



Guidelines for the
Back to Work in Agriculture
Incentive Scheme

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Version 2 – updated 3 December 2020

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Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
PO Box 15397
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Phone: 13 25 23
Email: info@daf.qld.gov.au
Web: daf.qld.gov.au/agbacktowork

Contents

1. Fund overview	3
2. What payments are available?	3
3. Eligibility	4
3.1 Eligible regions	4
3.2 Eligible employers	4
3.3 Eligibility employee criteria	4
3.4 Ineligibility	5
4. Timeframes for applications	5
5. What you will need to provide	5
5.1 Evidence requirements.....	5
5.2 Delays in obtaining evidence	6
5.3 Late applications.....	6
6. Application process	7
6.1 Online application.....	7
6.2 Assessing applications	7
6.3 Fraudulent applications	7
6.4 Payment.....	7
6.5 Applicants notified of outcome.....	8
7. Further information.....	8
7.1 Definitions	8
7.2 Frequently asked questions.....	9
7.3 Guidelines	9
7.4 Tax information	9
7.5 Appeal.....	9
7.6 Acknowledgements and authorisations	9
7.7 Privacy	10
Attachment 1.....	12
Eligible regions	12

1. Fund overview

Up to \$700 000 is being made available through the 'Back to work in agriculture incentive scheme pilot' (the Scheme) as a key element of Queensland's Economic Recovery Strategy: *Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs* to help accelerate the state's recovery from COVID-19.

Agribusinesses have been highly impacted by the closure of international borders as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and we have been working with the agribusiness and food sector on options to limit disruptions to the workforce they need to continue operating and maintain production capacity where possible. This Scheme, administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) in partnership with the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA), aims to attract and assist Queenslanders, including job seekers, who do not currently work in agriculture, to mobilise to available seasonal jobs across Queensland.

The Scheme initially targeted seasonal agricultural employment in the Wide Bay and Darling Downs regions. From 3 December 2020, the Scheme was broadened to be a Statewide initiative.

Applications for Wide Bay and Darling Downs opened on 2 October 2020 and applications for all other areas across Queensland will open on 3 December 2020. The Scheme will close once all funding has been allocated or 30 June 2021, whichever comes first.

The key objectives of the Scheme are to provide:

- support to farming and food processing businesses in regional areas experiencing significant labour shortages as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and limited available local workforce
- new job opportunities for Queenslanders, including job seekers, and support for them to access these available jobs by assisting with costs (such as accommodation and transportation) associated with relocating to rural and remote locations.

2. What payments are available?

Up to a total of \$1500 will be made available for eligible employees. Payments are made directly to the eligible employee in two parts:

- Initial payment of \$500 after completing 2 weeks of continuous employment.
- Second and final payment of \$1000 after completing an additional 6 weeks of continuous employment (i.e. a total of 8 weeks employment to be eligible for the full \$1500).

Employment can be with different eligible employers, physical locations or farms in the eligible regions in recognition that seasonal workers can work with multiple employers depending on available work.

The funding is intended to assist with the cost of relocating to regional Queensland for seasonal agricultural work, such as accommodation and transport costs.

There is a limited pool of funds and the Scheme will close when funds are fully committed or by 30 June 2021, whichever comes first. Applications will be assessed in the order they are received. The submission of an application does not guarantee the applicant will receive support.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Eligible regions

From 2 October 2020 eligible regions for the Scheme included:

- Wide Bay
- Darling Downs.

(Please refer to the map of eligible local government areas for the pilot period at Attachment 1).

From 3 December 2020 all of Queensland will be included as part of the Scheme.

3.2 Eligible employers

To be considered for funding under this Scheme an applicant must demonstrate employment with eligible employer/s. An eligible employer is an employer that:

1. is an agribusiness, registered labour hire firm or contractor directly involved in agriculture; and
2. holds an Australian Business Number (ABN); and
3. holds a current WorkCover policy.

Applicants are strongly advised to seek confirmation from employer/s that they comply with requirements of other relevant legislation including workplace health and safety and industrial relations.

3.3 Eligibility employee criteria

To be considered for funding through this Scheme an applicant must meet **ALL** of the following eligibility criteria. You must:

1. be a permanent resident of Australia and your principal place of residence is in Queensland;
2. have relocated from your usual place of residence: being the address in Queensland where you live as an owner, tenant or boarder, or where you reside with your family;
3. have worked in paid employment in an eligible region for an eligible employer:
 - a. for 2 consecutive weeks (for the initial payment) and an additional 6 consecutive weeks (for the second and final payment)
 - b. under an employment offer that was made on, or after 2 October 2020 to work in the Wide Bay or Darling Downs regions; or under an employment offer that was made on, or after 3 December 2020, anywhere in Queensland
 - c. in one of the following job roles:

- i. on-farm planting, maintenance, harvest, grading or packing of crops
 - ii. off-farm grading or packing of horticultural fresh produce
 - iii. on-farm breeding and caring of livestock (including shearing and aquaculture activities)
 - iv. time-critical primary food processing of fresh, perishable produce
- d. hold a deposit account with an Australian commercial bank or other institution.

3.4 Ineligibility

An applicant will not be eligible under the Scheme if they:

1. have already worked in a Queensland agribusiness in the four weeks prior to commencing the current role for which the first application applies
2. hold a Working Holiday visa (subclass 417 and 462), Student Visa (subclass 500), Seasonal Worker Program or Pacific Labour Scheme visa (subclass 403) or a COVID-19 Pandemic visa (subclass 408).

4. Timeframes for applications

Initial payment applications must be received within 4 weeks of the employee completing 2 weeks of continuous employment.

Second and final payment applications must be received within 4 weeks of the employee completing an additional 6 weeks of employment (a total of 8 weeks).

Applications and claims received outside of these timeframes will be ineligible for payment. It is highly recommended that applicants submit their applications well before the cut-off date.

Applicants must immediately notify of any problems submitting their applications within the required timeframe by calling QRIDA on 1800 623 946 or complete the form at www.qrida.qld.gov.au/contact-us.

5. What you will need to provide

5.1 Evidence requirements

Applicants will need to provide:

1. For your initial application, proof of your identity as the person submitting the application and that you have the right to work in Australia must be provided. Acceptable documents may include:
 - an Australian driver licence
 - adult proof of age card (e.g. 18+ card)
 - Medicare card
 - passport.

Your identification must be current (not expired) at the date you commenced employment.

2. Evidence of your usual home address of where you usually live as an owner, tenant, boarder or with their family. Acceptable evidence may include:
 - Copy of current Australian driver licence or adult proof of age card (e.g. 18+ card)
 - Copy of recent bank statement showing name and address
 - Copy of rental agreement
 - Copy of local government rates notice.
3. Evidence of employment with an eligible employer in an eligible region. You must include:
 - **Copy of your letter of offer** from the employer, which includes the terms of employment; and
 - **Copy of your payslips** to demonstrate paid employment with an eligible employer for at least 2 consecutive weeks prior to the initial application being made and must have worked the average hours relevant to the position.

Payslips must be submitted, as timesheets or a payroll summary will not be sufficient.

Payslips must meet the minimum requirement as set out by Fair Work Australia under the *Fair Work Act 2009* and the *Fair Work Regulations 2009*. Information on the legal requirements for payslips is available through the Fair Work Australia website at www.fairwork.gov.au/pay/pay-slips-and-record-keeping/pay-slips.

4. Evidence that you have relocated to an eligible region during the pilot period (i.e. Wide Bay and Darling Downs) for seasonal agricultural employment by providing the address of where they have been living while working in regional Queensland, together with the name and contact details of the owner (or business name) of the accommodation provider.

5.2 Delays in obtaining evidence

If you are waiting for evidence documents to complete your application and it is getting close to the cut-off date, you will need to notify QRIDA on 1800 623 946 or complete the form at www.qrida.qld.gov.au/contact-us.

5.3 Late applications

Consideration will be given to a late application if:

1. the applicant has experienced extenuating circumstances beyond their control (e.g. ill health, loss of records due to natural disaster or a large-scale internet failure) that prevented the submission of an application within the required timeframe; and
2. QRIDA has been notified; and
3. program funding is still available.

Please note that being unaware of the Scheme and subsequently not submitting an application within the required timeframe is not considered an extenuating circumstance. Late application requests will not be considered in this circumstance.

The applicant must submit a request for consideration of a late application in writing via a statutory declaration, including all relevant supporting material to QRIDA. Please call QRIDA on 1800 623 946 or complete the form at www.qrida.qld.gov.au/contact-us.

Applicants will be notified in writing of a decision within 30 business days from the receipt of the written request.

6. Application process

6.1 Online application

Applicants are required to complete an online application form and upload the required documentation as outlined in these guidelines.

The guidelines are available on <http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/agbacktowork> and will include a link to the QRIDA portal to commence the application process.

6.2 Assessing applications

Applications will be assessed based on the following eligibility criteria:

- Has the applicant complied with these guidelines including:
 - eligible employee
 - eligible employer/s
 - eligible job
 - eligible region (i.e. Wide Bay and Darling Downs) during the pilot period
 - completion of required periods of employment
 - timeframes for submitting applications
 - supporting evidence and documentation.

Assessors may contact employers to verify work claims and applicants must provide correct contact details and a valid ABN for their employer/s as part of their application.

6.3 Fraudulent applications

By signing the application form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true and accurate. Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be a breach of criminal law for which serious penalties may apply. If any information provided in an application or supporting documentation is found to be inaccurate, untrue or misleading, legal action may be taken against you, including action to recover the subsidy.

6.4 Payment

Applications will be assessed in the order they are received until all Scheme funds have been exhausted or the program closes to applications.

The first payment of \$500 can be claimed by a person who secured and can provide evidence of working in a relevant agribusiness for 2 weeks and relocated to Wide Bay and Darling Downs on or after 2 October 2020, or anywhere across Queensland from 3 December 2020.

The second payment of \$1000 can be claimed by a person who secured and can provide evidence of working in a relevant agribusiness for an additional 6 weeks (a total of 8 weeks) and relocated to Wide Bay and Darling Downs on or after 2 October 2020, or anywhere across Queensland from 3 December 2020.

Applicants should allow up to 4 weeks for assessment and processing of claims.

Payments are made electronically to a nominated bank account.

6.5 Applicants notified of outcome

All applicants will receive formal notification of the outcome of the application as soon as possible following assessments. Successful applicants will receive a notification via email advising the application has been approved.

If you successfully receive the first payment of \$500, you will be asked to confirm if you are continuing employment under the Scheme for an additional 6 weeks to be eligible for the second payment of \$1000.

7. Further information

7.1 Definitions

- **Relocated** – move from current residential address to take up employment, either on a temporary or permanent basis.
- **Continuous employment** – a casual or seasonal employee's employment is considered continuous if there is unbroken service on a full-time basis; being that same number of normal work-days or shifts as a full-time employee in that role and industry would normally work, in the weeks that you claim the payments.

It is understood certain events may impact an employee's continued service such as leave on account of illness or injury forced absence or inability to work at the business due to seasonal/agronomic factors (i.e. cyclones, flooding, biosecurity outbreaks) or forced leave due to COVID-19 related workplace closures. Due to these factors, for the purposes of this Scheme, an applicant can demonstrate they have met:

- the initial 2 week continuous employment requirement over a spread of up to a 4 week period; and
 - the additional 6 week continuous work requirement over a spread of up to a 10 week period.
- **Eligible regions** for the initial Scheme pilot from 2 October 2020 are illustrated in the map provided in Attachment 1. Eligible local government areas include North Burnett Regional Council, Bundaberg Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council, South Burnett Regional

Council, Gympie regional Council, Western Downs Regional Council, Toowoomba Regional Council, Goondiwindi Regional Council, Southern Downs Regional Council.

7.2 Frequently asked questions

Please refer to the frequently asked questions section on <http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/agbacktowork>.

For more information about the Scheme, please contact DAF on 13 25 23 or email at info@daf.qld.gov.au.

For questions about your application please call QRIDA on 1800 623 946 or complete the form at www.qrida.qld.gov.au/contact-us.

7.3 Guidelines

These guidelines are correct at the time of publishing. DAF reserves the right to amend, alter or change these guidelines at any time, including the list of eligible jobs, industries, or regions if required to address critical labour shortages in regions or industries. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they check the relevant website frequently.

The guidelines that apply to your application will be the guidelines that are current at the time your application is received. While care has been taken in preparing these guidelines, DAF will not be liable in any way for any errors, omissions or variation to information in these guidelines or for not advising an applicant of any errors, omissions or variations to information in these guidelines.

DAF may cancel or suspend this Scheme at any time.

7.4 Tax information

The taxation implications of any payments made to an applicant under this scheme may differ depending on the applicant's personal circumstances. The Queensland Government is unable to provide taxation advice and accordingly recommends consulting your own professional adviser to determine any taxation implications that may apply.

The Australian Taxation Office has information that may also assist you at www.ato.gov.au.

7.5 Appeal

The Queensland Government's decision in relation to an application is final and there is no process for appeal.

If an applicant has a concern in relation to the application or assessment process, a formal complaint may be submitted to the DAF. Further information on DAF's complaints process is available at www.daf.qld.gov.au/contact/compliments-complaints.

7.6 Acknowledgements and authorisations

Applicants will be asked to acknowledge or consent to the following when applying for funding under this Scheme:

- That you have read and understood the guidelines
- That information provided is true and accurate
- That you have read the privacy statement and understand how personal information provided in the application may be used and disclosed
- That you authorise QRIDA and each of its authorised representatives to obtain or collect the necessary information to assess your application, including contacting your employer or any Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government department, agency or authority that QRIDA or authorised representative may consider relevant. **(Relevant Persons)**.
- That you authorise QRIDA and each of its authorised representatives to disclose:
 - that you have made an application under this Scheme
 - information in your application or any supporting documentation provided with, or in support of, this application
 - information collected by QRIDA or an authorised representative from any Relevant Person

To any:

- Relevant Person or any subcontractor or agent of QRIDA, for purposes related to the assessment of your application or the administration and management of the Scheme or any grant provided under the Scheme, and for the purposes set out in the Privacy Statement; and
 - any other, Queensland Government department, agency or authority, for policy planning or other governmental purposes of that department, agency or authority.
- You will also be asked if you agree in follow up surveys or the provisions of relevant information around agriculture-related matter and initiatives that may be relevant to you.

7.7 Privacy

QRIDA and/or DAF may collect, use, and disclose the personal information provided as part your application in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) and its privacy policy, available at: <http://grida.qld.gov.au/privacy> or <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/site-information/privacy>.

Personal information provided on, or in support of, this application by you or that is obtained from any Relevant Person, may be used by QRIDA and/or DAF and its authorised representatives to assess your eligibility for the Scheme and your application for the Scheme, and in relation to the administration and management of the Scheme or any grant provided to you under the Scheme. DAF reserves the right to provide information via its subscription e-news service around other agriculture-related matters and initiatives that may be of interest to you. QRIDA may also use this information to provide you with information on other QRIDA programs or other support programs.

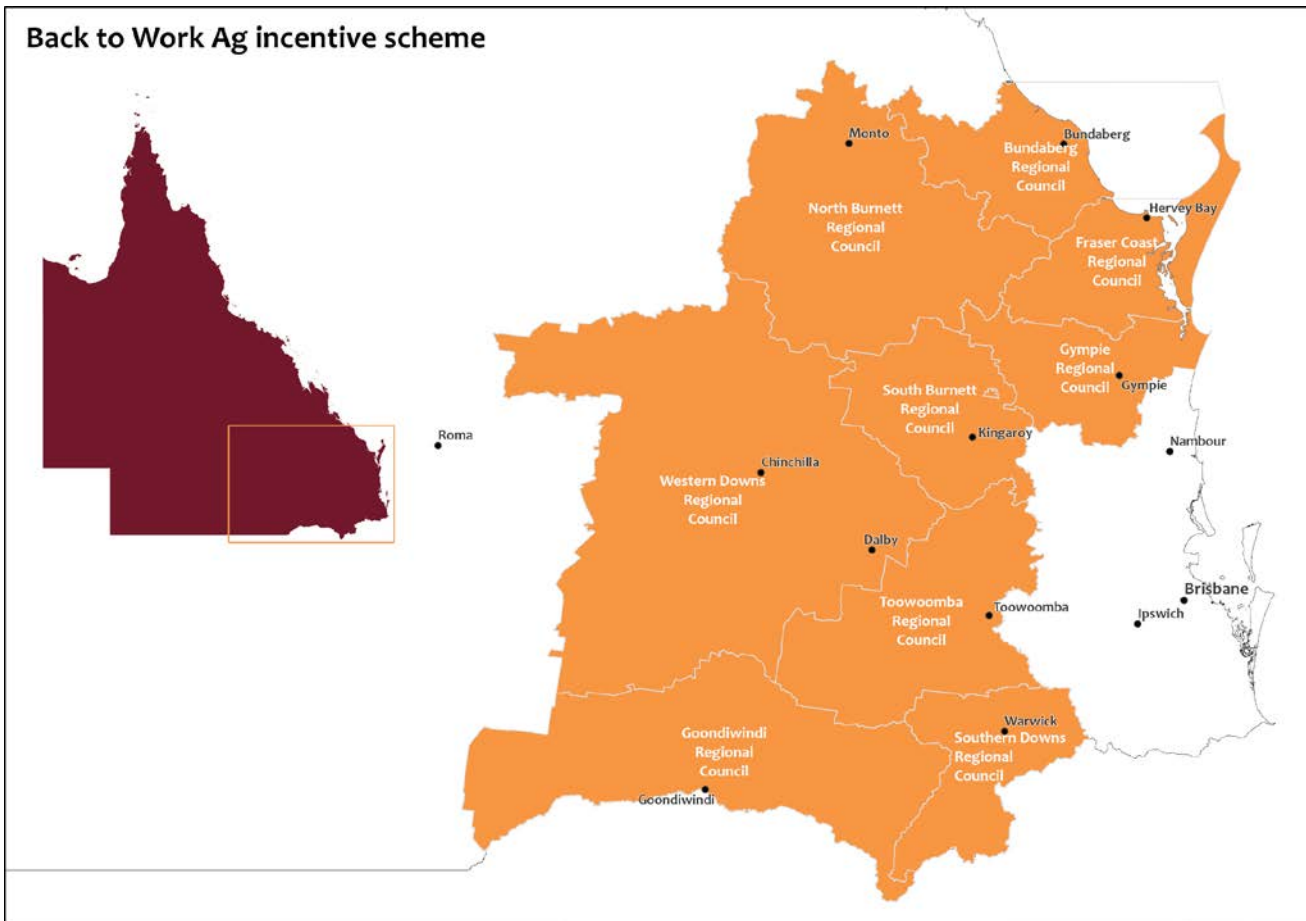
QRIDA may also disclose your personal information in accordance with authorisations included in the application and any department, agency, authority or other person to which such information is disclosed may use the information for the purposes stated in the authorisations. QRIDA may also disclose your personal information to its employees, contractors, related affiliates and third parties who assist it in operating its business and providing information, goods and services to you, or as otherwise required or authorised by law. Further information on these third parties is set out in the privacy policy. Some third parties may be located overseas, and you will be asked to agree to QRIDA disclosing your personal information to overseas entities to enable it to perform its functions and activities as part of your application.

Other than as set out in the authorisations in the application, QRIDA is not aware of any further disclosures of your personal information made by any recipient. More information about the way QRIDA uses, discloses, and secures your personal information, how you can access and correct that information, and how you can make a complaint about a breach of privacy can be found in its privacy policy.

QRIDA will comply with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) when making any decision, including with respect to collection, use, and disclosure of personal information.

Attachment 1

Eligible regions for pilot period 2 October 2020 to 2 December 2020.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Phone: 13 25 23

Email: info@daf.qld.gov.au

Web: daf.qld.gov.au/agbacktowork

Connect with us @QldAgriculture

