Impact Analysis Statement

A Summary Impact Analysis Statement (IAS) must be completed for all regulatory proposals. A Full IAS (see Box 1) must also be completed and attached for proposals that have significant impacts. Once completed, the IAS must be published.

Summary IAS

Details

Lead department	Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development.
Name of the proposal	Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Bill 2026
Submission type (*Summary IAS / Consultation IAS / Decision IAS)*	Summary IAS
Title of related legislative or regulatory instrument	*Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994*
Date of issue	13 October 2026

For proposals noted in table below, complete and delete rows where applicable. No further analysis is required.

Proposal type	Details
Minor and machinery in nature	This proposal is machinery in nature and seeks to modernise the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994* (the Act) and improve the performance of QRIDA. The proposal does not result in a substantive change to regulatory policy or new impacts for business, government, or the community.

*Refer to *The Queensland Government Better Regulation Policy* for regulatory proposals not requiring regulatory impact analysis (for example, public sector management, changes to existing criminal laws, taxation).

For all other proposals, complete below.

What is the nature, size and scope of the problem? What are the objectives of government action?

The Act establishes the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) to deliver assistance schemes, primarily to promote a more productive and sustainable rural and regional sector in Queensland.

Section 45 of the Act requires a review every 10 years from 1 July 2013. Such a review was conducted and tabled in Parliament in July 2024, but no further action was taken prior to the 2024 State General Election. The current Queensland Government conducted a targeted review to ensure that the findings of the former tabled review remained relevant and aligned with the objectives of the current Government.

Consistent with the recommendations of the targeted review, the proposed amendments to the Act will:

- Allow financial assistance schemes to be established in non-legislative documents or guidelines and approved by Ministerial Notice. This will streamline the process to establish and amend schemes, while maintaining modern standards of accountability.
- Allow QRIDA to administer 'parts' of schemes in Queensland. This enables the Queensland Government to leverage QRIDA's expertise in delivering these schemes, which will further strengthen its role in driving economic growth in rural and regional Queensland.
- Allow QRIDA to issues notices to recover funds paid in error, which will strengthen QRIDA's capacity to manage public resources responsibly.
- Modernise governance and administrative provisions and improve customer service and the operations of QRIDA.

What options were considered?

As noted above, the proposed amendments arise from the recommendations of a legislatively required review of the Act under section 45, as well as an additional targeted review. However, the option of maintaining the status quo was also considered.

What are the impacts?

Status quo

Maintaining the status quo and not amending the Act would see QRIDA's operations remain the same. QRIDA currently has a high level of customer satisfaction in the delivery of its functions. The most significant impact of retaining the existing framework is that financial assistance schemes will continue to be required to be set out in detail in a regulation. The drafting of regulations for new schemes and amendments to schemes is a time-consuming process and can take considerably longer than the proposed Ministerial Notice process.

Proposed changes

The proposed amendments are intended to streamline and improve the functionality and operation of QRIDA, consistent with the recommendations of the targeted review of the Act. This review concluded that QRIDA continues to perform its function effectively; however, opportunities exist to further improve its performance. The proposed amendments in the Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Bill 2026 (the Bill) will make the following amendments.

Ministerial Notice for Scheme Approval

The Act currently provides that all Queensland financial assistance schemes must be set out in detail in a regulation. While the requirement for each scheme to be detailed in regulation ensures schemes are

drafted by the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel (OQPC), tabled in Parliament, and subject to disallowance, it can delay in the rollout of financial assistance schemes. Establishing a new scheme or amending an existing scheme can take several months and the 2024 review noted that these time frames can be in tension with the need to be responsive, particularly when assistance is urgently needed for disaster relief.

As an alternative to the time-consuming requirement to set out schemes in detail by regulation, it is proposed that new schemes be established by Ministerial Notice. New schemes, and existing schemes that are amended, will be detailed in non-legislative documents or guidelines and approved by Ministerial Notice. QRIDA will administer these schemes in accordance with the relevant non-legislative document or guideline, which will come into effect once it is approved by the Ministerial Notice.

Ministerial Notices will be subordinate legislation, ensuring they are drafted by OQPC, published on the Queensland legislation website, and subject to parliamentary oversight, including tabling, potential disallowance, and expiry under the *Statutory Instruments Act 1992*.

Minimum requirements for guidelines will be set out in the Act. OQPC will consider whether the scheme guidelines meet these legislative requirements when drafting a Ministerial Notice. Any suggested amendments to the guidelines will be made to ensure they meet the legislative requirements before the Ministerial Notice is approved. Because OQPC will not be involved in drafting the detailed content of schemes, policy agencies will need to consider whether in-house legal review is required when developing their scheme proposals. If needed, eligibility criteria or definitions in guidelines could be reviewed by in-house legal or Crown Law.

The current process to establish a new scheme often takes three to four months to complete. However, this timeframe depends on the complexity of the scheme and the process can take much longer. The Ministerial Notice process will significantly reduce the drafting time and remove the requirement for Governor in Council approval. This is expected to halve the time needed to establish or amend a scheme under the Act. Most of the remaining time will be spent developing the guidelines, and there will be a significant reduction in workload for OQPC. Importantly, because the guidelines for disaster relief schemes already exist and are largely standardised, these schemes could be established or amended very quickly once the event is declared.

The Bill provides for certain schemes to be prescribed in a regulation. If prescribed, then these schemes must be detailed in a regulation. This means higher-risk schemes can be prescribed, which will trigger the requirement for them to be detailed in a regulation. For example, it is intended to prescribe schemes that involve long-term loans, which often create a large and long-term financial liability. Currently, the Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme is the only scheme that provides for loans with a repayment period of more than a 10-years, and it will be prescribed so that it must be detailed in a regulation.

Allowing certain types of schemes to be prescribed in a regulation will provide greater flexibility (compared to specifying in the Act the types of schemes that must be detailed in a regulation). QRIDA will be able to assess the risk of proposed schemes on a case-by-case basis, particularly new and novel schemes that have not been previously administered, and, where necessary, those schemes may be prescribed and required to be detailed in a regulation.

Ministerial Notices will substantially reduce the time and resources required to establish a new scheme or amend an existing scheme. They will also enable QRIDA to respond rapidly to emerging needs, such as natural disasters, reduce red tape and ensure Queenslanders can access funding sooner.

Parts of Schemes in Queensland

Currently, section 3, section 8 and section 11A of the Act make it clear that QRIDA can deliver 'parts' of schemes for the Commonwealth and other states in rural and regional sectors outside of Queensland. For example, QRIDA can be involved in processing and assessing applications without being responsible for providing the grant, rebate, discount or loan. QRIDA can also be involved in reviewing an interstate scheme for the Commonwealth.

Despite this, it is not clear that QRIDA can administer parts of schemes for the Queensland Government. In the past, this has meant QRIDA has been unable to deliver a part of a scheme in cooperation with a department or other entity that represents the state, even where QRIDA had the capacity and the scheme met the Object of the Act.

Amending the Act to remove this discrepancy and allow QRIDA to administer parts of schemes in Queensland will assist the Queensland Government to use QRIDA's services where it is best placed to deliver them. Accordingly, this should improve QRIDA's service delivery capability and will not impose any additional regulatory burden on applicants.

Expand Powers to Recover Funds

Currently, section 43 of the Act only allows QRIDA to recover funds paid incorrectly to scheme applicants as a consequence of a false statement made by the applicant.

The proposed amendment will expand the recovery provisions to include circumstances where funds were paid in error. Examples of funds paid in error could include overpayments or when funds are paid to the wrong bank account. This will enhance QRIDA's management of public funds and ensure greater accountability and alignment with the intended policy aims of financial assistance schemes.

Allowing QRIDA to recover funds paid in error where appropriate will strengthen its capacity to manage public resources responsibly. However, QRIDA will not be mandated to recover funds in every case and would have to consider, for example, the nature of the error, the time and effort required to recover the funds, and the amount that may be able to be recovered.

As part of the modernisation of the Act, the Bill will also allow for recovery of assistance where applicants breach a condition of that assistance and provide for a standard set of investigation and enforcement powers, such as the power to request information or request a certified copy of a document. The power to impose conditions and require applicants to repay assistance when those conditions are breached is often included in the scheme detail. Including this in the Act will ensure QRIDA can use its investigation and enforcement powers should this be needed.

If there are grounds to recover financial assistance (for example, because false or misleading information was provided or because the funds were paid in error by QRIDA), then QRIDA will have the power to issue a notice to recover the financial assistance as a debt. Applicants who receive this notice will be able to seek an internal review in the first instance as well as a review of the internal review decision by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).

This amendment will create an additional impact on applicants that does not currently exist. However, the impact is expected to be minor because it will only allow for QRIDA to lawfully recover money in rare and narrow circumstances. If a person believes that the funds were correctly paid, then they will be able to seek an internal review and subsequently apply for an external review by QCAT.

Modernise governance and administrative provisions and improve customer service and the operations of QRIDA.

Customer service

The Act will be amended to provide that within each assistance scheme established by Ministerial Notice, the guidelines will describe the customer service provisions that pertain to that scheme. For example, a

customer service provisions could include, on a case-by-case basis, measures such as flexible payment options, provisions allowing for pre-approval or in-principle approval for applications or allowing payment of assistance funds direct to suppliers.

Including customer service provisions in scheme guidelines will provide transparency and prompt consideration of customer service outcomes during scheme development. This should improve customer interactions with QRIDA and will not impose any extra burden on applicants.

Internal Review Extension

The Act currently provides applicants with 20 business days to apply for a review of a decision under section 13B of the Act. While the 2024 review did not find that major changes were needed to the current system, it acknowledged that more time may be needed for some applicants, particularly those experiencing distress or recovering from a disaster.

The proposed amendment will extend the timeframe for making an internal review application from 20 to 30 business days, with provision for further extension at the discretion of the CEO of QRIDA, ensuring flexibility for exceptional cases.

Extending the current timeframe for making an internal review application will allow individuals and businesses more time to lodge a review application. Accordingly, the proposed amendment will have a positive impact on applicants.

Object of the Act

The Object of the Act is broad enough to allow for innovation in support of the schemes administered but retains QRIDA's role to primarily 'administer assistance schemes that foster the development of a more productive and sustainable rural and regional sector in Queensland'.

Accordingly, no substantive amendment to the Object of the Act is required to ensure that QRIDA continues to be able to deliver on the Government's objectives for the community notably 'a better lifestyle through a stronger economy'.

Minor and consequential amendments to the Object of the Act in line with the other recommendations of the review have however been identified through the review process. This includes minor changes to wording and terminology and to allow QRIDA to administer 'parts' of schemes in Queensland and to provide greater clarity for QRIDA.

Improving Governance and Transparency

Through the targeted review, some governance-related amendments were identified to bring the provisions up to date with current practice for administration of statutory bodies in Queensland. These provisions include:

- enabling criminal history checks for directors and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and requiring notification of certain matters;
- expanding disqualification grounds for directors and the CEO to include having a conviction for an indictable offence, insolvency, disqualification under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth), and refusal to consent to criminal history checks;
- introducing provisions for the CEO to address vacancy circumstances; and
- other minor technical amendments.

These amendments relate to QRIDA's internal administration and are intended to align QRIDA governance with current practice for the administration of statutory bodies. These amendments do not impose a regulatory burden on applicants.

QRIDA Function

Section 8 of the Act lists the functions of QRIDA and allows for the creation of new functions that can be set out in regulation. This provision, however, does not describe what a regulation must contain to be valid. Accordingly, the Bill will amend section 8 of the Act to provide more clarity on what may be included in a regulation that establishes new functions for QRIDA. These amendments do not impose a regulatory burden on applicants.

Who was consulted?

Key industry groups whose members are users of QRIDA's services were consulted in the preparation of the proposed amendments. Government agencies with schemes of financial assistance administered by QRIDA were consulted in the preparation of the proposed amendments. Both groups noted the proposed amendments and neither raised any significant concerns in regard to the proposed amendments.

What is the recommended option and why?

The changed made by the Bill are recommended.

The Bill will improve customer service through customer service provisions in guidelines and an extended time frame to make an application for review.

The Bill will streamline the process to establish and amend schemes and ensure financial assistance can be provided in a timely fashion to Queenslanders when needed. QRIDA will be able to administer parts of schemes which will in turn strengthen its role in driving economic growth in rural and regional Queensland. QRIDA will also be able to recover funds, where appropriate, which will strengthen its capacity to manage public resources.

Finally, the Bill will modernise the Act and the governance provisions for QRIDA and bring them in line with modern legislation for the governance of a statutory body.

Signed



Amy Rosanowski

Acting Director-General
Department of Natural Resources and Mines,
Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development
Date:



Dale Last MP

Minister for Natural Resources and Mines
Minister for Manufacturing
Minister for Regional and Rural Development
Date:

Box 1 Full Impact Analysis Statement

For all significant proposals, a full IAS to be attached:

1. Identification of the problem
2. Objectives of government action
3. Consideration of options
4. Impact analysis of the options
5. Consultation
6. Conclusion and recommended option
7. Implementation, compliance support and evaluation strategy

Refer to The Queensland Government Better Regulation Policy for further detail.