

05 December 2023

**Farmers for Climate Action Submission:
Future Drought Fund**



Senator the Hon Murray Watt
future.drought.fund@pc.gov.au

Re: Submission to the Future Drought Fund - to inform the next phase of funding from 2024 to 2028

Dear Senator Watt,

Farmers for Climate Action appreciates the opportunity to once again contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the Future Drought Fund. We commend the Productivity Commission for its commitment to fostering collaboration and engagement in shaping the strategies that will define Australia's approach to mitigating the impacts of drought and climate change.

I had the privilege of attending the National Drought Forum and stakeholder workshop held in Rockhampton in late September, where the invaluable insights and perspectives shared by various stakeholders, including three Farmers for Climate Action members who spoke at the forum, further underscored the importance of a holistic approach to drought resilience.

The proposed Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2024 to 2028 acknowledges the disproportionate impact of climate change on agriculture, emphasising the need for proactive adaptation and transformation. In alignment with this, we reinforce our support for a comprehensive strategy that addresses the impacts of climate change on the agriculture sector. As an organisation representing more than 8,000 farmers across Australia and over 45,000 supporters committed to climate action for agriculture, we believe that the Fund's remit should be broadened to explicitly include the word 'climate,' reflecting the comprehensive nature of the challenges faced by landholders.

As per our previous submission in July 2023, we reiterate the below key points:

1. More Explicit Recognition of Climate Change

In light of the Draft Drought Resilience Funding Plan's acknowledgment of the broader impacts of climate change, we reiterate our recommendation to rename the Future Drought Fund to

explicitly include the term 'climate' in its title. This adjustment will accurately reflect the comprehensive nature of the challenges faced by farmers and communities. It is important that farmers experiencing climate change impacts beyond drought events, such as more frequent and severe flooding, are explicitly included in the remit of the Fund.

2. Retain Investment in Social Resilience

Social resilience plays a pivotal role in fostering drought-resilient communities. We commend the Plan's emphasis on social resilience, recognising its critical role in fostering adaptive and resilient communities. Our organisation fully endorses the inclusion of activities that strengthen social capital, wellbeing, and connectedness in rural, regional, and remote agricultural communities.

3. Understand and Minimise Overlap and Duplication:

A clear strategy with well-defined investment guidelines is crucial to minimise duplication and overlap with other federal and state schemes. We propose conducting a gap assessment to ensure efficient and optimal utilisation of the Future Drought Fund resources.

4. Drought Hubs

We commend the Plan's emphasis on greater transparency regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Hubs, and prioritising and supporting integration with existing farmer outreach networks, including Natural Resource Management (NRM) Regions.

5. Improving Outcomes and Access for all Landholders

We support the recommendation for improved outcomes and access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including appointing First Nations representation on the new Future Drought Fund Consultative Committee. Addressing accessibility issues will ensure equitable distribution of benefits to all landholders.

We welcome the Fund's vision, aim, and strategic objectives outlined in the Draft Drought Resilience Funding Plan. The three strategic objectives to build economic, environmental, and social resilience align well with our organisation's approach to advocate for strong climate policies that ensure a prosperous future full of opportunity for farming communities.

We support the detailed submissions that will be made by our partners at NRM Regions Australia, the National Landcare Network and Landcare Australia - these organisations are crucial in the successful impact of the Future Drought Fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the next phase of funding for the Future Drought Fund.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for further information.

Yours sincerely,



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