

More finance to increase primary production resilience

In November 2013 Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Barnaby Joyce, committed a further \$20 million to the Farm Finance Concessional Loans Scheme (QLD) and increased the maximum value of loans from \$650,000 to \$1 million.

The reallocation of funding means Queensland will receive \$50 million in 2013-14 and \$30 million in 2014-15.

“These changes better reflect the current requirements on-the-ground and bring a substantial increase to the areas in need,” Minister Joyce said.

The changes to the Scheme mean that QLD farm businesses struggling with debt may access up to \$1 million to help restructure eligible debt.

The loans will be interest only for up to five years and an initial interest rate of 4.5 per cent will apply.

With many QLD primary producers facing drought conditions the assistance may provide much needed breathing space.

QRAA Chief Executive Officer, Colin Holden, welcomes the changes to the scheme.

“The year began with Tropical Cyclone Oswald and has ended with drought - both conditions significantly affecting QLD primary producers,” Mr Holden said.

“Some producers had just recovered from the 2010-11 natural disasters only to be hit again by Tropical Cyclone Oswald in 2013.

“The additional assistance will help eligible producers get their businesses back on track and prepare them to deal with market vagaries.”



To be considered for a Farm Finance Concessional Loan, farm businesses need, among other criteria to demonstrate:

- they have the ongoing support of their commercial lender;
- a history of meeting debt; and
- capacity to return to commercial viability within the term of the concessional loan.

Applications for concessional loans will be assessed in the order of receipt and must be fully complete before they can enter the assessment queue.

Full repayment of a Farm Finance loan is required by the end of the loan term which is likely to be through a return to commercial lending arrangements.

Details of the second application period for 2013 - 14 will be published ahead of time on the QRAA website.

For more information about the Farm Finance Concessional Loans Scheme (QLD) visit www.qraa.qld.gov.au or contact QRAA

Freecall 1800 623 946.

Key elements

- \$80 million over two years to support primary producers with debt restructuring
- loans of up to \$1 million
- concessional interest rates of 4.5 per cent, reviewed on a six-monthly basis
- interest only for up to five years
- repayment or refinance required by the end of the loan term

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This program is funded by the Australian Government and delivered by QRAA.

Disaster assistance providing much needed relief

Since January 2013, QRAA has approved over 7,400 applications totalling over \$85 million under the jointly funded Commonwealth / Queensland Government *Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA)* for Tropical Cyclone Oswald and Associated Rainfall and Flooding, 21 - 29 January 2013.

QRAA's Chief Executive Officer, Colin Holden, says the NDRRA assistance has given Queenslanders a hand when they needed it most.

"Queenslanders have been hit hard in recent years and Tropical Cyclone Oswald severely impacted many regions of our state," Mr Holden said.

"The assistance has allowed those affected to cover clean-up and restoration costs arising out of direct damage from the disaster.

"QRAA is proud to have been able to assist such a large number of primary producers, non-profit organisations, and businesses in their disaster recovery efforts.

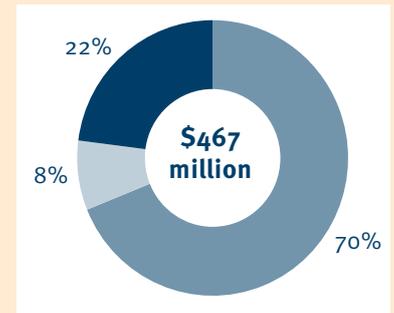
"We have heard many inspiring stories of recovery from clients affected by Tropical Cyclone Oswald, many of whom may have lost everything without the assistance provided."

Special Disaster Assistance grants and Exceptional Disaster Assistance loan / grant packages under NDRRA closed to applications on 29 November 2013.

Natural Disaster Assistance Loans are still available for primary producers and small businesses to help recover from the impacts of natural disasters.

\$464 million approved

QRAA has approved \$464 million in disaster assistance to primary producers, businesses and non-profit organisations affected by natural disasters since November 2010.



- Exceptional Disaster Assistance (over \$101.56 million / 22%)
- Special Disaster Assistance (over \$329.03 million / 70%)
- Natural Disaster Assistance (over \$37.13 million / 8%)

QRAA a wonderful contribution to rebuilding our community

Lynne Hewerdine, Hall Hire and Secretary for the North Bundaberg Progress Association Hall, shares her Tropical Cyclone Oswald recovery story.

The re-opening of our North Bundaberg Progress Association Hall was held on Saturday 3 August 2013.

The hall was swamped by the January floods with over 1.5 metres of water rushing through the building.

At the time, the committee was shattered as this hall is a major community function centre for the north side of the Burnett River. It houses everything from Tai Chi and ballroom dancing to bingo and Country Women's Association meetings (as well as many others).

We had no insurance at the time and were just going to walk away.

After talking to QRAA's Client Liaison Officer, Mark Barrett, we decided to apply for a Special Disaster Assistance grant. With this assistance we scraped together enough funds and community goodwill to move forward and return the hall to its original glory.

We used the grant for a new floor, new paint, a new kitchen and new indoor bowls mats - as bowlers make up the majority of our members this was high on the priority list; we wouldn't have a hall without them!

We are now almost fully booked every night and doing better than ever.

I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to all QRAA staff for their advice and support to help re-build our community.

We would not have recovered without this help and are eternally grateful to the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments for the financial assistance.



Above: Refurbished North Progress Association Hall, North Bundaberg

Industry focus on disaster recovery...

QFF videos provide valuable information for primary producers

QRAA works with a number of industry stakeholders to ensure financial assistance reaches those who have been affected by natural disasters. This year, Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) produced documentary-style flood recovery videos highlighting the case studies of several QRAA clients impacted by Tropical Cyclone Oswald. Here are a couple of stories from the videos. Stories and pictures by Brad Pfeffer, QFF.

Cane growers receive much needed disaster assistance

Cane growers in disaster declared regions as a result of the January 2013 rain and flooding have used NDRRA assistance administered by QRAA to get back on their feet following the ex-Cyclone Oswald rain and flooding event.

Wallaville farmer Danny Tobin is one producer who has accessed the assistance after experiencing extensive damage to his cane property.

Mr Tobin farms on the banks of the Burnett River and saw parts of cane paddocks eroded into the river. The enterprise suffered damage to farm infrastructure as well as experiencing lost production and reduced yields.

He said that large volumes of debris in the paddocks meant that harvest has been a major challenge, with the debris meaning more burning than usual and teams of workers needed on the ground to move logs etc, so haul-outs could pass through. Owing to the amount of damage, Mr Tobin was able to access the full \$25,000 grant and said it was very helpful assistance when he needed it most.

CANEGROWERS Bundaberg Industry Recovery Officer, Matt Leighton, said his role was to help steer growers through the process and help take the stress off.

"There are growers who have lost 50 to 70 per cent of their income just from

this year. Getting money into their account to take the financial stress off, and not just relying on their overdraft, makes a big difference to how they recover," Mr Leighton said.



Above: Danny Tobin on farm

QRAA Special Disaster Assistance Grants help Mundubbera get back on track

Mundubbera regional farmers are still continuing with the recovery from the Australia Day 2013 flood event. For local farmers Rob and Sally Wells, it has been a long and difficult process.

The Wells family farm citrus, lucerne and run a piggery on the Burnett River not far from Mundubbera. They made national headlines earlier this year when some of their herd were washed down the river in the flooding chaos. While some pigs died, many survived and were found as far away as Paradise Dam.

Rob Wells said some pigs survived on farm, despite most of the property, including their house, being inundated.

Their citrus trees are recovering, but the scale of the flood means that it will be a long process. A disaster grant through QRAA helped them with their recovery efforts.

"It has been marvellous assistance for us," Mrs Wells said.

We had done some repairs to the

house, but the NDRRA assistance meant we were able to put the grant towards the farm to get it going again, while using our personal money for the house. It really took the pressure off."

The Wells family have been visited several times by Growcom Industry Recovery Officer (IRO) Robert Doyle, who is one of a number of IROs who help farmers with the recovery process.

"There have been a number of IROs on the ground since the end of March, visiting growers and making sure they are aware of the assistance available and helping them with paperwork and any other external issues," Mr Doyle said.

To view the recovery videos by QFF visit www.qff.org.au.



Above: Sally and Rob Wells with Growcom IRO Robert Doyle (right)

Succession Planning...

Planning for the future continuation of your business...

Whether you are a family member or non-family member working in a family owned business, succession planning and preparing for the transition of management to the next generation is an integral part of good business planning.

Succession planning involves far more than just the transfer of assets when the business owners either retire or pass away.

It is an evolving process ensuring the continuation of a business down through either generations or layers of management.

It involves choosing and grooming the successor(s), planning for the future, coping with the transition, communicating around and managing the change to the family and the business and letting go gracefully.

The timeliness of succession is the most critical task any business owner wishing his or her business to continue for future generations will face.

Effective succession planning depends on open communication, good will, respect and a desire to keep relationships strong between all family members whether they are on-farm or off.

Effective business preparation for generational change is about much more than simply who gets what and when. It involves embarking on a process which promotes increased awareness about the many different elements of succession planning: it involves aspects such as the following:

- the opportunity to discuss some of the key areas of concern and future aspirations before the situation becomes out of hand
- understanding how to implement strategies now to prevent issues in the future and not just doing nothing hoping somehow that we will be different to most others
- increased family harmony
- an opportunity for the business owners and family members to communicate their aspirations for the future in a non-threatening environment

- developing a framework and planning to manage the complexities associated with being in business with the people who are also our family
- clarity and direction for each family member for the future
- empowerment to ask other professionals the right questions to ensure accurate information and the right structures and agreements are put in place
- motivation, drive, enthusiasm injected into the business
- risk management strategies discussed and analysis on current and future business structure based on the needs and interests of each family member
- strategic planning to build greater profitability into your business

An effective succession planning process for people in family businesses begins early and is underpinned by healthy and effective communication.

A number of families have taken the opportunity to access First Start Loans from QRAA. This funding has provided the mechanism for part of the transition of management and ownership between the generations.

Harmonious relationships, financially successful businesses and ongoing viability ensure effective positioning to successfully transition to the next generation and also continued stewardship of Australia's agricultural land by Australian farming families.

Written by Isobel Knight from ProAGtive.

Isobel is the 2013 NSW / ACT Winner of the RIRDC Rural Woman award and National Runner-up.

*Visit QRAA's website www.qraa.qld.gov.au or **Freecall 1800 623 946** for more information about First Start and Sustainability Loans. Interest rates for loans change 1 January 2014.*



QRAA rainfall chart

QRAA has created its very own rainfall chart for you to keep track of the annual rainfall on your property.

There are two versions of the rainfall chart, a hard copy version to hang up at home and an electronic version which has the functionality to calculate rainfall totals each month.

The electronic version is available to download from the QRAA website, please visit www.qraa.qld.gov.au.

If you would like a hard copy sent to you please contact QRAA on **Freecall 1800 623 946** or email contact_us@qraa.qld.gov.au.

RAINFALL CHART
2014

DATE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
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TOTAL												
Start Rain Fall												
Progression												
Notes												
Last Year												

Freecall 1800 623 946
www.qraa.qld.gov.au
for more information

QRAA...Here for a changing landscape
Life on the land is not without challenges. So if you need finance to make a change for the better, consider QRAA's First Start or Sustainability Loans. With no set up fees, no exit fees and no hidden costs, we have the loan to best suit your needs.
Learn up to \$40,000 | Low interest rates | Up to 20 year repayment terms

Great ideas. Great opportunity.

QRAA end of year wrap-up

CEO's Corner



This year Queensland faced extreme climatic challenges resulting in QRAA assisting many Queenslanders with disaster relief and productivity enhancements.

In the 2013 - 14 financial year to date, QRAA has approved over \$104 million (3,824 applications) in financial assistance across all loan, rebate and grant subsidy programs, this includes:

- over \$49.86 million in natural disaster recovery loans and grants to more than 3,625 primary producers, business owners and non-profit organisations under NDRRA
- over \$41 million under the *Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme*

These achievements could not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of QRAA employees.

In the later part of 2013, the QRAA

head office was relocated to 41 George Street, Brisbane.

The relocation ensures QRAA is close to the Queensland Government Precinct, enabling us to achieve higher operational efficiencies.

Please note that QRAA phone numbers, postal address and email addresses have not changed.

On behalf of QRAA I wish you a safe and happy Christmas and new year.

Colin Holden
Chief Executive Officer

Young Beef Producers Forum 2013

QRAA Roma Client Liaison Officer, Heather Smith, attended the 9th Annual Young Beef Producers Forum in Roma - read her wrap-up of the forum below.

The 9th Annual Young Beef Producers Forum (YBPF) was held in Roma on 14 and 15 November 2013.

With 'Thinking Outside the Square' as the theme, an impressive line-up of speakers certainly challenged and inspired the 160 delegates to do things differently.

Organised by the Future Farmers Network, the forum aims to encourage those under 40 to take a positive and proactive approach to their involvement in the beef industry either as an employee or as a business owner.

The experience and inspiration on offer from 16 speakers with a passion for what they do excited much conversation and thought among the delegates.

Richard Rains spoke about his career in the meat marketing industry and pioneering the supply of Australian beef into McDonalds in the United States. He also emphasised the growing consumer demand for organic foods and the increasing desire by the consumer to understand the origins of their food.

Zac McInerney brought a new dimension to building up a grazing enterprise, sharing his experience in

becoming a part owner of two Subway stores as a means to generating funds to expand his angus stud herd.

Robert Pekin sparked everyone's imagination when he shared his very personal journey farming in the Tasmanian wilderness and later establishing the Food Connect concept. Food Connect operates in most capital cities and provides an alternative channel for producers to market their produce direct to consumers.

All presenters emphasised the value of personal and professional relationships that have enabled them to achieve successes they had never foreseen and encouraged delegates to make the most of the networking opportunities that the Young Beef Producers Forum offer.

The two days rounded off with some welcome rain and a big catch up at the Roma races on the Saturday.

To see who else spoke at this year's YBPF, visit www.ybpf.com.au and to learn more about Future Farmers Network, visit www.futurefarmers.com.au.



Above: Information session at Young Beef Producers Forum. Image courtesy of YBPF.

Upcoming events

Take note of the following opportunities to catch up with your local QRAA Client Liaison Officer.

May

16 - 17 **North Queensland Field Days**

Townsville

23 - 24 **Ag.Trade.Life**

Mackay

QRAA holds Temporary Offices in regional areas throughout the year, view QRAA's event calendar for more details, www.qraa.qld.gov.au or Freecall 1800 623 946.

News from our regional Client Liaison Officers...

Recruiting now
Emerald

Becoming better equipped

In September, QRAA participated at the thought-provoking Queensland Rural Regional and Remote Women's Network Conference in Blackall, where First Start Loan enquiries were high due to interest in succession planning.

QRAA also participated in drought workshops throughout the region. The workshops were held to ensure graziers have the most recent and relevant information on climate modeling as well as practices to maximise their resources use to manage drought conditions effectively.

QRAA thanks former Longreach Client Liaison Officer, Geoff Kerr, for his contribution to QRAA and look forward to introducing a new Client Liaison Officer to service Central and Western Queensland in the new year.

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Kate Dunk
Toowoomba

Queensland is 'Legendary'

This year the Queensland Dairy Organisation held local meetings at a number of towns to 'Bring the Herd Together' providing dairy farmers with the chance to meet with key staff and receive the latest industry updates.

QRAA welcomed the opportunity to attend meetings held in the southern dairying districts which were all very well attended.

Psychologist Lex Peters was a key note speaker at the meetings and provided practical advice about looking after personal, family and community well being.

The outlook for dairy has improved slightly with the contracted milk price increasing from the lows of last year. Overall factory demand has increased with Queensland dairy production now seen as insufficient to meet local demand.

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Peter Crowley
Mackay

Interest in Farm Finance

There has been a significant increase in enquiries for the Farm Finance Concessional Loans Scheme from grazing districts throughout the Mackay CLO's catchment and further temporary offices are planned in early 2014 to assist those areas around Nebo and Charters Towers with the application process.

The interest only loans of up to \$1 million provide cashflow relief, reducing payments for five years on an enterprises eligible debt.

In periods where markets are flat and climatic conditions are extreme this scheme allows producers to manage their business more effectively and plan for greater resilience to deal with the challenges of primary production.

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Mark Barrett
Bundaberg

Assistance still available

It has been heartening to receive positive feedback from enterprises and non-profit organisations regarding the assistance both financially and physically provided by QRAA since Tropical Cyclone Oswald and Associated Rainfall and Flooding, 21 – 29 January 2013.

Applications closed for Special Disaster and Exceptional Disaster Assistance on 29 November 2013, however Natural Disaster Assistance Loans up to \$250,000 are still available to primary producers and small businesses in many areas including Bundaberg, Fraser coast and Burnett regions.

The loans are available to finalise repairs and provide carry-on funds for cashflow shortfalls related directly to Tropical Cyclone Oswald and Associated Rainfall and Flooding, 21 – 29 January 2013.

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Brendan Hamilton
Rockhampton

Talk to a QRAA representative

Demand for First Start Loans throughout the Fitzroy and Callide catchments have been particularly strong over the past quarter. Applicants have ranged from agricultural professionals to those currently working in the mines.

Those wishing to become primary producers are encouraged to contact their local Client Liaison Officer to discuss their eligibility for a First Start Loan. Applicants are reminded to ensure their applications are fully complete before they submit to QRAA.

Applicants are required to demonstrate satisfactory levels of equity and the ability to service the loan. It is prudent to reflect on current borrowings and investments and determine how they fit with the long term viability and aims of their primary production enterprise.

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Bill Fletcher
Kingaroy

Temporary offices deliver

This year interest in temporary offices held throughout the North Burnett, South Burnett and Gympie areas has been overwhelming.

Visiting areas on a monthly and at times, fortnightly basis, enabled QRAA to provide targeted personal assistance to a large number of clients enquiring about disaster assistance, productivity loans and the Farm Finance Concessional Loans Scheme.

Temporary offices are promoted through regional media and stakeholders but also by direct email to existing clients.

To ensure you receive timely notification of new programs and updated information that may be able to assist you, subscribe now via the QRAA website or contact us to ensure your details are up to date.

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Sam Spina
Innisfail

Season break helps cane

Cane harvesting has finished in the Far North and Tablelands with sugar levels in most districts above the five year average.

Much of the harvest period was dry and many cane growers were concerned that newly planted cane would not be as well established due to lack of moisture. Thankfully, reasonable rainfall events commenced in November and the new season now shows significant promise.

Conditions in the Gulf regions also improved on the back of early seasonal rain but with a significant feed deficit created in 2012/2013, it remains too early to determine the outlook for graziers in the region.

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Heather Smith
Roma

Funds to assist drought

Drought issues dominated the South West of the state during the last quarter of 2013 and consequently information relating to QRAA programs was in demand.

The Roma Client Liaison Officer area has received the greatest number of Farm Finance Concessional Loans Scheme enquiries. Cashflow relief will now be having a positive impact on those enterprises that received loans early in the first period.

Sustainability loans to assist with water infrastructure, especially the drilling and equipping of additional bores, are also available to help manage times when rainfall and groundwater is deficient.

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