



## Water Infrastructure Assistance Commended in Worsening Drought

AGFORCE Queensland has today commended both the Queensland and Federal Government on responding to worsening drought conditions and animal welfare concerns through the announcement of a funding boost for the state's water infrastructure.

In November last year, Federal Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce, and his Queensland counterpart, Dr John McVeigh, signed an agreement to increase water infrastructure rebates, with this agreement actioned earlier today.

Under the funding arrangement, primary producers will be eligible for an additional 25 per cent rebate for water-related infrastructure on top of what they can access under the Queensland Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate.

AgForce General President, Ian Burnett, said the funding would be welcomed by drought stricken primary producers, across approximately 70 per cent of Queensland, who were under pressure to secure reliable water sources for stock.

"In times of severe drought such as this providing a reliable supply of fresh water for livestock is critical to ensuring animal welfare," Mr Burnett said.

"Establishing new water infrastructure can be both expensive and labour intensive, so at a time when there is already enormous financial stress on our primary producers this additional assistance is warmly welcomed.

"We also congratulate both the State and Federal Governments on recognising the severity of this current drought and collaboratively responding to the needs of both our farmers and the livestock they care for."

However, Mr Burnett also reiterated the importance of further government response given the unique and severe nature of this weather event. Some of the measures identified as suitable for such assistance were this week outlined by both the National Farmers' Federation and AgForce Queensland.

"The severity of this drought has now pushed it to what should surely be considered a natural disaster," Mr Burnett said.

"We urge Minister Joyce and Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, to recognise the long-term viability of the agriculture industry, and the critical contribution it makes to the economy, and to provide urgent in-event support.

“There is no doubt, in the long-term, we need a significant restructure of drought support, but for now we must also be mindful of the wellbeing of the vulnerable primary producers facing this insidious weather event.”

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**Who is AgForce?** AgForce represents thousands of Queensland broadacre producers who recognise the value in having a strong voice. AgForce leads the way to ensure agriculture’s social, economic and environmental contribution is recognised by all levels of government. AgForce works alongside landholders, encourages and supports the next generation, builds industry partnerships and skills and promotes agriculture - for secure, sustainable, progressive and profitable food and fibre into the future.