

# **Rural and Regional Adjustment (Work in Paradise Incentive Scheme and Another Matter) Amendment Regulation 2021**

Explanatory Notes for SL 2021 No. 86

made under the

*Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994*

## **General Outline**

### **Short title**

*Rural and Regional Adjustment (Work in Paradise Incentive Scheme and Another Matter) Amendment Regulation 2021*

### **Authorising law**

Sections 3, 10, 11 and 44 of the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994* (the Act).

## **Policy objectives and the reasons for them**

### **Work in Paradise Incentive Scheme**

Research in 2020 indicated that staff attraction and recruitment of suitable applicants for job vacancies was a significant barrier for the recovering of the tourism industry in Queensland.

On 1 June 2021, SEEK indicated 3420 vacant tourism and hospitality jobs in Queensland.

Based on April 2021 Occupational Vacancy Data, there were 2725 vacancies across a range of roles associated with tourism industry including chefs and kitchen hands.

In response to the critical workforce shortages in regional tourism, the Queensland government announced on 20 May 2021 the \$7.5 million Work in Paradise Program (Program) to attract job seekers to take up a tourism job and relocate in regional Queensland.

The Program will promote the opportunity to work in one of Queensland's outstanding regional tourism destinations and make it easier for people to find tourism jobs through a new jobs website which will also have information on training, accommodation and life in the regions.

The Work in Paradise Incentive Scheme (Scheme) is part of the Program to offer job seekers incentives to secure a job in a tourism business in a regional Queensland area and assist in relocation expenses.

The primary objective of the Amendment Regulation is to enable the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) to administer the Scheme.

### **North Queensland Recovery and Resilience (Stream 2) Grants Scheme-Land Management**

The Commonwealth government is proposing to establish the North Queensland Recovery and Resilience (Stream 2) Grants Scheme-Land Management (North & Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough, 25 January–14 February 2019) - an assistance scheme (Commonwealth Scheme) related to the monsoonal flooding event in 2019. The Commonwealth Scheme is intended to help eligible landholders with future disaster preparedness of their property and improve environmental outcomes through improved land management practices.

The Commonwealth scheme will fund eligible projects which are based on best practice and which use evidence-based technology and infrastructure to enhance land management in an eligible area. This, in turn, should improve land condition through increased biodiversity, improved management of natural resources and ultimately increase the sustainability and viability of primary production enterprises in the eligible area. The Commonwealth scheme will benefit regional Queensland by supporting the recovery of regions of northern Queensland impacted by the monsoonal flooding events.

A further policy objective of the Amendment Regulation is to enable QRIDA to administer the Commonwealth Scheme.

## **Achievement of policy objectives**

### **Work in Paradise Incentive Scheme**

The policy objective will be achieved by amending the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation 2011* (the Regulation) to establish the Work in Paradise Incentive Scheme as an approved assistance scheme under the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994* (the Act). This enables QRIDA to administer the Scheme, as QRIDA can only provide financial assistance under an approved assistance scheme prescribed by regulation under the Act.

The Scheme will provide a \$1500 Employment Incentive payment to eligible applicants to take up a job in a tourism business in the eligible regions of Queensland provided:

- they have been offered and commenced in a job in an eligible tourism job in an eligible region after 20 May 2021;
- the job offer must be for a minimum of eight weeks and at least 20 hours per week.

The Employment Incentive payment will be made in three instalments provided certain conditions are met:

- an initial payment of \$500 after two weeks of continuous employment in a tourism job in an eligible region commenced after 20 May 2021;
- a second payment of \$500 after 12 weeks of continuous employment in the same tourism job or with another tourism business in an eligible region; and

- a third and final payment of \$500 after 24 weeks of continuous employment in the same tourism job or with another tourism business in an eligible region.

In addition, if a person has been approved for the Employment Incentive payment, he or she may also be eligible for a \$250 Job Start Bonus if the tourism job requires them to relocate more than 100 kilometres from his or her place of residence.

### **North Queensland Recovery and Resilience (Stream 2) Grants Scheme-Land Management**

The Amendment Regulation will achieve its objective by establishing the Commonwealth Scheme as an approved assistance scheme under the Act by amending schedule 16 of the Regulation. This enables QRIDA to administer the Commonwealth Scheme, as QRIDA can only provide financial assistance under an approved assistance scheme prescribed by regulation under the Act.

### **Consistency with policy objectives of authorising law**

The Amendment Regulation is consistent with the policy objectives of the Act. The Act establishes QRIDA to administer assistance schemes that foster the development of a more productive and sustainable rural and regional sector in Queensland. QRIDA may also support the State's economy by administering approved assistance schemes to assist primary producers, small businesses, and other sectors during periods of temporary difficulty, or to otherwise benefit the Queensland economy.

### **Inconsistency with policy objectives of other legislation**

The Amendment Regulation is not inconsistent with the policy objectives of any other legislation.

### **Benefits and costs of implementation**

QRIDA has extensive experience in administering grant, loan and rebate and payment schemes for government and is well placed to administer the schemes.

#### **Work in Paradise Incentive Scheme**

The Queensland Government's \$7.5 million Work in Paradise Scheme is designed to help ease the workforce shortage experienced by regional Queensland tourism businesses.

The Work in Paradise Incentive Scheme will attract jobseekers to tourism jobs in regional Queensland by providing incentive payments to assist in securing a tourism job and the costs of relocation.

### **North Queensland Recovery and Resilience (Stream 2) Grants Scheme-Land Management**

The Commonwealth Scheme will be solely funded by the Australian Government. QRIDA will be paid by the Australian Government for the administration of the Commonwealth scheme. The Commonwealth Scheme is part of the Commonwealth's *After the flood: A Strategy for long-term recovery which sets out a blueprint for the future for North and North-West Queensland* in response to the monsoonal flooding event of 2019. It will

provide assistance to help eligible landholders with future disaster preparedness of their property and improve environmental outcomes. The Commonwealth Scheme, which has allocated \$4 million for the grants, will benefit regional Queensland by supporting the recovery of regions of northern Queensland impacted by the monsoonal flooding events.

## **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**

The Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation (DTIS) has consulted with the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, Regional and Local Tourism Organisations and key tourism industry stakeholders about workforce issues in the regions as part of the COVID-19 recovery work, including conducting roundtables to identify the issues.

The consultation identified the key barriers to attracting workers such as the ability to easily find tourism jobs; the cost of relocation to a job in the regions; the need for sustainability in the industry by better connecting employees and employers with information on training opportunities; and difficulties finding suitable and affordable accommodation. The Program has been designed to break down the barriers identified through consultation.

The Amendment Regulation addresses the barriers of relocation expenses by establishing the Scheme to provide incentive payments to assist job seekers with the costs of relocation to regional area.

The Australian Government's (National Recovery and Resilience Agency) was responsible for development of the guidelines for the Commonwealth Scheme.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries consulted the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR), within the Queensland Productivity Commission, and the newly established Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction within Queensland Treasury, on whether the amendments are excluded from further analysis under the Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation. OBPR advised that it considered the proposals to enable QRIDA to administer the schemes were unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts; and that no further regulatory impact analysis was required.