

17 April 2020

Unite against COVID-19

Agriculture Coordination Officers to provide COVID-19 assistance to agribusinesses

Our new Agriculture Coordination Officers will support producers, the agriculture industry and local governments to manage COVID-19.

Approximately 100 of our regional economic development, extension, research and biosecurity staff are available to ensure rapid assistance across the state.



Support includes assisting producers and industry to access relevant information quickly without having to navigate a myriad of websites and in some cases with limited or no connectivity.

Email csc@daf.qld.gov.au to get in touch with an officer or call the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23.

Sourcing harvest and production workers

Many businesses rely on a regular pattern of seasonal workers and a stable, permanent workforce.

If you need to source additional workers, you can advertise your jobs on the [Harvest Trail website](#) or lodge vacancies directly onto [JobSearch](#). You can also register your business on the [jobactive](#) website to post positions for free. Also, consider contacting a licensed [labour hire](#) service provider.

If you need additional advice on these services, you can contact your local [agriculture workforce officer](#).

Travellers looking for work - options and reminders

Travellers seeking seasonal work on farms are reminded to stay where they are, unless they already have work lined up. Workers are not to visit farms directly.

Please register your availability with [Harvest Trail](#) or call the National Harvest Labour Information Service on 1800 062 332.

You cannot enter Queensland unless you already have employment in Queensland. You will need to apply online for an [entry pass](#) and have evidence of employment in Queensland. Your employer is also required to have submitted a [health plan](#).

There are additional restrictions in place for entry to [restricted communities](#) within Queensland.

Everyone who arrives in Australia, or think they may have been in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19, are required to self-isolate for 14 days. During the 14 days of isolation, you must stay in your accommodation and not go to public places or see visitors.

Try and keep a distance of 1.5 metres from others. Practise good handwashing and do not cough or sneeze on others.

For more information in many languages, visit [Queensland Health's website](#).

Application period for Land Restoration Fund extended

In response to disruption to business caused by COVID-19, the Queensland Government has extended the application period for intake two of Investment Round 1 of the Land Restoration Fund by two weeks.

The 2020 Investment Round will provide a grant of up to \$10,000 towards professional financial, legal or project support fees to get a carbon farming project off the ground.

Support also extends to workshops and online tools, capital up-front payments for start-up costs and annual payments for co-benefits.

The new closing date is **29 April 2020**. More information on the fund is available [here](#).

Business supported to develop their export potential

Exporters and export-ready businesses are invited to attend an interactive online workshop aimed at developing export potential post COVID-19.

Hosted by Tourism and Events Queensland, the event will feature a keynote speaker as well as a Q&A and break-out sessions to brainstorm solutions to common challenges. More information is available [here](#).

Have your say on international freight support measures

While the COVID-19 response has put constraints on airfreight capacity and cost, the Australian Government is backing Australia's agriculture and seafood export sectors through a new \$110 million initiative.

The [International Freight Assistance Mechanism](#) will help exporters get their high-quality produce into key overseas markets.

The Australian Government needs your help to guide this investment. [Have your say on international freight support measures](#).

Business continuity planning - resources and webinars available

In partnership with BDO, we have delivered three business continuity planning webinars to provide expert support and help you minimise the impact of COVID-19.

In the latest webinar, BDO discusses how you can reduce the risk of COVID-19 within an agribusiness context covering the physical, organisational, personnel and workforce accommodation elements of a business continuity plan.

You can watch all three webinars and download resources [here](#).

Quick reference guide for support available for small to medium businesses

[Payroll tax relief package](#): If you're an employer (or part of a group of employers) who pays \$6.5 million or less in Australian [taxable wages](#), you may be eligible for a refund of your payroll tax for two months, payroll tax holiday (i.e. no payroll tax to be paid) for three months or a deferral of payroll tax for the 2020 calendar year.

[Temporary relief for financially distressed businesses](#): The Australian Government is temporarily increasing the threshold at which creditors can issue a statutory demand.

[SME power bill relief](#): Small and medium businesses may be eligible for a \$500 rebate off their energy bill.

[Commercial tenancies](#): Relief measures for commercial tenants and landlords. A mandatory [Code of Conduct](#) has been developed by National Cabinet.

[Commercial and residential tenancies](#): Evictions will be put on hold over the next six months for commercial and residential tenancies in financial distress, who are unable to meet their commitments due to the impact of the COVID-19.

Any small business impacted by COVID-19 can now contact the [Rural Financial Counselling Service](#) in the following areas:

- [Southern Queensland](#): phone (07) 4622 5500
- [North Queensland](#): phone (07) 4652 5669

[Boosting cash flow](#): Temporary cash flow support to small and medium businesses through two sets of cash flow boosts to support employers to retain employees. Support will be provided via tax-free cash flow boosts of between \$20,000 and \$100,000.

[Coronavirus SME Guarantee Scheme](#): The Australian Government will provide a guarantee of 50% to support short-term loans.

The Australian Government's [JobKeeper package](#) offers a subsidy of up to \$1500 per fortnight per employee to keep eligible businesses paying their staff. Employers and sole traders can register their interest in this program with the [Australian Tax Office](#).

The [JobKeeper Payment factsheet for employers](#) states the first payment will be received by employers from the ATO in the first week of May.

[Supporting apprentices and trainees](#): Eligible employers can apply for a wage subsidy of 50% of their apprentice's or trainee's wage paid during 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2020.

[Job support loans](#): Loans for Queensland businesses to retain employees and maintain their operations. Low interest loans of up to \$250,000 are available to assist with carry-on expenses such as employee wages, rent and rates and other related expenditure. Eligible business types include sole traders, partnerships, private and public companies and trusts.

Latest health advice, current status and contact tracing alerts

Visit [Queensland Health](#) for the latest health information and instructions.

Join the [Australian Government WhatsApp group](#) for the latest news and advice.

If you develop a fever, a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath within 14 days of overseas travel, contact a doctor or call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

Social distancing of 1.5 metres: [Social distancing](#) is a public health practice with the key aim to prevent sick people from coming into close contact with others to slow down the spread of a disease.

It also intends to reduce the chance of high-risk groups from becoming infected and to alleviate the burden on our health-care systems and workers.

When is self-isolation required? [What is involved?](#)
