

Rural and Regional Adjustment (Regional Drought Resilience Planning Scheme and Another Matter) Amendment Regulation 2024

Explanatory Notes for SL 2024 No. 143

made under the

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994

General Outline

Short title

Rural and Regional Adjustment (Regional Drought Resilience Planning Scheme and Another Matter) Amendment Regulation 2024

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 *Rural and Regional Adjustment (Regional Drought Resilience Planning Scheme and Another Matter) Amendment Regulation 2024* (the Amendment Regulation) is to introduce two new schemes of financial assistance in the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation 2011*. These schemes are the:

- North Queensland Restocking and On-farm Infrastructure Grants, Northern and Central Queensland Monsoon and Flooding, 20 December 2022–30 April 2023 (NQ Restocking Grants) which is an Australian Government Scheme which will provide grants to primary producers that suffered damage from the monsoonal flooding event of early 2023 for restocking and on-farm infrastructure repairs; and
- Regional Drought Resilience Planning Scheme (RDRP Scheme) which will provide grants to improve drought resilience at the regional level.

These schemes will be administered by the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA). Section 11 of the Act requires that all QRIDA schemes of financial assistance be set out in regulation.

As the NQ Restocking Grants scheme is an Australian Government Scheme, per the requirements of section 11 (4) of the Act the name of the Scheme Guidelines is included

in Schedule 16 of the Regulation and the guidelines of the Scheme are available on the QRIDA website.

NQ Restocking Grants

The NQ Restocking Grants is an Australian Government funded program that provides grants of up to \$150,000 matched by the primary producer for restocking lost livestock or restoring or replacing lost or damaged on-farm infrastructure, lost or damaged as a result of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Disaster Event: Northern and Central Queensland Monsoon and Flooding, 20 December 2022–30 April 2023 (a monsoonal flooding event that impacted far northern Queensland, principally the northern Gulf region). The guidelines for this program will be available on the QRIDA website. The Scheme will be open until 30 June 2025 or until the funding is exhausted, whichever comes first.

RDRP Scheme

The Future Drought Fund (FDF) provides long term funding for a suite of programs to improve Australia's drought resilience. One of the programs of the FDF is the Regional Drought Resilience Planning (RDRP) Program which provides funding to develop plans at the regional level which will improve regional drought resilience. These plans are developed and owned by local government, consortia of local governments and potentially natural resource management organisations and Regional Development Authorities. One part of these plans is activities that the parties to the plan have identified that will improve drought resilience.

The RDRP Scheme, subject to this regulatory amendment, is a sub-program of the RDRP. The RDRP Scheme provides grants eligible entities (signatories to RDRP plans, eg local government, regional organisations of councils, natural resource management organisations or Regional Development Authorities) to assist them to complete a plan or implement activities identified in their completed RDRP plan that will improve the drought resilience of the region.

The RDRP Scheme has two components (not more than \$450,000 total per plan), an activity grant and a remuneration grant:

- the activity grant (sections 6 and 13 of Schedule 61 of the Amendment Regulation) is up to \$300,000 (excluding GST) for the implementation of eligible activities identified in the RDRP Plan; and
- the remuneration grant (sections 10 and 14 of Schedule 61 of the Amendment Regulation) is up to \$150,000 (excluding GST) for wages and salaries necessary to either a) make amendments to a draft plan as required by the Australian Government Minister for Drought before the plan is approved as a regional drought resilience plan (a draft plan per Section 5) b) assist the applicant identify or implement measures identified in an approved plan.

An approved Plan is one that has been approved by the Australian Government Minister for Drought (the Minister with responsibility for the FDF) and available on the relevant Australian Government website (section 9 of Schedule 61 of the Amendment Regulation). A draft Plan is one that has not yet been approved by the Australian Government Minister for Drought but has been provided to the Chief Executive of the Queensland Department

of Agriculture and Fisheries (section 5 of Schedule 61 of the Amendment Regulation). To be eligible for an activity grant or remuneration grant the applicant must receive an eligibility notice (section 8 of Schedule 61) from the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries that identifies the eligible activities that the applicant can obtain the grant for and the amounts that the Chief Executive recommends are payable for either a remuneration grant or activity grant. To be an eligible activity in cannot have been completed before the Plan has been published on the Australian Government's website: www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/drought/future-drought-fund/regional-drought-resilience-planning#toc_3.

Achievement of policy objectives

The policy objective of the Amendment Regulation is to increase drought resilience at the regional level for the RDRP Scheme and support disaster recovery and resilience of primary producers in northern Queensland impacted by the disaster event: Northern and Central Queensland Monsoon and Flooding, 20 December 2022–30 April 2023 for the NQ Restocking Grants. These policy objectives are supported by providing grant funding for eligible activities that will support disaster recovery (NQ Restocking Grants) and eligible activities that will increase regional drought preparedness (RDRP Scheme).

Consistency with policy objectives of authorising law

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. The introduction of the RDRP Scheme is consistent with the policy objectives of the Act as its intent is to improve the drought resilience of regional Queensland.

This NQ Restocking Grants Scheme is an Australian Government Scheme. It is consistent with Section 11(4) of the Act as its purpose is to provide assistance to assist primary producers which is one of the objects of the Act.

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 NQ Restocking Grants is funded wholly by the Australian Government with \$5 million notionally allocated for grants under this Scheme. It is funded subject to the Federation Funding Agreement-Environment: *Assistance for North Queensland Regions to Support Disaster Recovery and Resilience*

The RDRP Scheme is a program co-funded by the Queensland Government and the Australian Government under the FDF. The FDF component of the funding accords with

the Federation Funding Agreement-Environment: *Future Drought Fund-Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program*.

In total Queensland has received \$8.2 million from the FDF for the RDRP (of which the RDRP Scheme is a subcomponent) and Queensland has contributed \$6 million (\$14.2 million total from both the Australian and Queensland Governments).

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

In accordance with the *Queensland Government Better Regulation Policy* (the Policy), an Impact Analysis Statement has been prepared which identifies that the proposed amendments do not add to the burden of regulation, are unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts and that no further regulatory impact analysis is required under the Policy.

The Australian Government's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Queensland Reconstruction Authority and QRIDA were involved in the development of the guidelines for the NQ Restocking Grants.

The Australian Government which administers policy for the FDF developed the guidelines for the RDRP program which form the basis of the scheme subject to this regulatory amendment. QRIDA, the scheme administrator was consulted in the development of the guidelines for the scheme.