Driving Queensland Agriculture and Rural Jobs Growth
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Message from the Premier

Queensland’s agricultural industries continue to grow from strength to strength, and now contribute almost $20 billion to the Queensland economy. This is despite ongoing severe drought across the state and the devastating effects of Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

Rural communities and primary producers face unique challenges. The Palaszczuk Government has worked alongside primary producers as they prepare for future challenges and opportunities.

Severe drought continues in some parts of the state, so there is much work left to do.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Government will focus on continuing to grow agriculture export capacity and enhance innovation throughout the agricultural supply chain.
Queensland agriculture, forestry, fisheries and associated industries are vital to our state’s economy. Collectively they support more than 300,000 jobs, or more than one-in-eight working Queenslanders.

In building a strong and sustainable agriculture industry, a re-elected Palaszczuk Government will:

- Commit a further $5 million to the construction of wild dog exclusion fencing in western and southern Queensland
- Support the rapidly-expanding chickpea and pulses industry by providing $1 million to provide low-interest loans for silo construction, research development and extension.
- Provide up to $10 million to fund a business case and capital works for a pilot export distribution centre
- Establish the Agricultural Ministerial Advisory Council (AgMAC) to improve collaboration between industry and government
- Provide a $10 million Rural Economic Development Grant Program
- Provide $3 million to extend the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance and Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network (QAWN) in conjunction with industry
- Investigate the feasibility of abolishing stamp duty on agricultural insurance products.

Our Commitment
On coming to government in 2015, Labor was faced with a decimated Department of Agriculture and Fisheries after the Newman-Nicholls Government slashed over 600 jobs.

Cuts were felt right across the state, and it was in rural and regional Queensland where they hit hardest. Nine per cent of the Brisbane workforce was cut, however regional Queensland fared much worse, with a 21 per cent cut in southern Queensland, more than 25 per cent in central Queensland, and more than a third of the northern Queensland workforce was cut.

The Newman-Nicholls Government struck at the heart of our rural communities, presiding over rising unemployment and worsening rural debt.

These were heartless policies at a time when drought was gripping a record portion of the state.

Under the Newman-Nicholls Government, key frontline services were stripped away. Families left towns, less money was spent at local businesses and long-term damage was done to the fabric of rural communities.

The Newman-Nicholls Government made savage cuts to biosecurity. This workforce was cut by 26 per cent.

It shows a catastrophic disregard for rural and regional Queensland. Given the chance, Tim Nicholls and the LNP will do it once again.
The Palaszczuk Government’s Record

With the release of the Queensland Food and Fibre Policy in 2015, the Palaszczuk Government took a whole-of-supply-chain approach. We focused on value-adding, exporting and marketing in a bid to drive job creation.

Commitments delivered since 2015 have included:

- $31.2 million in grants and loans for the construction of 7,500 kilometres of fencing aimed at protecting stock from the scourge of wild dogs and cats – far exceeding our $5 million election commitment. Approximately 5000 kilometres of cluster fencing is helping producers revive the sheep and wool industry in Queensland.

- $424.7 million investment in rural and regional Queensland, including $77.9 million for the Drought and Rural Assistance Package to reduce financial stress, improve financial sustainability, and assist rural producers affected by debt and drought.

- Established the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance and the Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network (QAWN) in conjunction with industry. Seven QAWN officers have so far helped 170 appropriately skilled and trained employees into work, and 450 people to participate in new training opportunities.

- A Memorandum-of-Understanding between the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges and Central Queensland University to deliver skill-based training for the agriculture sector.
- The Animal Welfare Advisory Board to provide expert and impartial advice to government on issues such as treatment of domestic and farm animals, including those in transit, zoos and tourist attractions or at the point of slaughter.

- An independent review of Queensland’s biosecurity capability.

- Historic legislation to end cruel puppy farms. We legislated to smash the business model enabling unethical and exploitative dog breeders to operate, and established the Queensland Dog Breeder Register.

Labor scrapped stamp duty on intergenerational farm transfers within families, in a move hailed by AgForce as transformational for the agricultural sector.

Since the initiative was introduced, producers have benefited from $35 million in stamp duty concessions.

The Palaszczuk Government increased the Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme (PIPES) low-interest loan cap to $1.3 million, or $2 million for new farmers. This move provided vital capital to primary producers preparing to meet future challenges, seize future opportunities and encourage a new generation of food producers.

The former Newman-Nicholls Government made savage cuts to Queensland’s biosecurity capability, leaving the state’s producers and environment vulnerable to invasive weeds, pests and diseases.

The Palaszczuk Government has since stemmed the loss of expert staff. We have completed an expert independent Biosecurity Capability Review, and committed more than $30 million to implement biosecurity recommendations. We are determined to ensure that our biosecurity capability is world class.
Biosecurity Queensland’s rapid response to Panama and White Spot Disease affecting our banana and prawn industries was only possible because we had dramatically improved our biosecurity capability.

In contrast to Labor, biosecurity staffing was in freefall under the LNP.

Unlike Labor, Tim Nicholls doesn’t understand the value of world-class biosecurity in a frontline state like Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Government has moved from a rigid, bureaucratic regulatory approach to a flexible, market-driven strategy, in the fight against Johne’s disease, letting Queensland producers manage the disease in a way that best suits their business.

We have cut red tape, simplified the tick line and reduced costs through more flexible inspection arrangements. We have reduced stock handling during transit, delivering better animal welfare outcomes.

Through our One Stop Shop initiative we have supported and facilitated initiatives by the private sector to develop sustainable water and land resources in North Queensland.

We have boosted our support for the RSCPA to $500,000 per year to ensure best practice animal welfare and regulatory compliance by animal owners.
A re-elected Palaszczuk Government is committed to:

**Wild dog fencing**
- Providing a further $5 million in grants over two years to begin phase four of the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative

**Support for the chickpea industry**
- $1 million over two years for research, development and extension to address knowledge gaps in pulse storage
- Providing low interest PIPES loans for silo construction, to expand export capacity and meet growing international demand

**Export Distribution Centre**
- Providing $10 million from the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund for a joint industry and local government business case and capital investment for an export distribution centre pilot in regional Queensland

**Agricultural Ministerial Advisory Council (AgMac):**
- Establishing an Agricultural Ministerial Council to promote collaboration between industry and government, providing a direct line to the Agriculture Minister. Peak bodies such as Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF) and Agforce and other peak industry groups will be members
Rural Economic Development Grants:
- Providing $10 million over three years to a Rural Economic Development Grants Program to strengthen the agricultural sector and bolster rural communities

Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance:
- Providing $3 million over three years to continue the successful Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance and Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network (QAWN) in conjunction with industry

Agriculture insurance stamp duty:
- Working with industry to investigate the feasibility of abolishing stamp duty on agricultural insurance products, and reducing the reliance of primary producers on government assistance during natural disasters

The Palaszczuk Government will:
- Continue to exempt stamp duty on intergenerational farm transfers within families. There have been $35 million in concessions since the initiative was introduced
- Continue investing in vital research, development and extension in the agriculture sector to directly boost agribusiness profitability – provided current Federal Government funding levels are maintained ($120 million)
- Deliver an additional 200 energy audits to agricultural customers through an expanded Energy Savers Plus program, and provide a 50 per cent co-contribution (up to $20,000) to implement audit recommendations in partnership with the Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF)
- Provide no-interest loans to invest in solar and battery technologies. Applications will open in March 2018. Savings of up to $700 per year are expected
- Maintain funding for PIPES loans at $60 million and maintaining our increase of lending amounts in First Start Loans ($2 million) and Sustainability Loans ($1.3 million)
“The Palaszczuk Government will work alongside primary producers to prepare for the future challenges and opportunities”

- Fund the Drought and Climate Adaptation Program (DCAP) until 2020-21 to improve drought-preparedness and resilience for Queensland producers
- Maintain the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS) and work with industry to develop permanent drought assistance arrangements, incorporating recommendations of the DRAS Report of the Agriculture and Environment Committee
- Fund the upgrade completion of the RSPCA’s Townsville and Cairns facilities
- Deliver the $400 million National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program in partnership with the federal and state governments and territories.