

Click [here](#) if you are having trouble viewing this message.



This update is valid as of 9/2/26. Please ensure you are reviewing the most recent update as the EPBC reforms are fluid and changing frequently. We are doing our best to keep members informed.

Dear Members,

AgForce is continuing to push hard to protect Queensland producers as the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act reforms are now law and actively shaping on-farm decision-making.

Following two recent AgForce member webinars, AgForce formally lodged detailed follow-up questions with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW) to seek practical clarity on how the new rules apply to routine agricultural activities. We are sharing the first two written responses received from DCCEEW to ensure members have access to the same information we are using in our advocacy.

What's attached:

- [DCCEEW Official responses to AgForce's consolidated webinar questions from the 19th of January 2026](#), and
- [DCCEEW Official responses to AgForce's follow-up questions from the joint webinar on the 19th of December 2025](#).

The responses cover a range of questions from vegetation age, self-assessment, mapping, drainage lines, fodder harvesting, infrastructure and compliance to other legalities.

These responses reflect the Department's current interpretation. In several areas, answers remain conditional, high-level or contradictory to other resources on the DCCEEW website, and do not yet provide the certainty producers need to confidently plan or undertake works without calling the DCCEEW hotline.

That lack of clarity is exactly what AgForce is challenging.

Managing risk under current EPBC settings

AgForce is acutely aware that producers are being asked to make operational decisions in a regulatory environment where EPBC guidance remains unsettled.

For property-specific questions, members will often be directed to call the DCCEEW hotline. However, from a risk management and defensibility perspective, AgForce strongly advises producers to seek written confirmation of how the Department's interpretation applies to their circumstances.

Where advice is provided verbally:

- Follow up your phone call with an email to DCCEEW setting out your understanding of the interpretation as it applies to your proposed activity.
- Request confirmation or correction in writing.
- Retain this correspondence as part of your decision-making record.

This approach helps ensure your interpretation is formally on record, demonstrates good-faith compliance, and strengthens the defensibility of decisions made today against future changes in interpretation or enforcement approach.

If you receive unclear, inconsistent or impractical advice, please notify AgForce so we can escalate systemic issues directly with government.

What AgForce is doing on your behalf

AgForce is actively advocating to ensure EPBC implementation is workable for agriculture. This includes:

- Pushing for clear, broad exemptions for routine farm activities
- Advocating for a dedicated agricultural self-assessment and referral pathway that recognises farming as a continuous, adaptive land use, not a one-off development
- Pressing for practical guidance and thresholds so producers are not forced into unnecessary self-assessments or referrals

Our current advocacy priorities and submissions are outlined in [the previous member update](#), and whilst we have followed up member questions, we have first and foremost requested government to change the interpretations in line with AgForce member endorsed policy documents.

What members should do now:

- Use these Official Response documents from DCCEEW to understand the Department's position, however, note they do not resolve all uncertainties.
- For property-specific questions, members should contact DCCEEW directly to seek written clarification.
- If you receive unclear or inconsistent advice, please notify AgForce so we can escalate systemic issues.

Keep the pressure on

AgForce continues to advocate at the national level, but direct contact from producers to MPs remains critical to ensure Minister Watt understands the implications of these reforms.

We strongly encourage members to:

Write to your local MP using the same links and templates [you can access here](#).

- Explain how EPBC implementation affects your operation.
- Reinforce why exemptions for routine and remedial activities are essential to food security, animal welfare, drought resilience, long-term land stewardship and ecological outcomes.

AgForce will continue to represent members' interests and share updates as soon as new information becomes available.

Further links and information

Whilst we do our best to assist, AgForce cannot provide legal advice or case-by-case determinations.

For property-specific questions, members should contact:

- DCCEEW EPBC Hotline: 1800 803 772
- DCCEEW Referral Gateway (voicemail): 1800 423 135
- DCCEEW Website: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/approvals>

If you receive unclear or contradictory advice, please notify AgForce so we can raise systemic issues directly with government.

Other relevant Links:

- Updated DCCEEW Information sheet on Agricultural Exemptions to EPBC Assessment: [Updates to agricultural action exemptions under the EPBC Act updates - DCCEEW](#)
- For more information on EPBC Act project assessments: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/epbc-act-reform/more-efficient-robust-epbc-act-project-assessments>
- For more information on EPBC Act Reform: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/epbc-act-reform>
- MNES Search Tool (EPBC Act): <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/protected-matters-search-tool>
- Queensland Vegetation and PMAV Maps: <https://qldglobe.information.qld.gov.au/> and <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/vegetation/maps/map-correction>
- Environment Protections and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 \(EPBC Act\) - DCCEEW](#)
- Reef Catchment Mapping (dataset: Great Barrier Reef catchment and river basins): <https://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/catalogue/>

Recent AgForce Media Releases:

- [Environmental reform works best when farmers are part of the solution](#)
- [Standing Up for Producers Amid EPBC Uncertainty](#)
- [Before the Ink Dries: AgForce Calls for Watt to Co-Design EPBC Implementation with Queensland Producers](#)
- [Canberra's Green Deal Could Leave Australia Hungry, Says AgForce](#)
- [Farmers Can't Be Forgotten in the Rush for Environmental Reform](#)
- [The Time to Stand Up for Agriculture's Future is Now](#)
- [Queensland Producers Call for Common-Sense Environmental Reforms](#)

Recent Industry Updates:

- [EPBC Reforms Advocacy Update](#)
- [EPBC Reform: Latest Update & What's Next for Queensland Producers](#)
- AgForce Webinar with DCCEEW – Please reach out to your [Regional Manager](#) for a copy of the recording
- [Update on Environment Protection Reform Bill](#)
- [Federal Environmental Reforms \(EPBC Act\): Impacts, Timelines and AgForce's Response](#)
- [Have Your Say on the Future of Environmental Regulation](#)

Environment Protection Reform Bill 2025 and six adjoining bills links

- AgForce Submission [Environment Protection Reform Bill and six related bills](#)
- [APH Environment Protection Reform Bill 2025 and six related bills Inquiry Page](#)
- [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Reform Bill 2025 Amendments](#)



THE LEADING VOICE FOR QUEENSLAND PRODUCERS