

Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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Mr Mark Shelton MP
Member for Lyons

27 MAY 2026

C/- Laura.Ross@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Shelton

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark".

In Parliament on 21 May 2026, you asked the following question on behalf of your constituents:

Farmers from my electorate of Lyons had to work through a drought and prolonged dry conditions during 2024. Now, many of them are facing it once again, particularly in southern Lyons, around the Oatlands area and as you travel further south, with below average rainfalls in the last 12 months. Can you provide an update on the current seasonal conditions and outline what support the Tasmanian government is providing to help farmers in Lyons - and elsewhere of course, prepare and manage ongoing dryness issues and build resilience for the season ahead?

I firstly thank you for the question and note the timeliness of raising this matter on behalf of your constituents. I recognise the ongoing pressures that seasonal variability is placing on farmers across your electorate of Lyons - particularly in the midlands, east coast and south east regions.

The latest advice from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) demonstrates that, while conditions vary across the State, dryness continues to affect large parts of Tasmania.

- Rainfall has remained below average across many eastern and southern districts, with April rainfall around 23 per cent below the long-term average statewide.
- Soil moisture levels are very much below average across large areas of the east and Midlands, and runoff and streamflow have declined accordingly.
- Over the past 12 months, conditions have been persistently drier than average, with warmer temperatures increasing evaporation and placing further pressure on water availability and pasture growth.

Under Tasmania's phased seasonal conditions framework the north east, south east, east coast and midlands regions are currently assessed as being in the 'preparedness' phase.

This means that, while the State is not formally in drought, conditions are dry enough to require active planning, monitoring and early decision-making.

To help farmers build resilience and better prepare for future dry conditions, the Tasmanian Government publishes a monthly Seasonal Conditions Insight snapshots available monthly on the NRE Tas website at:

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/managing-seasonal-conditions/current-conditions-in-tasmania>

The Tasmanian Government is focused on ensuring farmers are not left to face these conditions alone, with strong investment in long-term resilience and preparedness.

The Government, in partnership with the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund, has extended the Farm Business Resilience (FBR) Program through to 2029, backed by a further \$6.2 million investment.

The FBR program is being delivered through the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) in conjunction with the TAS Farm Innovation Hub.

The FBR program supports farmers by providing:

- Practical training delivered by agricultural experts
- One-on-one business coaching and risk management support
- Tools to assess risks and strengthen decision-making
- Support to develop tailored Farm Business Resilience Plans for their enterprise

Primary producers are encouraged to register their interest in the program at:

[https://nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/farm-business-resilience-program-\(tasmania\)](https://nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/farm-business-resilience-program-(tasmania))

In addition, a \$4.4 million joint State and Federal investment through to 2029 is supporting the next phase of the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program (RDRP).

The RDRP program is delivering:

- Community-led drought resilience planning across all regions
- Grants and initiatives to implement locally identified priorities
- Practical actions to help communities prepare for, manage and recover from dry conditions

<https://droughtready.tas.gov.au/>

Useful information, tools and resources to support primary producers to manage seasonal conditions are available on the NRE Tas website at

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/managing-seasonal-conditions>

In addition, the TAS Farm Innovation Hub is one of a network of hubs established across Australia through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

The hub helps Tasmanian farmers, and those who support them, share knowledge, build skills, and support practical solutions to prepare for drought and climate change.

<https://tasfarmhub.com.au/>

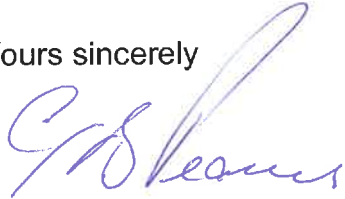
There is also important long standing support, such as the Farm Household Allowance and access to Rural Financial Counsellors.

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/managing-seasonal-conditions/financial-support>

The Tasmanian Government will continue to support our farmers and primary producers through the coming months, especially those parts of Tasmania where seasonal conditions are forecast to have some challenges.

Thank you for raising this important matter on behalf of your Lyons constituents and the broader agricultural community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Pearce', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Hon Gavin Pearce MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Water