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# MEDIA RELEASE

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12 March 2025

## 'Tears of relief' as PM answers desperate pleas of flood-affected NQ farmers

Queensland Cane Agriculture and Renewables (QCAR) is thankful Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has answered the desperate pleas of North Queenslanders by declaring the February floods a Category D emergency.

Cairns-based Queensland Senator Nita Green announced on Wednesday morning (12 March) that impacted farmers would now be able to access Category D grants of up to \$75,000 under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

QCAR Herbert District Manager Lawrence Di Bella said the higher-level grants would be lifechanging for sugarcane farmers and primary producers who had collectively taken a financial hit of hundreds of millions of dollars from the disastrous weather event.

"The grants of up to \$75,000 will go a long way to easing the financial and emotional burdens of farmers, their families, and let's not forget, the communities they live in and work in.

"Over the past few weeks, there's been tears of grief and exhaustion as growers documented the devastating fallouts from metres of rain swamping Herbert and Burdekin farmland.

"There were craters the size of swimming pools, tonnes of trash dumped on newly planted sugarcane, headlands washed away, trees uprooted, new creeks carved through fields, dead calves littering paddocks; the list goes on.

"Now there will be tears of relief with the release of Category D grants."

QCAR CEO Stephen Ryan said the Federal Government's announcement comes after weeks of campaigning from not only QCAR, AgForce and Canegrowers but also other agricultural organisations, politicians and public servants at all levels of government, producers who were vulnerable and shared their experiences, and countless others.

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**Securing a Stronger Future**

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"We cannot thank enough every person who personally visited the flood-affected parts of North Queensland and helped us in the fight for financial help.

"You showed us that farmers matter, you showed us that North Queensland matters, and you showed us that regional Australia matters.

"But our work is far from over. We must now make sure the funding is fair and reaches those who need it, like Ingham father of two and a sugarcane farmer, Luke Roveda.

"To make ends meet, he [also runs a harvesting outfit and works as a glazier alongside his dad.](#)

"Yet under current red tape, he will be ineligible for Category D Assistance because less than 51 per cent of his gross income comes from his sugarcane farm."

Mr Di Bella said another loophole QCAR was campaigning to fix applied to financial help for replanting cane.

"Many growers across the Herbert and Burdekin regions are exempt from replanting subsidies as it only applies to plant cane and not ratoon crops, despite plant cane only making up about 16 per cent of the Herbert's crops," Mr Di Bella said.

[QCAR is also pushing for funds to repair creek banks and clean drainage systems](#), support for the harvesting and local business sectors, help to repair the rail network and thereby allow the industry to begin crushing this season, and more mental health support and services.

[ENDS]

- For media interviews, please contact QCAR Herbert District Manager Lawrence Di Bella on 0448 084 252 or QCAR CEO Stephen Ryan on 0401 002 322.
- For further media assistance, contact Media & Communications Manager Heidi Petith on 0427 855 726
- To subscribe to future media releases, [complete the sign-up form on QCAR's website.](#)

Also see:

[An open letter to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese \(includes interviews with farmers and evidence of extensive flood damage\)](#)

[Sugarcane farmers to be denied help to replant flood-ruined cane under crop loophole](#)