

Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS)

Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate

The Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) is offered by the Queensland Government and administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF). The purpose of the scheme is to assist primary producers whose properties are drought declared to manage the welfare of their livestock during drought, and to restore their herds and flocks after drought. The Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate helps with the cost of establishing water infrastructure to supply water for emergency animal welfare needs.

DRAS will be phased out as local government areas come out of drought. New assistance measures are available through the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA). Primary Producers who are currently drought-declared can still access DRAS. Once revoked from drought, DRAS freight subsidies for stock returning from agistment and livestock purchase for restocking will remain available for up to two years after the drought declaration is revoked. Primary Producers can access the new drought assistance measures available through QRIDA but will lose access to DRAS. Producers can not access the new drought measures through QRIDA if they have received a DRAS payment for an tax invoice in the last six months. DRAS will not be available in future droughts.

Eligibility

To apply for this subsidy, you **must meet** the following conditions:

- **You are a primary producer. For the purposes of this scheme, a primary producer is a person or a partner in a partnership, company or trust who spends more than 50 per cent of their labour on, and derives more than 50 per cent of their gross income from, a primary production enterprise.**
- You are a property owner, share-farmer or lessee in the grazing industry (beef cattle, sheep, dairy cattle, goats, deer or horses that are not normally hand-fed).
- Your property was within a State drought-declared area or had a current Individually Droughted Property (IDP) declaration on the date of the purchase tax invoice for the infrastructure.
- You have not introduced any livestock on to the property during the current drought or in the three-month period prior to the drought declaration, including any livestock taken on for agistment.¹
- The water infrastructure is installed for grazing livestock that you own, that are permanently residing on your property and are not agisted.
- The property where the water infrastructure has been installed has been owned or leased by you for at least 12 months.
- You purchase and install the water infrastructure for a genuine emergency animal welfare need only, because either:
 - water is currently being carted or about to be carted on to your property to supply grazing livestock; or
 - your property could be reasonably expected to run out of water before the next expected inflow of water; or

¹ The subsidy does not apply when livestock have been introduced or agisted on a drought-declared property, except where:

- older core breeding stock have been replaced with female weaners or replacement bulls; or
- a property owner introduces livestock to a drought-declared property from a property under the same ownership but with a different Property Identification Code (PIC) as part of an overall drought-management strategy; or
- you have served a relevant suspension period as outlined in the 'Introduction of livestock – suspension of DRAS' section of this document.

- there is a lack of available water for grazing livestock that is within a reasonable walking distance.²
- You have provided a Water Availability Statement that is approved and signed by a DAF officer that endorses your claim that there is an existing emergency animal welfare need on your property and that the water infrastructure you intend to purchase and install, or have purchased and installed, is required to resolve the emergency animal welfare need.
- You have purchased the water infrastructure within **six months** of the date of endorsement on your Water Availability Statement. All purchases must be made while the property is drought declared.
- You have paid for the water infrastructure and all installation costs.
- Your application is received in Brisbane within **six months** of the tax invoice date for the infrastructure.

This rebate applies to:

- the purchase of pipes, water tanks and water troughs
- drilling a new working bore
- the purchase of water pumps and power supply used to run water pumps such as generators
- the purchase of other materials or equipment necessary to install the above
- any freight component to purchase and install the equipment
- professional installation costs for the installation of poly pipe and/or electrical work carried out installing electric or solar pumps.

Ineligibility

The rebate **does not** apply when:

- water infrastructure has been purchased and installed where there is not a genuine emergency animal welfare need
- the water infrastructure purchased and installed is to replace existing water infrastructure on the property
- water infrastructure has been purchased and installed for uses other than to supply water for grazing livestock (for example, to provide water for irrigation, intensive livestock, human consumption, or household use)
- water infrastructure has been purchased and installed in order to prepare the property for livestock returning from agistment³
- the water infrastructure that has been purchased and installed is excessive or superfluous to requirements in resolving the animal welfare need
- the water infrastructure and/or its installation has not been paid in full.
- you have received a Drought Preparedness Grant, a Drought Ready and Recovery Loan, an Emergency Drought Assistance Loan and/or a Drought Carry-On Finance Loan through QRIDA.

The rebate **does not** apply to:

- wages for your employees or your self-assessed labour or machinery costs, such as the cost of fuel
- any costs or labour associated with establishing a new dam, desilting dams or making dams larger
- any invoices from entities related to the applicant (for example, water infrastructure purchased from family members of the applicant or companies/partnerships owned by the applicant or that the applicant has an interest in)
- any repairs or maintenance on existing water infrastructure
- any costs or labour that are excessive or superfluous to requirements

² A reasonable walking distance is discussed in the section 'Emergency animal welfare need' on page 3.

³ You may be eligible to claim the rebate on water infrastructure purchased and installed in order to prepare the property for livestock returning from agistment if the livestock have been forced from agistment and you can provide a declaration and/or documentation of this fact.

- any water infrastructure or other items that are not included in your Water Availability Statement
- any costs associated with drilling of dry bores or test bores⁴
- any costs associated with remote sensing or water monitoring equipment
- any costs associated with water diviners and/or geological surveys.

Introduction of livestock — suspension from DRAS

This subsidy does not generally apply when livestock have been returned, introduced or agisted on a drought-declared property.

When this occurs, access to all DRAS assistance measures will be suspended from the date the animals are introduced to the property and for an additional 16 weeks after the livestock, or an equivalent number, have left the property.

Non-breeders that are returned because they have been genuinely forced off agistment may remain on your drought-declared property for up to four weeks while further agistment is sought, before the suspension period begins.

Breeders genuinely forced off agistment and returned do not incur the 16-week suspension, provided a statutory declaration is presented with the application that indicates why the animals were forced off agistment. This is approved by DAF on a case-by-case basis.

Breeders not forced off agistment that are returned to your drought-declared property can remain on your property for a maximum of four weeks while further agistment is found, without incurring a 16-week suspension.

Weaners up to six months old can be returned to your property while it is still drought declared if weaning facilities are not available on the agistment property. A statutory declaration from the agisting property owner is required to support this.

All suspensions are lifted from the property when the drought declaration is revoked.

Emergency animal welfare need

For the purposes of this rebate, it is considered a genuine emergency animal welfare need when:

- there is a lack of available water for livestock that are permanently grazing on your property, or
- the water that is available will be insufficient to sustain the livestock on the property until the next expected inflow, or
- there is a lack of available water for livestock that is within a reasonable walking distance.

For the purposes of this rebate, a reasonable walking distance is generally considered to be not less than 2 km. While the distance that livestock will travel from water depends on topography, and on the class and condition of the animals, studies show that, in most situations, livestock graze within a 2 km to 3 km radius of water.

It is therefore reasonable to expect animals to walk for 2 km to access water, and any watering points that are placed at a distance less than 4 km apart would be considered in most cases to be excess to requirements unless the primary producer can provide evidence that demonstrates why their animals cannot walk 2 km.

⁴ Dry bores and test bores may be eligible for rebate the animal welfare issue resolved for the property by other means.

In determining whether a property has an emergency animal welfare need you must provide information in a Water Availability Statement about the current emergency water situation, including the existing water infrastructure, watering procedures and watering points. You must also provide information on the steps you have undertaken to reduce the effects of drought and water shortages on your livestock and property, and provide detailed information on the new water infrastructure that you propose to install, or have installed, for the purposes of resolving your emergency animal welfare need.

The Water Availability Statement must be approved and signed by DAF officer, endorsing that there is an existing emergency animal welfare need on your property and that the water infrastructure you intend to purchase and install or that you have purchased and installed is required to resolve the water availability issue. The DAF officer may inspect your property or request further information from you before endorsing the Water Availability Statement.

Submission of an endorsed Water Availability Statement does not guarantee that you will be eligible for a rebate under the EWIR.

Rebate amount

The Queensland Government EWIR is **up to 50 per cent** of the cost of purchase, delivery and certain installation costs incurred to provide water for an emergency animal welfare need.

Australian Government Top Up (On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate)

On 2 October 2020 the Australian Government announced it would reintroduce the On-Farm EWIR, which could be a top up to the Queensland EWIR. A top up of 25 per cent applied to all tax invoices eligible for EWIR from 1 July 2018 to 1 October 2020. The maximum payable amount under the Australian Government On-Farm EWIR is \$25,000 per Property Identification Code (PIC) per financial year for applications received from 1 July 2018 to 1 October 2020.

From 2 October 2020 until 30 June 2022, or earlier should the Australian Government funds be exhausted, the Australian Government Top-up to the Queensland EWIR will be up to 12.5 per cent of the eligible tax invoices for the Queensland EWIR up to a maximum of \$12,500 per Property Identification Code (PIC) per financial year. This amount of \$12,500 is a combination of any Australian Government On-Farm EWIR top up, any payments for *Dam Desilting Rebate for Graziers* and any payments for the *Permanent Horticulture Tree Crops – New Bores and Dam Desilting Rebate*.

The Australian Government On-Farm EWIR top up is automatically applied to all recipients of the EWIR until the Australian Government allocations of funds are fully expended or until 30 April 2022. A separate application is not required to obtain the Australian Government On-Farm EWIR top up to your Queensland EWIR payment.

Please refer to the guidelines for the *Dam Desilting Rebate* and the *Permanent Horticulture Tree Crops – New Bores and Dam Desilting Rebate* on the DAF website daf.qld.gov.au.

How to apply

Step 1: Access or download the Water Availability Statement form at the DAF website daf.qld.gov.au or contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23.

Step 2: Complete the Water Availability Statement form and post it to your local DAF officer (listed below) or email to droughtdeclarations@daf.qld.gov.au to be endorsed. Where possible, it is recommended that you obtain an endorsed Water Availability Statement before expending funds on water infrastructure. Post or email your completed Water Availability Statement to one of the following DAF officers:

Northern Queensland (Aurukun, Burdekin, Burke, Cairns, Carpentaria, Cassowary Coast, Charters Towers, Cook, Croydon, Doomadgee, Douglas, Etheridge, Flinders, Hinchinbrook, Hope Vale, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, McKinlay, Mapoon, Mareeba, Mornington, Mount Isa, Napranum, Northern Peninsula Area, Palm Island, Pormpuraaw, Richmond, Tablelands, Torres, Torres Strait Island, Townsville, Weipa, Wujal Wujal)	<i>Climate Risk Coordinator</i> DAF PO Box 976 Charters Towers Qld 4820
Central Queensland (Banana, Central Highlands, Gladstone, Isaac, Livingstone, Mackay, Rockhampton, Whitsunday, Woorabinda)	<i>Climate Risk Coordinator</i> DAF PO Box 6014 Red Hill Rockhampton Qld 4701
Western Queensland (Barcardine, Barcoo, Blackall-Tambo, Boulia, Cloncurry, Diamantina, Longreach, Winton)	<i>Climate Risk Coordinator</i> DAF PO Box 519 Longreach Qld 4730
Southern Queensland (Balonne, Bulloo, Goondiwindi, Maranoa, Murweh, Paroo, Quilpie, Southern Downs, Toowoomba, Western Downs)	<i>Climate Risk Coordinator</i> DAF PO Box 102 Toowoomba Qld 4350
South East Queensland (Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cherbourg, Fraser Coast, Gold Coast, Gympie, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Logan, Moreton Bay, Noosa, North Burnett, Redland, Scenic Rim, Somerset, South Burnett, Sunshine Coast)	<i>Climate Risk Coordinator</i> DAF PO Box 23 Kingaroy Qld 4610

When endorsing your Water Availability Statement, DAF officers will set limits detailing the amount, size and/or costs for water infrastructure and installation. This is to ensure water infrastructure and installation costs are not excessive and or superfluous to requirements in resolving the emergency animal welfare need.

Step 3: Once you have an endorsed Water Availability Statement and you have purchased and paid for your water infrastructure, complete the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate application form and attach all necessary documentation, including a copy of the endorsed Water Availability Statement and tax invoices. You may submit more than one application to ensure that your tax invoices are received in Brisbane within six months of the tax invoice date for the infrastructure.

Application forms are available online at daf.qld.gov.au or can be posted or emailed to you if you contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23. Keep a copy of your tax invoices for your records and submit completed application forms and tax invoices to the DAF Brisbane office at the below address. Please post or email applications to:

Drought Relief Assistance Scheme
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
 Level 12
 GPO Box 46
 Brisbane Qld 4001
drought@daf.qld.gov.au

If at any time during the application process you need assistance completing the forms or you are unsure of your eligibility requirements under DRAS you are encouraged to contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23 or email DAF at drought@daf.qld.gov.au.

Supporting documents

DAF is unable to process rebate applications without copies of all corresponding tax invoices that relate to the purchase and installation of the water infrastructure being claimed. Please include copies of all tax invoices with your application and ensure these tax invoices have been paid in full. Remember to keep a copy of the application for yourself, as tax invoices will not be returned to you.

Minimum and maximum payments

The minimum payment for each application is \$25. No payment will be made for any claims under this amount. The maximum level of financial assistance available under DRAS is initially \$20,000 per Property Identification Code (PIC), per financial year. **For the purposes of this scheme, all properties or land parcels included under a single Property Identification Code (PIC) are considered to be one property.** This scheme does not allow the splitting of partnerships, properties or land parcels to access more than the prescribed maximum amount.

The initial \$20,000 limit may be extended to \$30,000 per property per financial year if a Drought Management Plan (DMP) for your property is endorsed by a DAF officer. Once a DMP is endorsed, the \$30,000 ceiling applies to the entirety of the current financial year and subsequent financial years. When a property with an endorsed DMP is in its third or subsequent year of being drought declared, the maximum allowable limit per financial year increases from \$30,000 to \$40,000. When a property with an endorsed DMP is in its sixth and subsequent year of being drought declared, the maximum allowable limit per financial year increases to \$50,000.

Once a drought declaration is revoked, the DRAS ceiling is the level the property was on immediately prior to the revocation of the drought declaration and remains at that level for the period that the property is eligible to apply for DRAS freight subsidy for the transport of animals purchased for restocking and the transport of animals returning from agistment. For example, if a property with an approved DMP was in the third year of being drought declared when the property is revoked the DRAS ceiling is \$40,000.

Properties without a DMP prior to revocation can obtain a DMP, and the DRAS ceiling limit will be \$30,000 regardless of the length of the drought declaration. For example, if a property without a DMP was in its third or subsequent year of drought prior to revocation, the producer can apply for a ceiling extension to the limit of \$30,000.

While the Australian Government On-Farm EWIR is in operation, Queensland Government payments under DRAS consist of freight subsidies and the state components of the EWIR, the Dam Desilting Rebate and the Permanent Horticulture Tree Crops – New Bores and Dam Desilting Rebate.

Where you have received a payment that you are not eligible to receive, DAF reserves the right to pursue reimbursement, which may include reclaiming funds from any future eligible DRAS applications.

Processing times

DAF aims to process 90% of claims within 21 working days. Incomplete claims or claims that do not clearly meet the eligibility requirements may take longer. To ensure your claim is processed as quickly as possible, please make sure you have provided all of the required information and that you meet the eligibility criteria.

Payment method

DAF's preferred method of payment is direct electronic transfer into your bank account; however, you may request payment by cheque. You can indicate on your form which method you would prefer.



Assessment

DAF will consider all applications for emergency water infrastructure received within **six months** of the date of purchase noted on the tax invoice for the water infrastructure. Water infrastructure must also be purchased within **six months** of the endorsement date on your Water Availability Statement.

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria. DAF reserves the right to request further information from you, or from any business or individual you have engaged, to assist in assessing your application and to verify any information provided in your application. Failure to provide such information may result in DAF refusing your application. DAF also reserves the right to refuse an application, at its discretion, for any reason or for no reason, irrespective of whether the eligibility criteria have been met.

DAF may consult with members of your local drought committee to assist in assessing your claim. DAF may consult with QRIDA on your access to other drought assistance measures available through QRIDA.

On your Water Availability Statement, DAF staff will set limits detailing the amount, size and/or costs for water infrastructure and installation. This is to ensure water infrastructure and installation costs are not excessive and or superfluous to requirements in resolving the emergency animal welfare need. Rebates paid to you will be calculated referring to the limits set out on your Water Availability Statement.

Applications submitted may be subject to audit by DAF or its agents in order to determine compliance with scheme guidelines.

Fraudulent applications

By signing the application form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true and accurate. Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be a breach of criminal law for which serious penalties may apply.

If any information provided in an application or supporting documentation is found to be inaccurate, untrue or misleading, legal action may be taken against you, including action to recover the subsidy.

Appeal and review process

If you are unable to purchase and install your water infrastructure within the six months after the endorsement date on your Water Availability Statement, you may request an extension by contacting the DAF officer who endorsed the statement.

If you are unsuccessful in obtaining an endorsed Water Availability Statement or disagree with the conditions of your Water Availability Statement, you may request a review of the decision by lodging a request with DAF. Your application will be reviewed by the State Climate Risk Coordinator or by the Director Drought Policy and Response. If you are not satisfied with the subsequent review of your Water Availability Statement, then you may appeal the decision by writing to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries.

If you are declined DRAS assistance because your claim was received by DAF outside of the eligible time limit, you can request a re-consideration by writing to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and outlining the reasons why your application was late. Payment of a declined claim may be approved at the Minister's discretion, if the Minister considers that there are extenuating circumstances that contributed to the late submission.

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If you are declined DRAS assistance because DAF officers believe you do not meet the eligibility criteria (for example, DAF officers believe you do not qualify as a 'primary producer'), you may request a re-consideration by writing to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and outlining the reasons why you believe you are eligible and including any additional supporting evidence. Payment of a declined claim may be approved at the Minister's discretion, if the Minister considers that the evidence provided by you demonstrates that you meet the eligibility criteria.

Producer responsibilities

While this scheme is to help you to manage the welfare of your animals, it does not discharge you from your legal responsibilities under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*. You should continue to manage the welfare of your animals, either by continuing to destock, by supplementary feeding or by carrying water, until such time as conditions on your property improve.

If you are intending to access groundwater, including artesian and sub-artesian water, you will need to ensure you have the correct authorisation to do so. This may include obtaining a water licence and a development permit. For further information on accessing and using groundwater, please contact 13 74 68.

Guidelines

These guidelines are correct at the time of publishing. DAF reserves the right to amend, alter or change these guidelines at any time, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they check the relevant website frequently. The guidelines that apply to your application will be the guidelines that are current at the time your application is received by DAF.

While DAF has taken all care in preparing these guidelines, DAF will not be liable in any way for any errors, omissions or variation to information in these guidelines or for not advising an applicant of any errors, omissions or variations to information in these guidelines. DAF may cancel or suspend this scheme at any time without notice.