



ANNUAL REPORT

2018-19



QUEENSLAND
FARMERS'
FEDERATION



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STUART ARMITAGE
PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The 2018-19 year has been another positive year of progress and achievement for the Queensland Farmers' Federation as the organisation continued to effectively advocate for sector-wide issues and secure positive outcomes on economic, social, environmental and regional matters.

QFF addressed issues in state and national energy policy and the cost of electricity, advocated for affordable and accessible water and supporting infrastructure, called for greater protection for farmers against trespassing animal activists and worked towards effective drought policy outcomes.

The majority of the credit must be given to CEO Travis Tobin for his leadership in progressing the organisation's agenda to continue bringing the state's agricultural representative groups closer together. The QFF team, led by Travis, has continued to deliver upon the organisation's reputation of producing a high standard of policy advocacy and project delivery on behalf of the intensive agricultural sector.

However, this year has not been without its challenges as more than half of Queensland continues to struggle through drought, the Queensland Government looked to introduce further reef protection regulations, and farmers faced radical and unjustified actions from animal activists trespassing on their properties.

Following two terms as President of QFF, my time has come to an end and I intend to step down this year, allowing someone new to take up the position. It has been a pleasure working with the QFF team on a range of important policy areas across the agriculture sector.

I have been lucky enough to meet many industry stakeholders and learn directly from farmers about the food, fibre, foliage and amenity they provide, the challenges they face and the ingenuity and innovation they continually demonstrate. I thank our farming leaders for their support and contribution to QFF's committees, council and board in conjunction with the support of staff from their respective industry member organisations. QFF would not exist without the service, dedication and collective vision of individual farmers aspiring for a better deal for the agricultural sector.

I am sure in 2019-20, QFF will continue to strive for the right policy settings and effective collaboration between industry, government and the community to help overcome the challenges and realise the opportunities ahead. The organisation will continue to drive improvements in the operating environment for farmers through productivity and profitability, international competitiveness while delivering on our environmental and social obligations.



TRAVIS TOBIN
CEO

CEO'S REPORT



Looking back on 2018-19, the sectoral headline numbers are somewhat helpful for quantifying another mixed year for Queensland farmers. According to the April 2019 forecast, the sector's total value was likely to be \$17.59 billion (\$13.89 billion at the farm gate); 5 per cent less than the average for the past 5 years. The protracted drought continued across more than 60 per cent of the state, with some areas now into their seventh year. Over the past few years some QFF industries have seen significant value declines including: 36 per cent in cotton; 29 per cent in sugarcane; 26 per cent in pigs, 20 per cent in dairy and 12 per cent in poultry. While not solely the result of drought, it has been a large determinant and highlights the impact of low water availability and high cost critical inputs such as feed, water and electricity.

Other severe weather challenges the sector experienced included the January-February 2019 monsoonal trough that caused major flooding in the far north, north and north west of the state resulting in the loss of hundreds of thousands of cattle and destroying coastal crops; and the November-December 2018 bushfires across central Queensland that burnt more than 1.4 million hectares of land. Since 2011 Queensland has faced more than 60 natural disasters, causing more than \$14.5 billion in damage.

The other whole of sector issue that drew a lot of attention this year was biosecurity, as African Swine Fever continued to decimate pig herds around the world and moved closer to our shores. As Australia's frontline biosecurity state, Queensland has some unique risks – diverse geography and climate, long coastline, proximity to south-east Asia – and concerningly, biosecurity risks and incursion pressures are increasing in number, scope and complexity. Biosecurity interceptions in Queensland increased 24 per cent in 2018.

At the organisational level, it was another constructive year of progress and achievement for QFF. In collaboration with and on behalf of members, QFF continued to develop and prosecute solutions-focused policy across more than a dozen



areas including: energy, water, biosecurity, risk management, planning, environment and natural resource management, the Great Barrier Reef, education and training, rural adjustment, mining and land access, waste, workplace health and safety, and animal welfare and activism.

Water and energy policy continued to dominate resourcing and effort as both commenced their periodic regulatory pricing processes. The State Government faces some pivotal policy decisions at the end of these processes if we are to arrest the 'water-efficiency' and 'energy intensity' trade-off currently taking place and create a brighter future for irrigated agriculture. Drought reform reviews got underway at state and federal levels and will potentially provide an opportunity to better target government policy and programs. The Reef was again the focus of our NRM work and combatting a coordinated wave of extreme animal activism became a high priority area of work for QFF. Summaries across all the policy areas follow in this report.

Advisory positions on countless government and industry stakeholder committees continued, as did representing members and the sector more broadly at various functions. The time commitment and resourcing required to meet these demands is increasing, and governments are placing unrealistic expectations on small, not-for-profit organisations like QFF. Continued collaboration across the membership helps ease the burden and ensure intensive, semi intensive and irrigated agriculture remains effectively represented in these key influencing forums, but something must give.

We continued to effectively and efficiently deliver government funded projects across various portfolio areas. Over the year QFF led projects in energy, Reef, education and training, water, resilience and agricultural insurance to the benefit of the whole agricultural sector. Most notable for the period was moving into the final stages of the \$45.6 million Reef Alliance Project. This single largest water quality project investment by the Australian Government that involves 12 partner organisations was due to wrap up at 30 June but will now close in December 2019 to

ensure the best outcomes are realised. Summaries of all the major projects follow in this report.

Improvements to organisational functionality continued and financial platforms were streamlined and service contracts for non-member organisations were rationalised. Amongst the QFF group, CANEGROWERS took over the shared services finance hub, which is working well. We welcomed Theodore Water and Mallawa Irrigation into the QFF family and look forward to Fairbairn Irrigation Network also joining the federation soon to further strengthen our advocacy work for irrigated agriculture. The strategic corporate partnerships with Telstra, Jacobs Australia and Holding Redlich continue to pay dividends and conversations commenced with other leading organisations from relevant sectors of the economy.

The ongoing financial support, expertise and commitment to a unity of purpose from members; farming leaders continuing to give their valuable time and serve on QFF's board and council; and a small, committed team remain the pillars underpinning QFF's achievements, standing and integrity. I thank them all for their contributions to the success of the organisation, and as always, a specific thanks and acknowledgement to President Stuart Armitage for his enthusiastic and selfless leadership.

During 2019-20, a new leadership team will take over at QFF. Stuart will step down at the November AGM after completing two terms as President, and I will be heading to Canberra by Christmas due to family pressures. Important work lies ahead for QFF and its members, as the cumulative impact of the multitude of issues now facing farmers, and the government's response to them, is challenging the profitability and viability of many farm businesses across the state. At the same time, the potential for Queensland agriculture to expand through high value export markets and sustainably increase state revenue and jobs has never been greater. Deliberate, strategic, joined up policies and action from government has never been more important.

2018 - 19 SNAPSHOT OF ACHIEVEMENTS



Successfully completed the NuWater Project Feasibility Study that explores ways to improve Moreton Bay water quality while increasing the capacity of agriculture in the Lockyer Valley and Darling Downs.



Successfully lobbied the Queensland Government to introduce on the spot fines for animal activists who put on-farm biosecurity at risk by failing to comply with biosecurity management plans.

 Successfully lobbied the Queensland Government to allow the temporary release of water in the state's strategic reserve, giving farmers access to the unutilised water to help drive the agriculture sector forward.



 Successfully lobbied the Queensland Government to specify a clear exemption for on-farm composting within the waste management licencing framework allowing farmers continue using composts and other organic products on farm.



Partner in successfully lobbying the Australian Government to commit to establish a National Farm Debt Mediation Scheme and prevent banks charging default interest during drought or natural disasters following recommendations made by the Banking Royal Commission.



Partnered with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation to deliver the Reef Alliance Phase Two Project and the Early Career Extension Project that will support the efforts of farmers and others working with the agricultural sector to safeguard the future of the Reef.



Partner in successfully pressuring all the major agri-lenders to allow farmers to offset money held in Farm Management Deposits (FMDs) against their agricultural lending.



Successfully lobbied the Queensland Government to postpone the introduction of a new Waste Levy, allowing farmers and rural communities more time to prepare for its commencement.



Partner is successfully lobbying the Australian Government to amend the Farm Household Allowance and lift the net asset threshold from \$2.6 million to \$5 million and provide a supplement payment of up to \$12,000 to help meet basic daily expenses.



Successfully lobbied the Queensland Government to extend the deadline for farmers and businesses to transition transitional and obsolete tariffs to standard electricity tariffs by 12 months.



Successfully completed the Cyclone Debbie Agricultural Recovery and Resilience project, managing the delivery across five industry groups and all impacted council areas in North Queensland and South East Queensland.



Partner in successfully lobbying the Queensland Government to develop the Growing for Queensland strategy for a productive and profitable agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector.

ABOUT QFF

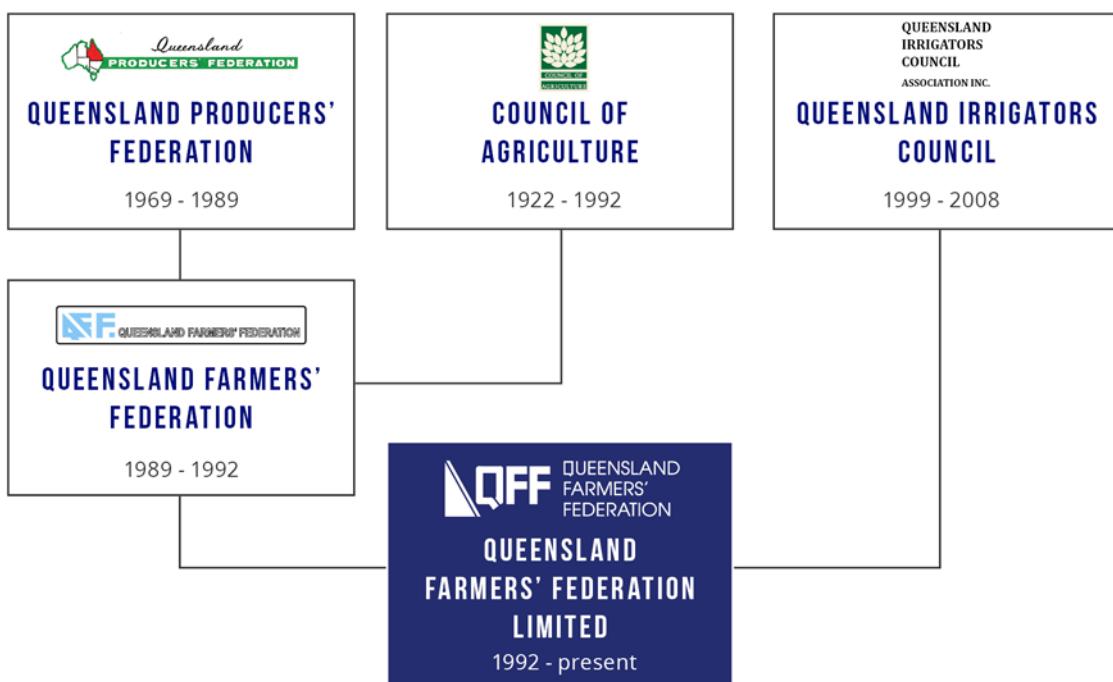
QFF is the united voice of intensive, semi-intensive and irrigated agriculture in Queensland. We engage in a broad range of economic, social, environmental and regional issues of strategic importance to the productivity, sustainability and growth of the agricultural sector. Our mission is to secure a strong and sustainable future for Queensland farmers by representing the common interests of our member organisations.

For more than 30 years, QFF has earned a formidable reputation as a leader in sectoral policy development and driving change to improve the operating environment for Queensland's farmers. Recognised as a non-partisan organisation that works effectively with all levels and sides of government, QFF is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential and respected advocacy groups in Queensland.

Currently uniting 17 peak state, national and regional agriculture industry organisations and the state's irrigation groups, the federation collectively represents the majority of farmers in the state.

QUEENSLAND AGRICULTURE REPRESENTATION HISTORY

This diagram shows the history of Queensland's peak agricultural advocacy groups and the progression that led to the formation of the Queensland Farmers' Federation Ltd.



ADVOCACY

ENERGY

Energy continues to be a significant focus for QFF. In 2018-19, QFF made 19 submissions on energy policy and regulation impacting Queensland's primary producers and processors to state and federal processes.

We are in an unprecedented period of regulatory and technology change across the energy sector. Much of this year's advocacy effort has been the development of Energy Queensland's (Ergon and Energex) 2020-25 Regulatory Proposal and Tariff Strategy Statement (TSS) for the networks.

The importance of a suite of suitable tariffs for the agricultural sector in the regulatory period from 1 July 2020 cannot be underestimated; particularly as this coincides with the decision by the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) to phase out 'transitional and obsolete tariffs' from 1 July 2020. These include both small and large business tariffs and irrigation specific tariffs. QFF remains highly concerned that the sector is being caught in a 'pincer movement' where the QCA has mandated the end of transitional tariffs and the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) has a requirement for cost reflective tariffs to follow.

QFF has continued to call for greater support and transitional arrangements for those customers who will be worse off, rather than just relying on the customer opting out back to a flat tariff; and queries why these customers must take the initiative to move tariffs.

QFF has requested support for customers affected by the removal of transitional tariffs be implemented, acknowledging this is a Queensland Government issue – separate from the AER's decision regarding future tariffs and tariff design contained in Energy Queensland's TSS. However, the convergence of these processes poses a real risk to the sector.

WATER-ENERGY NEXUS

QFF continued to educate governments on the inextricable connection between energy and water in agricultural systems. We continue to be disappointed and concerned that



governments appear to be unwilling to accept any ownership of the problems now faced, even though with a changing climate and growing population the water-energy-food nexus is creating problems at multiple scale. Over the past decade Australia's irrigated agricultural sector has responded to pressures of water resource scarcity, climate variability and productivity challenges by making large-scale structural adjustments on farm.

Converting existing on-farm irrigation equipment has achieved significant water savings; however, there have been unintended consequences associated with these structural adjustments, including higher electricity costs. Escalating electricity costs have negatively impacted Australian agriculture's profitability and productivity and encouraged food, fibre and foliage producers to irrigate at inefficient times or revert towards more water intensive practices. Several agricultural producers have also considered switching to alternative energy supply options or a return to lower productivity dryland farming.

Uncoordinated state and federal government policies are undermining sustainable agricultural practices in Australia and impacting the broader environment. Agricultural producers are progressively tackling the energy-water-food nexus challenges through innovative thinking and collaborative engagement between different stakeholders.

Recent figures from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) show a progressive commitment among Australian farmers to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. In the last three years, farmers have taken up loan incentives offered by the CEFC, spending more than \$260 million on over 1,200 projects nationwide. Of this, over \$50 million across more than 250 projects has been invested in Queensland agribusinesses to install energy efficient or renewable energy equipment on farm.

There are signs that Australia is at the point of addressing complex problems such as the water-energy-climate change nexus. Hence policy makers should heed this signal and apply the emerging concept of the modular principle to tame what currently remains as a problem, the climate-water-energy-food nexus.

WATER

WATER DEVELOPMENT

The updated Queensland Bulk Water Opportunities Statement (December 2018) addresses various policy initiatives which could promote the development of the irrigation sector in this state. Initiatives that address compliance, better management and utilisation of available water, improvement of water trading, development of water markets and water products, and temporary access to unallocated water are particularly relevant to QFF and our members. However, there must be a concerted effort to plan and implement measures that help the irrigation sector to manage the significant issues arising from the implementation of existing water reforms and more recently energy reforms.

These reforms have been implemented selectively without consideration of measures to promote the development of each of the irrigation areas in Queensland. For example, areas that have poor water availability or low rates of utilisation of water supplies have little capacity to cope with increases in water and energy prices. If this approach continues, the obstacles to reform implementation will continue to become more challenging.

QFF prepared a water development program which will facilitate the implementation of the state's water and energy reforms and presented this to the Department for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy to test if the Department will assist in funding this essential body of work.

WATER AND ENERGY POLICY COMMITTEE

The Water and Energy Policy Committee (WEPC) continues to meet regularly. Its role in assisting the communication of critical messages and workstreams from key stakeholders such as SunWater, seqwater, Energy Queensland, the Queensland Competition Authority and the Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy directly to QFF members is invaluable. The significant issues this year include but are not limited to irrigation water pricing and the development of a metering policy for Queensland.

In February 2019, WEPC met to discuss what success might look like for QFF members in relation to Queensland's agricultural water scene in the future. In summary, the key success measures identified by WEPC are wholly consistent with QFF's mission and included:

- The existence of a business environment that nurtures prosperous, resilient, sustainable and growing industries in the agricultural sector (with such conditions underpinned by the sustainable management of natural resources for and by participants in the agricultural sector);
- Ongoing, equitable and clear access to reliable, good quality and affordable water supplies;
- Government policies, reforms, plans and change programs that are clearly supportive of the development of a world-class irrigated agriculture industry in Queensland. The value of policy and investment to industry cannot be over-stated. This includes, for example, getting the nexus between energy and water policy (and pricing) settings right for irrigators and



key suppliers (e.g. water infrastructure providers); and

- An intensive, semi-intensive and irrigated agriculture sector in Queensland that is valued by society for the important role it plays in bringing food to the table, fibre to meet people's clothing and textile needs and positive amenity.

WEPC also identified a range of current and future critical water-related issues, risks and impediments to, as well as the opportunities and enablers that may be available for, the achievement of success as defined above. These are grouped into the following key themes:

1. Increasing electricity and water prices – industries and a number of irrigation schemes are becoming increasingly unviable due to the increasing costs of key agricultural inputs for which prices are set by government policy.
2. Process-driven reforms – policy reform has become heavily process-driven rather than being outcome-led (i.e. progress in reform tends to be measured in terms of process-based KPIs instead of the extent to which industries' success measures are being achieved).
3. Disjunct water, energy, climate-change and food security policies – government's policies on water and energy, as well as its strategies to mitigate and manage increasing threats relating to climate-change and future food security/scarcity are developed and implemented within agency silos.
4. Loss of deep knowledge in the public sector and statutory bodies managing resources important to irrigation – the agricultural sector is finding it increasingly difficult to meaningfully engage with agencies about key issues, policies and decisions other than at a very senior level.
5. Lack of information about the agricultural sector is threatening its social licence to operate – there is a concerning disconnect in the general public's (and government's) understanding (and even acceptance) of the role that agriculture has in supplying food and fibre to meet critical human needs.
6. The urgent need to secure industry unity in implementing sensible, coherent and transparent water compliance framework – water users readily acknowledge the important inter-dependencies between measuring water usage, improving water management and securing public confidence. However, there is concern amongst QFF members that adopting a 'cookie-cutter', technology-driven approach to water metering will be neither fit-for-purpose nor affordable in all situations.



7. The lack of resources available to industry to provide coordinated, proactive and strategic input to state government initiatives such as the Queensland Bulk Water Opportunity Statement (QBWOS), the Rural Water Management Program (RWMP) and the Queensland Plan – in particular, the agricultural sector recognises the urgent opportunity in engaging with its members and government to ensure that QBWOS and the RWMP is developed and implemented to align with, and be effective in, achieving the success measures identified earlier. In short, finding ways to make more water available for use by irrigators (at an affordable price) will unlock and enable new growth in agricultural production with obvious flow-on benefits for regional economies, communities and Queensland as a whole.

8. The lack of targeted investment in research and development (R&D) and deployment of new technologies in the agricultural sector that is relevant to the Queensland context – QFF members have demonstrated impressive advancements in water use efficiency and on-farm productivity over the past two decades. Future improvements are vital to ensure farmers' viability and survival and will only be possible with fresh investment in R&D that is targeted at the unique characteristics and needs of agriculture in Queensland.

REGULATORY AND WATER PLAN ACTIVITIES

Changes to the Water Act 2000 came into effect on Friday 24 May 2019 via the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment (NROLA) Act 2019. The NROLA Act amends water legislation to:

- Strengthen compliance and enforcement provisions including:
 1. A new separate offence provision (section 808A) for take of water that is in excess of the volume or rate of take authorised under the water entitlement;
 2. A greater penalty for failing to comply with a compliance notice (a multiplier of 1.5 times the penalty for the original offence); and
 3. Clarity of responsibility for water use through the use of common meters and jointly held water entitlements.
- Ensure consistency with local government infrastructure charging notices;
- Facilitate balanced gender representation on category 2 water authority boards and modernise the selection and appointment process for directors;

- Clarify the application of a number of provisions applying to category 1 and category 2 water authority boards; and
- Clarify a number of water licence provisions including section 112 regarding the availability of water licence application information on the Department's website or Queensland Government business and industry portal.

With regards to Water Plans, the Minister released reports for the Whitsunday, Pioneer Valley, Boyne River Basin, and Georgina and Diamantina water plans. The reports provide an assessment of the performance of the respective water plans. The final Cape York Water Plan was released on 7 June 2019.

UNDERUTILISED WATER

The Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy is working with the irrigation, resource and local government sectors to better understand supplemented and unsupplemented water usage practices and assess opportunities to increase the utilisation of this water where appropriate and will enable the greatest economic benefits.

This project was initiated following an assessment that found significant quantities of water that remained unused in some Queensland dams, weirs, barrages and metered water management areas even in dry times over the last 10 years including:

- 280,000 ML of uncommitted supplemented water allocations
- 865,000 ML of unused committed supplemented water allocations
- 2,000,000 ML of unused unsupplemented water entitlements.

Analysis undertaken by the government's consultant identified six key reasons why under-utilisation is occurring including water markets, regulatory causes, external forces, delivery infrastructure, risk management and transitioning regions. The reasons are very similar for both supplemented and unsupplemented allocations, except for delivery infrastructure which is not relevant to unsupplemented allocations.

A series of recommendations have now been developed including a development of a water markets optimisation project which will develop initiatives for improving Queensland's water products, market and trading processes, planning practices and the way information is provided to users and investors. These initiatives will help realise the full economic potential of Queensland water resources and water supply infrastructure.



BIOSECURITY

Biosecurity incursions remain one of Queensland agriculture's greatest business risks with exotic pests, diseases and weeds having a potentially crippling impact on plant and animal production systems across the state. Australia's island status protects the country to a certain extent, but as the movement of people and goods around the globe continue to increase and traditional agricultural production systems and regions continue to change, the threat of biosecurity incursions are intensifying.

In March 2019, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources released some summary figures on the previous year's work which revealed that in 2018, Australian biosecurity officers intercepted more than 350,000 items of biosecurity concern across the country including foods, plants, seeds, wood and animal material.

African Swine Fever, the highly infectious and contagious viral disease of domestic and wild pigs, started to spread around the world and moved closer to Australian shores. While it does not pose a health risk to humans, it is usually fatal among infected pigs and has the potential to disrupt the world protein market for years. After being reported for the first time in August 2018, China's pig herd had declined 32 per cent by July 2019. While Australia's pork producers are among the most biosecure in the world, it could cause devastating economic losses for the industry if it got through our borders.

In Queensland, the \$411 million National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (SEQ) started to deliver against its 10-year eradication plan. A progressive rolling strategy is being implemented under this plan. The operational area has been divided into 4 indicative priority areas for focused eradication activity over the 4 successive stages of the life of the plan. Results to date have been mixed, with the nursery industry continuing to be the most affected amongst QFF members.

In April 2019, the Queensland Government called for nominations for membership to a new Biosecurity Queensland Ministerial Advisory Council (BQMAC) to provide strategic oversight and direction on Queensland's priorities within the national biosecurity system and advise the minister on key biosecurity issues and trends affecting the state. Six representatives were nominated from the QFF family. BQMAC appointments are to be advised in August 2019.

In May 2019, the Queensland Government convened the inaugural meeting of the Plant Biosecurity Liaison Group (PBLG) – a forum to discuss biosecurity and market access issues between Biosecurity Queensland, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and plant and associated industries. QFF and all plant industry members are represented on PBLG.



RISK MANAGEMENT

QFF continued to lead the discussion around insurance as a risk management tool and pressure the Queensland Government to remove stamp duty on agricultural insurance products. Subsequently the government contracted KPMG to investigate the removal of stamp duty. QFF met with KPMG at several stages through their process compiling the report for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries: 'Investigating the Feasibility of Abolishing Insurance Duty on Agricultural Insurance Products'. QFF has raised concerns with this process and some elements of the KPMG report and will continue to work with the government to see this inefficient tax removed.

Drought continued to affect much of Queensland through 2018-19 with the area of the state drought declared ranging from 57 to 65 per cent throughout the year. Some regions are now in their seventh year of drought.

In August 2018, the Queensland Government appointed an independent expert panel made up of Ruth Wade and Charles Burke to review drought programs and assistance in Queensland for future droughts. The panel held regional forums and sought written submissions throughout September and October 2018 and provided their recommendations to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries in January 2019. QFF was actively involved in the review process, meeting with the panel on several occasions and providing formal written submissions.

On 28 June 2019, the Queensland Government released the panel's report and the government's response. The panel made 20 recommendations of which the government accepted 13 outright and another six in principle. QFF will work with the government throughout 2019-20 and strive to get the right settings in the drought reform areas that are open for

consultation. The government's current Drought Assistance Package and other programs will continue to run for the duration of this drought.

At the national level, the Prime Minister appointed a national drought coordinator. QFF met with Coordinator General for Drought, Major General Stephen Day and participated in the Minister for Agriculture's drought roundtable in July 2018 and will attend the upcoming roundtable in August 2019.

The Far North, North and North West of Queensland suffered severe flooding from a monsoonal trough 25 January to 14 February 2019. In an unprecedented move, the Prime Minister launched the North Queensland Livestock Industry Recovery Agency (NQLIRA) on 1 March 2019 to assist with the immediate response, recovery and reconstruction efforts. Although much of the focus has been on the north west, impacts along the east coast were also significant with QFF member industries severely affected from the Herbert down to the Burdekin. QFF asked for and received funding for a flood recovery project that we are now delivering with CANEGROWERS, Growcom and NGIQ to assist primary producers throughout the region recover from the flooding event.

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

QFF finalised the Agriculture Sector Adaptation Plan (AgSAP) regional implementation plans with assistance from industry member Growcom. This plan for climate change adaptation was delivered to the Department of Environment and Science early 2019 and is waiting for sign off by the Department before being publicly released. The plan focused on the east coast NRM cluster with the case studies taking a detailed look at climate change impacts and potential adaptation actions on a sugar cane farm and a grains farm.



RURAL PLANNING

QFF successfully secured funding from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) to provide planning services to review Queensland's local government planning controls for on-farm composting. It had come to QFF's attention that some farms conducting on-farm composting activities required a development approval from their local council while others did not. This work will be completed in August 2019.

QFF is aware of the increasing pressures of competing land-use activities on agricultural land and has been working with DAF to develop a robust framework for the protection of the best agricultural land. Particular issues pertaining to Queensland's energy transition (towards renewable energy) are an indicator of the pressures and the increasing rate we are losing good quality, irreplaceable agricultural land. For example, to date the large-scale solar facilities in Queensland have sterilised over 13,000Ha of agricultural land (>5,500Ha is PAA; >4,000Ha is Class A; >3,000Ha is SCL).

QFF has been working with DAF to develop a 'Best of the Best' methodology which could be used to examine all non-agricultural activities and their impact on land and will continue to advocate for this methodology to be accepted and implemented by the Queensland Government.



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (NRM)

REEF REGULATIONS

The Queensland Government continued to press ahead with its agenda to increase regulation in the Reef catchments with the introduction of the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill in February 2019. The Bill will see a greater regulatory burden placed on Queensland's farmers while not guaranteeing any benefits for the Great Barrier Reef.

QFF again made evidence-based submissions to the Bill and engaged in the subsequent parliamentary and consultation processes. Disappointingly, the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee handed down its report in April 2019 that did not recommend any changes to the Bill. The Bill is likely to pass the Parliament in late 2019.

Concerningly, the whole process cannot be categorised any other way than disingenuous. Following a similar process and result with vegetation management legislation in 2018, QFF questions the value of the parliamentary committees. As the state's 'house of review', they are failing to genuinely review legislation introduced to parliament and put forward informed recommendations to improve law making in the interests of all Queenslanders.

QFF continues to advise government that industry remains opposed to increasing regulation in the Reef catchments, as it is not considered to be the best way to achieve the desired outcomes. It is widely accepted within industry circles that the best way to realise long term practice change is leading by example, incentivising people and giving them a sense of ownership towards change; not through regulation. Time will tell but QFF considers applying a blanket approach to regulating agricultural activities across all six Reef regions in the belief that

this will rapidly reduce run-off from farms is misguided.

We continue to advocate for industry-led BMP and other voluntary programs that incentivise and empower farmers and deliver real practice change. They are a structured and successful pathway for realising improved farm management practices and have supported farmers to gain a better understanding of their business and adopt improvements. Properly resourced, they remain the right vehicle for agriculture to continue doing its bit for the Reef and QFF and members remain committed to this approach.

LAND RESTORATION FUND

The Queensland Government's 2017 election commitment to establish a \$500 million Land Restoration Fund (LRF) to expand carbon farming in the state by supporting land-sector projects that deliver clear environmental, social and economic co-benefits has been slow to get off the ground. QFF has remained actively engaged in the LRF development processes, including signing a MoU with the Department of Environment and Science, throughout 2018-19 as this initiative has the potential to play an important role for the future of agriculture. With the right settings, it will create opportunities for farmers across Queensland to contribute to climate change mitigation and improve their on-farm adaptation.

As part of our engagement in the development of the LRF, we are encouraging the government to better connect different policy objectives and identify the complementarity or not (and if not, rectify) with other existing government priorities, such as drought reform and farming in the Great Barrier Reef catchments.



MINING & RESOURCES

Queensland is maintaining an extensive exploration program and published a schedule of tender releases until the end of 2019 for both gas and coal exploration, including five new areas for coal exploration in Queensland's Bowen Basin totaling 458km² (147 sub-blocks) which are subject to environmental, native title and other approval requirements under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989 (Qld)*.

The Queensland Government is also continuing to drive gas policy and exploration with companies seeking domestic gas supplies to tackle onshore shortages. Senex Energy was awarded 153km² of land near Miles to explore for gas for Australian-supply only, and a Santos/Shell joint venture, Galilee Energy and Sajawin have also been awarded exploration rights for gas across more than 2600km² between Miles and the border town of Inglewood. Since 2015, the current government has released more than 39,000km² of land for gas exploration with nearly a quarter of it for the domestic market.

QFF remains vigilant around the value proposition to local communities and issues associated with coexistence of the agricultural and resource industries. That said, over recent years the energy transition from traditional resources to renewables has brought new challenges. The transition to a low carbon economy driven by the Queensland Government's commitment to transitioning to 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030 will drive decarbonisation of the static energy supply. The International Energy Agency (IEA) shows that transition still requires the development of unconventional gas resources (including Coal Seam Gas); and the future is likely to see a role of hydrogen at scale; and other energy technologies (e.g. solar, wind, carbon capture and storage).

For example, the development of large-scale solar photovoltaic facilities across Queensland is supported by the State Government's commitment to a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030. These facilities are currently assessed in Queensland under individual local planning schemes, unlike other large-scale resource and energy generation activities which are rigorously assessed at state level. Much of the siting and development of large-scale solar facilities has occurred in regional Queensland. Small local governments lack adequate resourcing for the consistent assessment and conditioning (development approvals) of these facilities, despite the considerable land-footprint and infrastructure requirements. To date, over 14,000 Ha of high-quality agricultural land (including irrigated land) has been developed by large-scale solar facilities. Some of the facilities have impacted the neighbouring properties 'right to farm' and undermined the viability of regionally located agri-infrastructure.

All these new energy technologies impose change on local communities. QFF has recently supported a research proposal to explore what transition means for regional Queenslanders, who are most likely to host new energy systems and technologies, and who increasingly expect to see tangible regional benefits from projects. The research would leverage research and lessons learned from the introduction of a CSG industry in Queensland and apply relevant tools to the renewables sector.

The ability to identify, measure and validate regional benefits is key for any resource activity or energy technology to be accepted and building social licence to operate.

WASTE MANAGEMENT & RECYCLING REFORM

QFF continued its work on the Queensland Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan (PPRP) and on 19 February 2019 contributed to a PVC plastic workshop along with member organisation Cotton Australia to seek recycling solutions.

The Queensland Department of Environment and Science has now completed the review of the regulated waste framework and waste related Environmentally Relevant Activities (ERA's under the Environmental Protection Regulation 2018). QFF was disappointed to see many agricultural resources (manures and food processing wastes) remain classified as Category 2 regulated wastes despite substantial advocacy in this area.

The Environmental Protection (Regulated Waste) Amendment Regulation 2018 commenced on 4 February 2019. This amending regulation introduced a new risk-based waste classification framework with two default categories of regulated waste:

- Category 1 regulated waste (highest risk); and
- Category 2 regulated waste (moderate risk).

This has implications for the new Queensland waste levy. The levy zone includes 39 out of 77 local government areas and covers around 90 per cent of Queensland's population where most of the waste is generated and disposed. The levy was intended to commence on 4 March 2019 but was deferred to 1 July 2019. The categories for the waste levy are \$75 general waste, \$105 for category 2 regulated wastes and \$155 for category 1 regulated wastes.

A positive outcome from QFF's advocacy work however, was the exemption of on-farm composting from the licencing requirements under Environmentally Relevant Activity 53 (Organic Material Processing) where on-farm wastes are generated and beneficially used. This means that farms are no longer required to apply for an Environmental Authority to conduct on-farm composting. This is a positive outcome for the continued circular economy approach widely practiced on organic resources across the sector.

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The circular economy is a widely coined term for a system that does not produce any waste or contaminants, instead materials flow (such as biological nutrients) and recirculate in the biosphere. A circular economy approach in agriculture centres on the production of agriculture commodities using the minimum amount of external resources and closing valuable nutrient loops.

Resources can be circulated through many pathways by employing technologies and creating new products and new value chains. It is assumed that a 'circular economy' approach for agriculture offers benefits to Queensland's agricultural sector from an economic, social and environmental perspective – and



farmers have naturally adopted a circular approach to organics and nutrients historically.

There are new opportunities for maximising the value of by-products and value-adding of waste/resources from farms through the further adoption of the bioeconomy. While a purely bioeconomy approach, which may maximise on-farm returns by valorisation of by-products, risks diverting critical, and in some cases, limited nutrients from the biosphere. The bioeconomy opportunities continue to be nascent across much of the sector, impeded by cross-departmental jurisdiction approaches and competing policies and agendas. As an example, Queensland's Biofutures Road Map and Action Plan provides aspirations to leverage the strategic advantages provided by the agricultural and other sectors to secure a share of the global bioproducts and services market, which is expected to be worth US\$1.1 trillion by 2022. This Biofutures agenda is broad ranging from biopolymer and biochemical production, through to biofuels and bioenergy production. Under this government-led policy resources are not circularised, but valorised to maximise financial returns. Throughout 2018-19 QFF made seven submissions in this area to attempt to align policies and plans across Departments.

The agricultural sector is critical to the Queensland economy, providing food, fibre, foliage and increasingly, fuel. The sector is instrumental in managing the challenges associated with population growth, food security, climate change and natural resource management. It is essential that there are measures to promote research and innovation on the circular economy, encourage cooperation between relevant actors, reward the continued use of circular economy principles and promote the uptake of the resulting green products.



WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY (WHS)

In 2018-19, QFF renewed advocacy efforts towards convincing the Queensland Government to provide a greater focus and more funding towards electrical safety, measures that take greater action protecting and educating farmers and workers on all-terrain vehicles or quad bikes, and rural mental health.

The government and the Office of Industrial Relations (OIR) claim that current budget constraints do not allow for joint funding electrical safety incentives for the rural industry. Until such time that this changes, QFF and government continue to reinforce the following practical steps every farm business can take:

- using Ergon Energy's recently launched 'lookupandlive' app – a free interactive geospatial mapping tool that will help farmers identify the distribution network on their property, manage their overhead powerline exclusion zones, provide on-farm induction and training, and help with safe loading and unloading;
- moving irrigation pipes, machinery and other large items away from under overhead electricity lines;
- not planting inappropriate crops directly under overhead lines;
- asking Ergon Energy for free safety advice about electricity lines and poles;
- checking portable electrical equipment before use and disposing of defective items; and
- using portable safety switches for plug-in equipment used around the farm.

A lack of committed funding is also the obstacle for helping farmers better manage the risk of quad bike rollovers through a rebate scheme for fitting operator protection devices to existing quad bikes, or to switch to more terrain appropriate vehicles such as side by sides. OIR is currently investigating the feasibility of a rebate scheme for quad bike rollover and assessing the effectiveness of similar rebate schemes in other jurisdictions. The Minister for Industrial Relations has also tasked OIR with scoping possible amendments to the WHS Regulation regarding quad bike and side-by-side vehicle safety.

On rural mental health, QFF President Stuart Armitage remains a patron of Mary O'Brien's 'Are You Bogged Mate?' initiative and QFF continued to provide administrative assistance for this important work. The Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries remains a committed and enthusiastic supporter of the AYBM initiative.



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

COMPETITION

QFF coordinated responses to several inquiries by the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) throughout 2018-19. Issues included a class exemption for collective bargaining, which remains under consideration by the ACCC and would provide legal protection for:

- businesses with an annual turnover of less than \$10 million in the preceding financial year to collectively bargain with customers or suppliers, and
- all franchisees and fuel retailers to collectively bargain with their franchisor or fuel wholesaler respectively regardless of their size or other characteristics.

The Treasury ran a review into the extended unfair contract terms (UCT) protections for small business and their effectiveness in promoting fairness during contractual dealings with regard to standard form contracts. Treasury is yet to release its report on this review.

QFF also supported the positions of industry members CANEGROWERS and Australian Cane Farmers Association on the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources' Review of the Competition and Consumer (Industry Code - Sugar) Regulations 2017.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

QFF continued to support the work of the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC). Led by the National Farmers' Federation, the 21-member Coalition continues to advocate for better telecommunication services in rural and regional Australia. Core policy outcomes sought by the Coalition are:

1. A universal service obligation that is technologically neutral and provides access to both voice and data.
2. Customer service guarantees and reliability measures to underpin the provision of voice and data services, to deliver more accountability from providers and the nbn.
3. Long term public funding for open access mobile network expansion in rural and regional Australia.
4. Fair and equitable access to Sky Muster for those with a genuine need for the service, and access which reflects the residential, educational and business needs of rural and regional Australia.
5. Fully resourced capacity building programs that build digital ability, and the development of effective problem-solving support for regional, rural and remote businesses and consumers.

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ACTIVISM

Throughout the 2018-19 year, Queensland's intensive animal farmers experienced coordinated animal activist attacks. Activists invaded farmers' privacy, threatened the welfare of their animals, posed unacceptable risks to their businesses and endangered the country's food security. Moreover, the constant threat of being the next target also hindered farmers' ability to operate their businesses to produce the highest quality food, fibre and foliage as they wore the economic and social costs of these actions.

Following continued advocacy by QFF, the Queensland Government introduced new regulations under the Biosecurity Act allowing the Queensland Police Service and biosecurity officers to immediately fine people who put on-farm biosecurity at risk. These regulations require people entering any farming operation to comply with the property's biosecurity management plan or face fines of \$652.75, either issued on the spot or later after further evidence is gathered. The regulations also enable individual fines of \$2,611 to be imposed if a farmer chooses to prosecute.

In addition, the Queensland Parliament's Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is currently considering a Bill introduced by the LNP in May 2019 that seeks to better protect businesses and individuals from trespass. The Criminal Code (Trespass Offences) Amendment Bill 2019 introduces three new offences including aggravated trespass with a maximum penalty of \$13,055 fine or three years imprisonment; and serious criminal trespass and organised trespass which both attract a maximum penalty \$391,650 or 10 years imprisonment.

QFF supported the principle of this Bill in a submission to the government as it would provide the courts with the legislative consent to impose a greater sentence and bring the penalties for trespassing on farming land back in line with farmer and community expectations. It is now incumbent upon the Parliament to ensure it delivers adequate protections and a suitable deterrent for would be and repeat offenders so farmers and society can operate without threat of disruptive, costly and damaging law-breaking behaviour.



2018-19 SUBMISSIONS

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

Submission to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee - Criminal Code (Trespass Offences) Amendment Bill 2019 - July 2019

Submission to The Treasury - Review of Unfair Contract Term Protections for Small Business - December 2018

Submission to the Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy - Review of the financial thresholds required to qualify for a Farming Concessional Valuation - October 2018

Submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission - 'Collective bargaining class exemption' discussion paper - September 2018

Submission to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources - Review of the Competition and Consumer (Industry Code - Sugar) Regulations 2017 - August 2018

EDUCATION & TRAINING

RJSA submission to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries - Proposal for Queensland Agriculture to Schools Engagement Program (QASEP) - March 2019

RJSA submission to Jobs Queensland - The Future of Work in Queensland to 2030 - Evolution or revolution? - March 2019

RJSA submission to the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training - Skills for Queensland Discussion Paper - October 2018

ENERGY

Submission to the Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy - Review of the Queensland Biofuels Mandate - July 2019

Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator - Energy Queensland (Ergon and Energex) Regulatory Proposal 2020-25 - June 2019

Submission to the Australian Energy Market Commission - Consultation Paper - National Electricity Amendment (Transparency of New Projects) Rule - May 2019

Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority - Draft Determination: Regulated Retail Electricity Prices for 2019-20 - April 2019

Agriculture Industries Energy Taskforce submission to the AEMC - Wholesale Demand Response Mechanisms - Response to Rule Change proposals - April 2019

Agriculture Industries Energy Taskforce submission to the AEMCA - AEMC review of the regulatory frameworks for Stand-Alone Power Systems - Priority 2 - March 2019

Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority - Discussion Paper - Recommended reliability standards for Energex and Ergon Energy for 2020-25 - March 2019

Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority - Discussion Paper - Recommended reliability standards for Energex and Ergon Energy for 2020-25 - March 2019

Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator - Draft Customer Hardship Policy Guideline - March 2019

Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority - Regulated Retail Electricity Prices for 2019-2020 (December 2018) - January 2019

Agriculture Industries Energy Taskforce submission to the ACCC - Discussion paper on monitoring of electricity supply within NEM - December 2018

Sapere Research Group report for the Agriculture Industries Energy Taskforce - Regulated Australian Electricity Networks: Analysis of rate of return data published by the Australian Energy Regulator - October 2018

Submission to The Energy Charter - The Energy Charter: Draft for Consultation (September 2018) - October 2018

Submission to Energy Queensland - First draft of Energy Queensland's Draft Plan 2020-25 (the plan) - October 2018

Submission to Energy Queensland - Energex and Ergon Energy Network Tariffs 2020-25 and Addendum - July 2018

Agriculture Industries Energy Taskforce submission to the Energy Security Board - National Energy Guarantee draft detailed design consultation paper - July 2018

Agriculture Industries Energy Taskforce submission to the COAG Energy Council - National Energy Guarantee (NEG) Draft Detailed Design for Consultation, Commonwealth Elements paper - July 2018

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & WASTE

Submission to the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning - Draft Queensland Resource Recovery Industries 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan - June 2019

Submission to the National Chemicals Working Group (NCWG) of the Heads of EPAs Australia and New Zealand - Draft of Version 2 of the PFAS National Environmental Management Plan - May 2019

Submission to the Department of Environment and Science - Queensland's Draft Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy - April 2019

Submission to the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee - Inquiry into the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 - March 2019

Submission to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources - Inquiry into the impact on the agricultural sector of vegetation and land management policies, regulations and restrictions - January 2019

Submission to the Department of Environment and Science - Draft End of Waste Code Biosolids (ENEW07359617) - November 2018

Submission to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries - Queensland Drought Program Review ADDENDUM- November 2018

Submission to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries - Queensland Government Drought Program Review - October 2018

Submission to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy - Review of accepted development vegetation clearing codes - October 2018

Submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission - AA1000429 - AgStewardship application - September 2018

Submission to the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee (ITDEC) - Waste Reduction and Recycling (Waste Levy) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 - September 2018

Submission to the Department of Environment and Science - Draft Education Strategy: Environmental Obligations for Regulated Waste Generators (August 2018) - September 2018

MINING & AGRICULTURE

Submission to the Queensland Treasury - 'Managing Residual Risks in Queensland' Discussion Paper (Part of the Financial Assurance Framework Reform Package) - February 2019

Submission to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy - Consultation: Improving Resource Approval Efficiency - October 2018

RURAL PLANNING

Submission to the Western Downs Regional Council - Amendment 1 to the Western Downs Planning Scheme - November 2018

WATER

Submission to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy - Draft 2019 Surat Underground Water Impact Report (UWIR) - July 2019

Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority - Apportionment of Dam Safety Upgrade Costs - March 2019

Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority - Rural irrigation pricing review 2020-24 - SunWater - March 2019

Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority - Rural irrigation pricing review 2020-24 - Seqwater Schemes - March 2019

Submission to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy - 10-point response to the Draft Plan amendment submitted by the Lockyer Water Users Forum - February 2019

Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority - Rural irrigation pricing review 2020-24 - Issues - December 2018

Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority - Fee Framework - November 2018



MAJOR PROJECTS



ENERGY SAVERS PLUS PROGRAM EXTENSION

In 2018-19, QFF was awarded the \$4.3 million tender to deliver the Energy Savers Plus Program Extension (ESPPE) by the Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy (DNRME). By December 2020, in partnership with our industry members QFF will deliver 186 energy audits to farms across Queensland. ESPPE includes a co-contribution grant of up to \$20,000 per farm to aid in the implementation of recommended energy management opportunities. ESPPE also ensures QFF and our members can build on the useful work done under the original Energy Savers Plus Program. The program is well on its way to delivering energy savings for Queensland farmers with 51 per cent of the 186 audits commenced and due for completion by November 2019.

QFF was also awarded grant money from DNRME to deliver extension services elements under ESPPE. This funding is critical to building greater energy efficient and demand management though the sector as it ensures practical on farm energy learnings can be shared beyond the participants in ESPPE. Extension activities have included over 15 events this year which has allowed us to reach an additional 900 people outside of those directly participating in the program.

Within the scope of the extension services contract, QFF will also be delivering a Real-Time Energy Use metering trial. The aim of the trial is to test whether farmers will find it easier to manage energy consumption and cost with access to real-time data and investigate the potential for energy trading.

REEF ALLIANCE: GROWING A GREAT BARRIER REEF

The Reef Alliance: Growing a Great Barrier Reef Project is a collaboration involving 12 partners namely: AgForce, Australian Banana Growers' Council, Burnett Mary Regional Group, CANEGROWERS, Cape York NRM, Fitzroy Basin Association, Growcom, NQ Dry Tropics, Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation, QFF, NRM Regions Queensland, Terrain NRM.

The project commenced in May 2016 and invests \$45.6 million to support 1,219 farmers and graziers improve their practices over 1,917,186 Ha across 33 Great Barrier Reef catchments. The project targets the sugarcane, grazing, horticulture, broad acre cropping and dairy industries. QFF manages the head agreement with the Australian Government and nine subcontract agreements on behalf of project partners.

The project was scheduled to end on 30 June 2019, but during the year it became apparent that the project would deliver better outcomes with an extension in time. QFF coordinated and submitted a project variation and the Department of the Environment and Energy granted the project an additional six months to complete activities.

Over the last 36 months, the project has achieved the following outputs:

- 1,600+ farmers attended reef water quality related workshops;
- 904 farmers undertaken practice change over 594,635ha;
- 1,464 farmers receiving one-on-one extension; and
- 21,003 hours of one-on-one extension visits with land managers.

As part of the project's communication activities, QFF again partnered with the Prince's Trust Australia for the Prince of Wales Environmental Leadership – Reef Sustainability Award, which recognises a local leader for their exemplary efforts above and beyond the call of duty to raise awareness and foster knowledge sharing in sustainable natural resource management. Won this year by Gerry Deguara, a second-generation farmer located in North Eton in Central Queensland, the Prince's Trust Award was offered alongside nine other award categories in reef conservation, community, extension, nutrient, sediment, pesticide management, youth and under 15 youth as part of the annual Reef Champion Awards that were held in Yeppoon in November 2018.



REEF ALLIANCE: PROJECT PHASE 2

QFF coordinated another Reef Alliance partners project proposal and was awarded \$3.5 million to deliver the Reef Alliance Project Phase 2 (RAP2). Funded by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, RAP2 commenced in April 2019 and aims to continue and improve upon the existing Reef Alliance 'Growing a Great Barrier Reef Project' (RAP1). The project will maintain momentum and ensure continuity of RAP1, which takes farming beyond industry best management practice in cane and grazing at a Reef-wide scale to help achieve the Reef 2050 WQIP targets.

RAP2 anticipates that by March 2020, 462 cane farmers and graziers will have been engaged, resulting in at least 187 enterprises changing practice, covering 206,870 Ha across 10 catchments.



RURAL JOBS & SKILLS ALLIANCE (RJSA)

Funded by the Queensland Government, the RJSA is in its fourth year of operation and continues to provide recommendations and advice to government, service providers and other stakeholders about employment, skills, industry training and workforce planning on behalf of Queensland agriculture.

RJSA members developed and endorsed a Strategy and Action Plan (2018-21) that will guide the work of the Alliance for the next three years in its pursuit of helping rural industries ensure a sustainable workforce.

In the wake of the cessation of funding for the Schools Industry Partnership Program (SIPP), the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries invited the RJSA to submit a proposal addressing the gaps in schools-industry engagement. The 'Queensland Agriculture to Schools Engagement Proposal' (QASEP) aims to improve the way schools and agriculture industries interact providing real industry learning experiences and deliver pathways to attract people to agriculture to meet workforce needs. Alliance members continue to work with the responsible government departments to progress RJSA's comprehensive and holistic proposal to implementation.

In response to the planned closure of the Queensland Agriculture Training Colleges (QATC), RJSA has been recognised as the industry conduit best placed to provide feedback into the transition planning for QATC's regional satellite Hubs. RJSA met with QATC and the Project Management Office to discuss and address any potential training delivery gaps arising directly from the closure of those hubs. These interactions will continue throughout 2019.

RJSA provided ongoing feedback from industry and evidence-based commentary on training needs and industry expectations including:

- The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training Annual VET Investment Plan and the Department's review of the VET market performance of the Rural Operations qualifications;
- VET Quality Framework to inform about supplier issues and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)/Pre-qualified Suppliers (PQS) monitoring via Training Market Health Check reporting;
- The Australian Industry Skills Council on national training package development and participation in Industry Reference Committees (IRCs);
- Skills Forecast and Schedule of Work (2019-22) by contributing to the relevant IRCs' training package project reviews;
- National VET Reform; and
- RTOs delivering to our sector.

To improve industry interactions with training providers and other interested stakeholders in the VET sector, RJSA conducted a forum in November 2018. The event was attended by 42 stakeholders across a range of organisations working in the sector, including RTOs and representatives from state government departments. Group discussions and sessions were designed to provoke thinking about the potential for increased co-operation between industry and training providers that would improve mutual outcomes for industry, its workforce and the training sector.

To inform the Skills for Queensland strategy – the Queensland Government's plan to secure our future prosperity through a skilled and adaptive workforce – RJSA represented the needs of Queensland agriculture and related industries through forum discussions and submissions to Jobs Queensland's Future of Work in Queensland to 2030 discussion paper to the Skills for Queensland discussion paper.

To improve development, attraction and retention of skilled workforces, RJSA:

- Produced the 'Your Career in Agriculture' video, which is a useful tool for teachers to communicate, and students and parents to discover the exciting and evolving roles available in the agriculture sector;
- Led the Agriculture Extension Work Placement Program – projects funded by the Australian and Queensland governments that place 14 new extension trainees with NRM and agricultural advisory groups across the Reef catchments;
- Developed and delivered five 'Embracing Digital Innovation in Agriculture' workshops in Townsville, Mackay, Emerald, Bundaberg and Dalby in partnership with TAFE Queensland; and
- Continued working with regional networks, especially the Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN), to help industries engage with government programs that will boost workforce development for rural and related industries.

Alliance industry members during the period were: QFF, AgForce, CANEGROWERS, Cotton Australia, Growcom, Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland (NGIQ), Irrigation Australia, Timber and Building Materials Association (TABMA), and the Queensland Chicken Growers' Association.

DROUGHT AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION PROGRAM – PRODUCING ENHANCED AGRICULTURAL CROP INSURANCE SYSTEMS

Funded through the Queensland Government's Drought and Climate Adaptation Program (DCAP), the Producing Enhanced Agricultural Crop Insurance Systems project conducted focused reviews on climate risk in agriculture and how insurance products could be used to address these risks. The project finishes 30 June 2021.

Outputs of the project include:

- Promoted the cyclone parametric insurance product developed to increase understanding and awareness;
- Product development to assist the dairy industry. Example products to be developed for each of the four risks identified - drought, heat, flood and cyclone.
- The development of a discretionary mutual fund for CANEGROWERS to manage cyclone risk, which is being further refined and trialed over the coming cyclone season.



CSIRO INSURANCE DATA

The CSIRO Insurance Data project will establish a time series of commodity maps and yields achieved over a period of 20 years (1997-2017) within a pilot study area in Queensland's Western Cropping Zone. The maps will combine Australian Bureau of Statistics data, and satellite imagery to create a new index for insurance product development. The project will be completed in October 2019.

Outputs of the project include:

- A time series (1997-2017) of digital maps (GIS compatible raster data format) that provide estimates of the yields achieved per pixel within the study area (including rasters showing commodity groups associated to each pixel and year); and
- The new index tested within the insurance market to see if viable insurance products possible of this type of insurance.

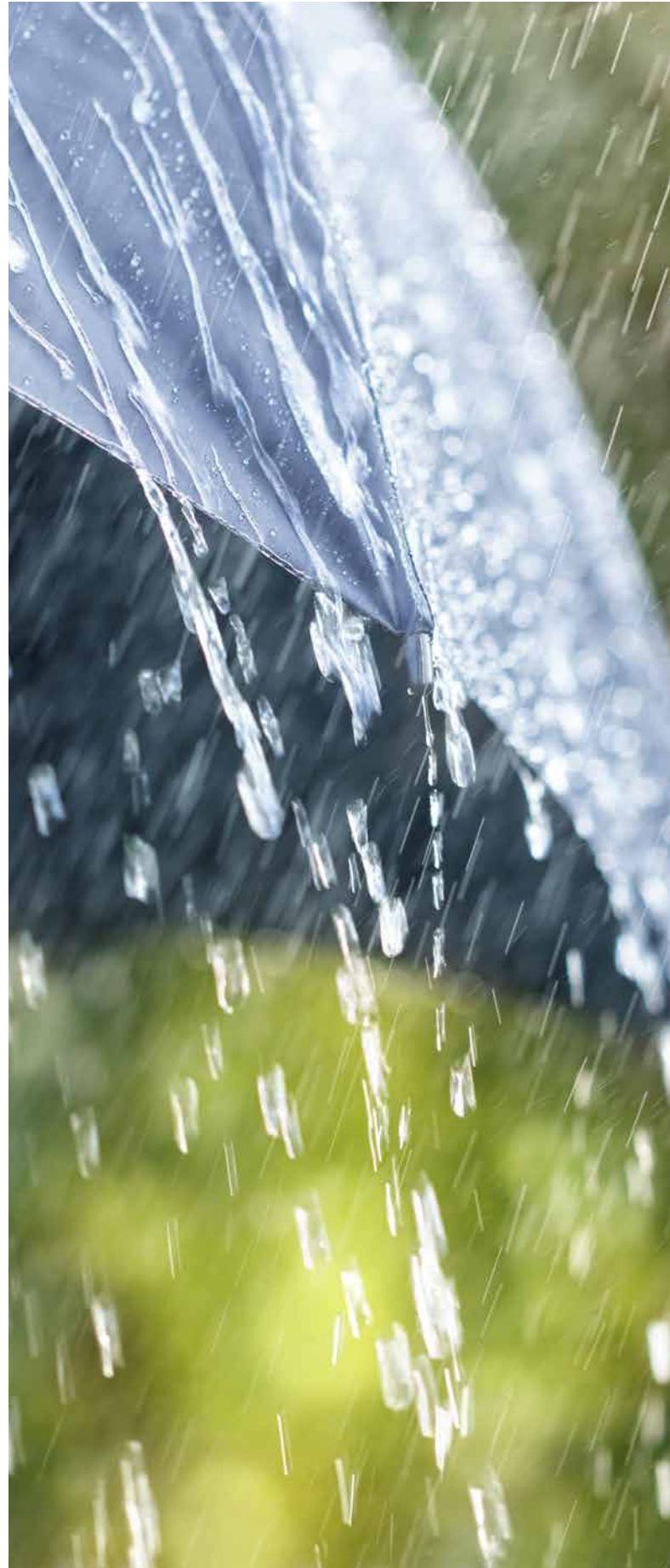


NORTH & FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND MONSOON TROUGH AGRICULTURAL RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PROJECT

The project will deliver technical recovery and resilience assistance in the critical initial stages of recovery to help farmers get the best start possible on the road to recovery. It builds on learnings from previous disasters and severe weather events and will help farmers directly affected by the monsoonal trough system from 25 January to 14 February 2019.

Funded through the joint federal and state disaster recovery funding arrangements (DRFA), the project will conclude in November 2019 and provides services for affected farm businesses to:

- Undertake natural disaster recovery and resilience planning to improve agricultural businesses resilience;
- Access government and other assistance measures available; and
- Access additional support where required from professionals such as financial advisors, technical advisors and health professionals.



QFF MEMBERS

MAJOR COMMODITY MEMBERS



CANEGROWERS

CANEGROWERS



COTTON AUSTRALIA

COTTON AUSTRALIA



growcom

GROWCOM

Nursery & Garden Industry
Queensland (NGIQ)NURSERY & GARDEN INDUSTRY
QUEENSLAND (NGIQ)QUEENSLAND CHICKEN GROWERS
ASSOCIATION (QCGA)QUEENSLAND CHICKEN GROWERS
ASSOCIATION (QCGA)Queensland
Dairyfarmers'
OrganisationQUEENSLAND DAIRYFARMERS
ORGANISATION (QDO)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

AUSTRALIAN CANE FARMERS ASSOCIATION
(ACFA)

FLOWER ASSOCIATION



PORK QUEENSLAND



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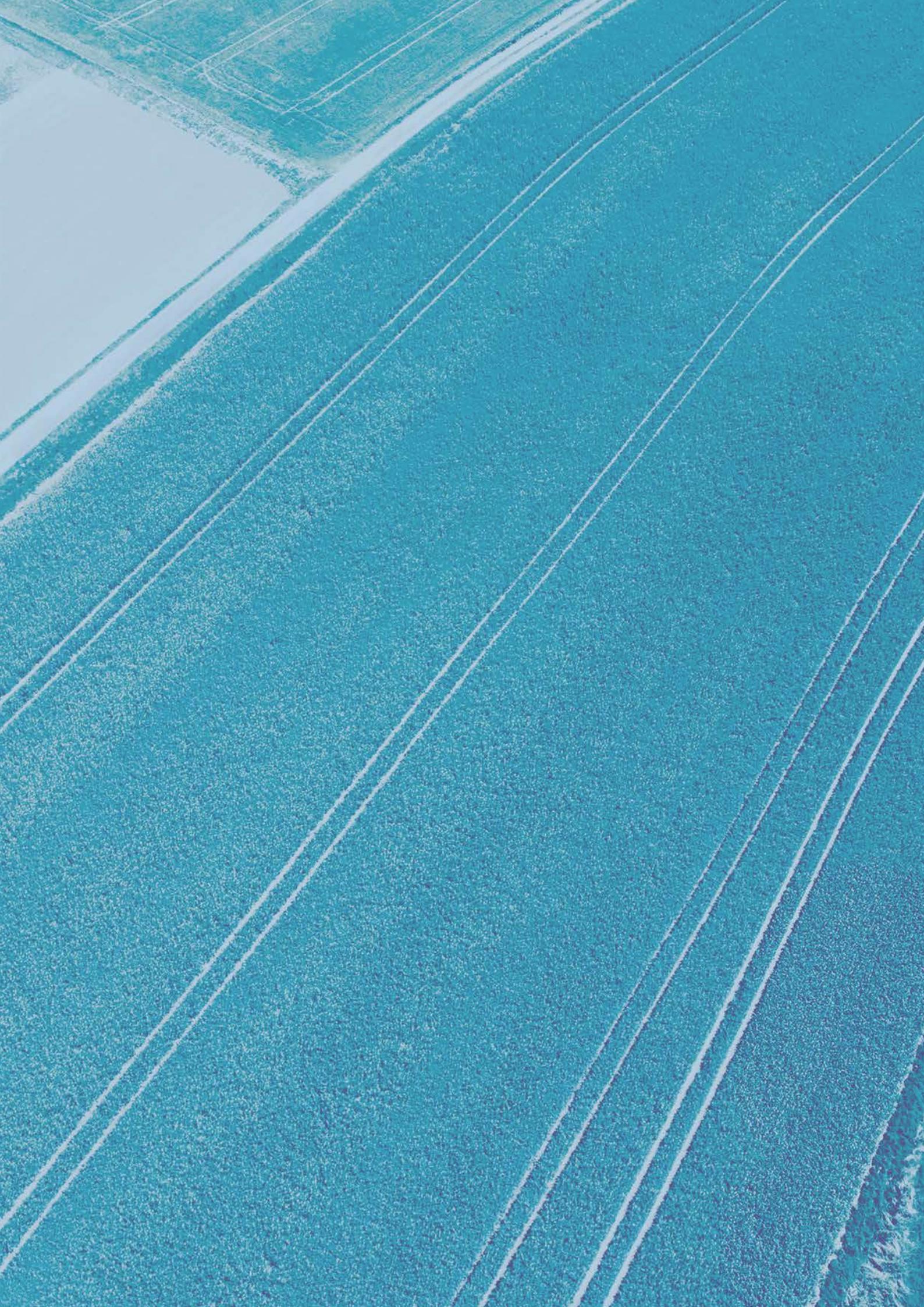


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