1. Since 2013, much of Queensland has been in drought. At its peak, over 88 per cent of the state was drought declared. Currently, 23 shires and five part shires are drought declared. This is approximately 58.1 percent of the land area of the state.
2. The Queensland Government has provided significant assistance since the drought began in 2013. Over $160 million has been spent by the Queensland Government on the measures in its Drought Assistance Package and, if other assistance measures are taken into consideration, the amount of assistance delivered to regional Queensland would be more than $670 million.
3. The Bureau of Meteorology has indicated there is a 50 percent likelihood of an El Niño forming in the latter half of 2018. If an El Niño develops, there is an increased risk current dry conditions may continue well into 2019.
4. In its 2018-19 Budget, the Government committed $34.6 million for the Drought Assistance Package. $100 million in 2018-19 was made available for the Primary Industries Productivity Enhancement Scheme loans and $3.5 million for the Tackling Regional Adversity through Integrated Care (TRAIC) program.
5. Cabinet noted a Queensland Drought Program Review was being conducted to inform future drought programs.
6. Cabinet endorsed the announcement of funding to programs to support droughted communities:
* four years of funding to the Royal Flying Doctors Drought Well Being Service;
* a drought supplement to the Tackling Regional Adversity through Integrated Care (TRAIC) program (TRAIC);
* enhancements to the freight subsidies and Emergency Water infrastructure Rebates available under the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme; and
* the expansion of the small business financial counselling service.
1. Cabinet endorsed the appointment of two drought Commissioners.
2. *Attachments*
* Nil.