



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2019-2020



QUEENSLAND  
FARMERS'  
FEDERATION

# CONTENTS

---

<b>President's Report</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CEO's Report</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>About QFF</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2019-20 Snapshot of Achievements</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Advocacy</b>	<b>8</b>
Energy	8
Water	9
Biosecurity	10
Risk Management	11
Rural Planning	12
Mining and Resources	13
Environment and NRM	14
Waste Management and Recycling	16
Workplace Health and Safety	17
Agricultural Productivity	18
Animal Welfare and Activism	19
Research Collaborations	20
<b>Submissions 2019-20</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Major Projects</b>	<b>24</b>
Energy Savers Projects	24
Reef Alliance Projects	25
Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance	26
Natural Disaster and Risk Management Projects	27
Insurance Projects	27
<b>Industry Members</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Corporate Partners</b>	<b>29</b>

## COPYRIGHT 2020 Queensland Farmers' Federation Ltd

This work is Copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without the written permission from Queensland Farmers' Federation Ltd. Requests and enquirers concerning reproduction and right should be addressed to Queensland Farmers' Federation Ltd, PO Box 12009 BRISBANE QLD 4003 or [qfarmers@qff.org.au](mailto:qfarmers@qff.org.au)

CITATION Queensland Farmers' Federation Ltd 2020. Annual Report 2019-20. QFF, Brisbane.

DISCLAIMER QFF advises that the publishers, editors, authors and contributors do not warrant that the information in this publication is free from errors or omissions. Nor do they accept any form of liability, be it contractual, tortious or otherwise, for the content of this report or for any consequences arising from its use or any reliance placed on it. The information, opinions and advice contained in this book may not relate to, or be relevant to, a reader's particular circumstances.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

---



**Allan Dingle**  
**PRESIDENT**

The 2019-20 year has been another positive year of progress and achievement for the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) 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 rural land use protections and championed farm safety.

The majority of the credit must be given to outgoing CEO Travis Tobin and incoming Dr Georgina Davis for their leadership in progressing the organisation's agenda to continue bringing the state's agricultural representative groups closer together. Thank you also to the QFF team, which has continued to deliver upon the organisation's reputation of producing a high standard of policy advocacy and project delivery on behalf of the agricultural sector.

However, this year has not been without its challenges as more than half of Queensland continues to struggle through drought, while the COVID-19 pandemic frustrated agricultural supply chains and access to a well resourced workforce.

Following two terms as President of QFF, Stuart Armitage stepped down and I thank him for his expertise, commitment and valuable contributions to the organisation's success. I appreciate this opportunity to further represent my fellow farmers in this new role as QFF collaborates with industry, government and the community to overcome existing challenges and realise the opportunities for the future of the state's agriculture sector.

QFF continues to rely on the contribution 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.

In 2020-21, QFF will continue to strive for the right policy settings and effective collaboration between industry, governments 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 sustainability, productivity and profitability while delivering on our environmental and social obligations.

# CEO'S REPORT

---



**Dr Georgina Davis**  
**CEO**

In the first half of 2020, we have experienced profound change and it is generally accepted that there is more change to come. It has been a time of grief, shock, and lost opportunities, but also compassion and community support. Fortunately, Queensland's agricultural sector has generally been spared the scale of disruption that has occurred in other sectors and other countries. Indeed, consumers have seen the strong food (and nutrient) security that our sector guarantees whilst we have continued to sustain exports.

For those of us working on the required regulatory, policy and strategy requirements for the agricultural sector and delivery of critical programs, there has been a sense of being sidelined and even silenced by the scale of the pandemic and associated shutdown. For pressing matters, such as environmental, social, sustainability and climate challenges, the ability to get messaging out has been stifled, with even the sustained drought being pushed to the back of mind for those outside the industry.

The ongoing pandemic situation has presented a number of threats to our path towards a sustainable and resilient agricultural sector, and highlights the vulnerability of many aspects our industries face. Not least, our fresh food supply chains, the weakness in relying on certain worker classes, or our just-in-time imports of critical tools of our trade, from pesticides and fertilisers through to farming equipment.

However, there are also strong and growing dialogues about opportunities for change, innovation, diversification, re-imagination, and

regeneration. Decision makers now have a better understanding of our industry evidenced by our sector being designated a critical industry and our workers as front-line workers; and, importantly, decision makers are starting to ask the right questions.

Despite the challenges, it has been another high-achieving year for QFF. In collaboration with members, QFF has continued to provide solutions-focused policy across a rapidly expanding portfolio. It has been an extremely busy year for water and energy policy, particularly coinciding with the conclusion of the revenue determination period for Queensland's electricity networks and irrigation water prices. QFF was able to secure a new suite of electricity tariffs, including interruptible load and seasonal time of use tariffs, which mirrored existing irrigation tariffs set to expire in 2021, whilst a freeze on water prices for 2020-21 was also announced.

At the organisational level, QFF continues to deliver on-the-ground programs in association with members across energy, water, education and training, environmental sustainability, drought and disaster resilience, and agricultural insurance. These various projects not only benefit our members and their farmers directly, but also provide thought leadership on a range of new and emerging topics which benefits the whole of the Queensland agricultural sector. QFF continues to lead policy and regulatory development based on sound scientific evidence and farmer experience.

QFF has an ongoing commitment to science and research. From promoting student research projects directly with industry members, which also helps the sector and the many occupations it represents become more visible to graduates; to successfully securing funding for more on-farm research in new and emerging areas; and QFF is now an active member of several Cooperative Research Centres. QFF also successfully secured federal project funding for investigating microgrids for the sector which will clearly articulate the cost-benefits, opportunities and risks that these technology advancements provide for Queensland's agricultural sector. In the meantime, we continue to advocate for further on-farm, tangible projects to assist farmers improve efficiencies, yields, profitability, and marketing differentiation.

QFF, as a trusted source of advice to numerous stakeholders, continues to advocate for members requirements through its role on an increasingly diverse number of advisory bodies and boards. Whilst these activities consume our human resources, they provide opportunities to influence policy and regulation, often at early stages and from a trusted position within.

I am extremely proud of the way that QFF has represented its members and the broader agricultural community this year. To improve the environmental, social and economic outcomes, and to continue to demonstrate professionalism and thought leadership. QFF has led the charge to improve our sector, providing more value to our members and their communities through better representation, new member services and delivery of innovative on-farm projects. A huge thank you goes to all the QFF staff who have worked so hard to promote the interests of our sector, especially in challenging times. Thank you also to the member organisations (old and new) who support the Federation, both financially and through the provision of time, skills and experience, and always with integrity. Your contribution through our Board, Council, Committees and Alliances ensures QFF has the depth of understanding required to properly represent the sector in these dynamic times. Indeed, next year will be busier than this one.

On a personal note, I would like to thank QFF President Allan Dingle for his contributions since taking over the helm from November 2019, and I also acknowledge previous QFF President Stuart Armitage who successfully led QFF through two full terms. I would also like to acknowledge the work by my predecessor, Travis Tobin, who handed over the reins of a strong, vibrant and outcome-focused organisation.

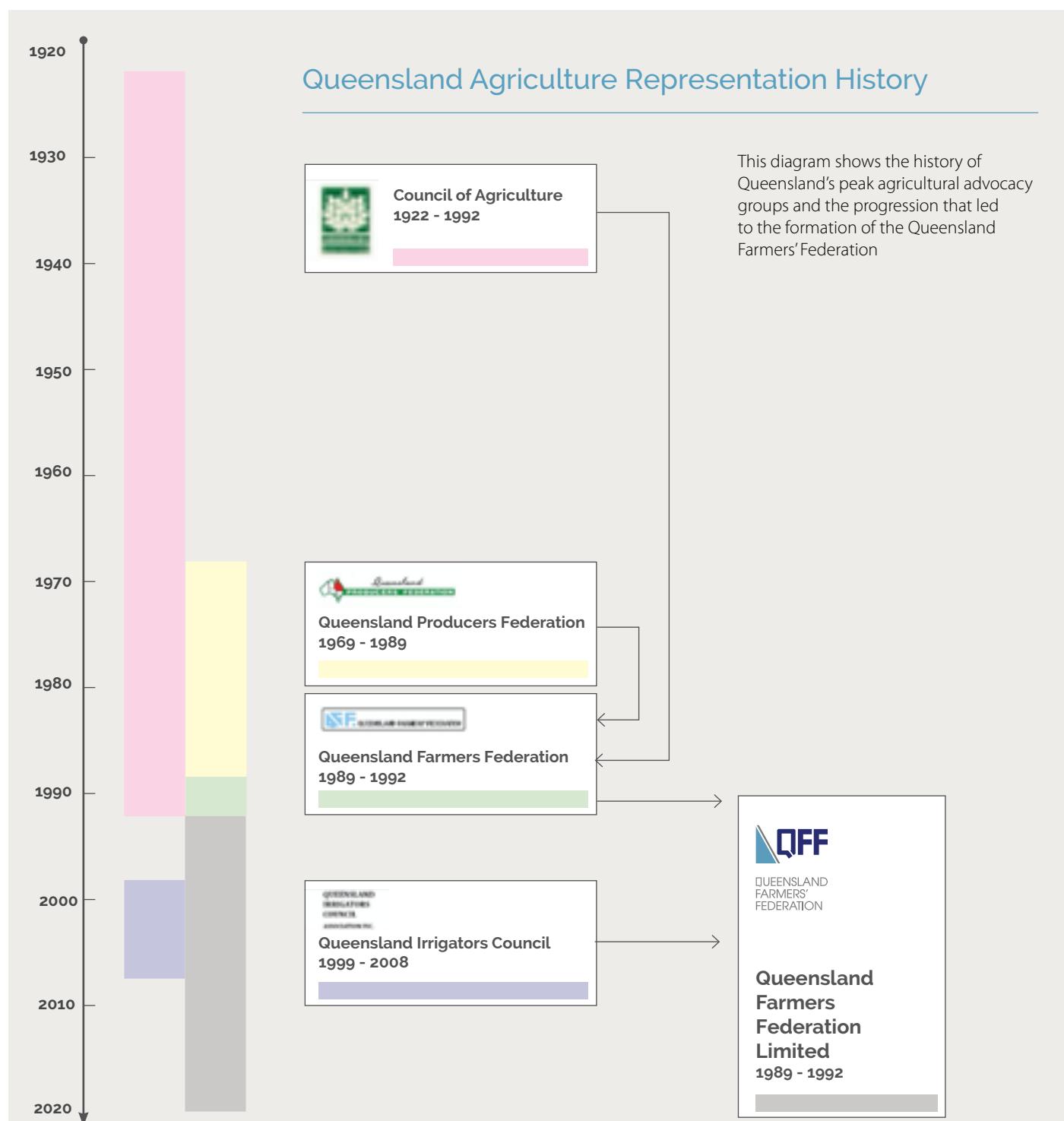
# ABOUT QFF

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 21 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.



# 2019-20 SNAPSHOT OF ACHIEVEMENTS



Successfully advocated for the Queensland Government to freeze irrigation prices for one year, pass on any price decreases and absorb dam safety costs for the next four years.



Successfully advocated for the Queensland Government to ensure water management outcomes in the Murray-Darling Basin were supported by the right infrastructure, policy and enforcement settings through the federal accreditation of the state's water resource plans.



Partner in successfully petitioning the Australian Government to implement legislation which criminalised the publication of material, via a carriage service, with intent to incite trespass, property damage and theft on agricultural land.



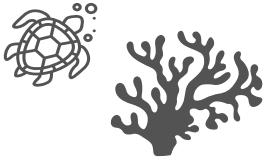
Successfully influenced the Australian Government to establish the Future Drought Fund to assist farmers with drought resilience, preparedness and recovery.



Partner in successfully lobbying the Australian Government to impose strict penalties for travellers who illegally imported contaminated pork products to protect Australia's pork producers from the biosecurity risk African Swine Fever.



Successfully partnered with home-grown Australian businesses to provide additional membership value and support for the 14,000 primary producers the peak agricultural body represents including discounts on vehicles and on-farm safety systems.



Successfully completed the Reef Alliance's Growing a Great Barrier Reef (GGBR) project where more than 40 dedicated extension officers engaged with 1,588 landholders to deliver demonstrated practice change to safeguard the Reef.



Successfully reached a major milestone in the Energy Savers Plus Program Extension, with half of the 200 farm energy audits completed and significant energy savings identified.



Partnered with the Queensland Government, the Australian Government, and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation to complete the Agriculture Extension Work Placement Program which skilled 14 trainee extension officers to support the efforts of farmers and others working with the agricultural sector to safeguard the future of the Reef.



Released 51 informative media statements and a further 51 industry news items.



Provided 28 formal policy and advocacy submissions on a range of industry matters.



Attracted 1343 new followers across social media and received more than 106,000 website hits.



# ADVOCACY

---



## Energy

---

Energy continues to be a significant focus for QFF. In 2019-2020, QFF made 10 submissions on energy policy and regulation impacting Queensland's primary producers and processors to state and federal processes.

There is currently a progressive movement in regulatory and technology change across the energy sector. Much of this year's advocacy effort has been in the continual development of Energy Queensland's (Ergon and Energex) 2020-25 Regulatory Proposal and Tariff Strategy Statement (TSS) for the networks and the Regulated Retail Electricity prices for the 2020-21 year.

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 coincided with the decision by the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) to phase out 'transitional and obsolete tariffs' from 1 July 2020 and the subsequent government decision to extend this to 1 July 2021. However, notified prices and tariffs are not expected to be delivered until 1 November 2020. The delay in tariffs and relative pricing structures have affected the agricultural sector, by exacerbating economic impacts on farm businesses by giving very little time to implement new tariffs and associated costs associated with the running of their businesses.

The development of a suitable suite of tariffs to reflect the various uses of energy in the agricultural sector is necessary for businesses to remain viable and remain 'on grid'. QFF is continuing to work with Queensland's distribution networks to develop more appropriate tariffs for agriculture. This is inclusive of the deployment of advanced metering and other technologies that will be necessary to achieve the full benefits of network tariff reform for customers.

QFF has continued to call for greater support and transitional arrangements for those customers who will be worse off when the current tariffs are no longer available.

## Water-Energy Nexus

QFF has continued to educate and work with governments on the inextricable connection between energy and water in agricultural systems. We continue to be disappointed and equally concerned that governments appear to be unwilling to accept any ownership of the problems now faced. The intricacies of not incorporating climate change into the policy framework for water and energy can be seen as a lack of engagement from government to address what is, and what will be, a higher economic cost for farmers, stakeholders, the public and government if not addressed now.

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. In a COVID-19 world, the irrigated agricultural sector has continued to respond to pressures, at their own cost, and with little support from government to adjust.

Agricultural producers are progressively tackling the energy-water-climate nexus challenges through innovative thinking and collaborative engagement between different stakeholders. A clear and cohesive policy direction from Government that allowed for innovative practices to align with policy needs to occur in a timelier manner that will allow for greater economic and environmental sustainability for on farm practices.

QFF has the opportunity to bridge these relationships between various stakeholders and government to develop a smoother pathway for innovative mechanisms to be implemented that allow for the economic and sustainable delivery of water and electricity.



## Water

### Water Development

In 2019-2020 QFF made seven submissions on water policy and regulation that are impacting Queensland's primary producers.

The updated Queensland Bulk Water Opportunities Statement (December 2019) addressed various policy initiatives which could promote the development of the irrigation sector in this state, from the efficiency of existing water resources to the development of infrastructure. 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.

There needs to be a comprehensive approach on water, incorporating the quality of available land resources such as soil, water infrastructure, energy costs for supply and the implications of climate change on the availability of water and associated impacts on the irrigation sector.

### Water and Energy Policy Committee

The Water and Energy Policy Committee (WEPC) met an unprecedented 12 times this year and there were further issue-specific meetings throughout the year involving selected WEPC members. This reflects the complexity of the regulatory processes and particular challenges for the industry this year. WEPC was particularly instrumental 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. The significant issues this year include, but are not limited to, irrigation water pricing, water planning, metering policy (including telemetry) and the lowering of the Paradise Dam wall in Bundaberg which has caused significant and well justified concern over the future irrigation water and reliability of that water to local growers.

In February 2020, 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 across a range of themes from process-driven reforms to targeted investment in research and development.

## Biosecurity

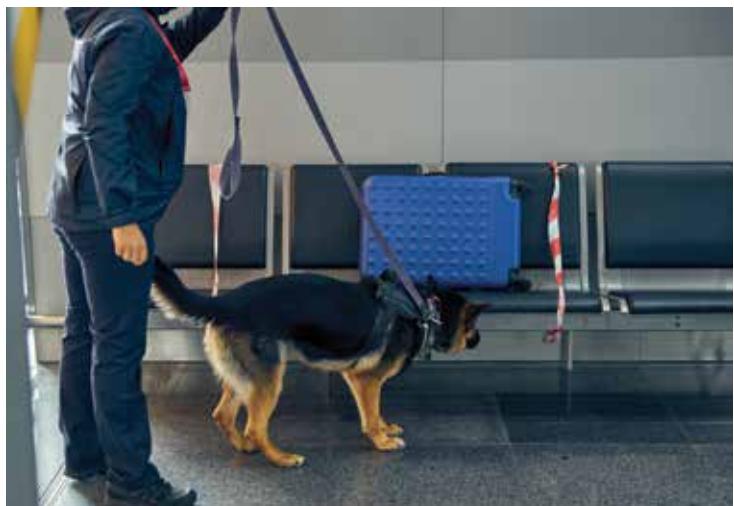
Biosecurity incursions remain one of Queensland agriculture's greatest business risks with exotic pests, diseases and weeds having a potentially crippling impact on plant and animal production systems across the state. As the movement of people and goods around the globe increases, Australia's island status advantage is rapidly being lost and the threat of biosecurity incursions are intensifying.

QFF supports effective invasive plant and animal management in Queensland and is a member of the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative Oversight Committee. Through this initiative, funding is allocated to support regionally agreed cluster fencing arrangements in areas with high wild dog density, as well as other invasive plant and animal control programs across Queensland.

QFF is also a member of the Queensland Invasive Plants and Animal Committee and was consulted by the Queensland Government in the preparation of the Queensland Invasive Plants and Animals Strategy 2019-2024 to be released in August 2020. The Strategy represents work undertaken by the Queensland Invasive Plants and Animals Committee to establish a statewide strategic planning framework to address the impacts of invasive plants and animals and reduce the incidence of new exotic species entering Queensland. The Strategy was developed through valuable stakeholder and public consultation. It includes themes and objectives with underlying strategic actions for stakeholders in invasive species management in Queensland to implement over a five-year period.

African Swine Fever, the highly infectious and contagious viral disease of domestic and wild pigs, continued 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. The Australian Government introduced new legislation allowing border officials to cancel visitor visas if they fail to declare biosecurity risk goods. QFF welcomed this step in strengthening the country's biosecurity laws to maintain our relative pest, disease and weed freedom. 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) continued 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 four indicative priority areas for focused eradication activity over the four 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.



**The Australian Government introduced new legislation allowing border officials to cancel visitor visas if they fail to declare biosecurity risk goods. QFF welcomed this step in strengthening the country's biosecurity laws to maintain our relative pest, disease and weed freedom.**





## 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.

Drought continued to affect much of Queensland through 2019-20 with the area of the state drought declared ranging from 65 to 67 per cent throughout the year. Rains during the latter part of the 2019-20 year were somewhat 'hit-and-miss' being mostly coastal and in the northern region of the state.

To further assist farmers impacted by drought, QFF utilised its position on the Drought Industry Working Group to work on Drought Program Reform. Since August 2019, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries have held six-weekly Drought Reform Industry Working Group meetings and also conducted quarterly Drought Program Reform Interdepartmental Committee meetings. Up until March 2020, drought program reform was on track to be implemented by 1 July 2020. However, the impact of COVID-19 delayed reform and consequently pushed back implementation by twelve months to 1 July 2021. QFF will work with the government throughout 2020-21 and strive to get the right settings in the drought reform areas that are open for consultation.

At the national level, QFF is a member of the Minister's Roundtable on Drought and works with the National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency, led by the Hon. Shane Stone AC QC. QFF continued to engage with the Agency during the year and intends to continue engagement with the Agency in 2020-21.

During the year, QFF also provided a response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. Their remit was to provide an overview of the impact of the 2019-2020 bushfires and/or floods on primary producers, QFF involvement in the recovery and response process, and opportunities identified to improve the natural disaster recovery of primary producers.

Bushfires and ongoing flood recovery became the focus of natural disaster recovery projects for QFF and its member groups, with widespread areas of the state experiencing high to extreme bushfire danger, largely due to continued dry conditions.

**Drought continued to affect much of Queensland through 2019-20 with the area of the state drought declared ranging from 65 to 67 per cent throughout the year.**

## Rural Planning

Planning for agriculture is necessary to ensure the best agricultural land remains available for food, fibre and foliage production. Land suitable for agriculture is a finite resource that cannot be created or replaced. Increasingly tourism, development, manufacturing and recreation have competed with agriculture, forestry and resource extraction as dominant economic drivers. In addition, the encroachment of mining for coal and gas into traditional productive agricultural lands has caused conflict between these sectors. Planning in rural areas aims to allow the establishment and operation of productive agricultural industries while conserving important natural areas and allowing urban activities in appropriate areas.

Following the release of the North Queensland Regional Plan, QFF raised serious concerns about the Queensland Government's commitment to adequately protecting the state's limited prime agricultural land. The Plan failed to correctly classify both current and potential agricultural land for protection. Instead the Plan classified only a limited area of currently used agricultural land as Priority Agriculture Area (PAA) for protection while omitting areas of high-quality Class A and Class B land with potential for agricultural development.

While the Queensland Government's intended outcome to achieve a consistent planning outcome was supported, the use of PAA to define an arbitrary subset of Class A and B land has created a significant gap in the protection of agricultural land. QFF has continued to call on the Agricultural Ministerial Advisory Council to make Queensland's overly complicated planning framework for agriculture a priority. Additionally, as the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan review gets underway, QFF will use its position on the Industry, Community and Environment working group to seek adequate protections for agricultural land.

QFF has received an increasing number of requests from farmers for assistance relating to the erosion of their 'right to farm'. One significant area of concern for farmers pertains to the operation of irrigation pumps and other equipment. In response to these concerns, QFF engaged GHD Pty Ltd (GHD), to investigate the current regulations and policy settings pertaining to noise and noise nuisance as could be applied to the undertaking of agricultural activities such as the operation of irrigation pumps in regional areas. The investigation identified that the criteria expressed in the relevant Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy 2019 and Section 440T of the Environmental Protection Act 1994, was primarily created to provide guidance on pumps located in urban areas (particularly swimming pool pumps and spa blowers). QFF has called on the Queensland Government to implement a multiple land use framework, amend the relevant sections of the legislation (both primary and subordinate) and facilitate a sensible approach to the noise emissions from essential agricultural activities in regional areas.

**Tourism, development, manufacturing and recreation have competed with agriculture, forestry and resource extraction as dominant economic drivers.**





## Mining and Resources

Queensland is maintaining an extensive exploration program and published a schedule of tender releases until the end of 2020, including the release of twelve new tender areas for coal and gas exploration in the Bowen and Surat basins. As a key stakeholder, QFF has been a part of the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy's community engagement program advocating on behalf of farmers to uphold their rights as landholders.

As Queensland is rich in agricultural and mineral resources, this can create coexistence challenges for the agriculture sector and the gas industry to manage the interaction between these critical industries. In this financial year, Insurance Australia Group (IAG) announced its subsidiary, WFI, would align its policies with its subsidiary CGU and not provide public liability insurance to landholders if there is any petroleum and gas activity (including infrastructure) on their property.

Under the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 (Qld) landholders are not liable to anyone for any harm arising out of petroleum and gas activities on their properties, except to the extent they contributed to the harm. However, farmers rightfully want to manage their risk should an unfortunate incident occur. The good news is that there are multiple insurers continuing to

offer public liability insurance for farmers who have gas activities on their properties. Following this decision, the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) has been working with the GasFields Commission, key insurance, agriculture and gas industry peak bodies and government agencies to ensure farmers can effectively manage risks associated with the operation of their businesses.

QFF has joined with fellow agriculture representative group AgForce, and the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, to advocate to the Queensland Government and facilitate the transfer of infrastructure from petroleum activities like bores, access tracks, small dams, fences and sheds to landholders. Currently, State Government regulation prevents transfer of ownership without the surrender or partial surrender of the overlying tenure and environmental authority. Well-maintained CSG infrastructure could offer landholders who host mining operations a positive, long-term legacy. Given the construction quality of many of these assets which are built to commercial resources standards, they are potentially very useful and valuable to landholders. QFF will continue to work towards a feasible solution that is transparent and ensures farmers are aware of any associated obligations as well as any residual risk that the environmental regulator may impose.

# Environment and Natural Resource Management

## Reef Regulations

The Queensland Government introduced the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 into the Parliament on the 27 February 2019. The Bill was voted on and passed in September 2019. The new regulations started on 1 December 2019 and will be rolled out over the next three years in different regions based on improved water quality management priorities.

The regulations provide the ability to create agricultural Environmentally Relevant Activity (ERA) Standards for commercial cattle grazing, banana and other horticulture cultivation and the cultivation of other crops, including sugarcane and grains, and a compliance program on them, to improve the water quality of the Reef. All agricultural industry activities in the Great Barrier Reef catchments (Burnett Mary through to Cape York) are included in the regulation.

QFF continues to advise government that industry remains opposed to increasing regulation in the Reef catchments. It is widely accepted by industry 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. Applying a blanket and blunt approach to regulating agricultural activities across all six Reef regions in the belief that this will rapidly reduce run-off from farms is misguided.

Industry-led BMP and other voluntary programs 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 delivering improved environmental outcomes for the Reef, and QFF and members remain committed to this approach.

## Great Barrier Reef Projects

After three years, the Reef Alliance's Growing a Great Barrier Reef (GGBR) project, which encouraged farmers to embrace practice change and make on-farm improvements to mitigate and manage agriculture's impact on the Reef, concluded in December 2019. The innovative GGBR project was a significant step in bringing together government, the agricultural sector and natural resource management organisations to proactively work together to minimise soil loss, optimise fertiliser application and pesticide applications, to safeguard the future of the Great Barrier Reef.

As a result of the GGBR project, more than 40 dedicated extension officers engaged with 1,588 landholders to deliver one-on-one customised farm planning and personalised technical advice. Through which, 1,783,998 hectares of farmland across Queensland's Reef catchments have demonstrated practice change to safeguard the Reef such as achieving dissolved inorganic nitrogen savings of 366 tonnes. While the implementation of a single database to manage practice change and extension information across five Reef catchments allowed the Alliance to chart a 'reef-wide story'.

The Australian Government's Reef Trust Partnership funding through the Great Barrier Reef Foundation continued the project with the second phase, which concluded in April. With the GGBR project now concluded, the current investment focus is now only on hotspots and specific industries, which risks losing the momentum and capacity gains made towards long-term practice change across all Reef catchment areas and industries. In the future, balancing this approach with more holistic programs will ensure the ongoing legacy from the significant investments made in the GGBR's project model.



1,783,998 hectares of farmland across Queensland's Reef catchments have demonstrated practice change to safeguard the Reef such as achieving dissolved inorganic nitrogen savings of 366 tonnes.

## Land Restoration Fund

Maintaining a sustainable and profitable agriculture sector is essential to the longevity and prosperity of Queensland farmers and the environment into the future. In February, the state government took a positive step in announcing that \$100 million would be available for the first round of funding under the Land Restoration Fund (LRF).

The Fund aims to expand carbon farming in the state by supporting land-sector projects that deliver additional environmental, social and economic co-benefits. The opportunity will enable land management activities aimed at storing carbon in trees and soils, and avoid the release of carbon through better management of fire, livestock, and fertiliser use. In addition, it will empower farmers, land managers and landholders with the support needed to generate additional, regular and diverse income streams, and reduce the risk for their businesses.

Applications for the first round of funding under the LRF closed in April. QFF coordinated a number of expert-led workshops held in March to assist potential applicants learn about carbon farming, its co-benefits and how it could be beneficially applied to their individual farms. Since then, we have continued to work closely with the government to ensure the delivery of mutually beneficial and environmentally resilient outcomes under the project.

Intensive, semi-intensive and irrigation agriculture have specific barriers to overcome compared to mainstream carbon farming. QFF has advocated that the LRF should push the boundaries of what carbon farming can achieve in Queensland and assist industry to move past identified barriers to allow for increased participation. Our industries understand and accept their environmental and social responsibilities and are proud land stewards. While the program has been slow to get off the ground, with the right settings the LRF will create opportunities for farmers across Queensland to contribute to a range of positive environmental outcomes, including climate change mitigation and improving their on-farm adaptation.

## Zero Net Emissions

The Queensland Government has set a state target to reach zero net emissions by 2050 with an interim target for at least a 30 percent reduction in emissions on 2005 levels by 2030. This target is seen as a critical first step to drive the investment and action needed to transition Queensland's economy to a zero emissions future. The Queensland Climate Transition Strategy outlines how Queensland proposes to prepare for this transition and set itself on the pathway to meet this target.

QFF believes agriculture emissions are challenging to address. Reducing emissions from agriculture poses challenges due to the diffuse nature of farming and the critical role of agriculture in the life (and livelihoods) of billions. There are entry points for mitigation of agricultural greenhouse gases outside government price policies, but many questions remain around their scalability and efficacy. A comprehensive and accelerated effort will be needed to bridge the gap from modelled emissions to realistic policy pathways. Reducing agriculture emissions will require changing how we farm, what we eat, how much we waste, and how we manage our forests and natural carbon sinks. This will have wide ranging implications which may impact an internationally competitive, sustainable agricultural sector.

## Regenerative Agriculture

Regenerative agriculture is an approach to food and farming systems which aims to regenerate biodiversity, soil, solar, water and nutrient cycles, economies and communities. This is a more holistic approach to farming practices with the potential for significant benefits, including:

- Increased soil carbon leading to increased water retention, better fertility, and consistent and reliable production from both grazing and cropping systems.
- Improved landscape hydrology by capturing and slowing water through the whole catchment – reducing the incidence of high-level floods from rainfall events, improving the water availability across the whole catchment, and producing more consistent water flows through the system therefore water is available across the catchment for longer, improving environmental flows and improved access to water for human endeavours.
- Improved opportunities for local and regional business development in production and value adding to food within the regions.
- Improved long-term sustainability and resilience of food and agriculture systems to ensure food security and food sovereignty into an unstable climate future.

While the Queensland Government has made significant investment in the Land Restoration Fund for carbon farming, yet no significant policy or investment platform has been made to support specifically regenerative farming practices. QFF views the potential benefits, from regenerative farming supported by natural processes, building more resilient farms and farmers in a future of increased seasonal and weather variability to connecting programs that deliver benefits as vital, and will continue to work with government to achieve outcomes in this emerging field.



## Waste Management and Recycling Reform

QFF had successfully secured funding from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) to review Queensland's local government planning controls for on-farm composting and formally released the 'Planning and Regulatory Approaches to On-Farm Composting in Queensland' report. The research sought to review local government planning schemes with respect to the regulation of on-farm composting and to identify local government areas where on-farm composting may be constrained by local planning requirements. Analysis of 78 local planning schemes within the report identified an inconsistent approach to the regulation of on-farm composting activities with many Queensland councils still defining on-farm composting as high impact or noxious industries.

QFF previously secured an exemption for 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 if they do not accept wastes from external, off-farm sources. Now, QFF is working towards amending the Planning Regulation 2017 to ease or, where possible, eliminate these identified constraints on agricultural composting.

### 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) 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.

The bioeconomy opportunities continue to be nascent across much of the sector, impeded by cross-departmental jurisdiction approaches and competing policies and agendas. QFF signed an open letter written by Bioenergy Australia calling on the Australian Government to recognise the potential of biogas and the role it can play in solving energy market decarbonisation challenges while providing the lowest cost transition to a decarbonised energy system.

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 Circular Economy, encouraging cooperation between relevant actors, reward the continued use of circular economy principles and promote the uptake of the resulting green products.

## Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)

QFF continued 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 and around all-terrain vehicles or quad bikes, and rural mental health.

The Queensland Government revised the Electrical Safety Code of Practice – Working near overhead and underground electric lines, which provides important information for rural producers and workers working near powerlines. Queensland's work health and safety laws require risks to be managed in accordance with a hierarchy of risk controls, which the code of practice shows can be effectively applied to the risk of contact with overhead powerlines. The code provides that as a first step, risks should be eliminated by arranging for power to be switched off during work periods, changing the farming activities or by re-routing powerlines. If it's not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, it may be minimised through substitution, isolation or engineering controls.

TAFE Queensland introduced a Rural Electrical Safety Awareness micro credential intended to develop workplace health and safety skills to safely work with electrical equipment in the rural industries. The course provides a basic understanding of hazard identification, risk control, and risk assessment in relation to electrical work carried out in a rural environment.

While QFF continues to advocate for funding for electrical safety incentives for rural industries, practical steps to ensure electrical safety on farm have been reinforced including:

- The use of Energy Queensland's 'look up and live' platform for pre-activity planning and carrying out a risk assessment process;
- Moving irrigation pipes, machinery and other large items away from under overhead electricity lines;
- Not planting inappropriate crops directly under overhead lines;
- Asking Energy Queensland 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.

The Consumer Goods (Quad Bikes) Safety Standard 2019 came into effect on 11 October 2019. The purpose of the standard is to prevent or reduce the risk of fatality or injury associated with the use of quad bikes. The safety standard sets out the requirements for new quad bikes and imported second-hand quad bikes. It is intended to:

- Improve information for consumers (through a hang tag, warning for operators and additional information in the manual) from 11 October 2020;
- Improve the design of quad bikes (through requiring quad bikes to meet certain requirements in the US or European Standard) from 11 October 2020; and
- Improve the design of general use quad bikes to reduce the likelihood of a rollover incident occurring (through stability requirements) and to mitigate the harm if a rollover does occur (through operator protection devices) from 11 October 2021.

This standard was welcomed by QFF, however there is a lack of committed funding to assist farmers implement the new requirements. QFF is assisting the Office of Industrial Relations in their investigating the feasibility of a rebate scheme for the safety equipment and assessment of the effectiveness of similar rebate schemes in other jurisdictions.



Photo courtesy of [farmonline.com.au](http://farmonline.com.au)

## Agricultural Productivity

### 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 was formed to raise awareness of the important role of connectivity for regional Australians and ensure their voices are heard. The policy goals sought by the Coalition are:

1. Guaranteed access to voice and data services – Wherever Australians work and live, they should have guaranteed minimum access to data and voice services. This includes upload speeds and other specific features needed for existing and future residential, agriculture, health and education applications.
2. Equitable voice and data services that meet minimum standards and reliability – Updated telecommunication service guarantees and adequate service performance are needed to reflect the needs of consumers and businesses.
3. Continued program to expand mobile coverage – Expansion of mobile coverage is critical in regional and rural areas. There are premises, vital community hubs and high traffic areas that remain at risk from having no mobile coverage.
4. Digital capacity building for regional, rural and remote Australia – Consumers and businesses need independent, trustworthy technical support to get connected and stay connected.
5. Affordable communications services for regional, rural and remote Australia – Providing access to affordable communications to support individuals and families to access essential services and engage in education and training in place, strengthening local communities.

### Queensland Industry Recovery Alliance

QFF was an invited member onto Queensland's Industry Recovery Alliance (QIRA) to identify economic recovery opportunities for Queensland post-COVID 19. QFF provided a range of briefing papers to the Queensland Government for opportunities for a technology led, regionally targeted response that enabled growth in both traditional and emerging agricultural industries to support the creation of employment, new and innovative tools to drive productivity for the sector and assist our internal competitiveness.

Detailed economic plans provided by QFF included the development of Queensland's agritourism sector, development of agri-processing facilities, removal of red and green tape to facilitate new development and new digital skills opportunities for the sector.





## Animal Welfare and Activism

In recent years, Queensland's farmers have experienced ongoing coordinated activist attacks, despite adhering to world leading animal welfare standards. These activists' radical and unjustified actions invade farmers' privacy, threaten the welfare of their animals and crops, pose unacceptable risks to their businesses and have implications for food security. The constant threat of being the next target also hinders farmers' ability to operate their businesses to produce the highest quality food, fibre and foliage.

Following continued advocacy by QFF, the federal and Queensland governments legislated more appropriate punishments for these actions. The Federal Government's Criminal Code Amendment (Agricultural Protection) Bill 2019, introduced a year ago, criminalises the action of publishing material, via a carriage service, with the intention to incite trespass, property damage and theft on to

agricultural land. While protesters who unlawfully enter onto farmland now face up to one year in jail or a fine of more than \$60,000 after Queensland Government's Agriculture and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 was implemented in February.

Now, with a global pandemic, the risks are now even more serious for farmers. Already struggling with a protracted drought, rising input costs and burdensome government regulations, Queensland farmers are struggling to remain productive and profitable, any further repercussions associated with COVID-19 could be debilitating. It is now incumbent upon the Parliament to review and reform the current protections to ensure they pose 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.

**These activists' radical and unjustified actions invade farmers' privacy, threaten the welfare of their animals and crops, pose unacceptable risks to their businesses and have implications for food security.**

## Research Collaborations

### RACE for 2030 CRC

In late 2019, QFF committed to supporting the application for the Reliable, Affordable, Clean Energy (RACE) for 2030 Cooperative Research Centre (CRC). RACE CRC is an industry led collaboration intending to undertake high-impact research on boosting energy productivity and integrating clean, distributed energy into the grid, to cut bills and carbon emissions of Australian businesses and households. The focus will be on the integration of new digital, generation and energy management technologies into business and network innovation programs as part of a cross-industry program ensuring opportunities along the supply chain are captured.

The CRC application was successful and in June 2020, the Queensland Farmers Federation committed to the new CRC as an 'Affiliate Partner' recognising QFF's strategic capabilities and interests in the field of research of the CRC that may assist the CRC to fulfil its objects.



### Advance Queensland Industry Research Fellowship – Energy Transition

In December 2019, QFF was informed that Dr Katherine Witt, from the Centre for Natural Gas at the University of Queensland had been successful in her Advance Queensland Industry Research Fellowship. QFF is a proud supporter of this research which will investigate the energy transition to renewables including the role of hydrogen at scale; and other energy technologies including wind, carbon capture and storage. All these new energy technologies impose change on local communities. This research explores 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.

QFF had identified a number of risks and opportunities as early as 2016 and communicated these to the Queensland Government. The loss of Good Quality Agricultural Land (GQAL), particularly at a time where the expansion of new agricultural land in Queensland has been limited through amendments to the vegetation regulatory regime, means that there is no off-set or replacement process for lost productive agricultural land. When coupled with increasing export and food security pressures, climate change with increasing drought cycles, the negative impacts to adjacent agricultural land which have reduced productivity and, in extreme cases, the right to farm; there is a growing requirement to ensure a harmonious co-existence framework for large-scale solar and intensive agriculture.

Planning has an important role to play in the delivery of new renewable energy infrastructure and in the maintenance of the social licence to operate for large-scale solar facilities given their growing prevalence in the environment; and will become particularly critical as the adoption of low-density fuel sources with high land foot-prints continues. Whilst Queensland has historically adopted high 'power-density' forms of energy (such as oil and coal), renewable (and green) energies are lower in density than traditional fossil fuels and require a larger 'energy production footprint'. As such, land use and co-existence concerns are likely to intensify as Queensland transitions its energy mix.

Dr Witt's project will work closely with regional stakeholders including councils, landholders, farming businesses and communities, to identify and understand their expectations for shared benefits from new energy technologies –particularly large-scale solar farms, and later, hydrogen. The research will leverage world-leading research and lessons learned from the introduction of a Coal Seam Gas industry in Queensland, which has been Dr Witt's main focus for the past five years. Understanding expectations for shared value will enable the development of affordable and sustainable energy supplies in Queensland. Without community acceptance, new energy projects are likely to be delayed or their costs inflated, and existing projects may be disrupted, prolonging the uptake and the ultimate realisation of climate gains.

The ability to identify, measure and validate regional benefits is key. This allows proponents and governments to effectively respond to the needs and expectations of local stakeholders – a key principle of the energy supply chain's Energy Charter. A shared understanding of expectations will facilitate a 'social license' and enable communities to participate meaningfully in the development and long-term operation of new energy technologies for shared benefits.



## Applied Network for Recycled Organics and Waste Management

QFF continues to support and be a member the Applied Network for Recycled Organics and Waste Management (ANROWM), an industry-oriented and research-driven network aimed at optimising beneficial use of recycled organics. ANROWM brings together the state government, industry (wastes and recycled organics), researchers, environmental consultants and farmers from around Australia. ANROWM continues to offer research opportunities to address research gaps identified by farmers and agricultural bodies, as well as providing education and training opportunities. The network is currently undertaking a project to develop a novel and value for money approach for the identification and quantification of microplastic in effluents, biosolids and soils – a critical project identified by QFF. The ANROWM network also undertakes projects including quantifying the effect of organic amendments in sugarcane fields on water quality in Great Barrier Reef catchments using advanced science techniques.

On 8 October 2019, ANROWM held its Workshop on Progress Update on Emerging Contaminants (PFAS/PFOS & Microplastic) in Solid Wastes and Soils. The workshop provided updates on several projects including some involving QFF members' farms, as well as hearing from Queensland Government scientists and policy makers, and utilities companies. QFF's Dr Georgina Davis chaired the industry discussion session, which identified future contaminants of concern for a variety of sectors, including agriculture.

## Future Waste Resources Convention

The Future Waste Resources Convention (FWR) which was planned for 17-19 June 2020 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has now been rescheduled to 1-3 March 2021. This event will be Queensland's only convention combining the waste and secondary resources sector and Queensland's primary producers. QFF is co-hosting this event with the Waste Recycling Industry Association Queensland (WRIQ) and the Australian Industrial Ecology Network (AIEN).

The 2021 Convention, themed Optimism and Collaboration for Resource Recovery in Queensland, will focus upon and showcase real and practical solutions for managing secondary resources and value adding these important materials as Australia begins to rethink our sovereign capabilities in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. This unique conference brings together the resource recovery industry, manufacturing and primary producers including specialist presenters and suppliers outlining real challenges, successes, and case studies, as well as present technologies currently in use. It will provide insights into what industry and the farming community are already achieving in terms of waste diversion and value-adding to secondary resources. The program will ensure investment decisions made by industry, government, and waste generators, including primary producers, are informed as to the options available, thus supporting business confidence.

# 2019-20 SUBMISSIONS

---

## Agricultural Productivity

---

### To the Department of Agriculture

Modernising the Research and Development Corporation System: Discussion Paper (September 2019) – *December 2019*

### To the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

Queensland Small Business Strategy Discussion Paper  
*December 2019*

### To the Department of Agriculture

Draft Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020 to 2024  
*December 2019*

### To the Department of Transport and Main Roads

Eligibility for Primary Producer Concession Scheme  
*November 2019*

### To the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee

Agriculture and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019  
*September 2019*

### To the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Criminal Code (Trespass Offences) Amendment Bill 2019 – *July 2019*

## Education & Training

---

### RJSA submission to the Senate Select Committee on Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas

Inquiry into Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas  
*September 2019*

### To the Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business

Harvest Labour Services Reforms to encourage Australian job seekers to take up seasonal work - Consultation Paper  
*August 2019*

## Energy

---

### To the Australian Renewable Energy Agency

ARENA Bioenergy Roadmap, Call for Submissions (April 2020)  
*June 2020*

Ag Energy Taskforce Submission to Technology Roadmap process  
*June 2020*

### To the Queensland Competition Authority

QCA Draft Determination: Regulated Retail Electricity Prices for 2020  
*21 (March 2020) - May 2020*

### To the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy

Review of Queensland Energy Legislation, Options Paper (October 2019) – *February 2020*

### To the Australian Energy Regulator

Issues Paper - Guidelines to make the Integrated Systems Plan Actionable (November 2019) – *January 2020*

### To the Australian Energy Regulator

Energy Queensland (Ergon and Energex): An Overview - Our Revised Regulatory Proposals and Revised Tariff Structure Statements 2020-25 (December 2019) – *January 2020*

### To the Queensland Competition Authority

QCA Interim consultation paper: Regulated retail electricity prices for 2020-21 (December 2019) – *January 2020*

### To the Energy Charter Independent Accountability Panel

Energy Charter Panel 2019 - Public Submission on Published Disclosures – *October 2019*

### To the Australian Energy Market Commission

Draft Rule Determination: National Electricity Amendment (Transparency of New Projects) Rule 2019 – *September 2019*

### To the Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy

Review of the Queensland Biofuels Mandate – *July 2019*

## Environment, Natural Resource Management & Waste

---

### **To the Department of Environment and Science**

Draft SEQ Koala Conservation Strategy 2019-2024 – *January 2020*

### **To the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport**

Inquiry into the identification of leading practices in ensuring evidence-based regulation of farm practices that impact water quality outcomes in the Great Barrier Reef – *November 2019*

Planning and Regulatory Approaches to On-Farm Composting in Queensland – *October 2019*

### **To the Department of Environment and Science**

Energy from Waste Policy: Discussion Paper for Consultation (July 2019) – *August 2019*

## Rural Planning

---

### **To the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning**

Draft North Queensland Regional Plan and Draft Mapping – *November 2019*

## Water

---

### **To the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy**

Draft amendment to the water management protocol for the Burnett Basin Water Plan, on the Barambah Creek groundwater management area (April 2020) – *May 2020*

### **To the Queensland Competition Authority**

Irrigation price investigation 2020-24 – *November 2019*

### **To the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy**

QCA Rural Irrigation Price Investigation 2020-24 – *February 2020*

### **To the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy**

Rural Water Management Program - Proposals for Strengthening Non-Urban Water Measurement, Consultation Paper – *December 2019*

### **To the Queensland Competition Authority**

Supplementary submission/Letter of Support as part of the 2020/24 Irrigation Price Review – *August 2019*

### **To the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy**

Draft 2019 Surat Underground Water Impact Report (UWIR) – *July 2019*



# MAJOR PROJECTS



## Energy Savers Plus Program Extension

In 2019-20, QFF and its member partners continued to deliver the Energy Savers Plus Program Extension (ESPPE) with the Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy (DNRME). At the end of this financial year, the program had delivered 93 per cent (167) of the 180 energy audits to farms across Queensland. ESPPE includes a co-contribution grant of up to \$20,000 per farm and early indications show this will aid farms in the implementation of recommended energy management opportunities.

QFF is also delivering extension services elements under ESPPE. This aspect of the program is critical to building greater energy efficiency and demand management as it ensures practical on farm energy learnings can be shared beyond the participants in ESPPE. Extension activities have included:

- 15 events this year including both face-to-face and online;
- 7 e-bulletins; and
- 23 new case studies published.

There have been some adjustments to our extension practices this year in the light of COVID-19 making workshops and face-to-face interactions impractical. The team has been ensuring farms are kept up to date with findings of their energy audits and new technologies by hosting multiple webinars and writing numerous case-studies.

Within the scope of the extension services contract, QFF is also delivering a Real-Time Energy Use metering trial to determine whether farmers find it easier to manage energy consumption and cost with access to real-time data. QFF has installed 50 Real-Time meters throughout the state and on various farm types. The majority of sites have captured their main load along with a circuit of their

choice ranging from pumps and solar systems to heating and cooling. The data will be used to help determine the most suitable tariffs, identify energy savings opportunities and investigate the potential for energy trading and how this can lead to further cost reductions.

The trial also strengthens a new microgrid project supported by the Federal Government's Regional and Remote Communities Reliability Fund. QFF has partnered with industry member Cotton Australia, ReAqua and Constructive Energy to deliver the project which will consider whether microgrids can offer benefits to agricultural electricity consumers as well as networks. Still in its development phase, the project advisory group recently met for the first time to discuss objectives and looks forward to achieving positive outcomes in farm energy usage.



15

EVENTS  
face-to-face  
and online



7

eBULLETINS



23

CASE  
STUDIES  
published

## Reef Alliance: Growing a Great Barrier Reef

The Reef Alliance: Growing a Great Barrier Reef Project was a collaboration involving 12 partners. The project commenced in May 2016 and concluded in December 2019, investing \$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 targeted the sugarcane, grazing, horticulture, broad acre cropping and dairy industries. QFF managed the head agreement with the Australian Government and nine sub-contract agreements on behalf of project partners.

The project has achieved the following outputs:

- 366 tonnes dissolved inorganic nitrogen reduction;
- 1,800+ farmers attended reef water quality-related workshops;
- 1,114 farmers undertaken practice change over 1,783,998ha;
- 1,600+ farmers receiving one-on-one extension; and
- 25,000+ 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. Recognising a local leader for their exemplary efforts above and beyond the call of duty to raise awareness, fostering knowledge sharing in sustainable natural resource management. The award was won by Lenny Parisi a sugarcane farmer in the Mulgrave and Russell River catchments. The award was offered alongside six other award categories in reef conservation, community, extension, nutrient, sediment and youth as part of the annual Reef Champion Awards that were held in Mackay in November 2019.

The 12 project partners were: 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.

## 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 aimed to continue and improve upon the existing Reef Alliance 'Growing a Great Barrier Reef Project' (RAP1). The project maintained momentum and ensured 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 concluded in March 2020, 469 cane farmers and graziers were engaged, resulting in 200 reported enterprises changing practice, covering 273,103870 hectares across 10 catchments.



## Rural Jobs & Skills Alliance (RJSA)

---

Funded by the Queensland Government, the RJSA is in its fifth 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 the Queensland agriculture sector.

RJSA members developed and endorsed a Strategy and Action Plan (2018-2021), which continues to guide the work of the Alliance in the pursuit of helping rural industries ensure a sustainable workforce.

After more than four years as the RJSA chair, Peter Perkins has retired. We wish Peter the best and thank him for his contribution to the Alliance as one of its founding members. A new RJSA chair was appointed, Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland CEO Ian Atkinson.

In response to the planned closure of the Queensland Agriculture Training Colleges (QATC) in December 2019, the RJSA continued to provide feedback on the transition planning of the QATC's regional satellite Hubs. The 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.

The RJSA expressed their concern regarding the gaps the closure of the hubs could have. The QATC training hubs were building momentum servicing an increasing demand from schools with both VETIS and Traineeships, and with a developing online and digital presence for a range of qualifications and training products to service remote and regional Queensland. While other Registered Training Organisations (RTO) are slowly filling the gap, they are still issue in regional and remote Queensland. The closure saw an exit of not only an RTO dedicated to delivering agriculture training, but also a loss of educators and assessors prepared to service the rural and remote areas that make up a large portion of Queensland.

QFF has also secured a three year project to undertake the Industry Skills Advisory (ISA) of agriculture for the Department of Education, Small Business & Training (DESBT). The ISA engaged with the agriculture industry to provide high quality, evidence-based industry advice and intelligence about current and emerging industry direction, regional skills needs and training solutions, jobs growth and employment opportunities. This advice will:

- Inform and align our training and skills priorities and decision-making, including program design and investment settings;
- Support and connect with the State Government's industry engagement framework priorities including the work of departmental regional officers, Regional Jobs Committees, Jobs Queensland and the Ministerial Skills Roundtable;
- Support the ongoing implementation of the VET Quality Framework;
- Inform and contribute to national vocational education and training (VET) reform agendas and the review and development of training package product; and
- Support employer, small business and industry's connection and engagement with VET and VET pathways and DESBT programs, initiatives, and events.

To improve industry interactions with training providers and other interested stakeholders in the VET sector, the RJSA conducted a forum in November 2019. The event was attended by 65 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 improve development, attraction and retention of skilled workforces, RJSA:

- Successfully completed the Agriculture Extension Work Placement Program, funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments, that placed 14 new extension trainees with natural resource management and agricultural advisory groups across the Reef catchments;
- Completed two well attended (over 75 people in each event) Zoom webinars for extension officers 'Understanding Reef water quality emerging science' and 'Communicating Reef water quality science';
- Completed the delivery of seven 'Embracing Digital Innovation in Agriculture' workshops in Townsville, Mackay, Emerald, Bundaberg, Dalby, St George and Kilcoy in partnership with TAFE Queensland. Additionally, the first session of a small business solution mentoring and training program called 'Forward Farming Program' took place in Townsville. The second session, which was scheduled for April 2020, could not take place due to COVID-19. The last session is now planned for November 2020;
- Completed the Queensland Farm Businesswomen: The Long Road to Leadership report. This research, carried out by the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) and Griffith University, aimed to identify initiatives that would encourage more women to take up leadership roles in the state's agriculture sector;
- 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;
- Continued to provide input to the Agribusiness Gateway to Industry, Schools Program (AGISP). 32 schools participated in the AGISP in 2019 to undertake a range of projects that expose students to various aspects of the agricultural supply chain;
- Participate in the industry steering committee group and partner with AgForce Queensland to deliver a project funded by the federal government's Kids to Farm grants program, aimed at cultivating connections between farms, schools and communities.
- Worked with TAFE and CANEGROWERS Mackay to develop an electrical safety awareness induction in rural industries for people who are required to work near live electrical apparatus; and
- Continued to advocate for the Queensland Agriculture to Schools Engagement Program (QASEP), which suggests a holistic solution that addresses both the perceived and real gaps in schools-industry engagement and the need for continuous learning in the workforce.

Alliance industry members during the period were: QFF, AgForce, CANEGROWERS, Cotton Australia, Growcom, Nurseries and Garden Industry Queensland (NGIQ), Irrigation Australia, the 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 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. Four risks identified - drought, heat, flood and cyclone. Example products developed for each of these risks; and
- 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.



## North & Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough Agricultural Recovery and Resilience Project

The project appointed Industry Recovery Officers (IROs) for the cane, nursery and horticultural industries which were impacted by the 2019 monsoon trough flood event in North Queensland. The project built on learnings from previous disasters and severe weather events to 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.

The project was extended to February 2020 and provided 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.

Through the engagement of IROs, the project delivered 531 project-led activities, with 1,008 engagement touch-points with primary producers and 95,268 communication and social media messages.

## Flood Mapping, Mitigation and Management Plans for Primary Producers

Funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments through the 2017-18 Natural Disaster Resilience Program, this program enabled two industry extension officers from member groups, Growcom and Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation to work with ten primary producers in the identified industry groups to develop mitigation and resilience management plans for their property. The project is scheduled to complete in September 2020.

Outputs of the project include:

- Assisting primary producers to develop mitigation/resilience management plans for their property;
- Providing technical advice to further develop disaster mitigation strategies for their property; and
- Providing advice to improve resilience to future natural disasters.

## CSIRO Insurance Data

The project was completed in March 2020, and established 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 combine Australian Bureau of Statistics data and satellite imagery to create a new index for insurance product development.

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.

# INDUSTRY MEMBERS

## Major Commodity Members



CANE<sup>GROWERS</sup>

CANE<sup>GROWERS</sup>



COTTON  
AUSTRALIA

COTTON AUSTRALIA



GROWCOM



Nursery & Garden Industry  
Queensland

NURSERY & GARDEN  
INDUSTRY QUEENSLAND  
(NGIQ)



QUEENSLAND CHICKEN  
GROWERS  
ASSOCIATION (QCGA)



Queensland  
Dairyfarmers'  
Organisation

QUEENSLAND  
DAIRYFARMERS  
ORGANISATION (QDO)

## Industry and Irrigation Members



AUSTRALIAN CANE  
FARMERS ASSOCIATION  
(ACFA)



FLOWER  
ASSOCIATION



PORK QUEENSLAND



QUEENSLAND UNITED  
EGG PRODUCERS



QUEENSLAND CHICKEN  
MEAT COUNCIL (QCMC)



BUNDABERG  
REGIONAL  
IRRIGATORS  
GROUP (BRIG)



BURDEKIN RIVER  
IRRIGATION AREA  
IRRIGATORS LTD (BRIA)



CENTRAL DOWNS  
IRRIGATORS LIMITED  
(CDIL)



FAIRBAIRN  
IRRIGATION NETWORK



PIONEER VALLEY WATER  
CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED  
(PVWATER)



MALLAWA  
IRRIGATION



THEODORE  
WATER



ETON IRRIGATION



TROPICAL  
CARBON HUB



TURF QUEENSLAND

# CORPORATE PARTNERS

---



## Telstra

Telstra knows that connectivity is vital to regional, rural and remote communities. That is why they are committed to providing improved and expanded mobile coverage across Australia.

Telstra is investing in a digital future that champions the needs of farmers. They offer a range of products to suit the specific needs of rural and regional Australians. As a partner of Queensland Farmers Federation, Telstra is making a commitment to the people of the country, providing support for the agricultural sector in Queensland and helping regional communities to thrive.

Visit [www.telstra.com.au/telstra-country-wide](http://www.telstra.com.au/telstra-country-wide) for information on rural-based products to suit your home and farm business.



## Holding Redlich

At Holding Redlich, great law is our starting point. We have a broad depth of specialist experience from the farm gate, through the supply chain to export and beyond. From acting for third and fourth generation family business through to large corporates, industry groups and international investors, we have the skills to meet all legal needs in agriculture.

Across our offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Cairns we provide solutions tailored to our clients' needs, underpinned by the very best legal thinking and expert industry knowledge. But it takes much more than great law to build enduring partnerships – our aim with every client. That's why we have a personal stake in our clients' success and longevity, a commitment to quality in everything we do and an informal culture which values respect and collaboration.

Our clients receive the benefit of our strong political, commercial and cultural networks where necessary to get results. And above all else, we understand that our role is to look after our clients and their best interests.

Visit [www.holdingredlich.com](http://www.holdingredlich.com) for more information.



## Jacobs

Jacobs is a premier global consulting, design, engineering, construction, operations and maintenance and technical services firm delivering advanced solutions for a more connected, sustainable world. Our 77,000+ employees in 400+ locations around the world serve a broad range of companies and organizations, including industrial, commercial, and government clients across multiple markets and geographies.

Our company's vision, mission and values are the cornerstones of our culture. They guide our global strategy, define our overarching goals and serve as a constant reminder of Jacobs' high performing, innovative and empowered culture. We pride ourselves on operating seamlessly around the globe. We sustain this single culture by remaining true to our values. These values address how we interact with clients, vendors and one another. They help shape our business strategy and are the foundation of our code conduct.

Visit [www.jacobs.com](http://www.jacobs.com) for more information.

# CORPORATE PARTNERS

---



## Bunnings

Bunnings is a major supplier for commercial businesses and a major supplier to project builders, commercial tradespeople and the housing industry. Bunnings' engages with the communities in which it operates and actively contributes to causes and organisations that benefit these communities.

Visit [www.bunnings.com.au](http://www.bunnings.com.au) for more information.

## Safe Ag Systems

As a SaaS solution for managing compliance requirements in the agricultural industry, Safe Ag Systems™ strives to improve safety, productivity and deliver high quality resources. "Our mission is to remove the paperwork associated with compliance for agribusinesses globally without compromising productivity".

With a program designed especially for agribusinesses, this fast-growing Australian based company is committed to providing a digital safety solution. Safe Ag Systems™ offers a practical cloud-based safety solution businesses use to induct, train and manage their workers. Complete with a comprehensive list of templates, checklists and inspection tools, the program removes the barriers and frustration often associated with safety obligations.

Visit [www.safeagsystems.com](http://www.safeagsystems.com) for more information.

## National Salary Packaging

National Salary Packaging is an Ethical Salary Packaging/ Sacrificing provider helping Australian businesses add real tangible financial benefits and value to their business and their staff. National Salary Packaging gives businesses around Australia the opportunity for their staff to take home more pay at payday, at zero cost, burden or FBT liability to your company.

Visit [nationalsalarypackaging.com.au](http://nationalsalarypackaging.com.au) for more information.

## AutoTender

AutoTender is the secret to getting the best deal on a new car and the most money for your old car. You will have access to competitive (fleet) pricing that you normally could not get your hands on and a platform that does the leg work for you – saving you an enormous amount of money time, energy, and effort.

Visit [www.autotender.com.au](http://www.autotender.com.au) for more information.





QUEENSLAND  
FARMERS'  
FEDERATION

Level 3, 183 North Quay, Brisbane QLD 4000  
PO Box 12009 Brisbane QLD 4003  
07 3837 4720

[www.qff.org.au](http://www.qff.org.au)