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*This update is valid as of 18/2/26. 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,**

### **Unprecedented Ministerial Engagement on EPBC**

The past week has marked a significant step forward in AgForce's advocacy efforts, with engagement at both State and Federal levels.

AgForce met with:

- **Queensland Premier David Crisafulli**, alongside Ministers Last (Natural Resources), Powell (Environment) and Perrett (Primary Industries)
- **Federal Environment Minister Murray Watt**
- **Federal Agriculture Minister Julie Collins**
- **Federal Northern Australia Minister Madeline King's** key advisors

This level of coordinated engagement, across the State and Federal portfolios, positions AgForce strongly as we work to influence how EPBC reforms are implemented in practice.

### **State Government Engagement – Premier & Cabinet**

In our meeting with the Premier and senior Ministers, AgForce outlined the scale of impact the current EPBC settings and interpretation will have on Queensland agriculture, including the captured under the 15-year "continuous use" trigger and Great Barrier Reef 50m drainage-line provisions. Equally the critical importance of bilateral negotiations to ensure Queensland's PMAV system, Vegetation Management Act, Planning Act and Reef regulations are not overridden.

Importantly, we received a full commitment from the Premier and Ministers to do everything possible to protect Queensland agriculture.



*From left to right, CEO Niki Ford, General President Shane McCarthy, Premier Crisafulli, AgForce Cattle Director Adam Armstrong, Vegetation Management Advisor Anna Fisbek*



*From Left to Right, CQ Regional President and AgForce Director John Baker, Minister Julie Collins, AgForce EPBC Lead Josefine Pettersson*



*From Left to Right, AgForce members Peter Quinn, Ian McCamley and Farm Host David Hill, Minister Watt and DCCEEW QLD Head Declan O'Connor Cox*

The key challenge now is clearly demonstrating how Queensland's existing legislative framework already meets, or can meet the federal environmental thresholds, while recognising that broader federal-level continued lobbying and amendments are required.

### **Federal Environment Minister – Farm Visit (Central Queensland)**

Following ongoing AgForce advocacy and invitation, Minister Watt visited a Central Queensland grazing property to see firsthand how different management strategies influence environmental outcomes and how EPBC Reforms affect this.

The site visit focused primarily on brigalow systems, *including*:

- *Remnant Brigalow, intact threatened ecological community (TEC) yet mapped as secondary forest*
- *Unmanaged 25-year-old Brigalow monoculture, characterised by bare ground, erosion and limited biodiversity*
- *Managed transition area, where regrowth has been managed however, landscape function is still recovering and further work is required to remediate the land further*
- *Open woodland Brigalow, demonstrating improved tree-grass balance and healthy groundcover. The outcomes possible on Cat-X land where producers have certainty.*

The purpose was clear: to demonstrate that different management approaches produce markedly different ecological outcomes and that producers cannot be regulated out of managing country without creating perverse environmental consequences.

We advocated strongly for:

- Clearer exemptions for routine and critical activities
- Recognition of cyclical agriculture within “continuing use” provisions
- Administration settings that reduce unnecessary Matter of National Environmental Significance (MNES) burden especially where no genuine risk exists.

While we understand the legislation itself is unlikely to change, how it is administered and interpreted can change, especially at the State level, and that is where current discussions are focused.

Minister Watt acknowledged the need to better recognise cyclical agriculture, improve clarity around exemptions, and provide stronger decision-support tools. These commitments are welcome, however, remain verbal at this stage.

### **Northern Australia**

AgForce raised the importance of ensuring that the EPBC Reforms recognised the importance of further development into Northern Australia. Ensuring the “continuous use” interpretation differentiates between unsustainable expansion and sustainable intensification to ensure producers have land management options readily available. This follows on from the recent Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia.

### **Minister Collins**

AgForce participated in a Flood Relief Round table with Minister Collins hosted by the Isaac Regional Council. AgForce reiterated the need for clarity and clear exemptions tailored to the Agricultural sector to empower producers for Flood resilience and response. Minister Collins was extremely receptive and mentioned she was actively working with Minister Watts office to ensure that agricultural needs were reflected within EPBC Reforms. Whilst AgForce again appreciate these verbal reassurances, we look forward to working with Government to ensure this translates for producers on the ground.

### **Next Steps**

AgForce is seeking written confirmation from DCCEEW on key interpretations arising from the farm visit before broader member distribution.

There is genuine momentum building, the level of engagement secured across State and

Federal portfolios places AgForce in a strong position to influence the next phase of implementation. However, until written certainty is secured, producers remain exposed to case-by-case interpretation.

Thank you to all members who have engaged their Federal MP and to AgForce members for sharing their time and experience during Minster Watt's farm visit. This continued pressure cannot be underestimated in the regards to the progress AgForce is making within the EPBC space. Please see the link below for the MP engagement guidance if you haven't already engaged your MP.

AgForce will continue to represent members' interests and share updates as soon as we have confirmed clarity on the revised interpretation.

### **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:**

- [DCCEEW Official responses to AgForce's consolidated webinar questions from the 19th of January 2026](#)
- 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 Reform Advocacy Update](#)

- [EPBC Reforms / Regulatory 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](#)



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