

+ Prime focus



Mt Alma Organics owners Angela and Gary Spotswood funded their on-farm rural worker accommodation and cold room and packing shed expansion with a QRIDA Sustainability Loan.

Growers overcome labour shortage with on-farm accommodation

Behind fields of organic cane and cattle, and rows of more than 40 different fruit and vegetable varieties at Mt Alma Organics in the Burdekin, farm workers put their feet up in a comfortable container home after a day of picking.

With housing and labour shortages making it difficult for Mt Alma Organics owners Angela and Gary Spotswood to secure workers, the husband-and-wife primary producers used a Sustainability Loan from QRIDA to fund the on-farm rural worker accommodation they have installed on their property, as pictured on the right.

“Our seasonal worker pool is growing so we needed extra accommodation,” Gary said.

“It’s hard to find suitable housing close-by and the nearest town is 30 kilometres away.”

“We would recommend QRIDA to other Queensland primary producers because we found them very easy to deal with.”

The Spotswoods also used the loan to expand their cold room and packing shed with demand for their fresh produce increasing from some of Australia’s major supermarket retailers.

“We just find it’ll be more efficient. We can grow other crops and we can produce more, we can be faster in packaging and it helps on labour as well,” Gary said.

As repeat QRIDA clients, the Spotswoods found completing the Sustainability Loan application was straightforward.

“We receive emails and information all the time on the Sustainability Loans, and we probably follow it regularly to see what suits and what’s available to our business,” Gary said.

“We would recommend QRIDA to other Queensland primary producers because we found them very easy to deal with.”

QRIDA’s Sustainability Loans of up to \$1.3 million can help primary production businesses construct on-farm small-scale rural worker accommodation.

To find out how a Sustainability Loan could help develop your primary production business, visit our website or contact us on **1800 623 946**.



Find out more

Scan the QR code to watch the Spotswood’s video story to learn more about how they used a Sustainability Loan.



Inside

QRIDA working with QLD producers	2
Get your property bushfire ready	2
RED Grants investing in QLD ag	3
Regional update	4

To update your details call **1800 623 946** or email contact_us@qrida.qld.gov.au



QRIDA working with QLD producers



QRIDA Chief Executive Officer Cameron MacMillan (far left) and members of the QRIDA Board visited clients Mark and Reid Menken (centre) to see the development work they have undertaken on their property at Eskdale with assistance from QRIDA.

QRIDA is proud to have continued our work with primary producers over the past year to foster thriving, sustainable and resilient Queensland communities.

In 2022-2023 QRIDA approved 10,447 financial assistance applications worth \$279.3 million. Our concessional loans have helped the next generation of primary producers break into the agricultural sector, create more sustainable and diverse farming businesses, and prepare for and recover from drought. As we look to the months ahead, we remain committed to supporting Queensland's agricultural sector.

While completing a three-day visit of South West Queensland recently, I spoke with graziers, local agents and industry allies about the return of dry conditions and falling commodity prices including cattle, sheep and goats. The trip provided the chance to spread the word about the importance of drought preparedness for farm businesses, and it was a relief to hear many graziers already had projects underway to increase the resilience of their property.

Whether you're looking to invest in water infrastructure or improve fodder storage, QRIDA has grants of up to \$50,000 and loans up to \$250,000 available to help producers prepare and recover from drought.

Lower livestock prices may also present an attractive opportunity for up-and-coming primary producers to build up their herd, and QRIDA has First Start Loans of up to \$2 million to financially assist the next generation establish their enterprise.

Speaking with producers on a recent Board visit in South East Queensland, we know producers are facing a range of challenges and we continue to support them to develop innovative solutions.

QRIDA's Sustainability Loans of up to \$1.3 million offer diverse ways for producers to improve their farm business. From investing in new agtech, to constructing on-farm small-scale accommodation, or increasing on-farm biosecurity, QRIDA has financial assistance available to help primary producers take a proactive approach to mitigate business risks.

Already early heatwave conditions, bushfires and the imminent cyclone season have some producers anxious about the summer ahead. It's important for producers to take precautions and have their own emergency plans in place ready to enact if required.

Please talk to your Regional Area Manager about which QRIDA financial assistance might be right for your enterprise, and how it could help you manage business risks and achieve your individual goals.

Cameron MacMillan
QRIDA Chief Executive Officer

Are you prepared for bushfire season?

With bushfires having already impacted parts of Queensland in recent weeks, it's important to get your property ready for the risk of bushfires.

Follow these steps below to ensure you and your property are ready should bushfires strike and keep an eye on QRIDA's website for details of any assistance available.

Prepare your property:



Reduce bushfire hazards on your property



Check your insurance and know what you're covered for



Have an evacuation plan in place.



Ensure important documents are stored in a safe place



Know who your local QRIDA Regional Area Manager is

Have ready if you need to apply for QRIDA disaster assistance:



Photos and videos of damage



Personal identification



Rates notice or lease agreement



Financial statements, tax returns, bank statements



Insurance details



Track your rainfall



Keep track of the rainfall on your property with our online **2024 Rainfall Chart**.

Download your copy today by searching for 'Rainfall Chart' on our website or scanning the QR code.



RED Grant brings shearing and crutching trailer to Western QLD

A Barcaldine family operation is building an innovative crutching and shearing trailer which will service outback Queensland and create up to eight jobs thanks to a Rural Economic Development (RED) Grant.

Ross Shearing's new state-of-the-art trailer will include the latest workplace safety and animal welfare features, delivering sheep directly to shearers and eliminating the catch and drag from the pen.

“The Rural Economic Development Grant has been a significant help in getting this project off the ground sooner...”

Ross Shearing co-owner Simone Pix said the family operation would provide the mobile shearing and crutching services to wool growers throughout outback Queensland including Barcaldine, Longreach, Hughenden, Quilpe and Cunnamulla.

“We’re building the shearing and crutching trailer because there are a number of crutching trailers out there but not a lot with a dual purpose of both crutching and shearing,” she said.

“We will also use the trailer to give shearing and crutching demonstrations and training to local schools in the area with the aim to attract more young people to the sheep and wool industries,” Simone said.

The innovative trailer is expected to be up-and-running by mid-next year, and will create up to eight direct, full-time jobs.

“The project will create a range of jobs including shearers, crutchers, wool handlers, and a mobile cook once the trailer is operational,” Simone said.

“The Rural Economic Development Grant has been a significant help in getting this project off the ground sooner allowing us to create a dual-purpose shearing and crutching trailer that will service a growing need in Western Queensland while creating new jobs and training opportunities in the sheep and wool industries.”

Ross Shearing is one of 24 businesses approved for the fifth round of the competitive RED grants program with a total funding of \$3.9 million. Overall, the fifth round of the program is expected to create up to 215 direct, long-term jobs.

Grants are available for up to \$200,000 with a 50 per cent cash contribution requirement from applicants to fund projects which generate economic and employment opportunities related to primary production value chains across rural and remote Queensland.

Over five years, the Queensland Government's RED Grants program has provided a total of \$13.3 million in funding to support 59 successful regional agribusiness projects, worth more than \$52.4 million and estimated to create over 2,500 new direct and indirect jobs.

The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) administers the RED Grant Scheme on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.



RED Grants

Funding for a sixth round of RED Grants has been announced for 2023-2024.

Scan the QR code to visit the RED Grant page on QRIDA's website for latest information about the scheme and application details when the next round opens.



Ross Shearing are establishing a crutching and shearing trailer with the help of a RED Grant administered by QRIDA. Photo credit: James Braszell.

+ Regional update

Our team in regional Queensland, helping you

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 **1800 623 946** or visit the 'your region' page on our website where you can search by region or postcode.



Bradley Whittington
Central Highlands & West

Drying conditions across the Central Highlands and West and poor market conditions are leaving producers feeling the pinch as we enter prolonged dry conditions.

I encourage producers to consider the Drought Preparedness Grants which can help them undertake new permanent infrastructure activities that will improve the drought preparedness of their property.

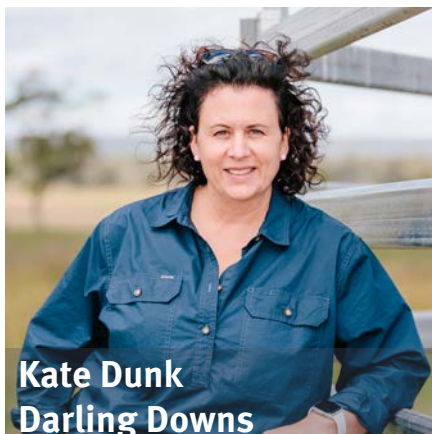
It is also timely for producers to prepare their properties for what could be a serious bushfire season. Improving or implementing fire breaks, removing or disposing of any vegetation or flammable material, obtaining or maintaining equipment for firefighting purposes and having an evacuation plan in place are all ways producers can prepare.

Fingers crossed there is some decent rain on the horizon, but for now, we must continue to adapt to these changing environmental conditions. Give me a call if you'd like to talk more about QRIDA's drought support.

Talk with Bradley

☎ 0417 775 345

✉ bradley.whittington@qrida.qld.gov.au



Kate Dunk
Darling Downs

With hot and dry weather forecast over coming months, drought is likely to return, driving commodity prices down with it. It's important for producers to get ready for drought and mitigate its devastating impacts. Producers could be eligible for a Drought Preparedness Grant, Sustainability Loan or Drought Ready and Recovery Finance Loan to help them undertake drought preparedness activities including investing in new water infrastructure.

In recent months it's been great to talk to many families about how a First Start Loan could help them pass the farm to the next generation through succession planning arrangements. Our First Start Loans aren't just to help family members buy their first farm – if you're an aspiring primary producer, you could also develop your property to become viable or enter into sharefarming arrangements with these loans.

If you want to know more about how our loans could help you achieve your farm business goals, please give me a call.

Talk with Kate

☎ 0427 690 448

✉ kate.dunk@qrida.qld.gov.au



Sam Spina
Far North

As we approach the end of the year we're entering disaster season and this year we have threats of bushfires as well as cyclones. In light of predictions of what may lay ahead weather-wise, I remind producers that QRIDA loan and grant assistance may become available if disaster events occur. All details of assistance will be included on QRIDA's website if it is activated so remember to look there for more information at the time.

If you're taking a break over the Christmas season, it might be a good time to think about future plans for your primary production business.

QRIDA's Sustainability Loans of up to \$1.3 million can help with your expansion plans by providing finance to carry out activities to help increase the viability and profitability of your business. For instance, these loans could be used to invest in irrigation improvements, upgrade or replace plant and machinery or implement value adding or supply chain initiatives.

If this is something you're interested in exploring more give me a call.

Talk with Sam

☎ 0429 497 757

✉ sam.spina@qrida.qld.gov.au

Disclaimer: the information provided by QRIDA is general information only and has been prepared without taking into account your individual objectives, financial situation and needs. Before applying for financial assistance or making any decision, you should obtain and read a copy of the relevant program guidelines and seek advice from your legal, business and financial advisers to determine your eligibility for, and the terms of the relevant financial assistance. You should note that past grants of financial assistance are not a reliable indicator of eligibility for future grants of financial assistance. The information provided by QRIDA has been taken from sources believed to be reliable however QRIDA does not represent that the information is accurate or complete and it should not be relied upon as such. QRIDA does not assume any common law duty of care towards you in providing the information and QRIDA will not be liable for any loss or damage however caused (including by the negligence of QRIDA), suffered or incurred by you in connection with information provided by QRIDA.