



It is the submission of RDA Barossa Gawler Light and Adelaide Plains that water management, innovation in water management, efficiencies in infrastructure for water management, water and energy efficient water reuse schemes with associated infrastructure and recognising environmental social and economic uses of water all contribute to economic resilience is the highest priority for Drought Resilience

Regional Development Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains is one of 52 regional development bodies throughout Australia. We connect industry, business, labour markets and community with local state and Australian government policy and priorities and provide those three government collaborators with insights, perspectives and priorities of the region. We also deliver on the ground services to meet demand and plug gaps in regional services and programs. We collate publish and promote regional information and opportunities to encourage investment and business confidence.

Our region is severely impacted by drought. The regional economy is underpinned by its agricultural base and the in region downstream processing and services that are sustained by it. With up to 50% reduction in production of grapes and grain and associated losses in purchasing, services and processing, our local economy and export income is severely reduced.

As a preliminary recommendation we request that the characterisation of The Barossa Council as ineligible for community drought funding or other assistance packages be reconsidered. The data starkly shows that the council area has severely reduced rainfall with substantial consequent economic loss from up to a 50% reduction in both viticulture (and therefore associated wine production) and broadacre. In an anomaly, one half of the Barossa Wine Region is eligible through Light Regional Council and the other half of the Barossa Wine Region is not.

The Drought Resilience Funding Plan is a welcome opportunity to build resilience in regional communities and equip them to better withstand drought. Our submission builds on the recommendations of the draft Plan.

Human Capital and Natural Resources are at the core of place based opportunity including diversification of the economic base. By investing in our human capital and our natural resources we are laying the foundation for sustainable economies. Diverse jobs strengthen social resilience.

Human Capital resilience to drought can include but is not limited to social resilience. Human Capital resilience includes adaptive skilling, physical and mental wellness, education, creativity and problem solving. The projects and programs to achieve this in any given regional area will need to be responsive to the regional context and culture. RDAs are well placed to lead and coordinate this work, embedded in the community and located throughout Australia.

Human Capital development is strengthened the visual and performing arts which are so important to social resilience. New opportunities in the creative industries link visual and performing arts to economic diversity and growth in the digital economy with capability in digital content, videos, gaming and VR applications. Community connectivity is also important to social resilience and

human capital development (R Florida, The Creative Class). Design capabilities support problem solving.

Resilient natural resources better withstand the effects of drought. I have had the benefit of considering the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board submission and the Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges NRM submission and generally endorse the recommendations, in particular that

- *The design and delivery of the fund should be locally oriented and relevant to achieve the level of engagement required to make a difference*
- *Community led and co-designed projects will be important for success*

with the caution that the leadership should be informed and strategic and that RDAs and NRM groups should be part of this process. Both include local leadership as part of their structure.

In addition to exploring/adopting new technologies, there is a lot to be learned from traditional natural resource management practices, including practices such as cleaning up stormwater with reed beds and slowing progress of the storm water in the stream so that adjacent land is hydrated and productive. These practices are regaining popularity with results.

Best practice water reuse and management should include considerations of environmental, social and economic requirements in a holistic way. It is the submission of RDA Barossa Gawler Light and Adelaide Plains that water management, innovation in water management, efficiencies in infrastructure for water management, water and energy efficient reuse schemes with associated infrastructure and recognising environmental social and economic uses of water all contribute to economic resilience, is the highest priority for Drought Resilience.

Further it is our submission that environmental and social resilience (or more broadly natural resources and human capital resilience) are critical to economic resilience. With strong human capital and resilient natural resources, there are options for low investment industries to contribute diversity and jobs to our economies that help withstand some of the “aftershocks” of drought and offer supplementary income to farming communities. Whilst it is perhaps not the work of the Drought Resilience Fund to seed those diverse investments, education and information on new business opportunities could be included in community programs to develop resilience in and to drought.

The Draft Funding Plan emphasises education on new technologies and business skills. The Regional Universities Centres could be an included delivery partner for these programs where possible. Like RDAs, Regional Universities Centres are part of the government’s policy and services infrastructure in regional Australia and should be connected with relevant regional delivery programs.

Finally, drought resilience building should not be abandoned with the first rains. Drought is a recurring environmental, social and economic reality in Australia and a growing and vibrant economy will depend upon reinforced resilience and long term strategies.

RDAs in South Australia have submitted a response to the drought plan, commenting on the specific objectives of the plan and RDA BGLAP endorses those submissions without repeating them.

Anne Moroney, CEO.
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