

## Palaszczuk Budget delivers for natural resources and mines in tough times

The Palaszczuk Government will invest \$29.7 million in 2015-16 to support drought-affected landholders, protect water resources and underpin the sustainable management and use of Queensland's natural resources.

Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines Dr Anthony Lynham said today's State Budget delivered funding for key sectors across the natural resources and mines portfolio.

"The agriculture and resource sectors are vitally important to the state economy for the jobs, regional growth and significant economic benefits they deliver for all Queenslanders," Dr Lynham said.

"This budget provides funding to support these sectors in challenging times and to ensure the ongoing sustainable management and use of our land, water and mining resources.

"The first Palaszczuk Government Budget will deliver better online services, boost coal seam gas compliance and manage public safety risks associated with abandoned mines," he said.

Key initiatives in 2015-16 include:

- \$4.1 million in rent deferrals, rebates and fee waivers to help ease the financial burden on drought-affected leaseholders and water users
- \$8 million to support stage 4 of the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative in Queensland
- \$6.2 million for the Abandoned Mines Land Program to manage the public safety risks associated with abandoned mine sites across Queensland
- \$3.6 million to fund compliance activities by the Coal Seam Gas Compliance Unit; including investigation of landholder concerns about the impact of CSG operations
- \$13.7 million, including \$7.8 million in capital funding, to modernise and enhance departmental online services to deliver faster service outcomes and make it easier for people to do business with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines
- \$2.2 million to address immediate native title trial costs and help accelerate the resolution of all outstanding Queensland native title claims through the Federal Court.

Dr Lynham said the \$4.1 million in drought relief measures his department would deliver in 2015-16 was part of a broader four-year \$52.1 million whole-of-government Drought Assistance Package.

“About 80 per cent of Queensland is currently drought-declared and landholders and businesses alike are doing it very tough,” he said.

To help ease the financial hardship on landholders in drought-declared communities, the Government will:

- defer all rural rent payments for more than 7,800 Category 11 primary production and grazing leases (with no penalty interest accrued) in drought-declared areas until 30 June 2016
- provide a 12 per cent rent rebate to all Category 11 tenures in drought-declared areas, returning a total \$3.2 million in rent to more than 4660 leaseholders at an average \$686 per rebate depending on property size, location and annual rent paid
- waive the \$74 annual water licence fee for drought-declared properties in 2015-16, saving approximately 11,000 water licence holders a collective \$814,000 in fees
- waive the \$117.50 water licence application fee for new applications seeking licences to take water for stock and domestic purposes until 30 June 2016.

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