



Not enough substance in Queensland Budget

The Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) and industry members are underwhelmed by the 2021-22 State Budget which appears to be all style and not enough substance.

QFF CEO Dr Georgina Davis said the Budget's headline numbers could not disguise that it was again a missed opportunity to address some critical productivity issues and exciting growth opportunities that would benefit the sector following the COVID-19 pandemic.

"QFF commends the state government for investing \$71.4 million over four years in the Queensland Drought Assistance and Reform Package to support farmers experiencing the impacts of drought on their properties and ensuring this assistance is more equitable across the state's various agricultural commodities," Dr Davis said.

"However, the Budget failed to abolish stamp duty on agricultural insurance and establish a Discretionary Mutual Fund to provide a flexible option for crop insurance and empower farmers with a long-term industry owned tool for managing risk for when the rain does fall."

"We also welcome funding to continue important workforce and skilling programs,

but would have also liked to see a greater focus on reducing youth unemployment by creating career pathways to all the employment opportunities across Queensland's agriculture sector."

"While the QFF-led Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance, which plays a pivotal role in providing industry advice to the Queensland Government on workforce issues, did not receive continued support at a time when the sector is struggling with an immediate labour and ongoing skills shortage."

"QFF acknowledges the significant infrastructure investment targeted towards regional needs and increased investment into biosecurity, but note it is insufficient to ensure the eradication of the red imported fire ant."

"Additionally, the Budget has increased expenditure for the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program, Nature Refuges and established a new \$500 million Carbon Reduction Investment Fund."

"QFF hopes this funding continues to support farmer participation in Best Management Practice programs and boost other initiatives that support sustainability in the agriculture sector."

Dr Davis said the state government needed to demonstrate a more strategic intent towards agriculture and long term, targeted stimulus-type investment if the sector was to take the next step change forward.

"Our sector is the only one that can deliver food security, environmental sustainability and economic opportunity for relatively low risk," Dr Davis said.

"Without more targeted and deliberate action from government, agriculture will not fully capitalise on the exciting opportunities that are unquestionably available."

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