

13 December 2019

Future Drought Fund Consultative Committee
Department of Agriculture
Australian Government

Dear Consultative Committee,

Drought Resilience Funding Plan Feedback – South Australian Regional Climate Partnerships

Since 2011, South Australia has been working collaboratively at a regional scale to strengthen the resilience of our communities, economies and environments. Our Regional Climate Partnerships were established under the *Prospering in a Changing Climate* initiative, with Federal, State and Local government co-investment. Since developing our regional climate change adaptation plans, our regional partners have delivered substantial on-ground action to tackle the risks and opportunities presented by the changing climate, including drought.

Our regional partners include the South Australian Government, local Councils, Regional Development Australia Boards and Natural Resources Management Boards. This regional-scale, cross-sectoral collaboration has proven effective in strengthening social, economic and environmental resilience to a range of climate-related risks.

General comments:

- Our partnerships welcome the Drought Resilience Funding Plan's recognition of how climate change is impacting land management, and applaud the Fund's emphasis on public good outcomes.
- Our partnerships also welcome the shift in focus from recovery to resilience, in line with the Sendai Framework and National Disaster Resilience Framework.
- Regional Climate Partners, including Natural Resource Management Boards, Regional Development Australia Boards, and Regional Organisations of Councils, are well-placed to provide contracted service delivery of Fund initiatives. These organisations operate at a practical, local level, on the frontline with drought affected communities. They have well-established and effective networks, knowledge and systems in place and are ready to go.
- Climate risks require urgent and proactive management by all levels of government and all sectors, so the proposed whole-of-government approach is encouraging. However, drought cannot be considered in isolation – this coordinated approach is needed across all climate-related risks to our regional communities, like water insecurity, infrastructure failure, stranded assets, bushfire and floods, pest and disease outbreaks, and health and wellbeing.

Social resilience:

- Community involvement in designing and implementing local solutions will be critical to the uptake and success of the Fund.
- Equity in availability of funding continues to be an important issue in South Australia. The fund should consider more responsive eligibility triggers.

- Psychological preparedness remains a key gap. Recent innovations in the emergency management sector (eg. Immersive Bushfire Experience) provide sources of learning and best practice.
- Resilience building is most effective through established networks. Existing contracted service providers (eg. National Landcare Program) should be used as a mechanism to deliver the Fund.
- Capacity building is integral to resilience building. In our increasingly disruptive environment, it will be critical to share information, collaborate, and rapidly uptake new approaches via networks. Networked capacity building, including its operational components, should be supported under the Fund for minimum 3 to 5-year terms.

Economic resilience:

- Given the increasing impacts of climate variability, many landholders are considering alternative or buffering industries and income streams such as tourism, carbon farming, conservation stewardship and alternative production methods that increase profit margins and ensure adaptation to climate and market needs. The Fund should support these diversified land management practices.
- Affordability and accessibility of insurance and finance products will increasingly affect the economic resilience of land managers. The Fund should support collection, sharing and use of spatial hazard data, and the design and application of innovative insurance and finance products, to minimise transitional risks while retaining market-based price signals (ie. avoiding insurance/finance subsidies).

Environmental resilience:

- Projects and initiatives addressing the following components of environmental resilience should be supported:
 - Management of total grazing pressure, including stocking rates, feral animals and overabundant native species.
 - Management of pest plants.
 - Soil improvement and modification to build soil biological function, water and nutrient holding capacity and carbon sequestration.
 - Resilient systems management, such as cover cropping, pasture cropping, regenerative agriculture, and strategic vegetation management (eg. securing pollination services, and planting for wind and fire management services).
 - Climate resilient species selection and market development, including genetic diversity and native food and fodder production.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Regards,

Jen St Jack

Central Coordinator, Regional Climate Partnerships
jen@jackjensen.com.au