

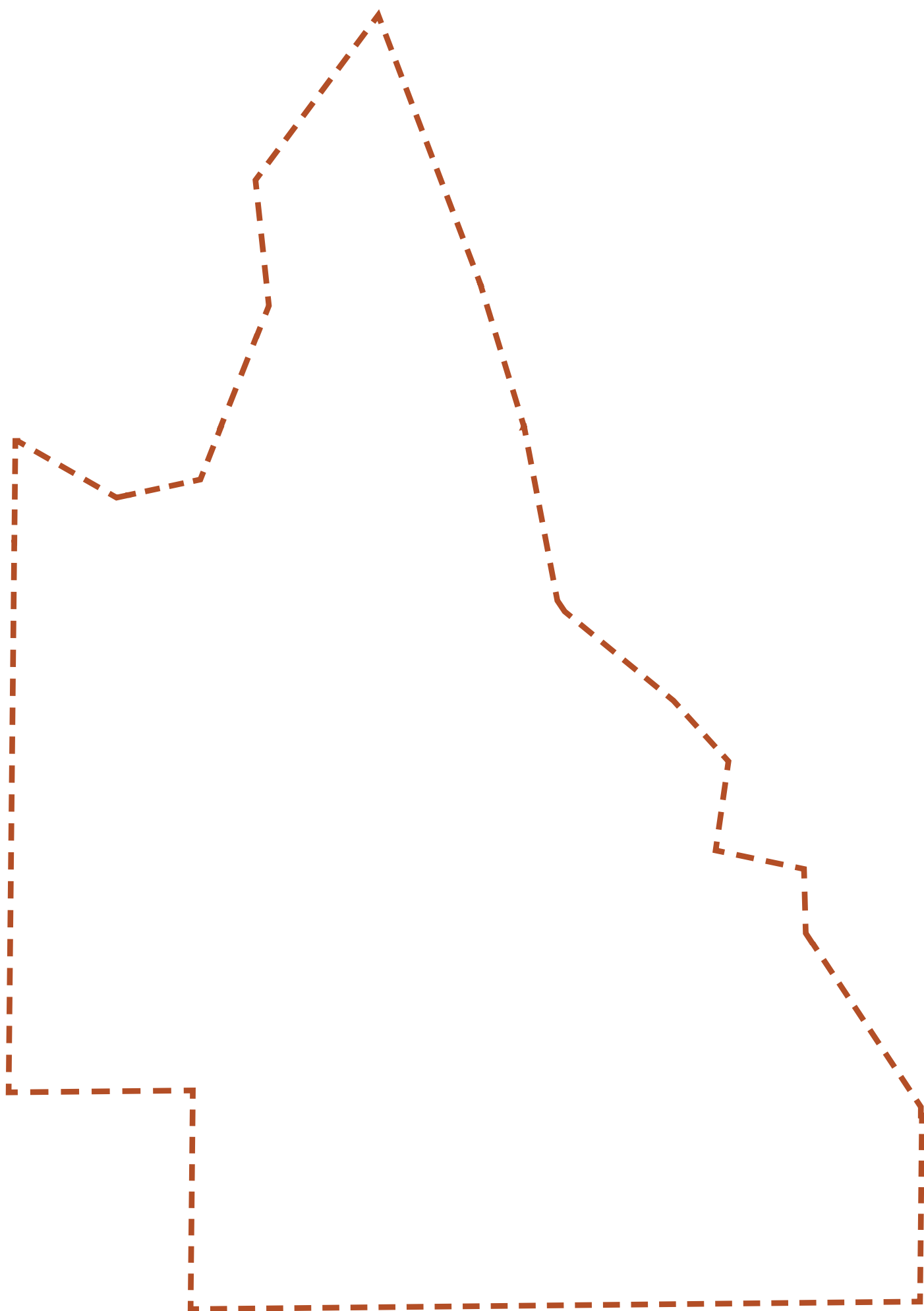
# AGFORCE QUEENSLAND FARMERS



STATE ELECTION  
POLICY DOCUMENT 2017

**‘THRIVING FARMS, THRIVING QUEENSLAND’**





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# Introduction

Agriculture is a foundation of the Queensland economy and a vital contributor to our society, underpinning tens of thousands of jobs in regional, rural and remote communities and thousands more in our cities.

The Agricultural Census released this year reveals Queensland is now the most valuable agricultural state in the country, producing almost a quarter of Australia's food and fibre.

The latest AgTrends Report from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries estimates the total value of our primary industry commodities at the farm gate was about \$15.5 billion in 2016/17.

From banana growers in the north, to grain growers in the south, to cattle and sheep producers in the west, Queensland farmers produce safe, high quality food and fibre for Australian and overseas consumers – and demand is growing.

AgForce believes Queensland has the potential to double the value of our agricultural production to more than \$30 billion a year over the next decade.

But for Queensland agriculture to achieve its full potential, we need governments to adopt the right policy settings so farmers can get on with the job of feeding our state, our country and consumers in many other nations across the world.

Through our 'Thriving Farms, Thriving Queensland' election policy platform, AgForce has outlined a series of policy priorities for agriculture, grouped under four key themes:

- Supporting Our Rural Families;
- Healthy Environments – Protecting Our Land and Water;
- Growing Agriculture and Enhancing Profitability; and
- Connecting Queensland.

Delivering on these policy priorities would drive growth in agriculture, create more jobs for Queenslanders and boost our rural and regional communities.

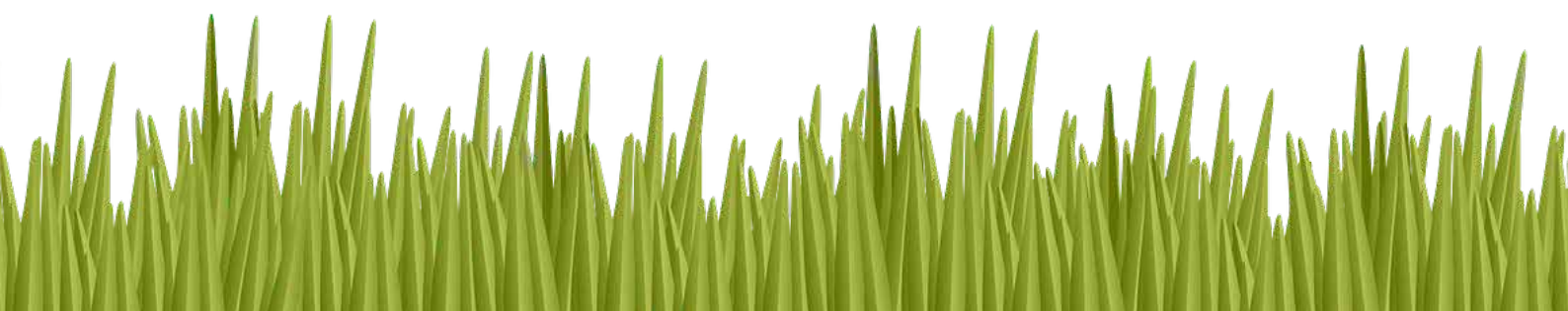
To support farmers achieve the vision of a \$30 billion agricultural sector in Queensland by 2027, we need a dedicated focus from the Queensland Government.

That's why AgForce is calling for the **establishment of an Agricultural Roundtable**, attended by key government and industry stakeholders, to help drive the sector forward.

Key members would include the Ministers covering policy areas such as agriculture, state development, transport infrastructure, natural resources, environment, and trade and investment.

Together with agricultural industry leaders, the Ministers would be tasked with tracking progress to achieve the vision for agriculture, identifying issues across portfolios and developing agreed solutions.

**Because if agriculture thrives,  
Queensland thrives.**



# About AgForce Queensland

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AgForce is an independent, non-government, voluntary organization with a vision to:

**“Drive and lead innovative and thriving broadacre industries in Queensland.”**

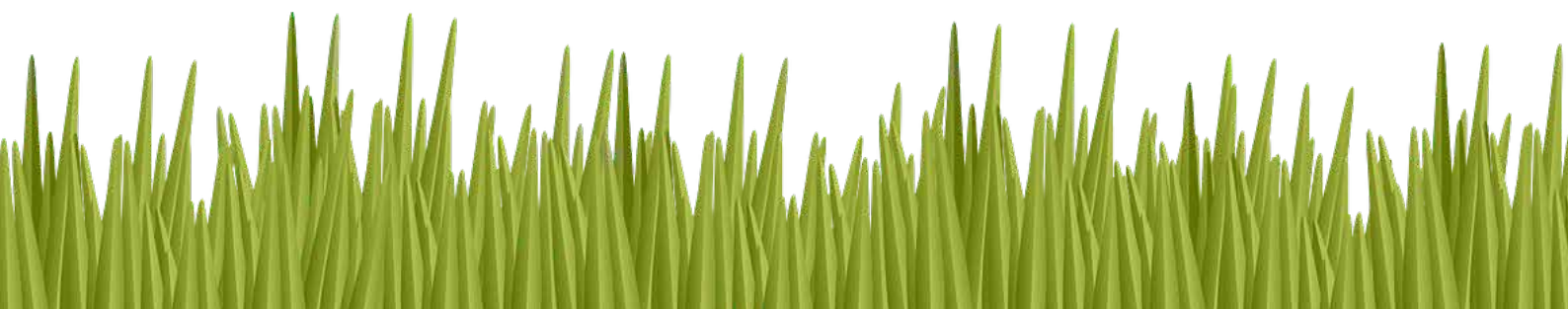
AgForce represents approximately 5,000 members across the beef, sheep and wool, and grains industries in Queensland. Our members provide high quality food and fibre products to Australian and overseas consumers, manage about 40 percent of Queensland’s agricultural landscape and contribute significantly to the social fabric of regional, rural and remote communities.

One of our key goals is to provide a strong, united voice for the farmers and graziers who create the first link in a supply chain which generates billions of dollars of production, employment and economic growth in Queensland. Our functions include representation of members to government, member training and education, industry stakeholder engagement, and creating open lines of communication between our industry and the people who consume our products.

We also pride ourselves on our regional presence with dedicated staff and elected members strategically placed throughout Queensland including:

- AgForce North – Longreach and Townsville
- AgForce South-East Queensland – Toowoomba
- AgForce Southern Inland Queensland – Roma
- AgForce South West Queensland – Charleville
- AgForce Central Queensland – Rockhampton
- AgForce Head Office – Brisbane

For further information on the policies contained in this document please contact AgForce on 07 32363100 or via email ([agforce@agforceqld.org.au](mailto:agforce@agforceqld.org.au)).



# Fast Farm Facts

## 85%

Almost 85 per cent of our fertile state is used for agriculture and grazing. (Source: Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, 10 year road map discussion paper, June 2017)



## 24%

Queensland accounted for 24 per cent of Australia's agricultural production by value in 2015/16. (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015/16 Agricultural Census)



## 47%

Queensland produces almost half of Australia's beef. The size of the beef cattle herd was 10.4 million head at 30 June 2016, which was 47 per cent of the national total. (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015/16 Agricultural Census)



## 26,000

There are approximately 26,000 farm businesses across Queensland. (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Land management and farming in Australia, 2014-15)





# Fast Farm Facts

## 59,400

59,400 Queenslanders are directly employed in agriculture (Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office 2016, Employed person by industry, Queensland, 2005-06 to 2015-16)



## 330,000

Over 330,000 Queenslanders are employed across the whole food supply chain, meaning that one in seven Queenslanders are either partially or entirely supported by the food sector. (Source: Queensland's agriculture strategy, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 2013)



## \$15.54b

The value of Queensland's primary industry commodities is forecast to be \$15.54 billion in 2016/17. (Source: AgTrends Report, Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, April 2017)



## \$4.41b

The value of first-stage processing (or value-added production) is a further \$4.41 billion. (Source: AgTrends Report, Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, April 2017)





# Supporting our Rural Families

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Queensland's primary producers work hard every day to provide for their families and provide high quality food and fibre products to all Queenslanders, in the face of challenging business and climatic conditions including drought. They want to be able to hand their farm onto the next generation in a way that maximises their chance of having a successful and safe farming career. They also want our city cousins to better understand farming, and perhaps make a career in the industry or its many supporting roles, including those located in the city.





# Supporting our Rural Families

## Next generation – Entry to farming

### Issue:

Starting out in any business is tough and it's no different in the agricultural sector. The average age of Queensland farmers is 56 years of age, and an average of 36 years involved in farming<sup>1</sup>. There is a relatively low turnover in the agricultural workforce compared to other sectors of the economy, and entry rates are correspondingly lower.

Farm businesses represent complex, multi-million dollar investments so the barriers to entry into farming are significant. We need to reduce the barriers to generational change in agriculture to ensure that there is a continual infusion of new people and ideas to keep industry productivity growing. We also need to ensure that new entrants are supported so they are not set up to fail in the early years of their farming careers, given the greater income volatility in agriculture.

As a new entrant starting with limited capital, the vast bulk of Queensland that is likely to be more available is leasehold land, particularly term lease which is owned and leased by the State under the *Land Act 1994* and which can never be upgraded in tenure. Land rent represents a significant ongoing cost, particularly in the early years of a business.

Recent amendments by the state government to assist succession by expanding exemptions from duty costs in the case of family farm transfers have been welcomed, however these currently only apply to transfers of farm businesses to individual recipients. Farmers often use family trusts or companies to protect their assets and to assist fair succession arrangements. Under current eligibility settings acquiring family trusts or companies have to pay transfer duty, potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars, which detracts from financial resilience or must be added to the debt levels of new entrants.

### Solutions:

- Expansion of eligible activities for succession planning grants to include professional advice plus the costs of financial assessment and implementation of new business arrangements
- To facilitate industry participation and successful succession AgForce believes that new industry entrants buying term leases be provided two years of rent relief
- The extension of the exemption from transfer duty on intergenerational family farm and business transfers to include all family business models

<sup>1</sup>Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Farm Management and Demographics, Australia – 2015-16



# Supporting our Rural Families

## Next generation – School to Industry Partnership Program long term funding

### Issue:

Since 2004 AgForce has delivered a very successful program connecting young people at school directly with agricultural producers through school-based interactive events. It is currently funded through the Skills Unit at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. The School to Industry Partnership Program (SIPP) has consistently delivered on its 2 objectives:

- to inform primary school students about the sources of their food and fibre through interactive school-based events
- to provide direct careers-related engagement between secondary school students and agriculture employers and producers, including emerging science and technology-based ag businesses.

SIPP is an excellent program, highly rated by all stakeholders and participants including Government Departments, schools and teachers. It is recognized by state and national agriculture educators as a successful, innovative and effective facilitator of school industry connections.

SIPP has been delivering a professional program across Queensland and is the only program promoting agriculture to students in Queensland – yet SIPP has no guaranteed ongoing funding, despite operating on a very limited budget. This restricts the number and spread of interactions compared to the demand and imposes significant burdens on the two part-time staff currently employed.

AgForce calls on all parties to recognise the tremendous need for this program and to ensure it is funded sustainably into the future. Previously funding has been provided across several departments and this may be a solution again.

### Solution:

A more permanent funding structure for the SIPP must be put in place across responsible Departments.





# Supporting our Rural Families

## Drought

### Issue:

Compared to other sectors of the economy, agriculture operates in a highly variable business environment with dry periods a feature which may become more frequent under climate change. Drought has a large negative impact on producers and their families, their farm environments and the productivity and profitability of broadacre businesses.

Two thirds of Queensland is currently declared drought-affected by the Queensland Government. Existing state drought support measures are necessary for dealing with this event and are a valuable complement to Federal measures. On average, Queensland farmers receive just 1 percent of their income from grants, government transfers, or relief funding<sup>2</sup>.

Farmers have primary responsibility for managing their own climate risks. AgForce is supportive of policies towards drought that assist producers to prepare for, live through and recover from drought and that build industry resilience to future events. It is also important that the emotional stresses of meeting education costs for farm kids during periods of sustained low or no income is relieved.

AgForce has developed a new approach to drought policy called the Agricultural Business Cycle. Under the Cycle producers develop climate risk management plans, self-identify what phase of the climate cycle they are in, and implement their plans through selecting from a range of privately and publicly funded measures that address the financial, social and environmental challenges of drought. Using their experience from each cycle, producers continually improve their capacity to mitigate impacts.

### Solutions:

- A commitment to provide continued assistance programs for producers to help them deal with the current severe drought and further expand financial support, such as local government rate relief
- Introduce, as a standard response, increased support for meeting the education costs of students from rural and remote areas once identified as drought affected
- To better manage future droughts, adopt the Agricultural Business Cycle concept and promote it to the Australian Governments as part of a shared approach to drought policy, preferably through the 2017-18 Intergovernmental Agreement review process.
- To continue funding RD&E programs that build the drought resilience of primary producers.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Farm Management and Demographics, Australia – 2015-16



# Farm Safety

## Quad bike safety rebate program

### Issue:

Only three per cent of Queenslanders' work on farms, but nearly 30 per cent of workplace deaths happen on them. Within the Queensland farm sector:

- There are on average 1,700 general workplace injuries per year
- 15 deaths per year - last year 3 of these involved children under 15 years
- \$22 million in annual workers' compensation claim payments
- The categories most at risk are machinery operators and drivers and young workers aged 25 to 34 (the latter accounting for ¼ of all injuries)
- Last year a further 85 non-fatal incidents were serious enough to be reported in media outlets. Of these, 45 were in Queensland and 43 involved quad bikes.

Despite significant funds being invested in preventative advertising campaigns by the Queensland Government little return is evident, with statistics rising and anecdotal evidence showing there has been little uptake of preventative measures, such as removing kids on adult-sized quad bikes and the wearing of helmets.

Coronial recommendations have supported greater regulation and recent case law indicates that Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) will seek to enforce strong penalties on Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBUs) found to have breached their duty of care.

AgForce supports policies that are incentives-based and move producer behaviour without harsh regulatory penalties in the first instance. Several farm bodies in other Australian jurisdictions have recently made proactive policy in farm safety, and combined this with support for state government rebate initiatives. Academic research evaluating

the Victorian 1997-98 rollover protective structure (ROPS) rebate scheme for tractors shows that the program has saved two Victorian farmers annually.

### Solution:

- A rebate program be put in place to cover:
  - i. Helmet purchase
  - ii. Installation and/or retrofitting of operator protective devices (OPD) and Crush Protection Devices (CPDs)
  - iii. Purchase of Side by Side Vehicles (SSV) or alternative vehicles
- The program should be based on the Victorian program in terms of quantum, eligibility criteria and (subject to government approval) administration.





# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

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Primary producers are the true environmentalists and the large majority want to pass on their land and water resources in better condition than they received it. We don't want our hands tied by excessive red tape in doing so, or in trying to manage our businesses and supply our customers in a profitable and sustainable way. We want support for our voluntary conservation efforts, including pest and weed control, and to secure protection for the irreplaceable high quality agricultural land and water resources our production systems depend on. Farmers just want a fair deal when resources companies seek to operate on or nearby their properties and for negative impacts on them to be avoided and minimised.



# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## Vegetation management

### Issue:

Landscape management objectives for healthy environments can be better achieved through cooperative and voluntary, rather than regulatory, involvement of landholders. Harsh regulatory practices have been utilised by state governments in the past, through restrictive (and often retrospective) regulation of land clearing. This legislation has been superseded numerous times by additions and amendments, leading to confusion and frustration for farmers. This regulatory practice has come at a significant cost to Queensland farmers, led to numerous perverse outcomes, and has created significant limitations to future farm productivity. These limitations reduce the ability of landholders to sustainably manage healthy environmental resources, such as land and water, that are vital to their overall productivity.

Instead, AgForce supports and endorses alternative, voluntary and complementary measures that correct the current red tape policy direction. Such measures give farmers clarity on the public benefit of undertaking actions on-farm that have positive environmental outcomes for the broader community.

AgForce believes complementary policy measures must:

- Provide investment certainty and clarity about the ultimate treatment of agriculture
- Provide positive incentives for adopting greater environmental and biodiversity outcomes and practices, an example of which is the Nature Refuges program
- Acknowledge previous good land management practice
- Be based on sound science, but entail a low administrative burden.

### Solutions:

- As soon as possible, implement AgForce's Baseline Area Management Plan (BAMP) policy. This entails a plan that is negotiated between the landholder and the State Government to manage vegetation on a landscape scale, having defined the outcome of the management activity prior to the BAMP being initiated.
- Guaranteed funding of extension for landholders to refresh their knowledge and understanding of responsibilities under the current vegetation management framework. For example, offering direct one-on-one support and negotiation capacities to implement the BAMP, or workshops held regionally by trusted industry networks and the Queensland Government.





# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## NatureAssist program

### Issue:

Farming and protecting the environment can occur simultaneously. This has been proven and encouraged through programs such as the Nature Refuges program. AgForce members currently manage over 1.7 million hectares under the Nature Refuges program, which is 46 percent of the total area of land protected by the program. Landholders who declare areas of their property under this program do so on a voluntary basis, managing these properties at their own cost whilst conserving significant environmental systems valued by the Queensland public.

The NatureAssist funding is currently targeted and assists landholders to achieve mutually-agreed projects to protect conservation values on their land and enhance the resilience of the property.

### Solution:

Guaranteed NatureAssist funding and expanding stewardship resourcing to incentivise and support landholder management of properties under the Nature Refuges program. This must include adequate funding and/or compensation for activities such as pest animal and weed control, and fire management.





# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## Wild Rivers red tape

### Issue:

AgForce supports protecting our rivers' natural values and the recognition that it is largely primary producers' voluntary land and river management efforts that have kept these natural values intact. AgForce has a long-standing opposition to the onerous *Wild Rivers Act 2005* and supported its repeal in 2014 as we believe better environmental outcomes can be achieved through greater support for voluntary landholder conservation activities without introducing additional layers of red tape.

A range of other regulation already applies to land and water use activities including the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, *Vegetation Management Act 1999*, *Water Act 2000*, *Planning Act 2016*, *Forestry Act 1959*, *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, *Land Act 1994*, and *Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007*. A desktop review conducted in 2016 showed that just at a state level, Queensland agriculture was affected by over 75 Acts and Regulations covering over 17,590 pages, not including local Government by-laws, associated Codes or Federal legislation.

The repealed *Wild Rivers Act 2005* did not acknowledge responsible and ecologically sustainable development and so social and economic outcomes were ignored for the sake of a purely environment-preservation-focussed Act. It restricted the ability of producers to implement best practice land management, diversify their practices in response to future challenges, including changing climate and market factors, and created perverse pest and weed management outcomes.

Green groups are seeking commitments to introduce re-badged Wild Rivers legislation in the next term of government, but indigenous leaders and AgForce oppose the return of this stifling red tape.

### Solution:

- Fund voluntary landholder stewardship programs, such as NatureAssist
- Facilitate opportunities for sustainable, viable development on suitable land so that landholders have more resources to conserve significant natural values on their properties
- Undertake real and transparent consultation with all affected stakeholders on any proposals to introduce unwanted 'wild rivers' or 'pristine rivers' legislation





# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## Biosecurity - More funds for Protected Area Estate pest and weed management

### Issue:

The current statewide budget for managing biosecurity matter across State managed land is not sufficient. For example, the statewide budget for managing giant rats tail grass on unallocated state land is only \$21,000<sup>3</sup>. Individual producers spend much more than this in one paddock. Everyone has a duty to contain their biosecurity matter and prevent spread, otherwise neighbouring productivity and natural systems are at risk.

Any government activity to increase Queensland's protected area estate from 9 per cent to 17 per cent must also provide a realistic annual budget for weed, disease and pest management.

### Solution:

Any existing and new State-funded land acquisition must also be allocated a perpetual annual budget for bushfire mitigation, invasive weeds and pest animal management and to minimise harbouring any prohibited biosecurity matter.

<sup>3</sup> Source: current Qld Govt Parliamentary Committee weed inquiry.



# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## Biosecurity - Improving capability, preparedness and awareness

### Issue:

The risk of new biosecurity incursions and the state's ability to respond remain a major threat to Queensland's agriculture, communities and ecosystems. The capacity of Biosecurity Queensland (BQ) needs rebuilding with people and systems<sup>4</sup>. The Queensland Government committed \$10.8 million of the requested \$30 million to Queensland Biosecurity Capability Review, however, progress has been extremely slow. Expert skills in biosecurity are acquired over time through practical experience and mentoring.

Further, since introduction of the new Biosecurity Act 2014, the rate of new biosecurity outbreaks across Queensland has diminished public confidence in Queensland's biosecurity systems. The concept of a General Biosecurity Obligation is poorly understood across agricultural systems and within the general community. Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility, just like public health and safety, but the message is failing to resonate with people.

Current trends in cost-sharing arrangements indicate graziers require an independent source of funds to solve livestock-related biosecurity issues. BQ responded to 43 threats over the 2015-16 period, only two of which were livestock-related, despite graziers being the state's largest agricultural producers.

<sup>4</sup> Source: <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/biosecurity/about-biosecurity/enhancing-biosecurity-capability-and-capacity-in-queensland>

### Solutions:

- Implement the Queensland Biosecurity Capability Review recommendations, and set aside \$5 million to develop and deliver the actions plans to support the Biosecurity Strategy 2017 – 2022.
- Prioritise building expertise, networks and regional capacity to respond to biosecurity incidents. Commence departmental succession plans and cadetships for biosecurity surveillance, awareness and research expertise.
- Raise everyone's awareness about biosecurity and their obligations to minimise weed, pest and disease spread.
- Invest in the regional biosecurity networks for weed, disease and pest management, and raise awareness of AgVet chemical training requirements, by upskilling produce agencies, pesticide outlets, and land management staff in biosecurity surveillance and methods for controlling biosecurity matter.
- Share, practical community mapping tools within the BIMS (Biosecurity Information Management System) to detect, map and monitor new and existing biosecurity incursions.
- Retain strong linkages to national biosecurity preparedness, such as AustVetPan, PlantPlan and Livestock Biosecurity Network.
- Graziers require an independent source of funds to solve broadacre livestock-related biosecurity issues - an industry-controlled fund would see our real issues addressed, regardless of prevailing government priorities.





# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## Great Artesian Basin Sustainability investment

### Issue:

Consumption of water from the vital Great Artesian Basin (GAB) contributes \$12.8 Billion annually to the Australian economy, including \$3 Billion from livestock within Queensland, and supports many rural communities and significant natural values such as springs.

Free flowing bores and bore drains used for transporting water to livestock results in significant evaporative and transmission water losses. In partnership with state and federal governments through the Sustainability Initiative (GABSI), landholders in the GAB have for many years been investing in capping these bores and replacing drains with piping. GABSI delivers wins for the environment, primary producers and rural economies. But the work is not yet completed.

Queensland government estimates that there will still be approximately 185 bores requiring rehabilitation and about 5,250 km of associated bore drains to be replaced in our state. This represents around \$75 million and 7 years' work

At the end of each Phase of the Initiative, securing Australian and Queensland government funding by AgForce has become increasingly difficult and a firm commitment to complete the job is needed to maintain momentum and obtain maximum value from the past investments.

### Solutions:

- For the Queensland and Australian governments to firmly commit to providing financial and other incentives sufficient to complete all the capping and piping work in Queensland
- To work with AgForce and other stakeholders to develop a sustainable funding model for sustainability efforts prior to the end of 2018
- For the state government to only move to a compliance based approach following a 10-year transition period that includes adequate positive incentives for voluntary conversions.



# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## Land use planning and protection of agricultural land

### Issue:

Broadacre agriculture faces significant competition for land from alternative industries, including from the resource sector, emerging solar energy generation and for environmental conservation. Productive agricultural land is an irreplaceable asset for current and future generations and must be effectively identified, managed and preserved through land use planning frameworks.

Queensland has only 4 per cent of Australia's prime agricultural land. As industry and policy makers strive to increase sustainable production and exports, the preferred solution to land use conflicts is for areas of irreplaceable, high quality agricultural land to be identified and completely protected from any activity that might risk its ongoing capacity to produce food and fibre for the generations of Queenslanders to come.

A more consistent system to characterise this land is also needed as multiple definitions currently exist within planning frameworks, e.g. Priority Agricultural Areas (PAA) and Priority Agricultural Land Uses, Strategic Cropping Areas (SCA), Strategic Cropping Land, Important Agricultural Areas and Agricultural Land Class A & B agricultural land. This reduces transparency and the capacity to effectively manage this vital resource.

AgForce is fully supportive of the development of renewable energy sources, such as solar, providing these developments (which can cover thousands of hectares) do not unavoidably impinge upon or reduce the prime agricultural land available to Queensland agriculture. Many local governments lack the resources to assess impacts and ensure compliance with imposed conditions and it is preferable that they be managed more consistently across the state.

### Solutions:

- Areas of irreplaceable, high quality agricultural land be identified and fully protected from any activity risking its ongoing capacity to produce food and fibre
- Develop a state planning Code for impact assessment of large-scale solar photovoltaic facilities to avoid direct siting on high quality agricultural land and to also manage any indirect impacts on it
- Expand the coverage of the PAA and SCA frameworks across the state as currently PAA covers just 40 pc of the total current cropping area in Central Queensland and 47 pc in the Darling Downs and only a quarter of the state is under SCA and it should be extended to include areas with irrigated cropping potential, such as the Flinders and Gilbert River catchments.





# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## Resource and energy development

### Issue:

Agriculture and the resources sector are key pillars of the Queensland economy, and AgForce strives to work with landholders and all stakeholders to achieve a sustainable balance between them. The development and expansion of the resources sector, particularly the coal seam gas (CSG) industry, has seen increased interaction with agriculture and forced both industries to work to find opportunities for mutual benefit and to resolve conflict effectively. With more than 75 percent of Queensland covered by resource tenures, this interaction will continue for many years so we must get it right.

AgForce believes Government must adopt a long-term policy approach towards assessment and approvals processes of leaving no negative legacy issues for agriculture as a result of resource developments. Effective management of groundwater impacts including the ability to make good and the front-loading of robust technical studies prior to development are essential policies government must adopt.

AgForce believes:

- That high-value agricultural land must be protected from resource development
- That legislation must protect landholder rights in accessing groundwater now and into the future
- There be an effective, efficient and clear dispute resolution framework to support landholders in negotiating and implementing fair land access and make good agreements
- That cumulative groundwater models be independently developed where multiple resource projects operate.

### Solutions:

- Develop an independent cumulative groundwater model for the Galilee Basin, including proactive groundwater monitoring and support for landholder bore monitoring initiatives
- Significant resource projects must have an independent review of groundwater models and include proactive steps for developing monitoring regimes and confirming suitable alternative groundwater supplies for producers prior to development
- Expand current provisions in the Land Access Ombudsman Bill to hear pre- and post-agreement disputes including land access and make good agreements
- Provide clear protections for high-quality agricultural land from resource development
- Long-term funding commitment to the successful AgForce Projects CSG & Mining Land Support Project to provide ongoing support to landholders managing resource development and improve linkages with Government Departments
- Develop a standard land access policy outlining mandated information that must be provided to landholders in order to negotiate agreements, outline clear pathways for dispute resolution and safeguards to protect landholder rights
- Implement a land access code of conduct regarding renewable energy projects accessing private land (where applicable).



# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## Great Barrier Reef - Further funds for water quality focussed programs

### Issue:

The health of Queensland's natural resources contributes to the prosperity and productivity of vast grazing and cropping areas, and the quality of water entering catchments, including the Great Barrier Reef. Beef cattle grazing and cropping is the major land use area in the Great Barrier Reef catchment with over 33.7 million hectares grazed across the six catchments draining into the Great Barrier Reef Lagoon.

Sediment loss into watercourses, poor water quality, and loss of agricultural potential as well as weeds and pest animals have imposed significant costs on landholders and governments in the past. Reef science has turned to primary producers as the main area of influence to improve Reef water quality.

The Grazing and Grains industry is constantly improving our current practices to increase efficiency and productivity, as well as reduce impacts on our natural resource base. The United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation's decision (UNESCO) to not list the Great Barrier Reef as endangered reflects positively on efforts to date to stabilise soils in reef catchments. Grazing land end of dry season ground cover has exceeded ReefPlan targets every year, according to Reef Report Cards from 2009 to 2016.

AgForce has always maintained that a voluntary industry-led best management practice model is the most appropriate way to ensure that the Great Barrier Reef is protected for the future, and supports real environmental and conservation work undertaken on farms every day.

### Solutions:

AgForce calls for support for innovative solutions to tackling river catchment threats and fund projects that deliver environmental benefits and increase agricultural productivity:

- Recognise that landholders in the Great Barrier Reef Catchments manage more land and understand better the responses in soil and vegetation that affect soil movement.
- Without industry support, no system, legislative or voluntary, can achieve real outcomes. It is only by working with industry groups to change practices that improvement to run-off water quality that is desired by all the community can be achieved.
- Adoption of best land management practices can provide co-existence between agricultural and environmental sustainability across the GBR catchments. AgForce seeks that Governments support industry to maintain sustainable agricultural practices in catchments adjacent to the reef.





# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## Climate change - Implement agricultural adaptation strategy

### Issue:

Queensland broadacre producers face perhaps the greatest challenge of any group in the community in relation to climate change adaptation and the associated risk management. These challenges are significant in financial terms, social impacts, resource management but also in relation to animal welfare, food, fibre and crop production.

The extensive livestock industry has acted on the trend of increased drought periods and developed a drought strategy, or Agricultural Business Cycle, that emphasises producers and government taking a more proactive, collaborative approach to managing drought risk. The strategy encourages farmers to develop plans across the financial, environmental and social elements and set clear deadlines, influenced by rainfall effectiveness, for decision-taking about practical management steps, including stocking and destocking.

A key challenge in shaping climate policy settings is the need to reconcile the competing objectives of food and fibre security for a growing global population while also reducing the emissions from the sector. This challenge is reflected in the text of the Paris Agreement. The agriculture sector contributes to our national emissions profile by both sequestering carbon in soils and vegetation and the emission of greenhouse gases from farming practices such as livestock production, cropping practices, the use of fertilisers and the burning of savanna grasslands.

Agriculture must play a central role in any climate change response and it has already made the most significant reductions of any sector so far.

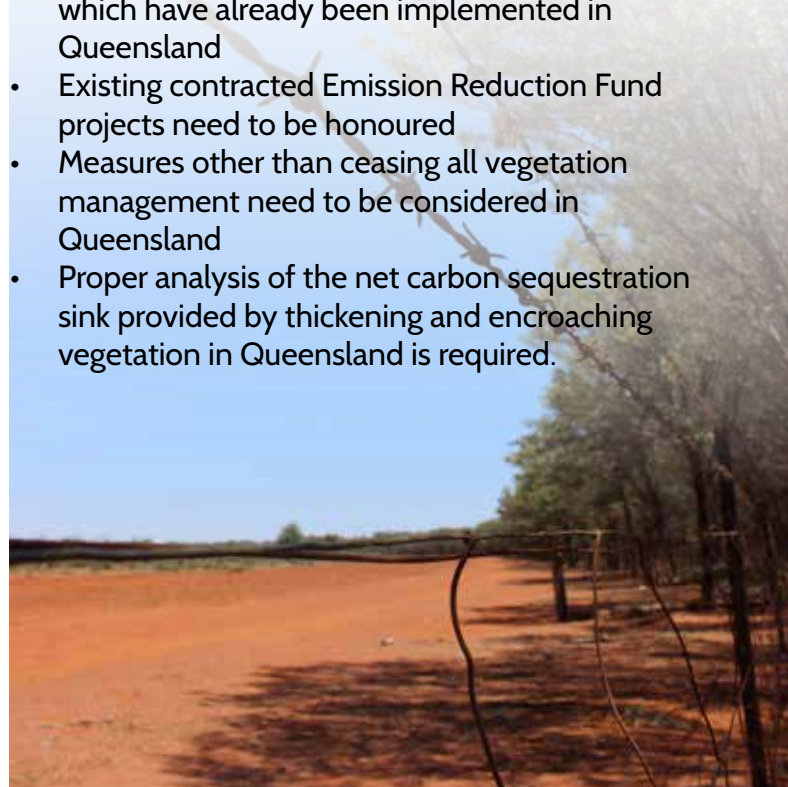
### Solutions:

#### Adaptation

- AgForce seeks to secure funding to deliver practical training and systems aimed at increasing:
  - knowledge of landholders of monitoring and environmental indicators, including remote sensing
  - adoption of best management practices, through continuous improvement processes
- Initiating on ground practice change across all broadacre agricultural industries - producers would benefit from forward-planning in abatement and adaptation methods.

#### Emissions

- AgForce does not support the continued use of agriculture as a low-cost source of offsets through regulatory processes - such as those which have already been implemented in Queensland
- Existing contracted Emission Reduction Fund projects need to be honoured
- Measures other than ceasing all vegetation management need to be considered in Queensland
- Proper analysis of the net carbon sequestration sink provided by thickening and encroaching vegetation in Queensland is required.



# Healthy Environments - Protecting our land and water

## Stock routes

### Issue:

In 2003, AgForce joined with local government bodies concerned about the deteriorating condition of the state stock route network to push State government to reform the legislation, to bring in greater compliance, a system to facilitate both short and long term grazing approvals on the system where appropriate and generate fees to reinvest in the upkeep of the network.

Over a decade later, two Bills have been introduced and failed due to a lack of political stability and the inability of parties involved to agree on implementation issues surrounding new legislation. This means that little has changed and the condition of the network is failing fast. A third version of the Bill – the Stock Route Network Management Bill 2017 – has been fraught with similar issues, and the relevant Parliamentary Committee recommended it not be passed in its current form. Regardless, if stakeholders cannot agree on a proposed reform package it is dubious whether there will be a stock route network available for use in years to come.

### Solution:

At a landmark meeting in Longreach in August 2017, key stakeholders agreed on a set of recommendations to advance the Stock Route Network Management Bill 2017. These recommendations must be implemented as a priority:

- Fees for Long-term grazing approvals: The State should set the fee (not just a minimum fee as per the current Bill). The rental component fee should be equivalent to the rental value for state grazing leases under the Land Act (currently 1.5 per cent of unimproved land value). Local governments will retain the flexibility to increase the total revenue they receive through increasing rates component paid for the grazing approval area.

- Fees for Travelling stock approvals: The State should continue to set the fee but the existing fee needs to be increased. At a minimum, the fee should be increased to 5 cents per head per day per 10 kilometres (the previous 2007-08 Stock Route Assessment Panel recommendation), annually indexed and annually reviewed with a view to gradually increasing it to reach a cost recovery level.
- Oversight: An implementation oversight group (IOG) for the Bill should be established. It would operate as a forum where implementation and network classification issues can be raised and resolution options identified and shared. Membership should include AgForce, LGAQ, local government representatives and DNRM.
- Communication/Education Program: An education program needs to be developed informing landowners of their responsibilities for using and grazing the network. Program components and roll out should be developed, coordinated and overseen through the IOG.
- Transition costs: The State government needs to provide funding to local governments to transition to the new arrangements, particularly to get new long-term grazing approvals in place.
- State Management Plan and Regulation: A commitment is sought from the Minister that stakeholders (through the proposed IOG) be consulted and engaged in the development of the state management plan and regulation.
- Water facilities management: The State government needs to commit to ongoing capital funding for water facilities through a rolling 3-year funding program, rather than an annual program.
- Water facilities management: The existing capital funding should be maintained at a minimum level of \$800,000 per annum and annually indexed.





# Growing agriculture and enhancing profitability

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As a foundation of the Queensland economy and a significant employment driver, Queensland agriculture is looking to build further on our achievement of being the most valuable in the country.

We want to look at further growth opportunities to sustainably use our abundant land and water resources and benefit our rural communities.

AgForce want to support our industry members in securing sustained productivity growth and profitability, so that they can have the quality of life all Queenslanders are seeking for themselves and their families.



# Growing agriculture and enhancing profitability

## Vegetation management - High Value Agriculture

### Issue:

AgForce maintains that High Value Agriculture/Irrigated High Value Agriculture (HVA/IHVA) development in its existing form presents a much needed social and economic opportunity for the agricultural industry in Queensland. It also has positive flow-on effects for rural communities and contributes strongly to building wealth for our state and nation.

However, some restrictions imposed by the HVA/IHVA framework contrast with the original intent of HVA/IHVA; to enable the growth of existing rural businesses to support the development of agriculture as an efficient, innovative, resilient, and profitable sector in the state economy. HVA/IHVA was also intended as a safeguard for mitigating against drought and protein deficiencies in wet season conditions, particularly in northern Queensland. The current scope of HVA/IHVA provisions do not include clearing vegetation for improved pasture as an acceptable practice. The practice of developing improved pastures has been carried out in Australia since European settlement and has resulted in the establishment of a thriving grazing industry across the state.

To support this original intent AgForce believes that applicants need to be able to demonstrate their proposal for development represents 'the right land use, the right landscape and the right design'. It is the right land use for an HVA/IHVA activity if that activity will bring economic and social benefits with minimal environmental consequences. It is the right landscape for an HVA/IHVA activity if the area has the appropriate soils, topography, rainfall and location for a successful activity that minimises the chance of the activity being abandoned. It is the right design for a HVA/IHVA activity if the crop/pasture

choice, farming method, seasonal timing and market choice make for a successful activity. This can all be demonstrated with a staged approach with 'proving up' at each stage.

AgForce also believes it is reasonable to request that clear and concise processes be put in place for applicants of HVA/IHVA developments to understand the criteria they are working towards. Once these criteria are met, a permit should be issued and, if not, there should be an appropriate right of appeal.

### Solutions:

- Amend regulations to include a staged approach to HVA/IHVA applications. Where proposed developments for HVA and/or IHVA requires land clearing exceeding 5,000 ha the clearing needs to be undertaken in stages of 5,000 ha. The applicant must 'prove up' before being allowed to clear further tranches of vegetation
- Proving means that the landowner can demonstrate an effective outcome through each phase of clearing vegetation, cultivating, and planting. The landowner will be required to satisfy criteria in an agreed self-assessment checklist at each 5,000 ha stage before continuing the next HVA/IHVA development phase. Moreover, once 50 per cent of a 5,000 ha stage is brought into production (ploughed and seeded), the landowner must be able to commence clearing in the next 5,000 ha stage to enable continuity of equipment use and optimize available areas for planting.
- Instituting an Ombudsman function for HVA/IHVA determinations to improve feedback to applicants and reduce the requirement for court actions.



# Growing agriculture and enhancing profitability

## Water resource identification and release

### Issue:

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' Queensland Agricultural Land Audit identifies land important to current and future agricultural production, development constraints and investment opportunities. The Audit reported that about 86 per cent of the state is currently used for grazing and 2.1 per cent is used for cropping. It also reported that 18.3 percent has potential for sown pastures, and up to 6.3 per cent for cropping, including in the Gulf of Carpentaria, south west of the Atherton Tablelands and west of Injune.

Reliable access to water is a key factor limiting further agricultural development in the state. Releases of unallocated water have recently occurred in the Gulf (granted 94,220 of 95,000 ML in 2012 and 100,000 of 264,550 ML in 2015, with further 92,500 ML to be made available in Cloncurry and Gilbert river catchments) and from the Great Artesian Basin (785 of 7,200 ML in 2013, 1,780 of 18,200 ML in 2015). Unallocated water is reserved under water plans and can be made available without compromising the security of existing water users or environmental values.

A CSIRO study found that in the Flinders catchment, farm dams could support 10,000 to 20,000 ha of irrigation in 70 to 80 percent of years and in the Gilbert catchment, large instream dams could support 20,000 to 30,000 ha of irrigation in 85 per cent of years. The study also identified a range of challenges to irrigation enterprises in these catchments and science-

based approaches are needed to ensure that water is reliably available, any development is sustainable and viable in the long term.

AgForce supports further sustainable development of agriculture in north Queensland, including understanding what levels of water use is sustainable, releasing it in a predictable and fair way and ensuring that it is actively used to improve the lives of producers and the communities in which they live.

### Solutions:

- For the state government to use a transparent science based process to identify further water resources potentially available for sustainable release in northern Queensland
- Establish a more predictable, effective and efficient process for the release of identified water reserves and more transparent and effective systems for water trading
- For the state government to provide effective incentives to translate released water reserves into on-ground development, including reinvesting funds from water sales into local initiatives.

# Growing agriculture and enhancing profitability

## Land Tenure

### Issue:

Despite the excellent tenure reforms of 2014, only 30 per cent of Queensland is freehold land. Freehold land is a prerequisite to attract many forms of investment. It offers far greater security to landholders, with the removal of the risk of excessive, even ridiculous, annual rent increases, as has been seen in the past.

With most perpetual leases transitioning to freeholding, it is the term lease estate that requires further attention if the State is to encourage continued good management, as well as the viability of the estate, industry and its surrounding rural communities, and to continue the good work that was legislated in 2014. It is time to turn our collective attention and thinking into how to provide the best possible tenure security to the term lease estate, which comprises over 50 per cent of Queensland.

### Solution:

That the state government's Department of Natural Resources and Mines implement with AgForce and traditional owners, a research and reform body to share information, where possible, to guide additional legislative reform and make additional recommendations with industry.





# Growing agriculture and enhancing profitability

## Wild dogs

### Issue:

It is widely recognised that wild dogs cause significant physical and financial impacts on the sheep, cattle and goat industries in Queensland through predation, disease transmission and lost production. The production costs were previously summarised in a 'Blueprint for the Bush' report<sup>5</sup> which found that in 2008/09 wild dogs had a significant economic impact on Queensland grazing industries, costing an estimated \$67 million in direct losses and costs. This does not consider the indirect cost from the deterioration in the mental health and well-being of numerous primary producers who carry an increasing level of stress due to the worry and anxiety of protecting their livestock from wild dog attack. Anecdotally, it is considered by many industry sources today that this annual cost equates to more than \$100 million.

Over the last five years, both State and Federal Governments have contributed approximately \$20 million through the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative (QFPI) and the Queensland Department of Natural Resource Management (DNRM) to assist producers to build exclusion fencing to protect Queensland's sheep flock. These programs have been instrumental in rebuilding the confidence and ability of Queensland's graziers to once again operate a sheep and wool production enterprise free from crippling predation.

Landholder surveys from the Central-west Queensland area alone, indicate expectations that sheep numbers in this area will increase from 365,600 to 714,200 (+348,600), generating an additional \$8.57 million per annum in wages from shearing, crutching and lamb marking. Additionally, an LPM Creative Solutions 2013 feasibility study into a "wild dog check fence

for Central-west Queensland" assessed a \$3.35 benefit to the region for every \$1 the government spent on building exclusion fences, generating an additional ninety Full Time Equivalents to the region's workforce.

### Solutions:

- A commitment from the State Government to continue to assist Queensland's sheep producers by providing no less than \$5 million annually toward exclusion fencing until every sheep producer in Queensland has been given the opportunity to benefit from these funding initiatives
- The State Government to seek matching dollar for dollar funding from the Commonwealth Government to assist with meeting the exclusion fencing need.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Major Economic Costs Associated with Wild Dogs in the Queensland Grazing Industry (Hewitt, 2009)



# Growing agriculture and enhancing profitability

## Research Development and Extension

### Issue:

Research, development and extension (RD&E) within agricultural industries is critical to ensuring our industries are sustainable, with minimal environmental impact, and robust R&D can deliver strong rates of adoption when supported by effective extension activities.

For agricultural industries, the time lag between scientific advancements and adoption can be considerable. For industries to continue to thrive, reducing the time taken for R&D to become commercialised into something usable on-farm is vital. In the grains industry, there must be a streamlined process from pre-breeding, breeding and commercialisation which results in new, more resilient or productive varieties being rolled out for commercial use. This rapid rollout is particularly important as producers themselves, through the levy system, contribute a significant portion of the R&D investment.

Governments are challenged by many budgetary pressures and competing priorities. But there is a significant risk of research, development, extension and adoption (RDE&A) underinvestment, particularly towards public-good issues. During the 2015 financial year, the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (QDAF) invested \$63 million of State funds into RD&E programs, or just 0.48 per cent of the combined value of horticulture, livestock and livestock products, and cropping in the State. Quite clearly, the intensity of the State Government's R&D investment into agriculture is insufficient when compared with the State's agricultural output.

Given the significant challenges facing broadacre agriculture and the public benefits that accrue from rural R&D investment, a strong public and private sector commitment to agricultural innovation is vital.

### Solutions:

- Promoting a government-industry co-investment model for R&D that is underpinned by effective industry consultation that collectively identifies R&D priorities and enhances collaboration that produces adoption of research findings
- Government(s) that provide leadership in long-term direction setting, such as integrating broader public policy outcomes into a more production-focussed R&D agenda, and that allows policy and regulatory settings conducive to more industry R&D investment
- Governments committing to capacity building and skills retention through innovative and more affordable ways of accessing training and skills improvement
- A RD&E system that supports producers to manage seasonal risks more effectively and reduces the impacts of natural disasters and drought
- A system that results in rapid on-ground adoption of targeted knowledge and technologies delivering both private and public benefits.





# Growing agriculture and enhancing profitability

## Biofuels in Queensland

### Issue:

Biofuels are liquid fuels which have been derived from biological matter, for example grains, plants and waste by-products. They provide alternate markets for grains and offer a tangible and valuable product from what would typically be discarded in primary production, such as wheat stubble in the grains sector and sugar cane waste. Using biofuels can help reduce emissions and contribute to long-term renewable energy targets.

However, the biofuels industry has traditionally lacked widespread support and has been, at times, uncertain and unstable. AgForce Grains believes a domestic renewable biofuel industry would add diversity and security to the supply of liquid fuel and would also provide a reliable market for grain grown by Queensland producers.

The Queensland biofuel mandate is a step in the right direction although the mandate must be incrementally increased over time to encourage further investment and development. The Queensland Government must continue to support the biofuels industry and appropriately target research into renewable fuel technologies along with new and improved feedstocks.

### Solutions:

- Maintain the Queensland biofuel mandate and incrementally increase the mandated percentages.
- Support the development of renewable fuel technologies that offer a broader, more diversified use of feedstock (crops) and ag-waste (e.g. husks, fibres, bagasse, stalks, woody biomass).
- Support the development of alternative feedstocks crops which can increase yields and water use efficiency and be used in less productive areas or areas not previously cultivated.
- Ensure water and vegetation policy enable sensible development in Queensland especially in north.



# Growing agriculture and enhancing profitability

## Access to firearms for primary production purposes

### Issue:

For Queensland primary producers, firearms are a tool of the trade used for specific purposes such as humanely euthanising sick, distressed or injured livestock, and controlling feral animals like wild dogs and pigs.

The vast majority of primary producers have always treated firearms with respect, and ensure they comply with the various state and federal regulations relating to training, handling, storage and registration that have flowed from the National Firearms Agreement in 1996.

However, despite the goodwill of primary producers, more and more police resources seem to be dedicated to closely scrutinizing legitimate firearm users rather than cracking down on criminals.

The Queensland Police Service's Weapons Licensing Branch regularly and almost systematically refuses to authorize Category D and H licences for primary production use, despite the Weapons Act 1990 specifically recognizing and allowing such licensing.

In particular, more and more primary producer applications have been denied for both new licences and renewals of category H firearms (handguns), even though there have been no changes to producers' circumstances or needs, nor any change to the Queensland Weapons Act 1990.

### Solutions:

- Encourage greater police resources to combat illicit use and trade of illegal firearms
- Education campaigns to encourage safe use and secure storage of all firearms
- Streamline the licence application and approval process
- Ensure the Weapons Licensing Branch assesses applications in accordance with current Queensland law.





# Connecting Queensland

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Queensland is a vast state and agriculture covers over 85 percent of it.

Our farmers need infrastructure that allows us to connect socially and also have access to the information and communications technology that we need to run our businesses.

Importantly we also require access to the transportation infrastructure that helps drive down the costs of getting our products to our customers.



# Connecting Queensland

## Telecommunications

### Issue:

Queensland is the most decentralised state in Australia, and the need for fairer, more reliable and more affordable phone and internet services is a high priority issue for people living and working in regional, rural and remote (RRR) areas. Effective, reliable and affordable phone and internet services is an essential part of everyday life, providing an economic and social lifeline for RRR Queenslanders. Telecommunication services are vitally important for community safety, to support business development, enhance children's education and maintain social connections.

Distance and low population densities present ongoing problems for the implementation of reliable, efficient, and secure telecommunications services. The Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII), which measures digital inclusion related to access, affordability and digital ability across the Australian population has ranked Queensland the third worst in Australia for digital inclusion.

A member telecommunications survey undertaken by AgForce in 2015 showed just 39 percent had reliable mobile phone connections, while almost 20 percent had no mobile connection at all; almost half relied on satellite internet connection and only 11 percent had benefited from the NBN rollout. Connection issues were further reinforced by Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia (BIRRR) through their Regional Internet Access Survey, undertaken in 2016. Their survey results revealed 73 percent of respondents did not have reliable mobile phone coverage, while 74 percent of mobile broadband users and 89 percent of satellite users had download speeds under 5 Mbps.

Without leadership and without change, Queensland risks growing and entrenching the digital divide between urban and rural telecommunications users even further. Just as urban businesses expect a certain level of service, the agribusiness sector also requires a foundation of telecommunications to run viable enterprises that make valuable social, economic and environmental contributions to our state.





# Connecting Queensland

## Telecommunications

### Solutions:

- All levels of government and all sides of politics need to collaborate with the telecommunications industry to extend and improve services in Queensland's RRR areas as quickly as possible
- An increase in mobile coverage for all Telcos in Queensland
- An Increase of the fixed wireless footprint for both NBN and third party providers in Queensland, through:
  - o Funded programs assisting RRR residents to identify mobile blackspots, that gives clear reports on coverage for both data and voice. This data should be used to prioritise areas based on connectivity
  - o Commitment to co-funding a further \$24 million in black spot infrastructure in RRR Queensland
  - o Government investment incentive programs geared to RRR Queensland, with incentives matched to the more remote, inversely related to the population
  - o The development of community engagement programs to investigate whether existing infrastructure can be used to improve connectivity
- A central, government coordinated site that captures Telco and other telecommunications investment timelines to enable people to make informed decisions and business decisions about their own personal telecommunications infrastructure
- Continued programs to develop and support digital literacy and capacity building. Expanded to include support for AgForce's proposed Telecommunications Innovation Project
- Work with relevant federal counterparts to ensure a Universal Service Obligation that is technology neutral and supports both voice and data is implemented. It is essential that everyone should have access, with a reasonable amount of speed and a reasonable amount of data, and at a reasonable cost.



# Connecting Queensland

## Fixing Queensland Country Rail program

### Issue:

Queensland has some of the worst performing rail infrastructure in Australia and it is damaging to our export competitiveness. As transportation often accounts for up to a third of the total cost of production, we need to invest in improving the supply chain to bring these costs down. As international competitors continue to improve and eat into our market share abroad, we must ensure we have a supply chain that is both efficient and cost effective so we can remain competitive.

Unfortunately, in Queensland, agricultural producers must grapple with low axle limits, poorly maintained tracks and frequently cancelled services due to lack of crews or maintenance. This is not acceptable for a state that boasts the largest share of Australia's agricultural output.

Queensland deserves a well maintained and highly functioning rail system that meets the needs of all its users. Rail is a highly efficient means of transportation, especially for bulk commodities like grains. But it is much more than efficiency - it also increases road safety and reduce road maintenance costs by taking trucks off the roads and it reduces emissions.

Rail makes sense for Queensland broadacre agriculture, it just needs government to give it a chance.

### Solution:

Establish a Fixing Queensland Country Rail program with funding to prioritise and invest in much needed 'up country' infrastructure improvements.





# Connecting Queensland

## Roads – Better network knowledge

### Issue:

Since the advent of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) all road managers have the responsibility of allowing access to their respective road network. Unfortunately, some road managers, especially at the local government level, are ill-equipped to make these access decisions in a timely manner. Often there is a lack of understanding of network capability or a lack of funding to address network shortfalls.

This costs industry considerably, with governments requiring permits for access which take time and costs money. Access is often restricted in areas where it is most crucial for productivity (i.e. feedlots and grain handling facilities). There must be better network understanding between all road managers so access is sensible and timely, and allows transporters to get produce from paddock to place as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### Solution:

Develop a local government fund to assist road managers in better understanding the freight task and to identify key network limitations. This can then inform further investment decisions to address the identified shortfalls.



# Connecting Queensland

## Roads – Funds for fixing identified network issues

### Issue:

Investment at the local government level is vital in ensuring produce and inputs can be moved from paddock to place as efficiently as possible. Often, due to lack of funding, infrastructure shortfalls mean transporters need to use less efficient (lighter) combinations or go the 'long way round', costing many sectors, not just agriculture, time and money.

Strategic investment within local governments, to enable them to optimise their freight task will drive transport efficiencies, improve the competitiveness of Queensland agriculture and ultimately lead to safer, better maintained roads.

### Solution:

Create a local government fund to invest in infrastructure shortfalls which have a significant impact on agricultural transportation. Based on sound evidence of network shortfalls, local government could apply for funding which would enable them to improve access.





# Connecting Queensland

## Roads - Advancing beyond access permits

### Issue:

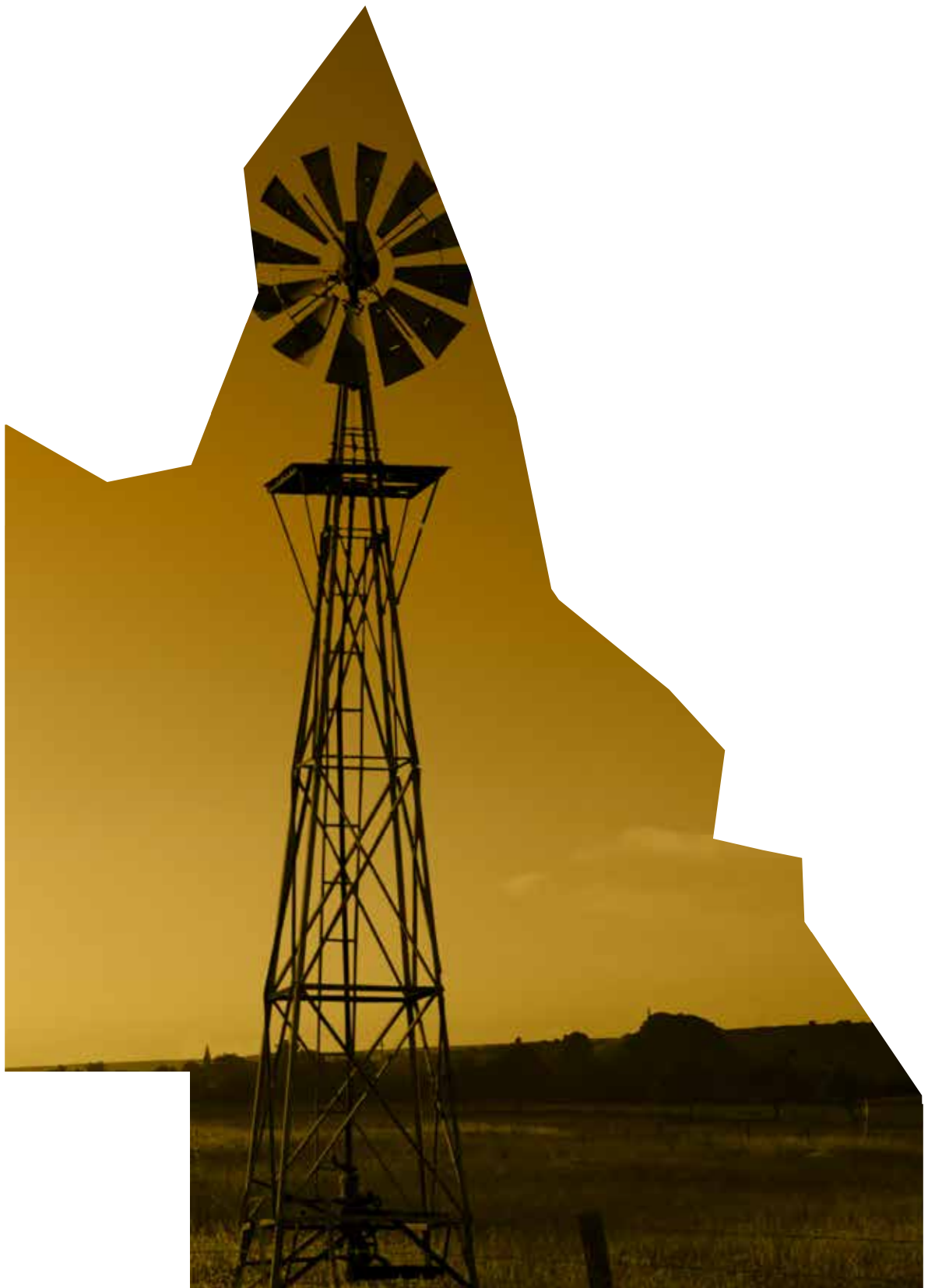
Permits are arbitrary and cost industry significant time and money. Often road access permits are continually required although always allowed – in these cases there is no valid reason for permits. If roads can handle certain combinations, they should be gazetted so transporters and primary producers can get on with the job and not get caught up in arbitrary red tape.

In a modern Queensland, we should be able to effectively establish which parts of the network can handle what sized agricultural vehicles. The current system does not work and is inherently inefficient.

### Solution:

AgForce seeks a change in government policy, moving away from the use of permits. Permits should only be used as a pathway to gazettal and if a route can handle a certain combination, it should be allowed 'as of right' rather than requiring arbitrary permits.





[www.agforceqld.org.au](http://www.agforceqld.org.au)