

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



*This update is valid as of 2/2/26. 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 continues to engage intensively across government to ensure EPBC reforms are workable, proportionate and reflective of Queensland farming systems. Below is a summary of recent progress and the next steps where member input and action are critical.

#### **Meeting with Minister Watt – Commitments Secured**

AgForce has met directly with Minister for Environment and Water, Murray Watt to discuss the implementation of EPBC reforms and their implications for Queensland agriculture.

Key outcomes from this meeting include:

- A commitment from the Minister to work with AgForce to minimise unnecessary cost and regulatory burden on producers, particularly for critical low-impact and routine agricultural activities like fencing and waterpoints.
- Recognition that implementation settings matter, and that poorly targeted requirements risk perverse environmental and production outcomes.
- Agreement to undertake a Queensland farm visit within the next two months, providing an opportunity to demonstrate how environmental outcomes and productive agriculture are delivered together on the ground.

AgForce emphasised that Queensland producers manage vast areas of Australia's landscape and must be partners in reform implementation, not regulated out of the ability to actively manage land.

#### **DCCEEW Engagement – Self-Assessment Template and Exemptions**

AgForce has continued detailed engagement with Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).

Recent engagement has focused on:

- Pushing for clearer guidance, written feedback mechanisms, and practical thresholds to avoid capturing routine farm activities.
- Advocating strongly for expanded exemptions for low-risk, routine and environmentally beneficial agricultural activities, including remedial works and resilience activities.
- Providing feedback on the draft DCCEEW Self-Assessment template. This template would provide guidance to the requirements for an EPBC self-assessment.

While the tone of engagement has improved, AgForce is clear that modifications are required to ensure the framework does not impose administrative and financial burden on everyday farm operations.

#### **AgForce Submissions on Your Behalf – Offsets and MNES Standards**

AgForce has lodged two major submissions on behalf of members:

Environmental Offsets Submission

AgForce's offsets submission focuses on ensuring agriculture is recognised as a land-based delivery partner, not a passive compliance subject. Key asks include:

- Avoiding offset security mechanisms (such as permanent covenants) that undermine property rights, land value and farm balance sheets.
- Ensuring long-term offset obligations do not expose producers to unmanageable natural disaster and climate risk.
- Full transparency on whole-of-life offset costs, including opportunity costs and long-term liabilities.

### MNES (Matters of National Environmental Significance) National Environmental Standards Submission

AgForce's MNES submission argues that agriculture must be treated as a continuous, adaptive land use, not a finite development activity. Key asks include:

- Clear exemptions for routine agricultural activities.
- Avoiding duplication with state-based regulation.
- Ensuring any additional public-interest assessment costs are not borne by producers.
- Embedding productivity, resilience, food security and environmental outcomes together — not trading one off against the other.

These submissions are central to protecting Australia's food security and food sovereignty, now and into the future.

### **Member of Parliament (MP) Engagement – Your Voice Matters**

While AgForce continues to advocate at the national level, member engagement with MPs is critical.

We encourage members to:

- Write directly to your local MP, not just raise issues verbally.
- Use AgForce templates or tailor your own letter to explain:
  - How these reforms affect your operation,
  - The cumulative cost and administrative burden,
  - Why workable implementation matters for food production, resilience and long-term land stewardship.

Written correspondence carries far greater weight and helps reinforce AgForce's advocacy with real, on-farm evidence.

Please see the following link for template directions and further guidance [here](#).

### **What's Next**

- AgForce is awaiting date confirmation of the next member webinar with DCCEEW, where Department officials will provide:
  - EPBC and MNES oversight;
  - Agricultural exemptions and requirements;
  - Implementation and Reform changes;
  - Opportunity for member questions.
- AgForce are finalising the Queensland Priority document for Bilateral negotiations to ensure Queensland interests are well represented.
- AgForce are expanding engagement with other stakeholders to ensure key Policy documents we produce have maximal impact.

AgForce will continue to represent members' interests to ensure EPBC reforms deliver strong environmental outcomes without compromising agricultural productivity, resilience or Australia's food future.

### **Further links and information**

AgForce cannot provide legal advice or case-by-case determinations.

For property-specific questions, members should contact:

- DCCEEW FPRC Hotline: [1800 803 772](tel:1800803772)

- DCCEEW Referral Gateway (voicemail): [1800 423 135](tel:1800423135)
- 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 Protection 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: 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](#)
-