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## EPBC Reform Update & Next Steps for Queensland Producers

### Dear Members,

AgForce has heard you clearly- the recent changes to the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* through the *Environment Protection Reform Act 2025 (Reform Act)* have created significant uncertainty for producers. We know you are seeking clarity, confidence, and practical guidance during this transition. While some aspects remain outside our direct control, we are committed to providing you with the most accurate information available and advocating strongly to protect your ability to operate and ensure that both ecological and agricultural outcomes are optimised as the reforms progress.

### Where things stand now

The Bill has now passed Parliament and become law. However, clear practical guidance from the Commonwealth is still lacking, particularly regarding:

- what constitutes a *routine agricultural activity*,
- what will or will not trigger a self-assessment or referral, and
- the interpretation of *continuous use*.

AgForce is working to ensure these uncertainties do not unfairly impact Queensland producers.

Further information on the reforms can be found in the links at the end of this update.

### Who has AgForce has been engaging

AgForce is proactively managing this issue at every level of government to ensure the realities of agricultural production are clearly understood and accurately represented in the reform process. We are strategically engaging across State and Federal portfolios to secure clearer guidance and practical outcomes for producers.

Over the past fortnight, we have intensified our engagement with key decision-makers. AgForce met with:

- Queensland Minister for the Environment, Minister Powell
- Queensland Minister for Primary Industry, Minister Perrett
- Minister Last's office, the Office for Natural Resources and Mines

to outline the immediate risks to producers and reinforce the urgent need for clear, workable processes.

In parallel, we have continued sustained engagement with the Federal Environment Minister, Minister Watt, as well as senior officials from:

- the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
- the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
- and other key technical stakeholders across the sector.

These discussions have focused on securing practical guidance for producers, clarifying areas where the Act remains ambiguous, and ensuring that the agricultural perspective is fully understood as implementation progresses.

We have also established an EPBC Taskforce, comprising producer members and subject matter experts, to strengthen our technical position and create more effective avenues for member feedback. While the Taskforce is yet to formally meet, it will play a key role in shaping our submissions and ensuring Queensland producers remain strongly represented throughout the reform process.

### **What AgForce is proactively doing**

Producers can't be expected to go through 1600 pages of legislation or do an EPBC referral Assessment for routine agricultural activities.

On Monday, AgForce will formally provide two essential documents to the Federal Environment Minister:

- 1. Positive List of Routine Agricultural Activities**

Identifying actions that should **not** require EPBC self-assessment or referral.

- 2. Activities That Must Not Be Classified as 'Not Continuous Use'**

Outlining practices that must continue to be recognised as established, ongoing agricultural operations, with strong justification.

If the Commonwealth is unwilling to progress these clarifications immediately, AgForce is calling for a Safe Harbour so producers can continue operating without agreements are finalised.

### **State Government update – Bilateral Negotiations**

The Queensland Government has advised that bilateral negotiations with Commonwealth will begin in February.

These arrangements are anticipated to be finalised before the end of the year. AgForce will remain actively engaged throughout this period to ensure central to those discussions.

### **How can you help AgForce help you**

We appreciate the volume of calls and emails we are receiving from producers. We will ensure your concerns are captured effectively and to manage the in

- 1. Direct Technical Questions to the Commonwealth Hotline**

These are Federal decisions, and it is essential the Commonwealth understands the uncertainty being experienced on-ground.



**DCCEEW Hotline: 1800 920 528**

*Please note: we understand some producers may be referred to 1800 423 135 however this is an EPBC referral gateway and is a messaging service only. It does not allow you to immediately talk to an operator about your situation. We recommend you call 1800 920 528 accordingly.*

**2. Share only key examples with AgForce**

Where possible, please send us clear examples or issues that demonstrate gaps, uncertainty, or unintended consequences.

**3. These examples are vital for our lobbying and for our meetings with Ministers and departments.**

We also understand Queensland Resources has been receiving a large increase in calls. This reinforces the widespread uncertainty and the need for the Commonwealth to address these issues directly.

Please direct this correspondence to: [fiskbeka@agforceqld.org.au](mailto:fiskbeka@agforceqld.org.au) or [peterssonj@agforceqld.org.au](mailto:peterssonj@agforceqld.org.au).

**3. Contact Your Local Representatives**

We also encourage members to contact their **local Federal MP** and relevant **State representatives** to outline how these changes are affecting your business, your ability to operate, and the broader sustainability of your region. First-hand accounts from producers carry significant weight, and it is important that elected representatives understand the practical impacts and uncertainty created by the current framework. Your feedback supports AgForce's advocacy and reinforces the need for clearer, more workable solutions for agriculture as part of the lobbying we are doing.

**We are here to support you**

AgForce will continue to advocate strongly for clarity, Safe Harbour protections, and practical outcomes for Queensland producers. We will keep you updated as new information becomes available and as negotiations progress.

We hope you can join the webinar next Friday.

**Further links and information**

- 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

- [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

- [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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