



Cyclone support welcome but flooded farmers still high and dry

Farm group AgForce welcomes the state government's delivery of Category C recovery funding to the North Queensland shires which missed out in last week's initial round of Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

AgForce vice president Ian Burnett, who is on the ground today in cyclone-devastated regions with Queensland Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies Tim Mulherin, said AgForce lobbied hard to secure Category C status for parts of the Charters Towers, Etheridge and Flinders shires.

"In the wake of Cyclone Yasi, graziers in these regions are facing enormous clean-up bills thanks to extensively damaged buildings, roads and power lines; destroyed fences; fallen timber; and displaced – in some cases deceased – livestock.

"Primary producers and small businesses in parts of these local government areas will now be eligible to receive grants of up to \$25,000 for clean up and recovery. These Category C grants were initially limited to coastal local government areas.

"Access to these recovery funds for these additional areas will now put 'fuel in the tank' by delivering a cash injection to producers so they can retain skilled workers and contribute to the long-term sustainability and morale of regional communities in the wake of Cyclone Yasi."

Category B assistance has also been delivered to the entire local government area of Flinders, giving eligible small businesses and primary producers access concessional loans of up to \$250,000 and freight subsidies up to \$5000.

While the state government has rectified its initial oversight with the delivery of Category C status, AgForce is calling on the federal government to explain why flood-affected communities have still not been granted Category D status – nearly two months on.

"We are still waiting for a sign that the federal government has the best interests of rural and regional Queensland at heart – the failure to underpin recovery efforts with a real commitment to the long-term sustainability of the vital agricultural industry is nothing short of disappointing."

Mr Burnett said the financial package requested by AgForce for the regions severely impacted by natural disasters included options such as interest subsidies and long-term low interest loans.

AgForce continues to represent primary producers on industry and government natural disaster recovery taskforces to ensure economic, infrastructure and productivity rebuilding across the state.

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