

+ Regional Drought Resilience Planning Scheme Guidelines

1. About the Scheme

- 1.1. The Regional Drought Resilience Planning Scheme (the Scheme) aims to provide grants of financial assistance to assist in paying wages and salaries necessary to amend a draft plan, or wages and salaries necessary to carry out the *eligible activities* identified in a *regional drought resilience plan* (Plan) and other costs associated with carrying out *eligible activities* identified in the *Plan*.

2. Amount of Assistance

- 2.1. The amount of assistance for the **activity grant** is up to \$300,000 (plus GST).
- 2.2. The amount of assistance for the **remuneration grant** is up to \$150,000 (plus GST).
- 2.3. The maximum amount of funding an *eligible entity* can receive under the Scheme is \$450,000 (exclusive of GST).
- 2.4. An applicant may apply for an activity grant and a remuneration grant under the Scheme.

3. Regional Drought Resilience Plan

- 3.1. A **regional drought resilience plan** (*Plan*) for an *eligible entity*, is a plan about drought resilience for a stated *relevant region*, to which the entity is a party, that:
 - (a) is approved by the Commonwealth Minister for drought under the program known as the Future Drought Fund Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program administered by the relevant Commonwealth department (the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (the Department);
 - (b) is published on the Department's website; and
- 3.2. A *draft Plan* for an *eligible entity* is a plan about drought resilience:
 - (a) given to DAF by an *eligible entity* before the commencement of the Scheme; and
 - (b) that has not been approved, or refused to be approved, by the Commonwealth Minister for drought as *Plan*.

4. Eligibility Criteria

- 4.1. An *eligible entity* means:
 - (a) a local government; or
 - (b) a *natural resource management organisation*; or
 - (c) a *regional development authority committee*; or
 - (d) a *regional organisation of councils*.

Activity Grant

- 4.2. The *activity grant* is a grant for financial assistance to an *applicant* under the Scheme for carrying out *eligible activities* identified in the *applicant's Plan*.
- 4.3. To be eligible for the **activity grant**:
- (a) the *applicant* must be an *eligible entity* and a party to a *Plan*;
 - (b) the activities in the *Plan* are *eligible activities*.
 - (c) the *applicant* has been given an *eligibility notice* by the Chief Executive of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries; and
- 4.4. An applicant is not eligible for the **activity grant** if:
- (a) the costs are not related to making the application for assistance;
 - (b) the costs are not related to the carrying out of the *eligible activities* identified in the *Plan*;
 - (c) an activity grant has already been approved in relation to the *Plan*.

Remuneration Grant

- 4.5. The *remuneration grant* is a grant of financial assistance under the Scheme for wages, salary or fees the entity pays a person employed or otherwise engaged to assist the *applicant*.
- (a) for a *draft plan* – to make amendments to the *draft plan* as required by the Commonwealth Minister for drought before the plan to be approved as a *Plan*; or
 - (b) for a *Plan* – to carry out the *eligible activities* identified in the *Plan*.
- 4.6. To be eligible for the **remuneration grant**:
- (a) the applicant is an *eligible entity*;
 - (b) for a *draft plan* – the Commonwealth Minister for drought requires the applicant to amend the plan before it is approved as a *Plan*; **or**
 - (c) for a *Plan* – the activities identified in the *plan* are *eligible activities*; and
 - (d) the Chief Executive of DAF has given the applicant an *eligibility notice*.
- 4.7. An applicant is not eligible for the **remuneration grant** if:
- (a) for a *Plan*, a *remuneration grant* has been approved in relation to the plan.
 - (b) for a *draft Plan*:
 - i. a *remuneration grant* has already been approved in relation to the plan;
 - ii. the wages, salary or fees were paid by the *applicant* or *eligible entity* before the commencement of the Scheme

5. How to Apply

- 5.1. To apply for assistance, complete the application form available on QRIDA's website at: qrda.qld.gov.au and submit to QRIDA by post or email.
- 5.2. Applications must be submitted to QRIDA before the Scheme closing day, 30 June 2025.
- 5.3. Applications assistance must be submitted to QRIDA accompanied with:
- (a) the *applicant's eligibility notice*: and
 - (b) the documents stated in the application form.
- 5.4. Applications for *activity grant* must state the *eligible activities* subject of the application.
- 5.5. If more than one *eligible entity* is identified in the *Plan* as a party to the *Plan*, the application must provide evidence of the consent of each *eligible entity* identified in the *Plan* to making of the application.

- 5.6. QRIDA may ask the applicant to provide further information to decide the application.
- 5.7. Upon receiving applications, QRIDA will acknowledge receipt by email and advise if any further information is required to commence assessment of the application.

6. Conditions of Assistance

- 6.1. QRIDA must consider and decide to approve or refuse to approve each application received under the Scheme.
- 6.2. QRIDA must have regard to the amount of assistance recommended by the Chief Executive of DAF stated in the *eligibility notice* when deciding the amount of assistance granted to an applicant for a *Plan*.
- 6.3. QRIDA must be satisfied that the *draft plan* or *plan* the subject of the application will improve drought resilience in the relevant region.
- 6.4. Before receiving assistance, the applicant must enter into and comply with the agreement with QRIDA that sets out the terms on which the assistance is provided.
- 6.5. QRIDA must refuse to approve an application if the funds for the Scheme are not sufficient to pay the application.
- 6.6. QRIDA must give the applicant written notice of the decision.
- 6.7. The *applicant* must keep the tax invoices for payments made by the applicant for which the applicant receives assistance under the Scheme (the records), until the day that is 1 year after the day Scheme closes.
- 6.8. The applicant must consent to QRIDA conducting an audit on *the records* to verify the amounts given to the applicant under the Scheme are used in accordance with the application for assistance.
- 6.9. If requested by QRIDA, the applicant must give QRIDA a report (the report) about how the financial assistance is enabling the entity:
 - (a) if the assistance is related to a *draft Plan*, develop the *Plan*; or
 - (b) if the assistance is related to a *Plan*, implement eligible activities and improve drought resilience in the relevant region identified in the *Plan*.
- 6.10. The applicant must agree to give consent to QRIDA to share *the report* or information included in *the report* with the Chief Executive and the Commonwealth Minister for drought.

7. Terms and conditions

- 7.1. The Scheme will close to applications on 30 June 2025, when available funds have been allocated, or on the extension date given by the Minister.
- 7.2. QRIDA may request further information to determine an application.
- 7.3. Upon receiving applications, QRIDA will acknowledge receipt by email and advise if any further information is required to commence assessment of the application.
- 7.4. Incomplete applications will not be assessed until all required information is received.
- 7.5. QRIDA must refuse an application if the funds for the assistance are not sufficient to pay the application.
- 7.6. Approved assistance will be deposited to your nominated bank account.

8. Conflict of Interest

- 8.1. A conflict of interest may arise due to a business dealing with QRIDA, if your private interests conflict with your obligations under the Scheme. Conflicts of interest could affect your eligibility for conditional approval. A conflict of interest can be;

- real (or actual);
- apparent (or perceived); or
- potential.

8.2. We will ask you to declare, as part of your application, any business dealings that may be considered an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest. If you later identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to your application, you must inform us in writing immediately.

9. Fraudulent Applications

- 9.1. QRIDA takes fraud and corruption seriously. Suspected fraud will be referred to Queensland Police Services (QPS) and/or the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC).
- 9.2. Fraud and corruption is a criminal offence under Sections 408C, 408D and 87 of the *Criminal Code 1899 (Qld)*. For corporations, directors and company officials, Section 596 and 184 of the *Australian Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)* will also apply.
- 9.3. Providing false or misleading information or documents in the QRIDA application process is an offence. Penalties may apply under Section 41 and 42 of the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994*.
- 9.4. By signing the application form, you acknowledge that the information you provide is true and accurate, and agree to be bound by the Scheme's guidelines and provisions.
- 9.5. QRIDA reserves the right to pursue and recover funding provided under fraudulent and dishonest circumstances.

10. Your privacy

- 10.1. QRIDA's Privacy Policy, available at qrda.qld.gov.au/privacy, sets out general information on how QRIDA collects, uses and discloses individuals' personal information
- 10.2. The application portal for this Scheme contains specific information on how personal information will be collected, used, and disclosed.

11. More information

For more information on the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Scheme, contact QRIDA on **1800 623 946** or email regionaldroughtresilience@qrda.qld.gov.au.

12. Definitions

Activity grant – see section 4.2 to 4.4.

Applicant – means an entity applying for financial assistance under the scheme.

Approved form means a form approved by QRIDA.

Commonwealth Minister for drought means the *Drought Minister* within the meaning of the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019 (Cwlth)*, section 5.

Draft plan, for an *eligible entity* see section 3.2.

Drought resilience see the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019 (Cwlth)*, section 5.

Eligible activities are activities that:

- (a) are identified in a *regional drought resilience plan*;
- (b) are designed to improve drought resilience for the *relevant region* for the plan;
- (c) are carried out after the *Plan* is published on the relevant Commonwealth Department's website;

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(d) are completed no later than 3 months before the day the Scheme closes.

Eligible entity see section 4.1.

Eligibility notice is a written notice stating the matters mentioned in (a) that is given by the Chief Executive of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to an *eligible entity* for the purposes of enabling the entity to apply for assistance under the Scheme.

(a) The notice must state, for a *regional drought resilience plan*:

- i. that the Commonwealth Minister for drought has approved the *eligible entity's draft plan* as a *regional drought resilience plan*; and
- ii. the *eligible activities* identified in the plan in relation to which the entity may apply for assistance under the Scheme; and
- iii. the amount of financial assistance the Chief Executive of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries recommends may be granted by QRIDA in relation to stated wages, salary or fees to carry out the *eligible activities*.

(b) The notice must state, for a *draft plan*:

- i. that the Commonwealth Minister for drought requires the plan to be amended before it may be approved as a *regional drought resilience plan*;
- ii. the amount of financial assistance the Chief Executive recommends may be granted by QRIDA in relation to stated wages, salary or fees necessary to amend the draft Plan in accordance with the Commonwealth Minister for drought's requirements.

Natural resource management organisation means an entity established to manage, protect and preserve the natural resources of a particular area or region of the State (*examples: Desert Channels Group, Fitzroy Basin Association*).

Regional Development Australia Charter means the document of that name made by the Commonwealth Minister responsible for regional development on 28 July 2023 and published on the website of the Regional Development Australia.

Regional development authority committee means a committee –

- established by the Commonwealth Government to represent a particular region or area of the State; and
- that operates in accordance with the Regional Development Australia Charter.

Regional organisation of councils means an entity established to represent 2 or more local governments within a particular region or area of the State.

Relevant Commonwealth department - means the government department administered by the Commonwealth Minister for drought.

Relevant region, in relation to an eligible entity, means a particular area or region of the State identified in the entity's *regional drought resilience plan* or *draft plan*.

Remuneration grant – see section 4.5 to 4.7.

Scheme means the Scheme set out in Schedule 61 of the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation 2011*.