

STOCK ROUTE AGISTMENT PERMITS - DECLARED DROUGHT

Doc Id: 950069
Author: Jeff Miles, Environmental Services Manager
Authoriser: Justin Kronk, Acting General Manager Strategy, Innovation and Assets
Attachments: Nil

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The local community has reached out to Council for assistance during drought and bushfires. Council has an opportunity to assist graziers with fee assistance with agistment permits issued under the *Stock Route Management Act 2002*.

CORPORATE PLAN

OUR VISION: By 2030, the North Burnett will be a region of choice for people to live, work and play:

OUR ROLE:

A Regulator

OUR PRIORITY AREAS:

5. Our efficient and effective council

RECOMMENDATION

That Council forego or refund their proportion of fees for stock route agistment applications made under the *Stock Route Management Act 2002* during the declared drought or following a nominated bushfire event for the 2019/20 financial year.

REPORT

Recent dry conditions have impacted primary producers with an increase in agistment applications by graziers. Council has now received a drought declaration for the entire Council area from the State Government. The recent bushfire in the Hawkwood area also created an urgent need for some graziers to agist livestock onto local roads. In such times, residents often reach out to Council for assistance. Council officers are assisting affected property owners through the stock route agistment application process that requires forms, mapping, insurance and fees.

The *Stock Route Management Act 2002* provides a regulatory framework for the issue of agistment permits and travelling stock permits including nominated fees; half of the nominated fee is retained by Council and the other half is remitted to the State. There is no provision in the legislation for Council to waive fees however, it is silent on whether Council can forego or refund its fifty percent of the scheduled fees.

To assist local property owners and land managers during the declared draught and recent bushfire, consideration can be given for some level of assistance with stock route agistment applications. It is not anticipated to include travelling stock permits as there are often itinerant drovers from outside the local government area.

CONSULTATION

In addition to the stories from recent applicants for agistment permits, the subject has been discussed amongst Council's Land Protection Officers.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

Reputation / Political

Property owners under drought conditions reach out to their Council for assistance. A failure to assist the community could impact negatively on Council. Empathy for the community under drought should satisfy community expectation.

Financial Impact

Expected revenue from stock route agistment permits would be reduced should Council forego or refund their fifty percent component of fees. The State will continue to expect their portion of revenue. It is difficult to predict the value of this at this stage.

Legal & Regulatory

The process is regulated by the Stock Route Management Act 2002. A requirement of the application process is public liability insurance with the State and Local Governments nominated as interested parties.

Environmental

Candidate areas for agistment are inspected for pasture and invasive species prior to the issue of a permit.

Property & Infrastructure

Agistment permits can impact upon local roads and scheduled works. Communication will have to occur with Council's Works Department.

Human Resources

Agistment permits consume staff resources for communication, inspection, processing and monitoring compliance.

KEY MESSAGE

Council empathises with primary producers under drought conditions and is prepared to waive their proportion of the State legislated fee for stock route agistment permits. A communication strategy will be necessary.