



Australian Government



Australian
**Small Business and
Family Enterprise**
Ombudsman

13 December 2019

Mr Brent Finlay
Department of Agriculture
National Office
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601

via email: droughtresilience@agriculture.gov.au

Brent

Dear Mr Finlay

Draft Drought Resilience Funding Plan

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Draft Drought Resilience Funding Plan (DDRFP) that assists small and family business and their communities to help build adaptability to environmental changes. Small businesses that include farming businesses are experiencing a rapidly changing business environment in both technology and environmental conditions.

Of the 2.3 million Australian small businesses, there are over 85,000 farm businesses that employ over 300,000 people.¹ These businesses are essential to the Australian economy and deserve support when experiencing significant change outside their control. The DDRFP is an opportunity for government in partnership with communities, to foster sustainable environments to help communities be resilient and grow, retain local employment, and upskill workers.

The DDRFP should be designed to limit administrative burdens for small and family businesses seeking funding and cover the following issues:

- Traditionally, drought assistance and support has focused on primary producers. However, programs should also be directed towards supporting the wider business community in regional, rural and remote locations. This needs to cover programs that promote innovative approaches such as regional online businesses @buyfromthebush on Instagram and website development that lead to increased sales as well as the retention and development of skills and businesses across regional, rural and remote communities.
- Care needs to be taken to ensure that the delivery of programs is aligned with and complements other initiatives regardless of whether they are at the federal, state or local levels.
- Approved infrastructure projects should provide continued productivity and broader economic benefits to small businesses and their communities once the project has been finalised.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Bryan Smith on 02 6121 6414 or at bryan.smith@asbfeo.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Kate Carnell AO

Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

¹ <https://www.nff.org.au/farm-facts.html>