

# Annual Report 2022-23



QUEENSLAND  
FARMERS'  
FEDERATION





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## President's Report

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Allan Dingle  
President  
Queensland Farmers' Federation

In reflecting on the 2022-23 year, several highlights come to mind. In August, QFF held its inaugural Celebration of Queensland Agriculture event to coincide with the Royal Queensland Show, better known as the EKKA. The event saw QFF members and key stakeholders from the agriculture sector across Queensland come together welcoming Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland, and Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry the Honourable Senator Murray Watt, and Queensland Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries the Honourable Mark Furner. QFF intends to hold this event every year in support of the EKKA, and to provide QFF members, corporate partners and the sector with a quality networking opportunity.

QFF advocated on behalf of our members on a number of important issues throughout the year from the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) Draft Determination for Regulated Retail Electricity Prices for 2023-24, the potential consequences of CSG induced subsidence and bank closures in regional Queensland.

It has been pleasing to see the QFF team grow and our working relationships with our 20 peak industry members growing from strength to strength as we continue to work together to provide a strong, united voice for agriculture in Queensland. Across our members, QFF represents the interests of more than 13,000 primary producers across the state, including those of Cotton Australia, CANEGROWERS, Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers, eastAUSmilk and Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment and good work of my fellow QFF board directors and thank them for the contribution they have made, both individually and as a collective, to progressing the strategic direction of the organisation.

I extend my appreciation and thanks to QFF CEO, Jo Sheppard, and the whole QFF team who work tirelessly on behalf of the organisation and the members we represent to build a strong future for Queensland agriculture. The QFF team has grown substantially during the past year, and I see this growth reflected in QFF's advocacy efforts and project outputs, which are providing great value to our members and their members.

As I approach the completion of my four-year term as President of QFF, I would like to say how much I have enjoyed my time in the role. It has been a privilege to work alongside the QFF Board and Council, QFF's policy committee representatives, QFF's dedicated staff, and of course, QFF's members, in advocating for outcomes that are critical to the future of Queensland agriculture.

There are many opportunities and challenges ahead for farmers across Queensland and I wish QFF, its members and the sector more broadly, all the very best in future endeavours.



## CEO's Report

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Jo Sheppard  
CEO  
Queensland Farmers' Federation

**This year saw the Queensland agriculture sector reach its highest value on record, exceeding the \$23 billion mark. This total value was more than 16 percent greater than the average for the past five years. Clearly, our state continues to be a significant producer of an incredible diversity of food, fibre and foliage for the nation and, with more than \$12 billion in agricultural export value, the world.**

In many ways, it has been a bittersweet year for Queensland agriculture with several positive outcomes and considerable opportunities ahead. At the same time, our farmers faced ongoing challenges particularly in relation to workforce shortages, increasing land use competition, rising costs of production, biosecurity threats, natural disasters, and continued supply chain disruptions.

QFF has worked closely with our peak industry members during the year to represent farmers across Queensland on the issues that matter to them. Farming enterprises are operating in a fast-changing environment, and it is critical that agriculture has a strong voice at the table to ensure that Queensland farmers can maintain their capacity for world-class production well into the future.

I would like to commend QFF members for their ongoing commitment to working together to build a united voice for Queensland agriculture. Collaboration – it is easy to say, but often much harder to actually do. QFF has 20 peak body members who have come together on a broad range of critical policy matters, working together to develop meaningful solutions and pathways forward to support their members and the sector more broadly.

The value in commodity peak bodies working together is immeasurable. Shared learnings and the collective power of coming together as one cannot be underestimated. It has been so very rewarding to have the opportunity to work on behalf of QFF and

our members to progress key issues and support our members in achieving outcomes for their members across energy, water, natural resource management, biosecurity, farm business resilience and other essential policy and project areas.

One of the highlights of the year for me was the QFF National Agriculture Day Breakfast event which saw close to 200 stakeholders come together to hear agriculture's incredible story of innovation and sustainability. QFF members Cotton Australia, CANEGROWERS and Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers shared the achievements and aspirations of their commodity areas supported by keynote speaker Dr Terry McCosker OAM, founding director of QFF's corporate partner, RCS Australia.

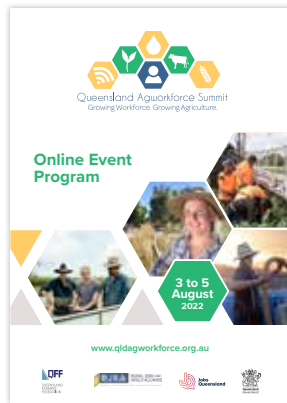
I thank the QFF board, staff, members, and corporate partners for the enormous contribution that they make on a daily basis to the future of agriculture and look forward to continuing our work. Queensland agriculture is certainly a shining light, in terms of the passion and innovation of our producers, as well as its ongoing economic contribution to the state and regions.

Despite facing ongoing challenges, Queensland agriculture is in a strong position for the year ahead and remains a sector that we can all be proud of.

# 2022-23 highlights



The five-year Agriculture Workforce Strategy is launched



QFF hosts the inaugural Queensland AgWorkforce Summit



QFF hosts our inaugural National Agriculture Day Breakfast



The 2022 Reef Champion Awards are hosted and awardees announced

**July 2022**

**August 2022**

**November 2022**

**November 2022**



**August 2022**

Inaugural Celebration of Queensland Agriculture EKKa Event is hosted

**August 2022**

QFF commences its Corporate Partners Program to support members in building a strong future for Queensland agriculture

**October 2022**

The Careers in Agriculture Magazine is launched



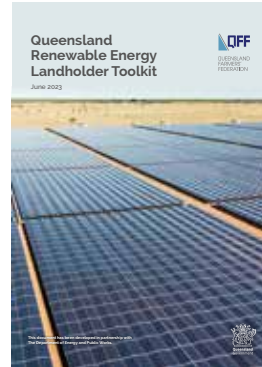
**November 2022**

QFF commences hosting the Industry Workforce Advisor program for horticulture and agriculture

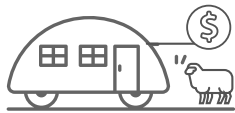




The Low Emissions Roadmap for Queensland Agriculture is launched with the Queensland Government



The Queensland Renewable Energy Landholder Toolkit is launched to support landholders make informed decisions when considering renewable energy developments on their land



### March 2023

29 agritourism grants totaling \$600,000 are provided to primary producers looking to explore or expand agritourism opportunities for their operations



Following consultation with QFF and members, Powerlink launched the SuperGrid Landholder Payment Framework that will see Queensland landholders hosting new transmission infrastructure receive increased compensation payments

### June 2023



By the end of the financial year, 180+ producers attended facilitated workshops or events as part of the Farm Business Resilience Program

### January 2023

### February 2023

Ag Jobs Queensland is launched as the first dedicated jobs platform for the Queensland agriculture sector and supply chain. QFF and members also meet with Queensland Premier to present key priorities for the agriculture sector.



### April 2023

EnergySQ is launched in partnership with ACCIONA Energía to support farms find energy savings and efficiencies on farm, as well as lower their emissions



### June 2023



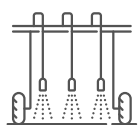
### June 2023

The first of its kind Price Path Consultative Committee with Sunwater is established to allow members and industry to provide early input into upcoming Price Paths



### June 2024

QFF welcomes the 2023 State Budget for Queensland announcement of \$550 million for Queensland agriculture



### March 2023

Following extensive advocacy efforts from QFF and members, the Queensland Government endorses a change to water policy, which resulted in an equitable and consistent irrigation pricing arrangements for Queensland farmers through state-owned water supply schemes

# About the Queensland Farmers' Federation

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The Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) is the united voice of agriculture in Queensland.

We are a member-based organisation representing the interests of peak agriculture industry organisations (both state and national). Through our members, QFF represents more than 13,000 primary producers across the cotton, cane, horticulture, dairy, nursery and garden, poultry and pork industries, as well as irrigators.

We unite the sector to engage in a broad range of economic, social, environmental, and regional issues through advocacy, policy development, and project activity. We work with the government of the day on behalf of industry, farmers, and the community to provide powerful representation and contribution to the policy direction, sustainability, and future growth of Queensland's agriculture sector.

Our Council of member representatives and policy committees set the strategic priorities for policy development and advocacy, while our Board ensures our corporate governance.

QFF draws on the expertise and industry knowledge of our members and through our commitment to collaboration and considered policy development, we lead Queensland's agriculture sector towards a strong future, ensuring our members are ahead of the game and have a voice at the table on the issues that matter to their members.

## Our areas of expertise



**Water**



**Energy**



**Biosecurity**



**Workforce planning, including education and training and workplace health and safety**



**Land use planning, regional development and co-existence**



**Agriculture productivity**



**Environmental sustainability and natural resource management**



**Farm business planning, including risk management and resilience building**



**Waste management and resource recovery**



**Animal welfare**



## Our history

QFF was formally established in 1992 to provide a united voice for the Queensland agriculture sector and to effectively advocate for sector-wide issues with a unity of purpose.



### The establishment of QFF saw the unification of:

▲ **The Council of Agriculture (1922 – 1992)** which was made up of 18 former statutory agriculture bodies,

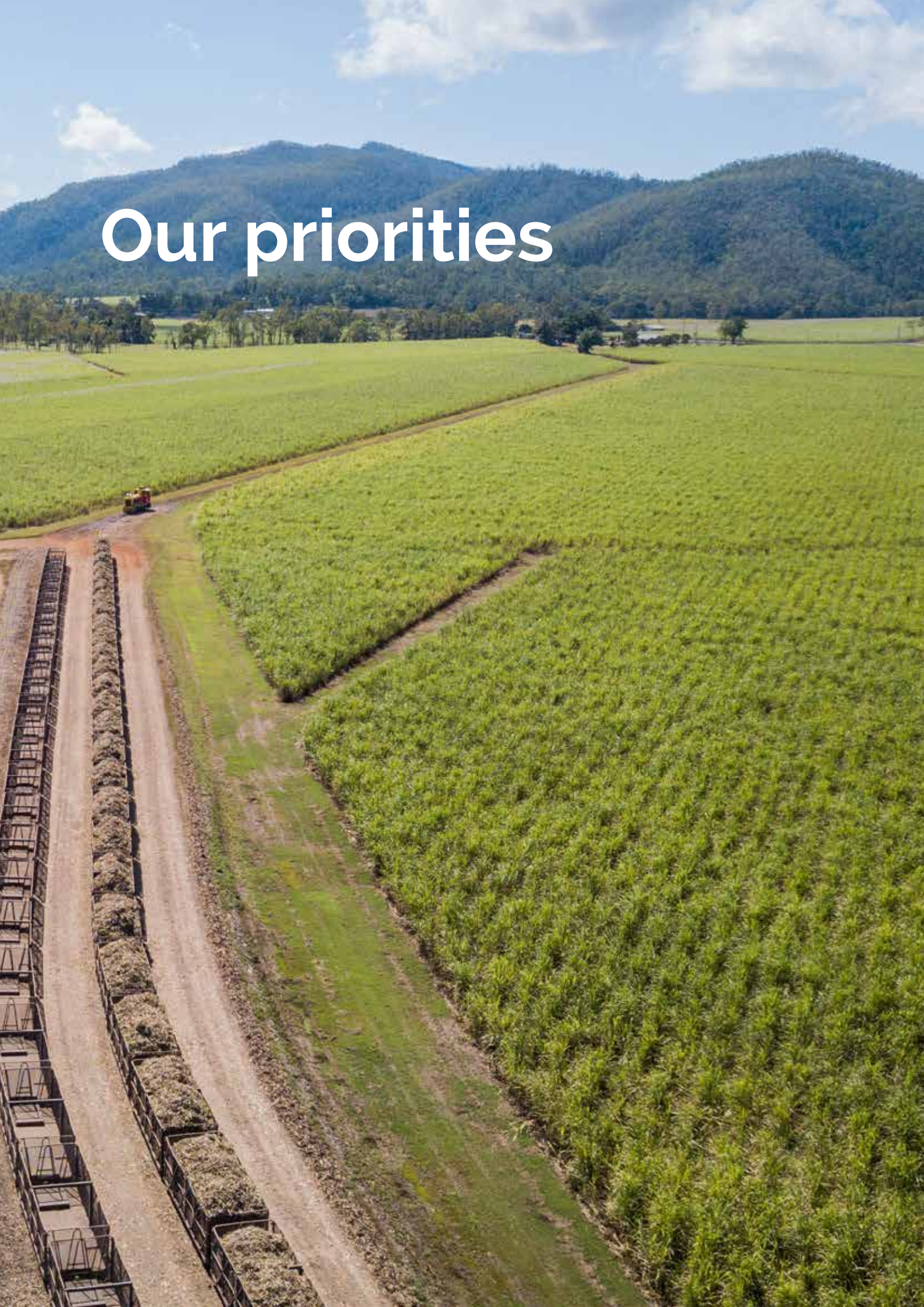
▲ **The Queensland Producers' Federation (1969 – 1989)** which was a broad coalition of agricultural commodity groups, and

▲ In 2008, the **Queensland Irrigators' Council (1999-2008)**.

QFF has since grown its membership to 20 peak state and national agriculture industry organisations, and the state's irrigation groups. Collectively through its membership, QFF represents more than 13,000 primary producers across Queensland.

Today, QFF is recognised as an influential and respected bi-partisan leader in sectoral policy development and advocacy with a strong history of driving change to improve the operating environment for Queensland farmers.

# Our priorities



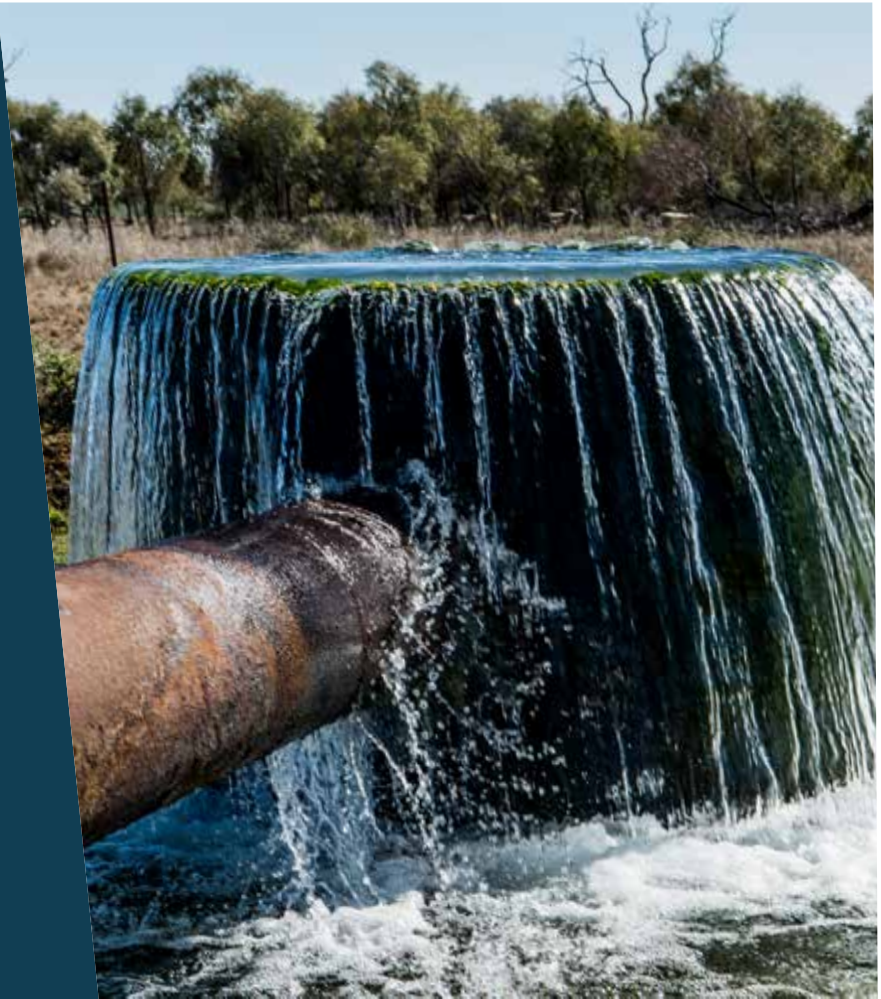
# Water

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QFF continued to advocate for enhanced water policy and regulation to support Queensland's primary producers in 2022-23.

## Our areas of focus

- Water planning.
- Water pricing efficiencies.
- Climate change impacts on agricultural production.
- Food and water security.
- Establishment of priority committees, for direct consultation including the establishment of an external committee with Sunwater.
- Rural Water Futures, including telemetry, metering and the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.
- Priority areas for the development of the Queensland Water Strategy.



## 2022-23 highlights

- ▶ Following extensive advocacy efforts from QFF and members, the Queensland Government endorsed more equitable and consistent irrigation pricing arrangements for Queensland farmers through state-owned water supply schemes.
- ▶ The first of its kind Price Path Consultative Committee was established with Sunwater.
- ▶ The DRDMW Priority Water Planning Group was established to prioritise regional water plans.
- ▶ QFF and Burdekin River Irrigation Area (BRIA) successfully advocated for a change to the amendments to the Environmental Protection (Water and Wetland Biodiversity) Policy 2019. The Baratta Creek in the Burdekin is now listed as highly disturbed, ensuring irrigators in the Burdekin are not adversely affected by these amendments via any reef quality audits.
- ▶ Six representations made on water policy to government.

## Advocacy

QFF undertook extensive advocacy work alongside our members throughout 2022-23. We continue to address the complexities of water security through working towards a comprehensive strategy on water, while providing representation on a number of committees and stakeholder groups.

### Paradise Dam Reference Group

QFF continued to provide representation on the Paradise Dam Reference Group (PDRG) to ensure our members are supported when it comes to water policy and decisions that may impact their members. The PDRG aims to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between key stakeholders and Sunwater while the Paradise Dam Improvement Project (PDIP) is implemented. As part of this work, QFF attended the Paradise Dam Reference Group Meeting held in Bundaberg and attended an on-site visit to Paradise Dam conducted by Sunwater.

### Parliament Public Hearing – Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

QFF had the opportunity to present at the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 hearing at Parliament House. In May 2022, the State Government approved the Queensland Non-Urban Water Measurement Policy and the preparation of the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. This will see the bringing forward of the amendments to the Water Act 2000 to establish the regulatory framework to support policy implementation.

### Water Engagement Forum

QFF continued to sit on the Water Engagement Forum which is focused on developing the next Queensland Water Strategy. QFF's core focus is to ensure agriculture is well represented in the next Water Strategy for Queensland which is due to be released toward the end of 2023.

### Parliament of Australia: Inquiry into food security in Australia.

QFF were invited to provide evidence to the Inquiry into Food Security in Australia in 2023. QFF advocated that there needs to be a broader view of climate change, beyond disasters and food production, which has yet to be fully integrated into a food security policy, and supply chain governance and practice in Australia.

### Parliament of Queensland – Climate Change and Agricultural Adaptation

QFF presented to the Queensland Parliament's Climate Change and Agricultural Adaptation Committee in March 2023. The Committee examined the impacts of climate change on Queensland's agricultural production. QFF presented initiatives, policies and solutions that Queensland farmers are currently undertaking to adapt to a changing climate.



# Stakeholder engagements

## QFF's Water and Energy Policy Committee

QFF's Water and Energy Policy Committee (WEPC) met seven times during 2022-23.

Key areas QFF and WEPC contributed to include:

- Developing an infrastructure policy to include changes to existing infrastructure to increase water security for the future.
- Investigating the utilisation of sewage water and recycled water as agricultural water supply options.
- Contributing to water and energy efficiency projects on-farm via programs like Energy Southern Queensland (EnergySQ).
- Developing a climate change policy that incorporates the direct impacts of climate change on agriculture.
- Developing a new energy policy, integrating renewables and current on-farm innovative practices, required to meet demand and lower costs.
- Water pricing inefficiencies.
- Water infrastructure.
- Renewable energy and impacts to pricing.
- Developing water policy to determine priorities for inclusion through the Sunwater Price Path consultation, and policies external to Sunwater and Seqwater.

## New stakeholder committees

Due to upcoming price paths, an increase in stakeholder meetings, and the transition to renewable energy, refined committees designated to provide more detailed information for members on topics affecting their regions were instigated throughout the 2022-23 year.

These committees have seen relationships and transparency grow between QFF members, stakeholder organisations and the decision makers behind the policies that impact agricultural production.

### Sunwater Price Path (IPP25) Consultative Committee

In a significant step forward, QFF facilitated the establishment of a joint Consultative Committee with Sunwater to ensure QFF members have input into price path negotiations. This committee is a result of extensive advocacy from QFF and members for a stronger relationship, greater transparency and accountability, and solutions-orientated delivery for water pricing in Queensland.

### DRDMW Priority Water Planning Group

The Water Priority Water Planning Group was established by QFF and the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (DRDMW) as a region-based water planning group to focus on water plans that are due to expire in the near future. This has facilitated discussions with QFF members to identify and prioritise items to be addressed through different water plans.

## Lake Eyre Basin

QFF sits on the Lake Eyre Basin Stakeholder Advisory Group (LEBSAG) to ensure a coherent policy approach is established to support agricultural interests in the region, and to ensure the interests of our members located outside of this region are protected. Through this engagement in 2022-23, QFF:

- Attended the final LEBSAG meeting to finalise position statements in preparation for the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS).
- Participated in a field trip to the Santos Ballera Gasfields in the Lake Eyre Basin where an overview of the mitigation strategies to protect the flood plain were shown.
- Continued to advocate for the protection of the Lake Eyre Basin, regional communities, existing water allocations, and agricultural businesses.

## Regional Water Assessments

QFF continued to sit on the stakeholder advisory groups and working groups for all three Regional Water Assessments (RWA) established by the Queensland Government in three of Queensland's most significant food bowls – the Southern Downs and Darling Downs, the Bundaberg and Burnett regions, and the Tablelands region.

The aim of the assessments is to identify water supply solutions to drive future economic growth. RWAs will provide a region-level assessment of water needs and options to improve water security and maximise economic development opportunities in the project area.

QFF will continue to advocate for water security, economic growth and long-term viability of the agricultural sector through effective policy development.

## Additional engagements

- Presented an update on QFF's work in water and energy policy and projects to the Queensland Horticulture Council.
- Attended the Commonwealth Murray-Darling Basin Peak Groups Meeting.
- Attended the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) Consumer Forum.
- Presented a water and energy policy update to the Canegrowers Economics and Trade Committee meeting.
- Attended various Queensland Murray-Darling Basin (QMDB) meetings and participated in feedback on metering in the QMDB.
- Presented at the International Water Centre and Qld Water Modelling Network's discussion on Decision making in water management.
- Presented at the Bureau of Meteorology, on how weather data impacts decision making for the agricultural sector.

## Submissions

View QFF's water related submissions on pages 34 – 35.

# Energy

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Energy remained a central pillar of QFF's project and policy work in 2022-23. Energy is a critical input in agricultural operations and QFF continues to engage with government and energy industry groups to develop equitable pricing structures and enable regulation to support the adoption, and transition to, smart energy technology. QFF has also continued to deliver projects on-farm, contributing to water and energy efficiency gains for primary producers.

## Our areas of focus

- Advocating for equitable energy pricing structures for farm businesses.
- Advancing the adoption of emerging energy technologies
- Enabling farmers to identify energy savings opportunities through grant funding, project delivery and knowledge sharing.
- Providing resources to assist farmers and landholders make informed decisions as they respond to and negotiate with energy industry representatives, including network infrastructure, about accessing land and developing energy projects.
- Working directly with farms to deliver energy projects.



## 2022-23 highlights

- ▶ Contributed to a range of critical energy panels, councils, and forums on behalf of the agricultural sector.
- ▶ Conducted 103 interviews with primary producers, regional councils and businesses to develop a better understanding of the appetite for smart energy technologies.
- ▶ Started working with farmers through the Energy Southern Queensland (EnergySQ) project to develop Energy and Carbon Action Plans specific to their operations.
- ▶ Developed and launched the Queensland Renewable Energy Landholder Toolkit.
- ▶ Worked with Powerlink to develop a new SuperGrid Landholder Payment Framework, that will see Queensland landholders hosting new transmission infrastructure receive increased compensation payments, along with the introduction of a neighbour payment.

## Advocacy

Throughout 2022-23 QFF was involved in a range of state and national energy advocacy and stakeholder engagement efforts.

### Powerlink Network Development Panel

QFF played a significant role as the only agricultural representative on Powerlink's network development panel, guiding Powerlink on the issues to consider during transmission infrastructure roll out. This will be the first significant review of the Network Development Process (NDP) in over eight years, and the first review of the compensation strategy in over a decade.

### The Energy Charter's Community Outcomes Group

QFF represented the agricultural sector in The Energy Charter's Community Outcomes Group (COG) during the development of their Better Practice Social Licence Guideline focused on social licence within the energy transition.

### Australian Energy Market Operator's Consumer Forum

QFF attended the Australian Energy Market Operator's (AEMO) Consumer Forum and highlighted policy changes that must be adopted to reduce costs of energy to agricultural businesses, which include accessibility to alternative energy sources on farm and the application and adoption of microgrids in regional communities.

### Sustainable Liquid Fuels Strategy

QFF participated in the Sustainable Liquid Fuels Strategy discussion at the DEPW (Department of Energy and Public Works), regarding agriculture and the impacts of fast-tracking alternative fuels, and solutions needed to bridge the gap when transitioning agriculture-based machinery and production to renewable fuels.

## Energy Queensland Engagements

QFF worked within Energy Queensland's Joint Customer & Community Council and Agriculture Forum and the Department of Energy and Public works to develop a consultation pathway for the future energy plan. This also incorporated engagement on the 2025 Regulatory Determination Project, as part of the RDP2025 Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

### Ministerial Energy Council

QFF continued to ensure farmers and the agriculture sector were represented on the Ministerial Energy Council (MEC), chaired by Minister for Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen, which brings together leaders from the energy sector, industry, consumer groups and government to discuss matters relating to the Queensland energy sector.

### Additional energy stakeholder engagements

QFF also engaged in the below:

- the Energy Charter Ag Landholder Social Licence Research: Shared Value Workshop
- the Regulatory Determination Project 2025 Stakeholder Forum for Ergon and Energex, Regulatory Proposal Development.



# Energy projects

## EnergySQ

In April 2023, QFF launched in partnership with ACCIONA Energía the Energy Southern Queensland (EnergySQ) program. The program is aimed at assisting farms in the Southern Downs and Goondiwindi regions to better understand and manage their on-farm energy consumption and identify ways to reduce their energy spend and carbon footprint. Through site visits to the farm, QFF's energy team have commenced assessing energy efficiencies and providing recommendations through a tailored Energy and Carbon Action Plan to participating farms..

In 2023-24 the program will be expanded to include the Toowoomba and Western Downs regions.

## Localised Energy in Regions

The Localised Energy in Regions project was completed in 2022-23 to gauge the growing interest in locally dispatchable Consumer Energy Resources (CERs) including microgrids, virtual power plants, and community batteries within Queensland's Renewable Energy Zones (QREZ). Through the project, funded by Energy Consumers Australia, 102 primary producers, regional councils and businesses were interviewed.

The data collected resulted in the development of an interactive market map and report to provide valuable insights that will enhance the planning, integration, and cost-effectiveness of CERs in regional grids.

Key motivations driving energy strategies:



Affordability



Reliability



Optimisation of energy assets



Decarbonisation



Energy sharing



Augmented energy consumption

## The flow on benefits of microgrids for agriculture

QFF partnered with Cotton Australia, Reaqua and Constructive Energy to consider whether microgrids can offer benefits to agricultural electricity consumers as well as networks.

The study found a high potential for microgrids to optimise local power networks.

The study was completed with a webinar late in 2022 covering the feasibility of microgrids in agriculture and the release of four case studies showcasing various archetypes for implementing microgrids on farms.

## Digital Agriculture Project

QFF teamed up with Enzen Australia (Enzen) and National Narrowband Network Company (NNNCo) on a digital farming project, creating an innovative Internet of Things (IoT) solution to cover the operations of two demonstration farms in southeast Queensland.

Over 50 sensors were deployed on the farms including weather stations, water quality, indoor environment for intensive animals, silo fill levels and plant sensors with leaf moisture and stem diameter.

The project team continues to work with the farms to understand the most useful data streams for the farm, opportunities to convert data to actionable information, and to consider potential relationships between data.

## Queensland Renewable Energy Landholder Toolkit

QFF officially launched the Queensland Renewable Energy Landholder Toolkit in partnership with the Queensland Government in early July 2023 to support farmers and landholders make informed decisions when considering hosting a renewable energy project on their land.

This document was developed through consultation with a range of businesses and individuals including landholders, developers, government bodies and legal and financial professionals.

The Toolkit provides detailed considerations for landholders to think through during the various stages of a renewable energy infrastructure development, including:

- Detailed checklists to use throughout developer negotiation processes.
- Practical guidance for each stage of a renewable energy infrastructure development project.
- Insights from legal and financial professionals, government bodies and landholders who have undertaken these processes themselves.
- Information on benefit sharing, community engagement and social license considerations.
- Extensive resources.



## Submissions

View QFF's energy related submissions on pages 34 – 35.



# Planning and local government

Prime agricultural land is a finite resource and must be protected from competing land use requirements to ensure the continued viability of Queensland's food, fibre and foliage production systems. QFF advocates on behalf of Queensland's agriculture sector to ensure governments conduct rural planning that safeguards the state's food security.

## Our areas of focus

- Advocating against encroachment on prime agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes.
- Continued advocacy for landholder protections and valuing agricultural land in all aspects of co-existence.
- Ensuring producers have resources to assist in their negotiations with proponents.
- Promoting policies that ensure the long-term viability of rural, remote and regional Queensland communities.



## 2022-23 highlights

- ▲ Finalised the Review of Agricultural Land Classifications for Statutory Planning in Queensland.
- ▲ QFF CEO Jo Sheppard presented to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Committee about the agritourism opportunity for the 2032 Olympics and the need for planning reform.



### 29 agritourism grants

totaling \$600,000 provided to primary producers looking to explore or expand agritourism opportunities for their operations.



## Advocacy

QFF's planning and local government advocacy spans a wide range of issues across reviews of statutory instruments and regional planning proposals, to agritourism, on-farm and rural worker accommodation considerations and local government rating issues.

QFF has held meetings with all relevant departments to ensure the alignment of all planning schemes and remains committed to advocating for future food security. QFF continues to address concerns regarding the disconnect in regional planning schemes which will impact future land use.

In 2022-23, QFF also facilitated member education programmes on planning and environmental legislation and approvals processes.

## Projects

### Queensland Agritourism Business Grants Program

QFF again partnered with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) to deliver the second round of the Queensland Agritourism Business Grants Program in 2022-23.

The first round of the Program in 2021-22 was heavily subscribed with over \$1.5M in applications reflecting the growing interest of farmers looking to agritourism as a viable business diversification strategy. Subsequently, round 2 of the Program was launched.

The Program offered funding support for primary producers to help them establish or expand into agritourism.

The first round of the program received 72 applications, with 17 grants being provided, including an additional funding tier due to the interest in the program.

The second round of the program received 45 applications and awarded 12 grants.

In total, close to \$600,000 was provided to farming enterprises in Queensland through the Program.

## Submissions

View QFF's planning and local government related submissions on pages 34-35.

# Natural resource management

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QFF advocates on behalf of the agriculture sector for positive environmental outcomes while maintaining the productivity and efficiency of Queensland farmers. We celebrate the achievements of farmers and growers who are utilising innovative approaches and best management practices and provide support through a range of projects.

## Our areas of focus

- Championing agriculture's role in improving the Great Barrier Reef's water quality.
- Providing agricultural extension pathways to facilitate best management practices.
- Fostering the development of carbon farming and nature repair markets while maintaining farm productivity.
- Ensuring agriculture is financially and operationally prepared for a carbon-constrained future.
- Increasing landholder awareness of and access to the Land Restoration Fund.



## 2022-23 highlights

- ▶ Seven submissions to state and federal governments on natural resource management (NRM) advocating for support for farmers to build positive environmental outcomes that also support profitable farming enterprises.
- ▶ 10 award categories, including two new categories, celebrating Queensland farmers at the 2022 Reef Champions Awards.
- ▶ Four Land Restoration Fund workshops.
- ▶ Eight agricultural graduates placed in extension positions in reef catchments, in a project that won the 2022 Department of Environment and Science Excellence Awards.

## Advocacy

QFF represents the agriculture sector on several critical natural resource management (NRM) committees, ensuring the efforts of farmers are acknowledged and that impacts to the sector are considered during the development of both legislative and voluntary targets.

- QFF has participated in the Low Emissions Pathway Steering Committee which has overseen the development of the Queensland Low Emissions Agriculture Roadmap, which was released in draft for consultation in June 2022. The final roadmap was released in March 2023. QFF continues to lead the negotiation process to develop the roadmap's implementation plan.
- QFF was engaged through the Australian Government's independent evaluation of Great Barrier Reef water quality improvement planning and targets.
- QFF provided feedback as part of the review of the voluntary Agricultural Management Practice Adoption Targets highlighting the lack of productive consultation with land managers and failures to seriously consider the production and economic impacts such targets would impose. The final report and recommendations from the review were sent to Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, the Honourable Tanya Plibersek and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs, and Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, the Honourable Meaghan Scanlon.
- QFF continues to engage as an active member on the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee to ensure farmers have a strong voice. The Committee meets regularly to provide strategic advice on the implementation of Reef 2050 actions, stakeholder priorities, and to highlight any emerging cross sectoral issues that need to be addressed.
- QFF has ongoing engagement with the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative (QFPI) and is a member of the QFPI Oversight Group which governs the development and implementation of the initiative.



## Projects

### Reef Champion Awards

The winners of the 2022 Reef Champion Awards were announced at the Awards dinner in Cairns on Wednesday, 30 November 2022. The winners and finalists work highlighted the importance of acknowledging the efforts of farmers and others working with the agricultural sector, traditional owners and local communities to safeguard the future of the Reef and coastal systems.

The Awards, run by QFF with support from Prince's Trust Australia, and the Australian and Queensland governments, recognise the outstanding achievements of individuals and organisations working to improve the quality of water entering the iconic Great Barrier Reef. Award categories and winners were as follows:

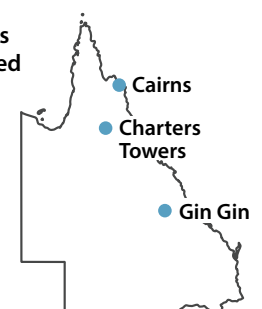
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>The Prince's Trust Australia Environment Leadership – Reef Sustainability Award</b><br/><i>Tony Rossi</i></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reef Pesticide Stewardship Champion Award</b><br/><i>Matt and Ben Abbott</i></li> </ul>             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reef Nutrient Stewardship Champion Award</b><br/><i>Denis Pozzebon</i></li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reef Traditional Owner Group Champion Award</b> <i>Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation</i></li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reef Sediment Stewardship Champion Award</b><br/><i>Fran and Damon Lyons</i></li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reef Community Champion Award</b><br/><i>CQ Seagrass Regeneration Collective</i></li> </ul>         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reef Conservation Champion Award</b> <i>Jason Bradford and Pacific Biotechnologies (Australia) Pty Ltd</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reef Traditional Owner Youth Champion Award</b> <i>Ashlyn Skeene</i></li> </ul>                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reef Extension Officer Champion Award</b><br/><i>Rebecca McHardie</i></li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reef Youth Champion Award</b><br/><i>Emma Parker</i></li> </ul>                                     |

### Land Restoration Fund Project

The Queensland Governments Land Restoration Fund (LRF) partnered with QFF and NRM Regions Queensland to run regional carbon farming workshops for landholders in April 2023. The project ran an interactive online landholder workshop and a webinar for carbon service providers.

At the workshops, the LRF joined with industry, local NRM groups, government and landholders running carbon projects to share information on the LRF, discuss Queensland's carbon farming opportunities, and answer landholders' questions.

Workshops were hosted in:



## Submissions

View QFF's environment and natural resource management related submissions on pages 34 – 35.

# Farm business resilience

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QFF continues to encourage governments at all levels to invest in projects and programs that foster risk management and resilience building for farming enterprises.

## Our areas of focus

- Cumulative effects of concurrent severe weather events on farm business resilience.
- Severe weather event impacts to our food supply system.
- Recovery and resilience programs that build more sustainable farm businesses.
- Crop insurance and risk tools that assist farmers manage weather related income volatility.



## 2022-23 highlights

- ▶ 11 episodes of the Farm Business Hour webinar series were delivered as part of the Farm Business and Resilience Program (FBRP) on topics related to risk management for agriculture.
- ▶ 180+ producers attended facilitated workshops or events promoting the FBRP.
- ▶ 40 producers completed risk self-assessment checklists.
- ▶ 30 producers developed their Farm Business Resilience Plans.

## Advocacy

With natural disasters and severe weather events becoming more prevalent, the cumulative effect of these events on farm businesses resilience, and consequently our food supply system, is increasing.

QFF continues to meet with state and federal ministerial representatives to ensure the interests of farm businesses in both resilience and recovery are communicated and advocated for.

Governments must support policies and projects that increase a business's ability to withstand cumulative pressures such as concurrent natural disaster and drought cycles while also stepping in to support businesses when the limits of preparedness have been reached.

QFF continues to advocate for government to engage actively in fostering a crop insurance industry that provides the capacity for farm businesses to transfer the risk they cannot mitigate. A robust parametric crop insurance industry has the capacity to build resilience and smooth income volatility. This is an area of complex policy and QFF will continue to engage with government in the year ahead.

# Projects

## Farm Business Resilience Program

QFF continues to deliver the Farm Business Resilience Program in partnership with members:

- Cotton Australia
- Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland
- Turf Queensland
- Queensland United Egg Producers
- Pork Queensland

The program works to assist farm businesses identify strategies to address risks through the development of a Farm Business Resilience Plan. The plans are designed to address priority risks, including:

- Climate variability
- Production risks
- Seasonal weather risks
- Financial and market risks
- Biosecurity
- Workforce
- Family business risk
- Personal and industry reputational risks

Participation in the program enables intensive industries to participate in the drought reform process through accessing funding available through the Drought Preparedness Grant and Drought Loans.

QFF members Growcom (project arm of Queensland Fruit & vegetable Growers), Canegrowers and eastAUSmilk also deliver the program through separate funding arrangements.

## Crop Insurance Project

QFF continued to explore integrating index-based insurance and optimal crop management strategies to reduce financial risk and improve income stability through the Crop Insurance Project.

In 2022-23, the project investigated the innovative ways to structure insurance products to cover multiple climate risks. This would allow the insurer to spread the risk and also add additional value to the farm business.

Moving forward, this project will continue to focus on the partnership with technology company Hailios and their innovative 'hail plate' technology to structure new crop insurance policies for hail. Increasing resilience to the most pressing climatic risks will assist in building overall tolerance in farming businesses to all risks including drought. QFF has also partnered with behavioural science consultants Evidn to gain a greater understanding of farm business attitudes to financial risk management.

## Enhancing Climate Change Adaptation Processes for Farmers and Agribusiness Project

The Enhancing Climate Change Adaptation Processes for Farmers and Agribusiness project conducted workshops and other engagement activities in 2022-23 with farmers and industry across value chains in Australia and India to understand their knowledge and uptake of farm insurance products to shield them from both the physical and financial disasters associated with climate change.

By developing a stronger understanding of barriers to insurance uptake through direct engagement, this project offers a unique opportunity to identify similarities and differences in Australia and India's climate adaptation, risk management and government policy processes.

As part of the project, QFF General Manager – Policy and Projects, Adam Knapp, travelled to India in early February as part of a small delegation to present to farmers, students and academic staff in India on the challenges of managing financial risks in the changing climate of Queensland.

Learnings from this project will culminate in the design of national and sub-national adaptation, mitigation, and risk management strategies to assist in the further development of insurance products and risk management tools for primary producers.

## QFF Farm Business and Economic Taskforce

### Chaired by Michael Murray, General Manager of Cotton Australia

The Taskforce acts as the reference group for issues that impact farm businesses such as farm debt, farm profitability and economic stability.

### Taskforce focus areas for 2022-23 included:

- Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) - Activation requirements, application requirements, scope of guidelines for the Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Grants.
- Queensland Office of the Valuer-General - Impact of statutory land valuations on agricultural land values.
- Australian Banking Association - Regional branch closure protocols and feedback from members on the impact of regional bank closure on regional and farming businesses.

# Biosecurity

QFF continues to work with all levels of government to ensure biosecurity measures for the agriculture sector are prioritised. We continue to advocate for a long-term commitment to developing and maintaining strong biosecurity measures including substantial investment, and ongoing capacity building efforts at regional, state and national levels.

## Our areas of focus

- Building biosecurity capacity for the Queensland agriculture sector.
- Partnering with government and key stakeholders to address the immediate risk of fire ants and lumpy skin disease.
- Emergency response preparedness.
- On-farm biosecurity preparedness planning, especially for mid-tier poultry farms.
- Ongoing advocacy and support for a collaborative approach to achieving biosecurity goals.



## Key achievements

- ▶ QFF welcomed the 2023 State Budget for Queensland announcement of \$550 million for Queensland agriculture including boosts for both animal and plant health biosecurity. This follows continued advocacy efforts by QFF for additional resourcing for biosecurity measures in Queensland.
- ▶ QFF participated and assisted in the design of the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) Biosecurity Partners Forum in March 2023 which allowed stakeholders to input feedback during the development of the Queensland Biosecurity Strategy 2024-29.
- ▶ QFF hosted a Strategic Outlook Meeting of Intensive Animal Industries with representatives from the pork, dairy, chicken meat, eggs and beef feedlot industries, as well as the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries representatives. The *'Strategic Outlook* – *Intensive Animal Industries Insights and Priorities'* paper was then developed to inform the basis of future strategic work and collaborative opportunities across industries and with government.
- ▶ Exercise Prepare, an emergency animal disease (EAD) exercise, was held bringing together government and the egg and chicken meat industry to identify significant gaps in the EAD response for avian influenza. A joint industry/government committee has now been formed to implement the recommendations from this exercise.

## Advocacy and engagement

Biosecurity, both animal and plant, is a top priority for the intensive animals industries and QFF. Strategy is critical to ensure devastating diseases and pests do not impact our agricultural industries. In 2023, QFF participated in strategic industry/government meetings to ensure the right strategies are adopted for the next 5 years and beyond.

Ongoing, QFF has representation on the following committees:

- Biosecurity Ministerial Advisory Council (BQMAC). This group is developing the Queensland Biosecurity Strategy 2024 – 2029 following the Biosecurity Partners Forum in April 2023.
- Queensland Invasive Plants and Animals Committee (QIPAC). This group reports to BQMAC and is reviewing the Queensland Invasive Plants and Animals Strategy.
- Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Preparedness Taskforce for Queensland
- African Swine Fever and Preparedness Project Reference Group
- Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Preparedness Taskforce for Northern Australia
- Animal Biosecurity Market Access Liaison Group
- Queensland Feral Pest Initiative Oversight Group
- Invasive Plants and Animal Research Review Committee

We also continue to host the QFF Intensive Animal Industries Policy Committee which was formed in 2021.

Through this activity, QFF has been involved in:

- high level discussions with the Chief Biosecurity Officer on the Cape York Biosecurity Centre and its closure
- supporting the extension of the Fire Ant Program
- training for industry in emergency animal responses
- building awareness of biosecurity obligations for mid-tier poultry farms
- advocating for industry amid proposed changes to livestock brands and earmarks and the subsequent impact on the pig industry.

## Building skills and capacity for the intensive animal industries

Building skills and capability for the intensive animal industries has been a continued focus for the QFF Intensive Animal Industries Policy Committee.

Both formal and informal groups of expertise have been established to progress biosecurity issues in animal health (veterinarians) and extension (on-farm biosecurity). A group has also been established to implement recommendations from the emergency animal disease exercise, Exercise Prepare.

These groups are building a body of expertise and experience to problem solve and mitigate biosecurity issues. There has also been close liaison with government in the ongoing design of biosecurity courses and information for workers in the pig industry.



## Animal and plant disease

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) and African Swine Fever continued to pose a significant risk in 2023. FMD is becoming widespread, and LSD remains prevalent, in Indonesia and African Swine Fever is present in New Guinea.

Plant industries also saw the incursion of guava root-knot nematode (*Meloidogyne enterolobii*) in a commercial North Queensland farm and a peri-urban farm at Hervey Bay. These nematode attacks impacted a wide host of produce from pineapples to ginger, to pumpkins and eggplants.

Pests that are already here in Queensland continued to be a focus, including feral pigs, fire ants and weeds of national significance.

QFF works to mitigate these risks through promoting on farm biosecurity plans, raising awareness of what is in place to support industries, and providing input into government policy development, including communication strategies and training.

### Submissions

View QFF's biosecurity related submissions on pages 34 - 35.



# Workforce

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Agriculture businesses across all industries and supply chains continue to experience workforce shortages. QFF is committed to walking alongside the sector to develop and implement practical solutions for farming enterprises and agribusinesses, while working with government to provide strategic advice on the required policies and legislative changes needed to address workforce challenges.

## Our areas of focus

- Promoting adaptability and capability in agribusiness across employment, skills, industry training and workforce development.
- Supporting agribusiness human resourcing requirements including attraction and retention, including by assisting agribusinesses to access funding.
- Advocating for workforce diversity to take advantage of the various skills that groups and individuals can contribute to the agriculture sector.
- Consulting with government and industry to ensure strong VET pathways for the development of agricultural workforce skills, including workforce planning for future skilling.



## 2022-23 highlights

- ▶ *Queensland Agriculture Industry Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027* launched in July 2023.
- ▶ Queensland AgWorkforce Summit hosted in August 2022.
- ▶ *Career in Agriculture* magazine launched in October 2022.
- ▶ Industry Workforce Advisor program commences in November 2022.
- ▶ Ag Jobs Queensland launched in February 2023 as the only dedicated job-matching platform for the Queensland agriculture sector and supply chain.



## Industry Workforce Advisor

The Industry Workforce Advisor (IWA) program for agriculture and horticulture commenced in November 2022. IWA's have been established by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training under the Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032 to help small to medium employers identify workforce challenges and connect with available support and funding.

Through the program, QFF's IWA continues to support businesses to identify workforce challenges and potential solutions, develop strategies to attract and retain people, complete a simple workforce plan and access funding where eligibility permits.

32

registrations over  
three days

19

businesses have worked toward  
completing their workforce plan

## Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance

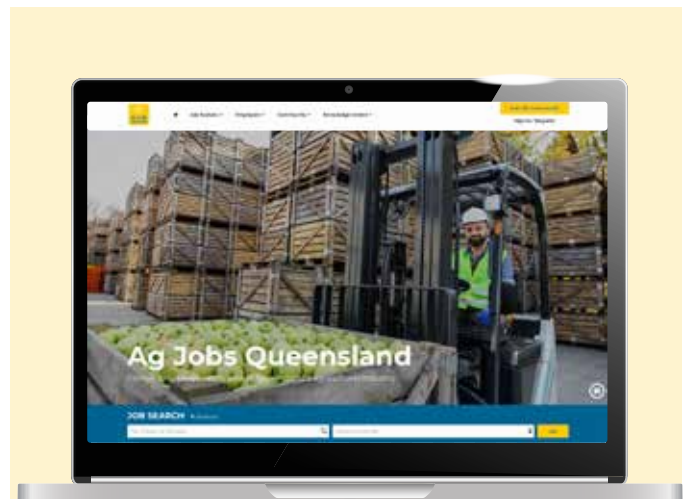
The Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance is QFF's critical mechanism for delivering strategic advice to the Queensland Government for skills and workforce planning issues for the Queensland agriculture sector. The 2022-23 year represented the seventh year of operation for the RJSA, providing recommendations and advice to government, service providers and other stakeholders about employment, skills, industry training and workforce planning on behalf of Queensland agriculture.

RJSA members include:

- QFF
- CANEGROWERS
- Cotton Australia
- Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers
- Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland
- Irrigation Australia
- Timber and Building Materials Association
- Australian Prawn Farmers' Association
- eastAUSmilk
- AgForce Queensland
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

## Industry Skills Advisor

QFF's Industry Skills Advisory (ISA) continued to support agribusinesses to navigate the vocational education and training (VET) sector and explore subsidised training and incentive opportunities on offer through his role as Industry Skills Advisor (ISA). ISAs have been established by the Queensland Government to act as a conduit between industry and government, providing advice to government on the current and future trends, skill needs and preferred pathways in the VET sector.



## Ag Jobs Queensland

QFF launched Ag Jobs Queensland in February 2023 in response to continued feedback from members and industry on the difficulty to find and attract staff for farming enterprises and agribusinesses. Ag Jobs Queensland allows employers to post their available jobs, while also allowing people looking for work to upload an AirCV and be matched to employers looking for their skills and experience.

20,000+

pageviews in  
the first two  
weeks post  
launch

6,000

people looking  
for jobs in  
agriculture each  
month

600+

average jobs  
available on the  
platform each  
month

# Queensland AgWorkforce Summit



The Queensland AgWorkforce Summit was hosted from 3 – 5 August 2022 by QFF and the RJSA in partnership with Jobs Queensland and the Queensland Government. The online event brought together agribusiness and experts to learn and share experiences about innovative strategies in attracting, retaining and skilling workforce, while address current and future workforce opportunities and challenges for Queensland agriculture.



196

registrations over three days

50

speakers

50

keynote speakers

50

panel discussions

5

industry case studies



## Key industry engagements

- Representation on the Aquaculture and Agriculture Tech Skills Hub Steering Committee.
- Representation on the Queensland Sheep and Wool Technical Advisory Group (Qld Wool TAG).
- Representation on the VET Emerging Industries (VET) Agribusiness Working Group.
- Participation in the NCVET research project 'VET delivery in regional, rural, and remote Australia: barriers and facilitators'.
- Presentations to:
  - ▶ National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE)
  - ▶ Queensland Agricultural Teachers Association (QATA)
  - ▶ 'Industry Connect' VET Forums
  - ▶ Independent Schools Queensland
  - ▶ Mackay Regional Jobs Committee
  - ▶ Ag Tech Elite 3-Day Holiday Program
  - ▶ Dual Diploma Agribusiness/Agricultural students

## Careers in Agriculture magazine

The Careers in Agriculture Magazine was launched in October 2022 by QFF in partnership with the Queensland Government and the RJSA to provide information on job opportunities, career pathways, internships, and traineeships in agriculture, to schools, career advisors, parents, and students.

The magazine is now embedded in the CareerHarvest website, which is part of the Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia website, providing a vital tool for potential entrants considering a career in agriculture.



## Submissions

View QFF's workforce related submissions on pages 34 – 35.



**A message from  
our tier 1 and 2  
members**

# A message from CANEGROWERS



2022-23 was a year of mixed fortunes for Queensland's sugarcane industry.

On the positive side of the ledger, industry stakeholders came together to launch an exciting new strategy aimed at propelling the industry into the heart of Australia's burgeoning bioeconomy.

The Sugar Plus roadmap outlines a united vision for a strong and vibrant future that will see sugarcane become a feedstock in the production of many sustainable products such as bioenergy, sustainable aviation fuel, bioplastics, and even sugar-based proteins.

This planned diversification will go hand-in-hand with growth in the production of sustainable raw sugar, as the industry seeks to become a world leader in the export of traceable, certified sustainably produced sugar.

We also saw the opening of a new tariff-free market for Queensland sugar under the Australia-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement.

After much negotiation and input from CANEGROWERS, the Australian Government was able to secure tariff-free access for 80,000 tonnes of Queensland sugar in year 1 of the agreement, rising by 20,000 tonnes per year until 2030, after which time there will be no limit on the export of tariff-free Australian raw sugar into the UK.

Thanks to the hard work of growers accredited in the industry-led best management practice program, Smartcane BMP, a buyer was already waiting in the wings to order the UK's first shipment of tariff-free Australian sugar in half a century.

That buyer, Tate & Lyle Sugars, only wanted to purchase sugar that was certified as being sustainably produced. Thankfully, with over 40% of Queensland's cane-growing area now accredited in Smartcane

BMP, and that program formally recognised by international sugar sustainability gatekeepers Bonsucro, ProTerra and VIVE, we were able to meet this demand.

This win on the trade front, coupled with the continued rise of the world sugar price throughout the first six months of 2023 and the rapid growth of the bioeconomy in Queensland, offered welcome news for growers and the whole industry.

On the negative side of the ledger, poor weather early in the season delayed the start of the harvest in many regions. This delay was further compounded by workforce shortages and ongoing problems with mill performance, with the result being several districts were forced to harvest through the Christmas period and into the New Year - a period that sees sugar content fall and therefore profits trail off.

Even with this extended crush, more than a million tonnes of sugarcane were left unharvested, which has impacts on the following season by reducing subsequent crop growth and therefore reduced yield in 2023.

The high level of standover cane also contributed to an explosion in rat and feral pig numbers in some districts, where many growers are now dealing with a costly biosecurity crisis.

**Dan Galligan**  
CEO  
CANEGROWERS



# A message from Cotton Australia



The 2022/23 Queensland cotton season has been a successful one despite the first half of the season being very challenging with wetter and cooler than normal conditions, making for late plantings and slow early development.

It's positive to be able to report that the current season may only just fall short of the previous season which was the largest crop on record and coming only five years since we recorded the smallest crop in 40 years.

The first months of 2023 saw better conditions including a warmer than expected start resulting in a boost for growers and the regions that benefit from the economic activity that creates.

Gins reported the quality of the 22/23 crop was exceptionally high with lint that is white and clean while also recording good fibre length and strength.

An off-farm highlight for the year was the Cotton Conference held on the Gold Coast in August. It was the first opportunity for direct engagement with growers, suppliers and other industry stakeholders since COVID and it became our biggest event ever attracting 2487 attendees, more than the previous record set in 2018 - coincidentally, the last time the conference could be held due to COVID restrictions.

Direct engagement with the public is another key element in trust strategy and events like the EKKa are a major part in that. Immediately preceding the Cotton Conference the EKKa was a wonderful opportunity to showcase cotton and the industry's vastly improved sustainability credentials. Cotton Australia's stand in the Agricultural Hall was very prominent with a 13 x 10m space.

A huge thanks to Jamie Grant who sits on the RNA council and supported us at every step and attended every day. He supplied a round module that was like a magnet to attract visitors to our stand for photo opportunities.

Over 500 visitors viewed our Cotton Virtual Reality experience during the event and we were pleased to welcome to the stand federal and state government ministers as well as growers Nigel Burnett and Aaron Kiely.

At Cotton Australia, we greatly value the partnership and collaboration with QFF which results in real outcomes. In particular the collective work with QFF has achieved significant value through the Water and Energy Policy Committee, with the government offering a new round of three-year water leases for the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve in the Dawson Valley.

Another major advance emerging from the partnership with QFF is the delivery of Farm Business Resilience Planning workshops in Moura, Emerald, Darling Downs, Goondiwindi and St George.

Cotton Australia congratulates QFF on the access it has given members to many politicians and senior bureaucrats, arranging a small dinner with the Premier at Parliament House.

**Michael Murray**  
General Manager, Cotton Australia



# A message from Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers

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The 2022-23 financial year has been equally as exciting as it has been frustrating.

2023 marks 100 years in operation for Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG), a formidable achievement in anyone's books but one made even more powerful when the interwoven stories of horticulture and Queensland communities are told.

To mark the occasion, we declared 2023 as the Year of Horticulture, a year we would celebrate, educate and advocate for our growers. A year when:

- Growers are treated like heroes, revered for being the people who proudly grow the food humans rely on.
- Everyone in the supply chain is acknowledged and appreciated for their involvement in food.
- Consumers understand the work and costs that go into one piece of fruit, nut, or veg.
- Regions remember their history and look to the future.
- Government further comprehends the essential and complex economy of cultivating food.

- The peak body strongly represents horticulture as the most important industry in the world.

It's this last point which has been a source of frustration - water, ESG, audits, PALM, seasonality, profitability (or lack thereof), and biosecurity issues has kept us on our toes. This year strong, loud, and brave advocacy has not only been appreciated it's been necessary. We still have a lot of work to do in this space before we would consider our growers to have a stable growing future.

On the flip side, our activation events have been a source of inspiration and excitement across industry members and consumers alike and we look forward to acting on many more of our crazy ideas.

Finally, as a member of the Queensland Farmers' Federation we couldn't have asked for a more supportive bunch of passionate people and vital industries, to share the journey with.

**Rachel Chambers**

CEO

Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers



# A message from Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland



The nursery industry in Queensland retained most of the extra-ordinary growth we experienced during COVID-19, as farm gate value remains over a billion dollars in 2022-23.

Sales into our largest market sectors (garden centres, and landscaping projects) remained strong, with the landscape sector experiencing shortages of quality stock. Demand in the smaller sectors (commercial fruit and vegetable growers, forestry, and revegetation) was steady despite some changes within specific sectors, such as avocados which are no longer in short supply.

The weather was kind to both growers and buyers with none of the shocks of previous years, such as the flooding in early 2022, but now we have El Nino on the horizon. Our industry can experience a dual effect from drought, there is the impact on water supplies (many growers rely on farm dams) plus the downturn in demand when drought affects our major markets in Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne

Our industry generally employs locals (permanent and casual) rather than visa workers, but we have still benefited from increased numbers of back-packers taking pressure off the general labour market. People with the skills and experience to be supervisors and grower/managers remain in short supply and attract premium wages.

NGIQ has had a successful year with Queensland Garden Expo at Nambour returning to pre-Covid visitor levels, Green Expo Trade Show on the Gold Coast attracting record numbers of interstate buyers, and steady membership numbers. Our advocacy efforts on behalf of the industry have paid dividends with programs such Horticultural Netting Grants, and improvements to Vocational Education and Training. On the downside we have seen no change to the continued failure of the Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program, and Biosecurity Queensland, to properly address the risk of this terrible pest without unnecessary impost on our industry.

Many thanks to our colleagues on this journey – Queensland Farmers' Federation and the other member groups.

**Ian Atkinson**

CEO

Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland (NGIQ)





# A message from eastAUSmilk



This was the first full year of operation by eastAUSmilk. We were able to consolidate and form the foundations for growth in the future.

This year, we have seen a number of challenges facing our industry:

- Weather conditions - The year was wet in most areas up until late in 2022 with many areas suffering from ongoing wet for several years. However, in many districts, it has turned from extremely wet to dry in early 2023.
- Farm-gate prices - Farm gate prices increased substantially this year with prices increasing by almost 15c/L on average. Although this was very positive, it reflected a rise in input costs rather than an increase in profits for farmers.
- Queensland and NSW industry conditions - The Queensland dairy industry is set to produce just under 280 million litres of milk for the 2022-23 financial year, which is a decrease of around of 7 percent from 2021-22. The fall in production was largely caused by the devastating floods and ongoing wet across much of Queensland but also due to ongoing exits from the industry.

The board of eastAUSmilk has now developed a strategic plan which establishes the key priorities for the board's three-year term which started on 1 January 2023. EastAUSmilk's vision is for a profitable and sustainable future for our members and our mission is to be the preeminent and sustainable body for addressing dairy issues in our region to grow production, improve profits and reduce risks for our members.

Moving forward, the key priorities that eastAUSmilk will focus on for our members include:

- Promote the dairy industry to increase milk price
- Dairy industry planning and leadership
- Animal welfare especially bobby calves
- Technology adoption by farmers
- Business Planning, grants and finance
- Assist members re disasters, forms and grants
- Ensure members are aware of and utilise our services
- Employment advice to members
- Provide discounted NLIS tags to members
- Improve membership in eastAUSmilk

All involved at eastAUSmilk will continue to advocate, provide services and projects for our members. We hope that the weather is more kind to farmers in the upcoming year and that prices increase to a sustainable level for farmers.

**Eric Danzi**  
CEO  
eastAUSmilk



# 2022-23 Submissions

## Biosecurity



**Submission to the Committee** - Senate Inquiry into the adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness, in particular with respect to foot-and-mouth disease – September 2022



**Submission to the Health and Environment Committee** – Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 – October 2022

## Energy



**Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority** – QCA Interim consultation paper: Regulated retail electricity prices for 2023-24 - December 2022



**Submission to the Department of Environment and Science** – Environmental Impact Statement – Surat Basin Carbon Capture and Storage Project – February 2023



**Submission to the Queensland Competition Authority** – QCA Draft Determination: Regulated retail electricity prices for 2023-24 - March 2023



**Submission to State Development and Regional Industries Committee** - Queensland Climate Transition Bill 2023 – May 2023

## Environment and natural resource management



**Submission to the Department of Environment and Science** – Independent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) consultation Discussion Paper – July 2022



**Submission to the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee** – Nature Repair Market Bill 2023 and Nature Repair Market Bill [Consequential Amendments] 2023 – May 2023



**Submission to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries** - Review of the Australian Government Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan – September 2022



**Submission to the GasFields Commission Queensland** – Potential Consequences of CSG-induced Subsidence Report – June 2023

## Farm finance and debt



**Submission to Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport** – Bank closures in regional Australia – March 2023

## Food security



**Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture** - Parliament of Australia: Inquiry into food security in Australia - October 2022

## Rural planning



**Submission to the Department of Resources**  
- Land access and coexistence: A review of coexistence principles and coexistence institutions – February 2023



**Submission to the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure** - Planning Submission: Section 10 - Planning Act 2016 - Draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan – February 2023



**Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture** - Parliament of Australia: Inquiry into food security in Australia - October 2022

## Water



**Submission to the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water** - Draft Barron Water Plan and Draft Barron Water Management Protocol - July 2022



**Submission to the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water** - Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water, Draft Strategic Water Infrastructure Reserve, Dawson River Pilot Project review report – August 2022



**Submission to the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water** - Preliminary public consultation notice - Proposed postponement of expiry and replacement of the Water Plan (Fitzroy Basin) 2011 - s and s55 of the Water Act 2000 - September 2022



**Submission to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee** - Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 - October 2022



**Submission to the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water Preliminary public consultation notice**  
– Proposed replacement of the Water Plan (Pioneer Valley) 2002 – s44 of the Water Act 2000 - October 2022



**Submission to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water** - Draft Lake Eyre Basin Strategic Plan - November 2022

## Workforce



**Submission to the Education, Employment and Training Committee** - Inquiry into the Delivery of VET in Regional, Rural and Remote Queensland – January 2023



**Submission to the Select Committee of Northern Australia** - Inquiry into Northern Australia Workforce Development – November 2022

## Other



**Submission to the Australian Government, Department of Industry, Science and Resources** - Australian Government, Department of Industry, Science and Resources - National Reconstruction Fund: Consultation paper - December 2022



**Submission to the Australia Competition and Consumer Commission** - ACCC - Coles' proposed dairy acquisitions from Saputo Dairy Australia Pty Ltd (Saputo) – May 2023



# Industry members

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## Commodity members



## Irrigator members



# Corporate partners

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QFF introduced our Corporate Partners Program in 2022-23 to build strong partnerships within industry, across sectors and with private enterprise to deliver positive economic, social, environmental outcomes for Queensland agriculture and regional communities.

Thank you to QFF's Corporate Partners for their ongoing support. For more information, please visit [www.qff.org.au/qff-corporate-partners/](http://www.qff.org.au/qff-corporate-partners/)









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