

Rural and Regional Adjustment (2019–2020 Extraordinary Bushfires Disaster Recovery Funding) Amendment Regulation 2020

Explanatory Notes for SL 2020 No. 5

made under the

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994

General Outline

Short title

Rural and Regional Adjustment (2019–2020 Extraordinary Bushfires Disaster Recovery Funding) Amendment Regulation 2020

Authorising law

Sections 10, 11 and 44 of the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994* (the Act)

Policy objectives and the reasons for them

The policy objective of the amendment regulation is to assist primary producers directly affected by the 2019-2020 extraordinary bushfire disaster events with costs associated with immediate recovery activities needed to rebuild their primary production enterprises.

Due to ongoing drought conditions, above average temperatures, low rainfall and high winds, the bushfire risk was elevated this bushfire season across much of eastern Australia. These conditions led to the breakout of a significant number of bushfires across parts of southern, southeast and central Queensland during November 2019.

In response to this damage, the joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Categories A, B, and C have been activated for the Livingstone Shire Council Area. After consultation with primary producers, local government and agricultural industry groups, it was identified that this DRFA assistance is insufficient to support the recovery of communities impacted by this disaster. On 14 January 2020, the Prime Minister announced the \$75,000 grants recovery package to support Queensland communities impacted by the bushfires.

Consequently, the Emergency Bushfire Response in Primary Industries Grants Scheme guidelines (the Federal scheme) were developed by the Federal Government in consultation with the Queensland Government.

The Federal scheme provides for the provision of \$75,000 in emergency grant funding for eligible primary producers.

The grants will be administered by the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA). QRIDA currently administers a range of DRFA assistance measures to assist businesses, primary producers and not for profit organisations impacted by natural disasters. It has also, in previous severe natural disasters, administered enhanced grants recovery packages similar to those subject to these regulatory amendments.

Achievement of policy objectives

The amendment regulation will achieve its objectives by amending Schedule 23 - Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants Scheme (SPDARGS) of the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation 2011* to reflect the Federal scheme, and enable the additional assistance to be administered by QRIDA.

Due to the nature of assistance exceeding what the standard grant amount would be available under the SPDARGS, an exceptional circumstances grant of up to \$75,000 will be available for eligible primary producers.

Consistency with policy objectives of authorising law

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

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

Inconsistency with policy objectives of other legislation

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

Benefits and costs of implementation

The Scheme will be equally cost shared between the Queensland and Australian Governments under DRFA.

Consistency with fundamental legislative principles

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

Consultation

Development of this scheme and other measures in the package occurred in consultation with agencies of the Australian Government, including the Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and Emergency Management Australia.

The Office of Best Practice Regulation in the Queensland Productivity Commission advised that the amendment is excluded from further analysis under the *Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation* on the basis of category (k) – regulatory proposals designed to reduce the burden of regulation, or clearly do not add to the burden, and it is reasonably clear there are no significant adverse impacts.

©The State of Queensland 2020