

Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation 2025

Explanatory notes for SL 2025 No. 169

made under the

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994

General Outline

Short title

Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation 2025

Authorising law

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994 (The Act)

Policy objectives and the reasons for them

Section 11 of the Act requires that each scheme of financial assistance be set out in detail in regulation. Section 44 of the Act allows the Governor in Council to make regulations under the Act.

Each scheme of financial assistance of the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) is contained in a Schedule to the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation 2011* (the Regulation). Any amendment to schemes of financial assistance requires an amendment to the relevant schedule of the Regulation. This regulatory amendment has the following policy objectives:

1. Amends the eligible activities in the Drought Preparedness Grant Scheme (Schedule 39) and the Drought Ready and Recovery Finance Loan Scheme (Schedule 40) to include infrastructure upgrades.
2. Amends the definition of primary production enterprise in the Drought Carry-On Finance Loan Scheme (Schedule 4), the Emergency Drought Assistance Loan Scheme (Schedule 5), the Drought Preparedness Grant Scheme (Schedule 39) and the Drought Ready and Recovery Finance Loan Scheme (Schedule 40).
3. Amends the Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants Scheme (Schedule 23) and the Rural Landholder Recovery Grants Scheme (Schedule 47) in relation to the National Redress Scheme.

4. Extends the closing date for the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Scheme (Schedule 61) to 30 November 2026.

Achievement of policy objectives

Amendment of eligible activities in the Drought Preparedness Grant Scheme (Schedule 39) and the Drought Ready and Recovery Finance Loan Scheme (Schedule 40) to include permanent infrastructure upgrades

QRIDA delivers a range of Queensland Government funded drought preparedness programs including the Drought Preparedness Grant (Schedule 39) and the Drought Ready and Recovery Finance Loan Scheme (Schedule 40).

These programs currently provide assistance with the cost of purchasing and installing eligible new capital infrastructure identified in the producers farm business resilience plan as measures that will improve the producers drought preparedness.

A review of the efficacy of the Drought Preparedness Grant Scheme commissioned by the Queensland Government recommended that the scheme eligibility criteria be expanded to include upgrades to existing infrastructure that improved drought preparedness not just the purchase and installation of new permanent infrastructure as is currently the case.

Accordingly, a minor amendment to both schemes is required to expand the eligibility criteria to include upgrades to existing infrastructure that improves drought preparedness. For example, if the producer upgrades pipes or pumps this will become eligible for assistance under the schemes.

Amendment of the definition of primary production enterprise in the Drought Carry-On Finance Loan Scheme (Schedule 4), the Emergency Drought Assistance Loan Scheme (Schedule 5), the Drought Preparedness Grant Scheme (Schedule 39) and the Drought Ready and Recovery Finance Loan Scheme (Schedule 40)

As part of the *Rural and Regional Adjustment (Feral Pest Exclusion Fencing Grants Scheme and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2025*, amendments were made to several disaster assistance schemes regarding the definition of primary production enterprise. These amendments were to align the definition of primary production enterprise used in those schemes with the policy guidelines contained in the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

The Australian Government's DRFA Guidelines provide that the business classifications within Division A-Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing within the Australian New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) are to be considered primary production enterprises for the purposes of DRFA assistance. Division A includes Subdivision 05 Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Support Services, which covers businesses such as shearing, mustering etc. Accordingly, the wording in several DRFA schedules for the definition of primary production enterprise was

amended so that it includes businesses that fall within subdivision 05 of the ANZSIC code (ie businesses that support primary production).

Such businesses include, for example: shearing business, mustering business, silage baling business, farm irrigation services, and timber plantation maintenance services. Previously, such support businesses were considered to be small businesses for the purposes of DRFA assistance in Queensland. This change in the classification of such applicants from small business to primary producer aligned Queensland's application of the DRFA Guidelines to guidance provided to it by the National Emergency Management Agency of the Australian Government.

In addition to DRFA schemes, QRIDA administers a range of drought assistance schemes on behalf of the Queensland Government. To align the definition of primary production enterprise across all QRIDA assistance schemes, the definition needs to be amended for the drought schemes to be the same as that for the DRFA schemes. This change will allow such primary production support businesses eg shearing and mustering to potentially access drought preparedness assistance under these programs.

Consequential amendments to the definition of primary production enterprise in several DRFA schemes (Disaster Assistance (Primary Producers) Loans Scheme: Schedule 2, Disaster Assistance (Small Business) Loans Scheme (Schedule 3), Disaster Assistance (Essential Working Capital) Loans Scheme (Schedule 7), Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants Scheme (Schedule 23)) were also made to align the wording used in those schemes with that used in the drought schemes mentioned above.

National Redress Scheme amendments to the Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants Scheme (Schedule 23) and the Rural Landholder Recovery Grants Scheme (Schedule 47)

The National Redress Scheme is an Australian Government program for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. The Australian Government has made it a requirement under the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Grant Connected Policy that non-government institutions that have declined to join or have not signified their intent to join the Scheme within the required timeframes will be ineligible to receive Australian Government grant funding. Further information on this policy can be found on the website: <https://www.dss.gov.au/national-redress-scheme/national-redress-scheme-grant-connected-policy>.

QRIDA administers the Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants Scheme (Schedule 23) and the Rural Landholder Recovery Grants Scheme (Schedule 47) that are Category C/D DRFA grant programs which the Australian Government rules in regards to the National Redress Scheme will apply to.

Accordingly, these programs are to be amended to provide that if an applicant for assistance is an institution named as an institution under the National Redress

Scheme and it has declined to join or are unresponsive to requests to participate it will be ineligible to apply for assistance under the DRFA program.

Information on which institutions have and have not joined the National Redress Scheme can be found on the website: <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/>. It provides a searchable function that allows anyone to search whether an entity has agreed or declined to participate. As at 28 November 2025 a handful of entities in Queensland have declined to join or are unresponsive to requests to join.

Extension of the closing date for the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Scheme (Schedule 61)

The Regional Drought Resilience Planning (RDRP) Scheme is an assistance measure that assists regions with implementing activities in the regions to improve their drought preparedness. It is co-funded by Queensland and the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund. Currently, the RDRP Scheme has a closing date of 30 June 2026. In order to give applicants more time to undertake activities, the closing date is to be extended to 30 November 2026. Discussions with the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund are ongoing as to the future of the RDRP Scheme and it is possible that the RDRP Scheme may be extended beyond the new closing date of 30 November 2026. Accordingly, to accommodate for this possibility, the Regulation is also amended to allow the RDRP Scheme to be further extended beyond the new closing date of 30 November 2026 to 30 June 2027 via the publication of an extension notice by the Minister for Primary Industries.

Consistency with policy objectives of authorising law

The amendment regulation is consistent with the policy objectives of the Act. The Act establishes QRIDA primarily to administer assistance schemes that foster the development of a more productive and sustainable rural and regional sector in Queensland, including schemes offered by the Australian Government.

QRIDA may also administer approved assistance schemes to assist primary producers, small businesses and other sectors during periods of temporary difficulty, or to otherwise benefit the Queensland economy.

The amendment regulation is consistent with the objectives of the Act, as the schemes that are being amended provide assistance to primary producers during drought and disaster and supports regions in Queensland in conducting drought preparedness planning activities.

Inconsistency with policy objectives of other legislation

This amendment regulation is not inconsistent with the policy objectives of any other legislation.

Benefits and costs of implementation

No additional expenditure or cost is associated with the amendments in this regulatory amendment.

The change to the definition of primary production enterprise in the drought preparedness schemes will mean that agricultural support businesses (eg shearing and mustering) will potentially be able to access the financial assistance available under these schemes to improve their drought preparedness whereas previously they would not have been eligible as they were considered small businesses as distinct from primary producers. This might lead to a small increase in demand for these programs but will not lead to an increase in expenditure as these programs are subject to a total funding cap.

Consistency with fundamental legislative principles

The amendment regulation has been drafted with regard to, and is consistent with, the fundamental legislative principles as defined in section 4 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992*.

Consultation

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development (NRMMRRD) has assessed the amendment regulation in accordance with *The Queensland Government Better Regulation Policy* as minor and machinery in nature. The Office of Best Practice Regulation was notified of this assessment. The Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development and the Director-General of NRMMRRD are satisfied that the regulatory review requirements have been met and have approved an Impact Analysis Statement for publication.