

**Glenelg Hopkins CMA**

PO Box 502  
Hamilton Vic 3300

ABN 55 218 240 014

T +61 3 5571 2526

F +61 3 5571 2935

E [ghcma@ghcma.vic.gov.au](mailto:ghcma@ghcma.vic.gov.au)

Glenelg Hopkins



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The Future Drought Fund Consultative Committee  
Department of Agriculture  
Australian Government  
[droughtresilience@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:droughtresilience@agriculture.gov.au).

**RE: Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority response to Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020-2024 Consultation Draft.**

The Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Drought Resilience Funding Plan and commends the Australian Government on this comprehensive and innovative plan to strengthen the drought preparedness and resilience of farm businesses and communities.

As a current supplier for the Australian Government National Landcare Program Phase two, Victorian CMA's offer a cost effective method for the delivery of the Future Drought Fund.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA through the support of the Australian Government's National Landcare Program formed strong collaborative partnerships and trusted relationships with the farming sector in one of Australia's most valuable and productive agricultural regions. The importance of the Glenelg Hopkins CMA region to national agricultural production continues to grow. In 2017-18, the region was rated as the 2nd highest agricultural production region in Victoria, and 4<sup>th</sup> highest in Australia, producing agricultural commodities with a gross value of \$2,245 million.

The Glenelg Hopkins Region has in the last 10 years experienced climate extremes ranging from record rainfall periods to record drought. During this time, Glenelg Hopkins CMA has continued to deliver programs that support farmers in innovation, adaptation, and responding to a changing climate.

Recently, this region, particularly the south west has been identified as a key drought refuge area. There has been a significant increase in farmers moving to this region from the north, particularly Murray irrigation and southern Riverina areas. These farmers are shifting in response to long term drought projections and increasing water costs. This trend has led to increased land prices and a recognition that this region has become crucial both in terms of agricultural value and production potential. Due to its value and importance to the future of Australian agriculture, not preparing for future drought in this region would have a significant impact on food and fibre availability and returns to the Australian economy.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA is well positioned to provide the mechanism for the delivery of the Future Drought Fund in this region through extensive local expertise and effective capacity building partnerships. This work would be guided by existing Natural Resource Management Plans for Climate Change that were funded through the Australian Government and provide a powerful framework for the development of priority projects for funding.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA is supportive of the Future Drought Fund's vision and the 3 strategic priorities. It provides a high-level framework to support the development of appropriate farm, regional and national activities.

At a National level we would encourage and support the development of an Australian Government National Policy for Climate Change that provides a vision and clear mechanisms for the integration of existing Australian and state government policies, frameworks and programs.

Locally, the Fund is well designed to support local farm and regional level transitional and transformational change. For this region of Australia, the GHCMA has identified priority activity areas that would align with The Funds strategic priorities and build on the existing longitudinal data and knowledge gained over decades of National Landcare Program activities.

**Farm and enterprise level resilience support, education and planning:**

These activities would range from one on one farm visits to workshops, information sessions, field days, information sharing and whole farm planning. An intended outcome of this work is the development of farm resilience plans that provide a long term, evidence-based plan for drought and climate change that is inclusive of trigger points and contingency activities.

**Rural and regional drought resilience capacity building:**

The GHCMA has a proven record in partnering with rural stakeholders to build the capacity of agricultural communities to understand and respond to external challenges and opportunities.

Successful programs include the support of peer information sharing, school and educational presentations, identifying and facilitating access to subject matter expertise, rural town transformation.

Future priorities will require a focus on developing further cross sectorial partnerships to build whole community knowledge and resilience including for example education providers, health services and banks and lending institutions.

**Collaboration for sustainable farming, innovation and environmental resilience:**

Partnering with land users to co-design natural resource management research, development, extension and adoption.

The utilisation of smart farming techniques and partnerships to the development and learnings from producer driven demonstration sites and opportunities for expanding revenue streams and transforming to more resilient production activities.

Congratulations on this impressive initiative and thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comment on the draft plan. We would welcome contact should you wish to discuss any of our response in more detail.

Yours sincerely



**Adam Bester**  
CEO