

+ Prime focus

Monsoon grant assistance a sweet boost for Burdekin canegrower

Close to 200 acres of sugar cane thriving in the cane rich Burdekin region in North Queensland is testament to Bruce and Natasha Davies’ decision to access disaster recovery assistance.

A North Queensland Restocking, Replanting and On-Farm Infrastructure co-contribution grant allowed the family farming enterprise, Front Row Farming Co, to recover years earlier than it otherwise would have following the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon trough event in 2019.

Close to two years since the disaster, Bruce says the enterprise ‘isn’t perfect’ but the grant, administered through the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) on behalf of the Australian Government, allowed them to get back to business.

‘We’ve put a big hole in the recovery and we’re operational – that’s the key thing,’ he said.

Recovery efforts are focussed on securing viability, maintaining business resilience and replacing lost crops and damaged infrastructure. The grant let them to get to work, drawing down when seasons permitted.

‘It’s very helpful to be able to draw down when seasons permit because we can’t do anything in the wet season here,’ Bruce said.



Burdekin canegrower Bruce Davies (pictured right with his son Alex) accessed a North Queensland Restocking, Replanting and On-Farm Infrastructure Grant to assist in recovery from the 2019 North Queensland Monsoon Trough disaster event

‘We can’t put down pipelines, we can’t laser level paddocks, we can’t plant cane. We’ve been able to manage our cashflow for the 50% for the grant to match.

‘The recovery would have been so much slower without the grant, it could have been five to ten years. We’re back to being operational and the grant has been of great assistance. QRIDA has been very quick which has allowed us to do even more.’

Bruce and Natasha were referred to the North Queensland Restocking, Replanting and On-Farm Infrastructure Grant via their accountant and started the application process.

‘It’s very helpful to be able to draw down when seasons permit...’

‘We’ve had to make sure we have enough money to keep moving, and that’s where QRIDA’s grant has been fantastic. (The grant) has been super helpful replacing some infrastructure,’ Bruce said.

Bruce said the grant helped pay for repairs to subsidise concrete irrigation lines, plant soy beans to reduce soil salinity and laser level paddocks, as well as repair infrastructure like drains and headlands.

The North Queensland Restocking, Replanting & On-farm Infrastructure Grants are funded by the Australian Government and administered by QRIDA.

Watch Bruce’s story

Check out Front Row Farming Co’s video story on the **News, events & stories** link on QRIDA’s website to find out more about how the North Queensland Restocking, Replanting and On-Farm Infrastructure Grant helped their recovery from the 2019 Monsoon flooding event.



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To update your details email contact_us@qrda.qld.gov.au or Freecall 1800 623 946.

+ QRIDA news

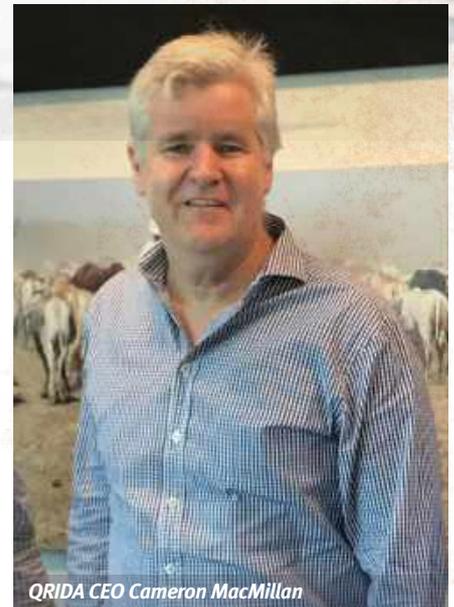
Welcome to the first edition of *Prime Focus* for 2021. This time last year we were first introduced to COVID-19 and preparing to launch the COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan Scheme. A year on and more than 86,000 people were able to retain their jobs in close to 7,000 businesses across the state which were supported under the \$1 billion scheme.

As we get back to moving about the state, our team is in regional Queensland helping yours more than ever as QRIDA's regional service is able to continue visiting clients and attending events. Our 11 Regional Area Managers are able to meet producers on-farm to chat about their options and how QRIDA can support them.

Whilst most of Queensland did not feel the predicted impact of La Niña over the summer period, Tropical Cyclone Niran and associated low pressure system did affect primary producers in North Queensland. Assistance is now available for producers impacted by this event - see our story below for more.

Further south in the state, beef producers and industry are preparing for Beef Australia 2021 in Rockhampton in May. Here they'll be able to meet the QRIDA team and learn about how we can support their primary production business. Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for updates closer to the event.

Cameron MacMillan
QRIDA Chief Executive Officer



QRIDA CEO Cameron MacMillan

TC Niran disaster assistance available

Primary producers impacted by Tropical Cyclone Niran and associated low pressure system, 25 February - 3 March 2021 can now apply for grant and low interest loan assistance from QRIDA to help with their clean up and recovery efforts.

Assistance available for affected producers includes:

- **Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants of up to \$25,000** to assist with costs of clean-up and the reinstatement of the business
- **Disaster Assistance Loans of up to \$250,000** to assist with costs of re-establishing normal operations
- **Disaster Assistance (Essential Working Capital) Loans of up to \$100,000** to assist with essential working capital expenses such as paying wages, rent, rates or buying essential goods needed to carry on operations.

These assistance measures are available for eligible primary producers in the Cairns, Cassowary Coast, Hinchinbrook, Mareeba and Tablelands Regional and Shire Councils.

For more information about the assistance available and how to apply, visit QRIDA's website and click on the 'Disaster recovery for primary producers' link on the main menu.

QRIDA's Regional Area Manager for the Far North, Sam Spina, is also available to assist and can be contacted on Freecall 1800 623 946, mobile 0429 497 757 or email sam.spina@qrida.qld.gov.au

QRIDA administers this financial assistance under the joint Commonwealth / Queensland Government funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018.



Banana plantation damaged by Tropical Cyclone Niran on a property south of Innisfail

Have you made the move to direct debit?



To make loan repayments easier for our clients, direct debit is now the preferred method for all QRIDA loan repayments.

Direct debit is a safe, secure and convenient payment method that ensures your QRIDA loan repayments are made automatically and on time.

If you are an existing QRIDA loan client and did not set up direct debit when you were approved your loan, you should have recently received a letter from QRIDA with a direct debit request form and instructions on how to set up your direct debit repayments.

If you have not already returned your direct debit request form to QRIDA, you are encouraged to do so as soon as possible so you can benefit from this easier loan repayment option.

If you have not received this communication from QRIDA, or if you have any queries regarding the set up of your direct debit, please contact us at contact_us@qrida.qld.gov.au or Freecall 1800 623 946.

Succession flows through the channel country



South West Queensland graziers Stacey and Joe Tully, pictured with son Mack, used a First Start Loan from QRIDA to put their succession plans in motion.

Safely outside the cattle yards, little Mack watches as his mum and dad work livestock on the other side of the fence; drafting and counting them before loading the truck ready for sale.

As a young child, Mack is already grasping what living and working the land is like, just as his father Joe did at the same age.

Tenham Station, a beef and sheep enterprise amidst the channel country in South West Queensland, has long run in the Tully family name. Joe is the third generation to own and operate the property with his wife, Stacey and son, Mack, something he always planned on doing from a young age.

“We each had our own successful careers working around Toowoomba but have always retained a strong interest in the rural industry. For me, the family connection to Tenham meant coming back out here was something I have always wanted to do,” he said.

When Joe’s parents decided to retire from Tenham Station, the opportunity arose for the couple to step in and take over as successors of the property. It was at this time that Joe and Stacey approached QRIDA for finance through a First Start Loan.

“The First Start Loan ticked a lot of boxes for us. It’s very specific to the rural industry and everything about the loan was very suited to what we wanted to do with the business,” Stacey said.

“Given their low interest rates and the large amount you can borrow, it was the obvious choice for us to approach them and see what they could do for us.”

Joe said having both grown up on the land, he and Stacey wanted the same lifestyle for their own children.

“I love everything about living on the land. Whether it is stock work or property maintenance, every day is different out here.

“It can certainly get a little hot and dry at times but it’s a great place to live and raise a family and we feel very fortunate to be in the position that we are,” he said.

The Tullys say entering the agriculture industry can be daunting but there’s a strong network of assistance available to those looking to make their break in the industry.

“The First Start Loan ticked a lot of boxes for us. It’s very specific to the rural industry...”

“We’ve been really surprised at just how much support is out there if you just go looking,” Joe said.

“Our [QRIDA] Regional Area Manager was fantastic from the beginning. He came out to see us before we’d even put an application in which was great.

“It really set us at ease and it was great to have somebody who had a genuine interest in what we were doing and who wanted to see us succeed in the rural industry,” Joe said.

First Start Loans of up to \$2 million are available to help producers enter the primary production industry. Eligible activities under the loan include purchasing land, buying into the family farm or developing existing operations to achieve viability.

Find out more

Watch the Tully’s video story on QRIDA’s website to find out more about how they put their farm succession plans in place with a First Start Loan.



We’re going to Beef Australia 2021

If you’re heading to Beef Australia 2021, make sure you stop by our trade stand to talk about how you can build your beef business with QRIDA.

3 - 7 May 2021
8:30am - 5:30pm
Sidney Kidman Pavilion,
Rockhampton Showgrounds



+ Regional update

Our team in regional QLD, helping yours...

QRIDA has a network of 11 Regional Area Managers (RAMs) based throughout Queensland who can provide you with the latest local knowledge and expertise on our programs and services.

With offices based in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cloncurry, Emerald (with an office in Longreach), Innisfail, Kingaroy, Mackay, Rockhampton, Roma, Toowoomba and Townsville, we've got Queensland covered.

In each newsletter we feature an update from three of our RAMs. To find details of your local RAM, contact us on **Freecall 1800 623 946** or visit the 'your region' page on our website where you can search by region or postcode.



Mark Barrett
Wide Bay & Fraser Coast

Despite some welcome rain in late 2020, producers in the Wide Bay saw below average rainfalls in January and February this year. It means water and energy costs are still at the forefront of many producers' minds.

QRIDA Sustainability Loans can support their on-farm activities, in particular, in water security and storage, including dams and irrigation, and energy efficiency projects like solar. Support is available to invest in the latest infrastructure to create a viable future for farming businesses across the region.

It was pleasing to see some rainfall in March which was particularly welcome for all industries relying on irrigation.

Producers from cane and tree crops to small crops and horticultural industries and everything in between should get in touch to see what's available.

As always, if you need to reach me, you can send an email, phone or arrange a time to meet on-farm, in-office or at a time and place convenient to you.

Talk with Mark

☎ 0417 775 547

✉ mark.barrett@qrda.qld.gov.au



Elizabeth Ahern
North Queensland

I've been attending many different events lately where I've met with a range of producers to discuss the assistance QRIDA has available for their needs.

It's encouraging to see many of these enquiries have been from young North Queenslanders who want to stay on the land and continue their family farming business. Our First Start Loans are a great option for young producers to make a start in agriculture as they allow for purchasing on a staged basis or entering into a lease or share farming arrangement (including from family members).

Another regular conversation topic is energy costs - something producers always have to contend with. Our Sustainability Loans can help with energy savings by providing low interest finance for irrigation systems and advanced technology to help producers run their business more efficiently, effectively and economically.

If you'd like more information about our low interest loans please get in touch - I'm always ready to talk.

Talk with Elizabeth

☎ 0408 180 644

✉ elizabeth.ahern@qrda.qld.gov.au



John Metelli
Capricornia

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, it's been refreshing to get out on the road again to visit producers in the Rockhampton and Callide districts.

Lately I've seen a lot of interest in First Start Loans to help with succession and Sustainability Loans to assist with various property development activities including building sheds and dams, installing solar pumps, carrying out weed management practices and purchasing or upgrading irrigation equipment. I'm keen to chat with producers about opportunities to introduce new and emerging technologies that can positively impact on productivity enhancement.

Beef Australia 2021 is just around the corner. I'm looking forward to catching up with clients and meeting new producers to see how QRIDA can help build their beef business. If you're heading along, drop by the QRIDA trade stand in the Sidney Kidman Pavilion to say g'day to myself and other Regional Area Managers who will be attending.

Talk with John

☎ 0417 775 245

✉ john.metelli@qrda.qld.gov.au

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