



# Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience

Program Implementation  
and Learnings



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry



Future  
Drought  
Fund



**FRRR**  
Foundation for Rural  
Regional Renewal

# Executive Summary

In February 2021, FRRR was awarded \$3,750,000 to deliver the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund Networks to Build Drought Resilience program. This report reflects on the implementation and outcomes of the program.

The program awarded 93 grants across four 'Opportunity Types' in all the states and territories of Australia. A small number did not proceed, for various reasons (detailed on page 48). In total, grants of \$4,199,157 were paid out – being \$3,160,545 of Australian Government funding and a \$1,054,982 co-contribution from FRRR and our donor partners. The remaining \$216,517 will be carried forward to the Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative.

**In total, the 87 community groups that completed their projects undertook 791 activities and reached 37,841 participants. The real legacy however lies in the networks that were created or strengthened and in the skills and knowledge gained by the participants.**

It is apparent from the final acquittal reports that this dedicated focus on providing agriculture-dependent communities with opportunities and resources to strengthen social and community networking, engagement and wellbeing has been impactful. Through their actions, communities report being more resilient to the impacts of climate change, including drought, and social capital has increased in these communities.

Social networks have grown through formal and informal avenues, with grantees generally reporting that greater diversity in participation in community networking events and conferences has led to a greater sense of belonging.

The most impactful projects in the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program had very strong local leadership, but also strong external support. The value of involving a broad cross-section of the community in designing their projects, as well as having the right external support was clear.

This work has resulted in a significant increase in skill development, an increased understanding of technology and how it can support drought preparedness and the importance of mental health strategies, and approaches for both individuals and communities.

Diverse participants contributed important insights to improve drought preparedness that have benefitted communities broadly. There is also evidence that these groups connected with other streams of the Future Drought Fund and accessed tools and resources such as the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs, Drought Resilience Self-Assessment Tool, Climate Services for Agriculture and Regional Drought Resilience Planning, where they had commenced, amongst others.

For the most part, implementation of the program went to plan, although there were disruptions from COVID and natural disasters. The flexibility in project delivery options was effective, although the relatively short timeframe for raising awareness of this new program and for community groups to execute projects did limit the impact of the projects in some circumstances. FRRR is appreciative of the flexibility of the Department in accommodating an extended program reporting period, which has allowed a number of project outcomes to become more evident.

Looking ahead, there is a strong appetite in communities to plan ahead for future droughts - not just on-farm but across the community as a whole, as there is strong recognition of the interdependence of the viability of the local community and the farmers that surround it.

This investment in the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program provided opportunities for communities to come together and place the conversation about 'managing and mitigating future droughts' squarely on the table. There is also now a strong evidence base about the practical benefits of investing in local people in place to help them adapt to a drying, and unpredictable climatic future, beyond the existing program parameters, timescale and depth reached with the existing small grants approach.

The program has highlighted the importance of social connectedness, community networks and deep social bonds, alongside the practical skills, knowledge and community-wide awareness required to be better prepared for drought into the future.

There is strong evidence that a significant opportunity exists to implement a tailored and localised approach to building drought resilience from 'the ground up' in communities that are likely to be impacted by drought in the future.

In closing, FRRR has welcomed active involvement in the broader Future Drought Fund and the opportunity to highlight the importance of community-led initiatives and partnerships leveraging government and philanthropy. Ultimately, relationship building has been vital to the success of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program and that strong foundation will underpin the success of any future program delivery.

Ensuring communities are resourced to actively support one another through stronger networks and improved infrastructure will enhance collective wellbeing and help agriculture-dependent communities to be more vibrant and sustainable long-term.

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# The Partnership

## About FRRR

The Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) is the only national foundation specifically focused on ensuring the social and economic strength of remote, rural and regional communities.

FRRR's vision is for a vibrant, resilient and revitalised remote, rural and regional Australia.

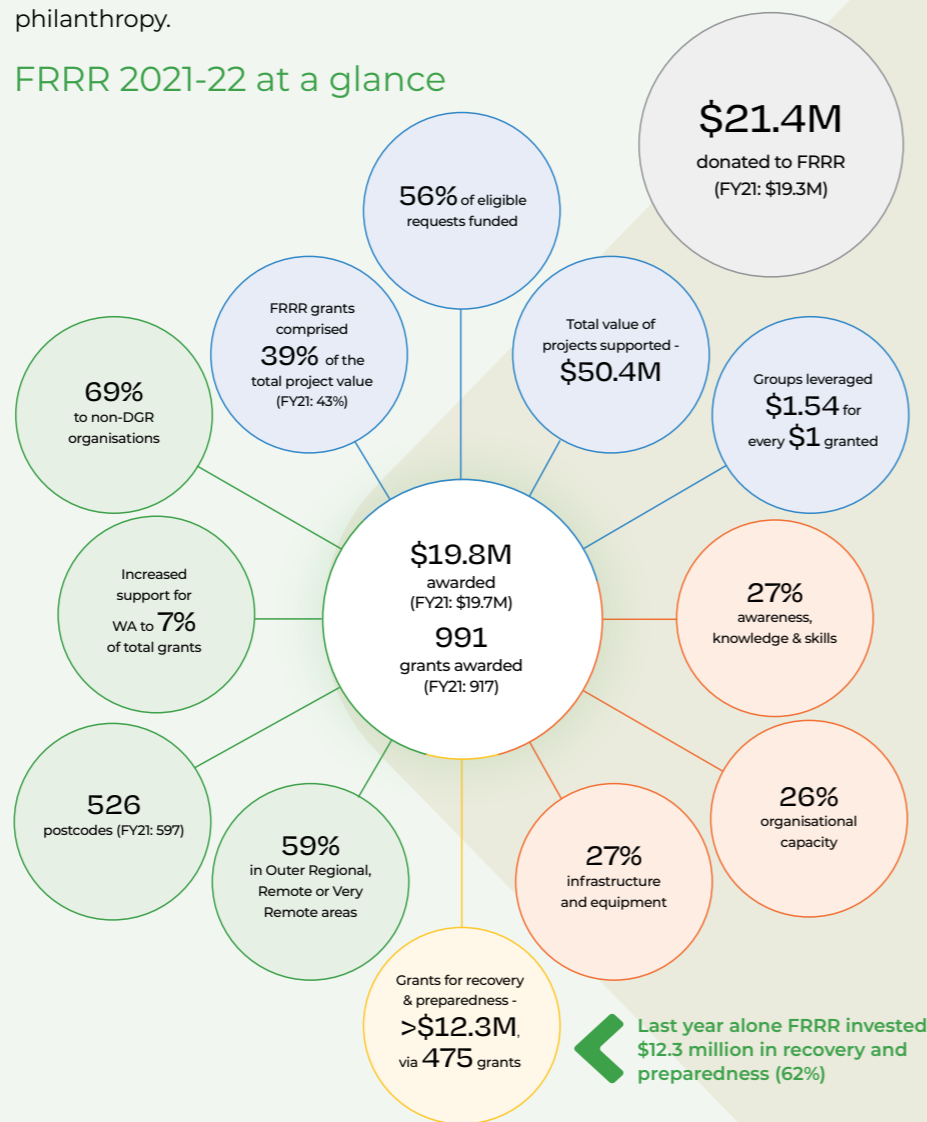
The Foundation believes that targeted, well-informed investment in people and organisations that are in and of their place will stimulate ideas that lead to actions, both big and small. Investing in local people and organisations that are connected, who know and understand the local context, and who can mobilise and activate resources, can transform a community's view of itself and drive its future. FRRR programs focus on building resilience and strengthening communities.

FRRR's unique model connects common purposes and investment with locally prioritised needs, to create communities that are vital and resilient. Since FRRR's start in 2000, it has delivered nearly \$155 million to more than 13,000 projects.

FRRR was pleased to partner with the Australian Government to deliver the Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience program.

FRRR's involvement in the broader Future Drought Fund has provided a welcome opportunity to highlight the importance of community-led initiatives and the power of partnerships between government and philanthropy.

## FRRR 2021-22 at a glance



# Program Overview

## About the Future Drought Fund

The Australian Government's Future Drought Fund is a long-term investment fund established under the Future Drought Fund Act 2019. It provides a sustainable source of funding to help remote, rural and regional communities, and farmers, become more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought. The Fund is part of the Government's Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan.

There are four focus areas in the Future Drought Fund, namely:

1. Better climate information – including tools such as the Drought Resilience Self-Assessment Tool and the Climate Services for Agriculture platform;
2. Better planning – helping farmers and regions to proactively plan for drought;
3. Better practices especially around developing and adopting farming and land management technologies; and
4. Better prepared communities, creating and supporting leaders, networks and organisations that underpin community resilience.

The Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience program addressed the fourth focus area noted earlier. It was designed to build community capacity by strengthening social and community networking, support, engagement and wellbeing. One of the Fund's foundation programs, it was deliberately structured to provide agriculture-dependent communities across remote, rural and regional Australia with the opportunity to access funds for a broad range of initiatives that directly and clearly benefit local communities to strengthen their resourcefulness, adaptability and capacity to thrive.

Networks to Build Drought Resilience aimed to build an enduring resilience to the impacts of climate change and drought, and enhance the public good in agriculture-dependent communities.

The program offered three tiers of grants to not-for-profit organisations totalling \$4.5 million over an 18-month period. The funding tiers were:

- \$10,000 - \$20,000;
- \$20,001 - \$50,000; and
- \$50,001 - \$150,000.

Applicants responded to one or more of the following Opportunity Types:

1. Projects that **strengthen the capacity, capability and coordination of professional, social or community networks** in agriculture-dependent communities to build drought resilience.
2. **Events** that facilitate professional, social and community connection to build understanding of risks posed by drought and climate change in agriculture-dependent communities throughout Australia.
3. **Training** to improve the skills, understanding and capacity of community network members to participate in community risk management, planning and community driven projects that build drought resilience.
4. **Small-scale community infrastructure** projects to foster connectedness, improve wellbeing and make community facilities resilient to the impact of drought.

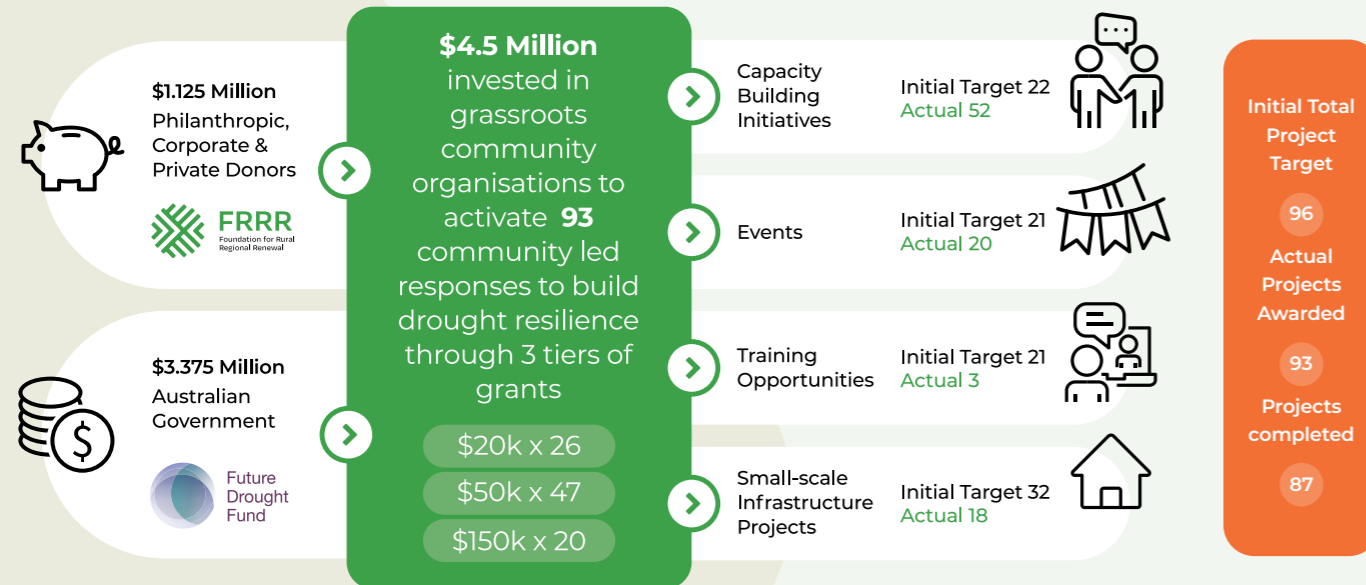
# Program Funding

In total, the Australian Government awarded FRRR \$3,750,000 to deliver the program - \$375,000 for administration and \$3,375,000 for the granting component (both GST exclusive). In addition, FRRR was asked to contribute a further \$1,125,000 of grant funds to the program. The FRRR co-contribution target was achieved in January 2022.

FRRR wishes to thank the generous donors who contributed. Those donors included:

- Equity Trustees Sector Capacity Building Fund
- Pratt Foundation
- Maple-Brown Family Foundation
- Thankful for Farmers
- Pinnacle Charitable Foundation
- Plus a number of others who wish to remain private.

## Outputs at a glance



- FRRR's program delivery fee: \$375,000
- Future Drought Fund grant to FRRR: \$3,375,000
- FRRR co-contribution: \$1,125,000
- Funds available for distribution: \$4,500,000 + \$1,771.49 interest
- Project target: 96 projects
- Program was delivered over 2 funding rounds:
  - Funds awarded Round 1: \$1,413,319
  - Funds awarded Round 2: \$3,084,346
- Projects awarded: 93
- Of those grants awarded:
  - 87 completed projects were delivered by not-for-profit organisations nationally using \$4,199,157 in grants;
  - One withdrew before contracting, so funds to the value of \$49,970 were not released;
  - Four grantees returned all funds and two returned part funds to the value of \$232,168;
  - One project to the value of \$16,370 has been provided an extension due to extenuating circumstances, acquittal report pending (as approved by the Department). Note, this project is not included in this report.
- Total value of projects funded: \$6,958,487
- Remaining funds: \$216,516.75 (\$216,226.73 unspent grant money + \$290.02 delivery cost unspent) will be carried forward to the Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought program.

# Overview of the Granting Process

As an experienced grantmaker, FRRR leveraged its skills and processes in the delivery of this program, supplemented with a small number of additional steps required by the Australian Government. Granting opportunities were promoted broadly through FRRR's owned channels, such as newsletters and social media, as well as shared via advocates and network contacts and via various media articles. A web page for the program set out the criteria and eligibility, and groups were asked to lodge an application online via FRRR's granting system, known externally as Grants Gateway.

Once the publicised application period closed, FRRR staff undertook what is known as a first read - an initial review of applications to remove any that are ineligible under the published guidelines. The program administration team, in this case the Program Manager and a dedicated Grants Support Officer, assessed applications received against the criteria, before shortlisting a number of projects against targets that were set out in the contract.

Those applications were then discussed with the Department to ensure no known conflicts or

duplications of funding through other streams, before being reviewed by the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) who make recommendations to the FRRR Board.

Once the Board confirmed which projects were to be funded, FRRR's program staff, with the support of our communications agency, JAW Communications, worked closely with Department staff to coordinate the announcement by the Minister.

Groups awarded funding then had to enter into a contract with FRRR that confirmed the project, what the grant was funding and the reporting and acquittal requirements. The latter were tailored to the Future Drought Fund's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework.

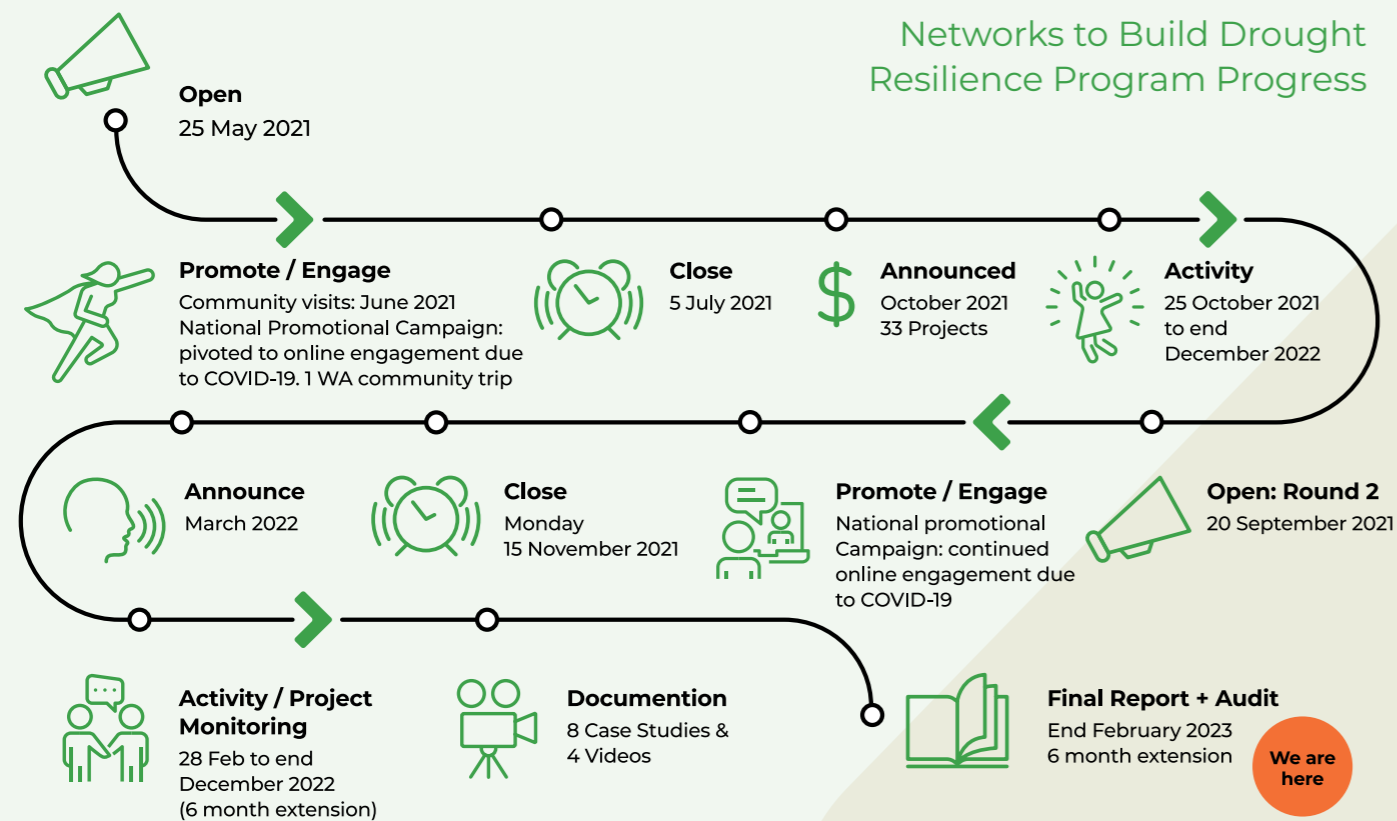
Throughout the granting process and while groups were implementing their projects, FRRR staff checked in frequently with recipients by phone and email, to ensure the projects were on track and to provide input to the agreed milestone reporting.



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# Program Timelines and Key Outcomes

## Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program Progress



- Round 1 opened on Tuesday 25 May 2021, a day later than planned due to delayed Departmental approval and Ministerial release.
- Round 1 closed at 5pm AEST on Monday 5 July 2021, as planned.
- Round 1 assessment: 6 July 2021 to 26 September 2021.
- Induction of Program Advisory Committee was on 26 August 2021.
- Program Advisory Committee meeting held on 16 September 2021 to discuss the Round 1 recommendations put forward by the FRRR assessment team.
- The FRRR Board approved the 33 recommendations on 26 September 2021 for a total value of \$1,413,319 (with \$1,059,989 Government and \$353,330 FRRR private donor contribution.)
- Round 1 project activity took place between 25 October 2021 and 30 December 2022.
- Round 2 opened on 20 September 2021.
- Round 2 closed on 15 November 2021.
- Round 2 Assessment: 16 November 2021 to 28 January 2022.
- Program Advisory Committee meeting was held 3 February 2022 to discuss the recommendations put forward by the FRRR assessment team.
- The FRRR Board approved the 60 recommendations on 17 February 2022 for a total value of \$3,084,346 (with \$2,313,259.50 Australian Government Future Drought Fund contribution, and \$771,086.50 FRRR private donor investment contribution).
- Ministerial Announcement of Round 2: 8 March 2022.
- Round 2 project activity took place between 14 March 2022 to 30 December 2022.
- All activity and grantee Final Reports were completed by 30 December 2022, in line with the approved variation.

During the program delivery period, a number of variations to the contract end date were negotiated and agreed with Departmental staff. These were largely in response to the extenuating climatic conditions (mainly floods) and COVID restrictions hampering the ability of communities to undertake and complete projects within the relatively short timelines set in the original contract.

For context, during the contracted program delivery period (April 2021 to December 2022), according to Disaster Assist, across Australia there were 79 declared disasters (31 from April to December 2021 & 48 in 2022). This included five cyclone / floods; 36 storm / floods; 12 floods; 17 storms; one earthquake; two tornados / storms; four storm surges / floods and two bushfires.

Specific variation dates include:

- Original Activity Completion date (other than the provision of any final reports): 30 June 2022
- Variation 1: Activity Completion date: 29 August 2022
- Variation 2: Community activity end date: 30 December 2022



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# Administration and Program Governance

## Program Administration

All relevant program plan tasks, risk management, communication activities, financial milestones and reporting requirements were met in accordance with contractual obligations.

FRRR completed the assessment process for both Round 1 and Round 2, where each application was checked for its eligibility in accordance with the Department approved Probitity Plan and recommendations put forward to the PAC for endorsement, with final approval undertaken by the FRRR Board.

Throughout the Round 2 assessment period, FRRR required more stakeholder conversations and due diligence checking across the Future Drought Fund to ensure that projects were not duplicated or should not be funded by other programs within the Future Drought Fund.

Reporting Milestones were met in accordance with contractual requirements. A Deed of Variation was submitted to extend the Round 2 application period and extend the activity and reporting timeframe for both Round 1 and Round 2 projects (submitted in the 1 July to 30 September 2021 reporting period).

Overall, it was a very collaborative process, with FRRR staff working closely with Departmental staff to ensure that the program's intentions were maintained. As with any programs, issues occurred

outside either party's control which required variations or quick turnarounds on review or approval of documentations. In all instances the Department staff were responsive and supportive.

## Staffing

The lead on this project was Nina O'Brien, FRRR's Disaster Resilience and Recovery Lead, who maintained close oversight of this program from conception and through delivery. FRRR recruited a dedicated Program Manager, Kristy Shay, and a Program Support Officer. The Program Manager undertook the day-to-day oversight of the program and had primary responsibility for engaging with the grantees and monthly project monitoring. Several other members of the FRRR team also provided support and guidance to applicants and grantees. FRRR's Disaster Resilience and Recovery

Lead and CEO also reviewed projects that were recommended to the Program Advisory Committee and maintained oversight across all program activity.

## Governance - Program Advisory Committee and Board involvement

As per the Grant Agreement, a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) was established for the program from a diverse range of sectoral perspectives. The PAC chairperson was appointed to guide the Committee and act as a representative of the FRRR Board.

Membership of the PAC was selected to ensure a diverse range of seven individuals related to the agriculture sector with a balanced gender and geographic representation, in addition to Departmental representation.

PAC Members	State	Sector
Natalie Egleton	Nat'l	FRRR CEO
Sue Middleton	WA	FRRR Board Director, PAC Chair. National Water Grid, Regional Telecommunications Review
Associate Professor Ben Lyons	QLD	Director RECoE, University of Southern Queensland
Charles Thomas	Nat'l	General Manager Corporate Affairs, National Farmers Federation
Christine Aughey	Dept	Future Drought Fund, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Donna Digby	NT	Economic Development, Northern Australia Development and Trade
Kate Burke	VIC	Think Agri Pty Ltd. Agri Educator & Strategist
Tim Eyes	NSW	The Food Farm. NSW Young Farmer program

Committee members were formally inducted and supported by a dedicated Terms of Reference, Roles and Expectations document, and recently updated FRRR PAC policy. All PAC members were provided Program Guidelines and information on handling conflict. FRRR Board, staff and PAC members managed conflicts of interest in line with FRRR's Declarations Policy, with coaching provided at induction and documented in the agenda and minutes of meetings. Any conflicts were also noted and managed at any point of the program with the Program Manager, Portfolio Lead, and the PAC Chair.

In the recommendation phase of assessment, a shortlist of the highest-scoring eligible applications was put forward to the PAC to consider. The PAC assessed the shortlisted applications in accordance with the requirements of the Future Drought Fund Act and the ministerially approved Program Guidelines.

The PAC met three times; the first for a dedicated induction; the second for the Round 1 Assessment meeting; and the third the Round 2 Assessment meeting. Background materials were provided seven days prior to the meeting via email.

Oversight of FRRR's activities is ultimately governed by FRRR's Board, a group of twelve highly respected individuals holding varied experience across government, business and philanthropy. The FRRR Board meets quarterly and formally approves (often via circular resolution) each grant delivered through FRRR's core granting programs.

## Risk management

Risks identified in achieving program objectives and mitigation actions implemented (as noted in the Program Risk Management Plan) are tabled here. The Program Lead and PAC maintained oversight of these risks as part of program governance.

High Risks	Mitigation Actions
Short-year program delivery timeline (1.5 years), combined with late contract execution.	This risk was mitigated by an extension to reporting beyond the end of June 2022. An extension of the timeframe for activity delivery allowed community organisations to deliver projects by 30 December 2022, and for FRRR to undertake final reporting by February 2023.
Inability to source 30% co-contribution due to funding climate variability given external conditions such as COVID, economic constriction, and Natural Disasters	A fundraising strategy was put in place, and considerable effort undertaken. This risk was further partially mitigated by a re-negotiation of co-contribution milestones dates. The overall contractual target was met by January 2022.
COVID health risk to staff during community engagement.	A COVID-safe travel plan was implemented that included extensive planning, risk assessment of travel routes and on-site risk mitigation such as social distancing, use of hand sanitiser, meeting in large venues and / or small groups. COVID rules and border restrictions across the delivery of the program impacted face-to-face engagement, which limited the ability to promote the program in communities during some periods.
General monitoring and management of WH&S.	General monitoring of WH&S was undertaken monthly at a programmatic level.
Staff travel to remote locations.	A remote-safe travel plan was implemented that included daily check-ins, use of 4WD, limiting travel hours, sourcing of suitable accommodation, and collaboration with other organisations to participate in pre-organised community events.
FRRR IT systems are compromised by malicious software.	External IT support monitored and was available to support FRRR in responding to malicious software intrusion if were to occur. No instances were reported at the time of writing.
Duplication of government funding, particularly in response to other natural disasters.	To avoid duplication of funding between the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program and other forms of government support, a cross check mechanism occurred with Departmental representatives during assessment, prior to Ministerial announcement, and before project commencement, to ensure that while some projects may be co-funded, specific budget line items to be covered by funds awarded were unique to each request. In Round 2, FRRR liaised with DAWE (now DAFF) representatives regarding three projects that received National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRRA) (now National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)) Black Summer Bushfire funding. All were considered separate, with minor amendments made to the grant agreements to ensure confirmation of specific budget items.



# Assumptions in Relation to Delivery

In FRRR’s original application and as part of planning the project, we made several assumptions about program delivery and the operating environment. During the program rollout, we tested these assumptions and we note actions and observations relating to these key points below.

Assumptions	Status
Organisational and personal capacity exists in local community groups to develop project ideas, seek funds, and manage project requirements.	This required ongoing monitoring to ensure the risk did not escalate. Anecdotally across all FRRR programs that ran in this similar timeframe, community capacity was very varied. This continued to be a challenge as communities experienced hardship, changing climatic conditions, COVID fatigue and re-emergence, limited volunteer capacity, often with multiple community obligations to deliver, while managing funding from multiple sources.
Further major and widespread natural disasters, pandemics or unprecedented operating conditions will take place and limit uptake of program.	Changing climatic changes continued to impact localised project delivery, with often more than one event affecting the community during the life of the program. As per the FRRR Grant Variation policy, and FRRR Delegation Framework, grant variations were undertaken within contractual parameters. Projects were monitored for timely progress, and FRRR remained in close contact with all grantees offering phone and informal project management support.
Existing networks are communicated to and choose to take up the program.	This was undertaken in Rounds 1 and 2 as planned, although some communities, such as First Nations groups and select states required additional activities.
Individuals and communities, including farmers, are socially isolated during drought.	Qualitative data suggests that individuals and communities are more socially connected because of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience funded projects.
The creation or promotion of tools, platforms and events leads to greater participation.	Networks to Build Drought Resilience grants delivered opportunities for community engagement, as well as increased awareness of tools and platforms, leading to a significant increase in participation and usage.
A variety of community sectors engage in the projects funded.	A broad range of stakeholders from community sectors, businesses, government departments and grassroots initiatives were engaged in the funded projects.
Access to amenities and facilities assists in bringing people together.	Feedback from grantees indicates that access to facilities and amenities brings people together. Qualitative data also suggests a broad range of settings is necessary to ensure different groups in the community feel comfortable coming together.
Community infrastructure is used for activities that have a connection with drought or drought planning.	Feedback from grantees highlights the importance of having adequate infrastructure to allow community members to meet and undertake drought preparedness planning and training.
Increased social connection helps individuals and communities better cope with the impacts of drought.	Feedback from grantees indicates that community stakeholders have a greater awareness of drought preparedness approaches and feel more connected and supported socially.

# Challenges and Constraints

The original Project Design Plan outlined expected constraints and assumptions based on what might impact the program’s implementation. Below is a table listing the constraints and assumptions, and commentary on the actual impact on program implementation. However, we highlight three challenges that had significant impacts for community groups in delivering their projects.

**1. Impact of COVID:** During delivery of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program there were extensive COVID restrictions, particularly in VIC, NSW and QLD, which limited the public movement of people, the density of public events, and freedom to move across state borders. This led to an inability to plan ahead with confidence that often resulted in significant planning and replanning at the last minute when locational conditions or the personal situation of the organisers changed. This also resulted in significant stress and compounded fatigue for people and communities that had, in many instances, recently been affected by fires. FRRR remained flexible and responsive across applications in the context of the significant disruption and disadvantage caused. With COVID having a significant impact on local community fundraising, the Networks program was an important source of support for communities to devise ways to build resilience for the future.

**2. Impact of climatic condition such as floods and storms:**

During the program delivery period, anecdotal insights gathered from flood and storm-impacted communities were highly localised and diverse; ranging from telecommunication issues, to reduced volunteer capacity. Some projects required diversified / varied approaches in delivery due to community impacts experienced, and community re-building across the flood-impacted areas.

Project elements that were affected include date changes to events, slight adjustments to projects such as speaker availability and locations, and material cost increases, reduced access to tradespeople and inconsistent supplies as a result of the widespread disaster recovery process across eastern Australia.

**3. Timelines were very tight** for projects to deliver across Autumn and Winter to meet the original 30 June 2022 project delivery date. FRRR continued to work closely with these groups and kept the Department updated as the anticipated challenges became realities.







Constraints and Challenges	Status (actual impact)
Community fatigue due to successive and ongoing impacts of drought, fire, COVID and flood may limit program uptake.	COVID and various significant natural disasters impacted grantee project delivery in various parts of Australia. Ongoing communication / monitoring of projects occurred, and phone and email support were provided to enable minor variations where required to accommodate local conditions.
The short timeline for communication and engagement of new program may limit program uptake.	Round 1 resulted in 71 requests, with 33 successful applications recommended. Round 2 resulted in 91 requests, with 60 successful applications recommended.
The short timeline for funded activity to be undertaken may limit program uptake and scope of projects proposed.	Usually, FRRR provides community organisations with a 12-18 month period to complete a project. Community feedback was received about the short timeframe being a limitation, particularly in Round 2. The Round 2 application open period was extended by Deed of Variation for two weeks. Activity timeframes for both Round 1 and Round 2 and the reporting periods were also extended with the Deed of Variation. Round 1 and Round 2 projects were closely monitored to ensure the best outcome was met for both grantee and community.
The timing of grant opening / close / activity windows and associated reporting spans over some peak agricultural production periods and consequently may limit awareness and uptake of program.	Feedback was received from both Ravensthorpe (WA) and Bairnsdale (VIC) to this effect during Round 1. Additionally, several communities experienced highly variable climate conditions that resulted in a later and longer Summer harvest (six weeks). Feedback from QLD and NSW communities highlighted they experienced altered harvest picking and sowing conditions due to widespread and multiple flooding, rainstorms and La Nina. Ongoing communication / monitoring of projects continued, and phone and email support was provided to enable minor variations where required to accommodate local conditions.
The relatively short timeline for project reporting (eight weeks) may limit the quality of reports submitted.	By Deed of Variation the project reporting timelines for both Round 1 and Round 2 were extended from 30 June 2022 to 30 December 2022. Grantees were kept informed of reporting processes, and FRRR completed a monthly outbound call campaign to understand how projects were progressing and ensure grantees were collecting the data they required, thereby also meeting the contractual obligation of 'project monitoring'.
The limited administration budget constrains the ability of FRRR program staff to undertake wide face-to-face engagement across Australia (original budget allowed for five community visits).	Given the limited ability to travel in previous reporting periods, the underspent budget portion was redirected to other parts of program delivery, such as program outcome documentation and increased communication costs (print advertising) during the application open periods. FRRR staff were able to complete localised travel to projects in action between April and December 2022 in VIC, ACT, WA, SA and TAS.
The limited administration budget constrains the ability of FRRR to undertake a wide range of communication and engagement opportunities to build program awareness and deliver a diversity of impact documentation that could amplify outcomes and impacts.	If additional resourcing was available, a wide range of opportunities existed to further promote the program and build additional partnerships at a state and localised level. During the foundational year, a modest approach was undertaken to promote, document and evaluate the project and program outcomes.

Constraints and Challenges	Status (actual impact)
The COVID related financial climate, and timing of donor board meetings may constrain the ability of FRRR to attract co-contribution by agreed milestone dates.	FRRR diverted significant resources across the team to attracting the co-contribution required by the program, and met this milestone and obtained all donor funds required prior to announcement of Round 2.
The public sentiment of giving is focused on short-term disaster impacts and less on long-term preparedness and may limit co-contribution.	Garnering attention and engaging donor sentiment in financial contributions to support drought resilience, especially during a period of comparatively high rainfall, ongoing COVID lockdowns and a constrained financial environment was highly challenging.
Terminology and building greater understanding of drought preparedness than of drought resilience.	Communities did not immediately understand what was meant by the terminology of building 'drought resilience'. This was especially prevalent in areas that were still recovering from drought or fire and in communities where FRRR has previously provided 'drought support' through programs like Tackling Tough Times Together, which did not have the forward-looking lens, rather focused on the here and now. Additionally, many communities in central and southern western QLD were still experiencing significant in-drought conditions. Further, with TTTT having delivered more than 15 rounds of funding, with a strong theme of funding large-scale infrastructure projects - something that the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program was not designed to do - it was a challenge to attract the right kind of applications in Round 1. FRRR staff found it essential to actively include education as a core component of engagement activities to build understanding of the new program criteria and concepts of drought resilience for grantseekers. It is our opinion that the term 'drought preparedness' was far more relatable and easily grasped. Further, as a result of the 2019-20 Black Summer fires, government investment and subsequent public programs, the term 'resilience' or 'resilience building' was also heavily used to describe the recovery process. As a result of community fatigue and highly varied community recovery experience, this term was not always met with positivity.
Program uptake in Round 1 is likely to be less than round 2 and coupled with a relatively short time for community groups to implement their projects, will mean uneven workloads across the lifetime of the program.	In FRRR's experience, it always takes time for a new program to be understood and for community groups to feel confident to apply for it. While we allowed for that in the planning phase, to an extent, as noted above the move to focusing on drought resilience / drought preparedness was a relatively new concept and it was a challenge to communicate the change in focus in a short period of time. Couple that with relatively short application open times, and short periods of time for groups to deliver their projects - and the impacts of COVID on community engagement - meant we saw a very uneven proportion of applications in round 2.
Need to expend entire funding allocation across only two rounds.	With only two rounds, it was always going to be a challenge to raise awareness of the funding availability and meet targets re expending the entire funding awarded within the timeline available. While we achieved the dollar targets, we were just shy of the project target we set (93 vs a target of 96 projects). In hindsight, a third round across an additional year would have enabled a more even distribution of funds, and reduced pressure on communities and delivery staff and perhaps meant that projects could be more tightly focused on initiatives that achieved the program's core aims.



Constraints and Challenges	Status (actual impact)
High-touch engagement requirements of the Department.	Historically in the delivery of government investment, FRRR has welcomed a high trust relationship with government, whereby engagement with program delivery staff was usually on a quarterly basis. While FRRR enjoyed the working relationship and the Departmental staff were always constructive and highly responsive, there were many meetings and more engagement and approvals of materials required than with the majority of other FRRR donor partners. FRRR had not allowed for that level of interaction in our resourcing and budgeting.
Complexity of the Future Drought Fund operating environment – the architecture of the fund, then how the programs slot in.	At the time that the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program was rolling out, a number of other Future Drought Fund initiatives and streams were also either being scoped, finalised or launched. This put significant pressure on Departmental staff who did a great job in being responsive, however it still made it challenging to deliver on the requirement to interact with those streams, share information, promote one another's activities and avoid overlap. It was some time before contacts were shared and the forums set up to provide the visibility and contact information necessary to make that happen. This again is an area where FRRR under-estimated and therefore under-budgeted in terms of resourcing and time required to deliver on the commitment. A further example in this area is the diverse approach to various aspects of drought resilience across the country. For example, regional drought resilience plans are delivered differently in each state and with different resourcing. While a core tenet of how FRRR operates is to recognise that every place is unique, this makes it very challenging for organisations like FRRR to ensure that we are consulting and informing the right people and advising our community partners correctly, in terms of how to engage in and link to those plans.
Overlap of broad community benefit vs farmer direct benefit; land ownership issues etc.	While the intent of this program, and a central tenet of FRRR granting practice, is to financially support projects with broad community benefit, the outcome distinction between individual financial gain (of individual farmers), and broad community benefit, was often unclear. This required a higher level of discussion about the program purpose and types of projects that could be funded both at a community, PAC and Departmental level.
Lack of clarity among applicants about program criteria, eligibility and what sat in each stream.	Extra grantseeker education activity – often one-on-one – was required to explain core criteria and eligibility. For example, the concept of “broad community benefit” vs individual gain; linking project descriptions to drought resilience criteria; and providing evidence of local community support. As a specific example, several requests sought support for community water infrastructure projects in very remote regions, often with complex ownership and intersecting roles and responsibilities by community and government. Some were funded by virtue of their link to social connection outcomes that demonstrated broad community benefit and clear community ownership, while others were ineligible or not supported due to intangible outcomes, complex ownership of land or assets, or it was considered the primary role of local government or sport-related. Further discussion is welcomed as to where and how this community need may be met in the context of the broader Future Drought Fund and interpretation of program criteria.

Constraints and Challenges	Status (actual impact)
Delays in announcement timelines.	There were delays at a number of points in the program lifecycle, which had flow-on effects for FRRR's timelines, such as delays in Ministerial announcements. While we recognise that often that is out of the control of either the Department or the Minister, we still note that it had financial impacts and ultimately led to tight timelines being compressed (at least initially - subsequently contract variations were secured).





# Communication Activities

A key contributor to the success of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program was the targeted approach to communications and engagement activities. FRRR acknowledges the positive and adaptive working relationship developed with the Department, which ensured that communication and engagement activities were aligned to the needs of communities, particularly those impacted by the COVID pandemic and flood events.

At the pre-implementation stage a comprehensive communications strategy was developed, with FRRR working closely with its communications partner, JAW Communications, to develop an effective communications strategy and collateral for the program that maximised awareness of the program across agriculture-dependent communities in Australia.

This included a dedicated program page on FRRR's website for applicants, promotion through social media, printed flyers, media releases and eDMs to FRRR's stakeholder network and via Future Drought Fund providers. A communications kit was also prepared with content to make it easier for partners to share information about the program. In addition, some online advertising was undertaken via social media.

In promoting the program, FRRR used a diverse range of communication channels, including traditional and social media, networks, events and our owned channels. In addition, FRRR worked collaboratively with other providers of the Future Drought Fund streams to leverage and streamline the communications received by agricultural communities.

Planned community engagement opportunities were limited due to COVID restrictions and limitations on travel. Instead, staff connected by phone and video conference calls with participants.

A series of planned community engagement opportunities were due to be undertaken across five interstate locations to promote the program in person at key agricultural related events. During the open period of Round 1, the planned program engagement was significantly limited due to COVID restrictions and limitations on travel, with only one interstate location

visited. Meetings were undertaken in 10 towns across WA during that one-week period in late June 2021.

Initially, FRRR staff were limited in their ability to undertake in-person community conversations with First Nations groups with agricultural links or interests to build awareness of, and engagement in the program, due to the increased risk of COVID to First Nations communities. FRRR staff successfully conducted five community conversations with First Nations groups as per the communications strategy, mainly delivered online or by phone due to COVID restrictions. First Nations conversations were undertaken with groups / organisations in Arnhem Land, NT; Sunraysia VIC; the Mallee, VIC; North Central, VIC; Northern VIC; Riverina / Murray / Southern NSW; and a multi-state body covering WA / VIC / NSW / SA. Other approaches were made to First Nations groups and organisations across the rounds, however received various responses. Additionally, tailored emails of introduction and broad promotional emails were undertaken to First Nations organisations nationally.

To offset this inability to travel (as indicated in the Program Risk Management Plan), FRRR staff increased the level of online engagement compared to the original plan. In addition to planned online grantseeker workshops, additional evening grantseeker workshops, an additional Q+A webinar and separate 'Book a Time



with the Program Manager' options were implemented to increase awareness and build understanding of the program. The additional opportunities were received very positively by community members.

The FRRR CEO and Disaster Resilience and Recovery Lead also attended the National Drought Forum (online due to COVID) hosted by the National Recovery and Resilience Agency during June 2021. FRRR has since contributed to the follow-up consultation and discussion paper 'Building a collective understanding of shared responsibility in drought support'.

Additionally, the Disaster Resilience and Recovery Lead presented at the Future Drought Fund's 'Science to Practice Forum' on 29 June to 1 July 2021, attended by approximately 800 people from around Australia. The Forum brought together the eight new Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs from around the country, interested farmers and associated streams of the Future Drought Fund such as Drought Resilience Leaders and Networks to Build Drought Resilience.

During August 2021, FRRR also presented to the Future Drought Fund's Research and Adoption Hubs 'Knowledge Brokers' Network to disseminate information about the program.

A series of more informal yet educational video clips were also created to offset the limited face-to-face engagement and help promote the guidelines and encourage communities to connect with FRRR to discuss the program.

To amplify messaging and Future Drought Fund awareness at a local level, additional social media templates were supplied to Local Governments to encourage promotion of the opportunities available to agriculture-dependent communities. Dedicated personal engagement and print advertising was prepared for the Northern Territory and Tasmania to provide agriculture-dependent communities information about the program, in response to less initial engagement than anticipated.

Additionally, sector networks developed as a result of Future Drought Fund forums were utilised to distribute the Round 2 opportunity via key events and email networks.

FRRR staff continued to reach out to stakeholders on a one-on-one level and continued to encourage stakeholders and groups to share the messaging. FRRR continued to adapt to online opportunities, social media and media opportunities.

In all cases and as opportunities or issues emerged, FRRR worked closely with the Department to ensure that all communications and collateral produced appropriately acknowledged the Australian Government and the Future Drought Fund.

Once grants were awarded, social media templates and collateral were created for successful grant recipients to amplify grant outcomes across their social networks and to assist in promoting the program.

Following the Ministerial Announcement in Round 2, FRRR staff undertook a welcome phone call, and monthly calls thereafter, to all 60 successful projects to explain the grant agreement process, collateral approval process, gather community insights and uncover any potential challenges or project implementation risks given the short time frame to deliver the activity in the second round, and to understand climate event impacts, as in this timeframe, many states experienced disasters - bushfires (WA), flooding (SA, NT, NSW and QLD) and ongoing COVID operating challenges.

# Communications Round 1

Web	News Articles	Socials	Webinars	Email
Total Page Views: 4,428; with 3,836 unique visitors 345 Program Guideline downloads 136 Grants Gateway 'Apply Now' Clicks	36 FRRR generated outcomes	11 Facebook posts with a reach of 21,669 (average of 3,611 per week) 12 Twitter posts with 8,592 impressions 10 LinkedIn posts with 4,482 impressions	143 total attendees over 3 webinars with 91% of attendees indicating an increase in grantseeker confidence	14,200 customised emails to launch program

# Communications Round 2

Web	Media	Socials	Webinars	Email & Phone
Round 2 - 20 September to 15 November Page views: 4,083 Unique Page views: 3,319 Downloaded Guidelines: 275 Apply now clicks: 148	94 FRRR generated outcomes TV Interviews - 3 Radio Interviews - 10 Print Adverts (Tas) - 2 Articles: Thought Leadership article - 1	Organic during round opening 1 October > 15 November Facebook: 10 posts LinkedIn: 8 posts Twitter: 8 posts Significant tagging of FRRR by community groups, as projects rolled out Paid Facebook campaign • Impressions: 104,232 • People reached: 44,038 • Link clicks: 312 • Post shares: 41 • Post saves: 52 • Post comments: 31 • Post reactions: 78	145 attended across 3 webinars 92% of attendees increased understanding and confidence post webinar 14 x 1:1 meetings with applicants in Round 2 - 6 post webinar FDF National Science to Practice Forum Presentation	14,200 customised emails 177 calls or emails logged Targeted Community Conversations Meat & Livestock Australia QR code at 3 events First Nations engagement across Round 2: 9 meetings or structured conversations

The Australian Government's Future Drought Fund provides a sustainable source of funding to help remote, rural and regional communities, and farmers, become more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought. The Fund is part of the Government's Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan.

The Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program is one of the Fund's foundation programs. It is designed to build community capacity by strengthening social and community networking, support, engagement and wellbeing.

The aim is to build an enduring resilience to the impacts of climate change, drought, and enhance the public good in agriculture-dependent communities.

Proudly supported by:

- Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
- Future Drought Fund

Additional Information: [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)

Activities funded must be completed by 29 August 2022

Grant Recipients: [Round 2 Grant Recipients](#), [Round 1 Grant Recipients](#)

All activities that receive funding must be completed by 29 August 2022, and fully acquitted no later than 03 October 2022.

**Vocal Locals** Free! Loxton Mental Health Workshop. Friday 17 June. Workshop: 9am - 12 noon | Lunch 12 noon - 1pm. The Precinct Mezzanine function area. Covering what is mental health, depression, anxiety, what (and what not) to do, self-care, local resources. For bookings: Email: Dale Woolford d.woolford@unisa.edu.au or admin@mentalhealthpartners.com.au or call 0432 749 850.

**GRANTSEEKER WORKSHOPS** NEW PROGRAM NETWORKS TO BUILD DROUGHT RESILIENCE. JOIN US TODAY! Learn more about this program and what it can fund, plus how to craft the best possible application for the Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience program!

There are two times available (you only need to attend one session):  
• Tuesday 5 October 11:00AM-12:00PM AEDT (via Zoom)  
• Tuesday 5 October 7:00PM-8:00PM AEDT (via Zoom)

The workshops will provide practical grant writing tips and an opportunity to ask questions. Register here: <https://events.humanitix.com/networks-to-build-drought/>  
#RuralNetworks #Drought #TheBigDry #NDR #FutureDroughtFund #RuralResilience #CommunityGrants #GrantseekerWorkshop

Last week some of our team travelled to northern Victoria to meet with Active Farmers in Bridgewater on Loddon. They are focused on health and wellbeing for farmers and communities, and come together to improve mental health in regional areas, including health related workshops (mental health first aid, nutrition, mindfulness etc) and exercise programs. They were holding their annual planning meeting and our very own Kristy and Nina were invited to attend. Back in March, Active Farmers was awarded \$10,120 through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience (NDR) grant program. The grant will help them support trainers and community members across 47 rural communities to attend a two-day mental health first aid course. The meeting had people attending from VIC, NSW, TAS, QLD and SA! Such a diverse group, which is great when trying to understand the different challenges of each community. The discussion was great - and everyone left with a branded cookie! YUM! To learn more about Active Farmers visit: <https://activefarmers.com.au/> #NDR #Drought #DroughtResilience

**GRANTSEEKER WORKSHOP FAQ & FOLLOW-UP SESSION** FUTURE DROUGHT FUND'S NETWORKS TO BUILD DROUGHT RESILIENCE. Hello, As a community group in an area that can be affected by drought, I'm reaching out to invite you to a Grantseeker FAQ and Follow-Up webinar next Wednesday, 3 November, focused on the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience grant program. Join us for tips and all the information you need to help you get the most out of the program, which is now available to all eligible communities.

Some examples of digital communications across the program.

# Engagement with Funding Recipients

There was significant engagement between the team at FRRR and funding recipients, with ongoing support and guidance provided to organisations during initial discussions when groups were shaping their applications, to grants being awarded, ongoing through to project completion and acquittal. Underpinned by a relational grantmaking approach, funded recipients were encouraged to access support when needed and the FRRR team also maintained regular monthly phone contact with grantees to ensure they felt supported, and that projects were on track. Any projects that were at risk of not proceeding, with significant alterations or likely to return funds were discussed, the approach agreed on and documented with Departmental staff in meetings and email.

Through this interaction FRRR gained first-hand insights into issues impacting the ability of grantees to deliver their project or initiative. Where necessary, variations were provided, to ensure grantees had the

greatest chance of successfully delivering their project. This was particularly important in flood and bushfire-impacted communities, where greater flexibility was required regarding timelines and deliverables.

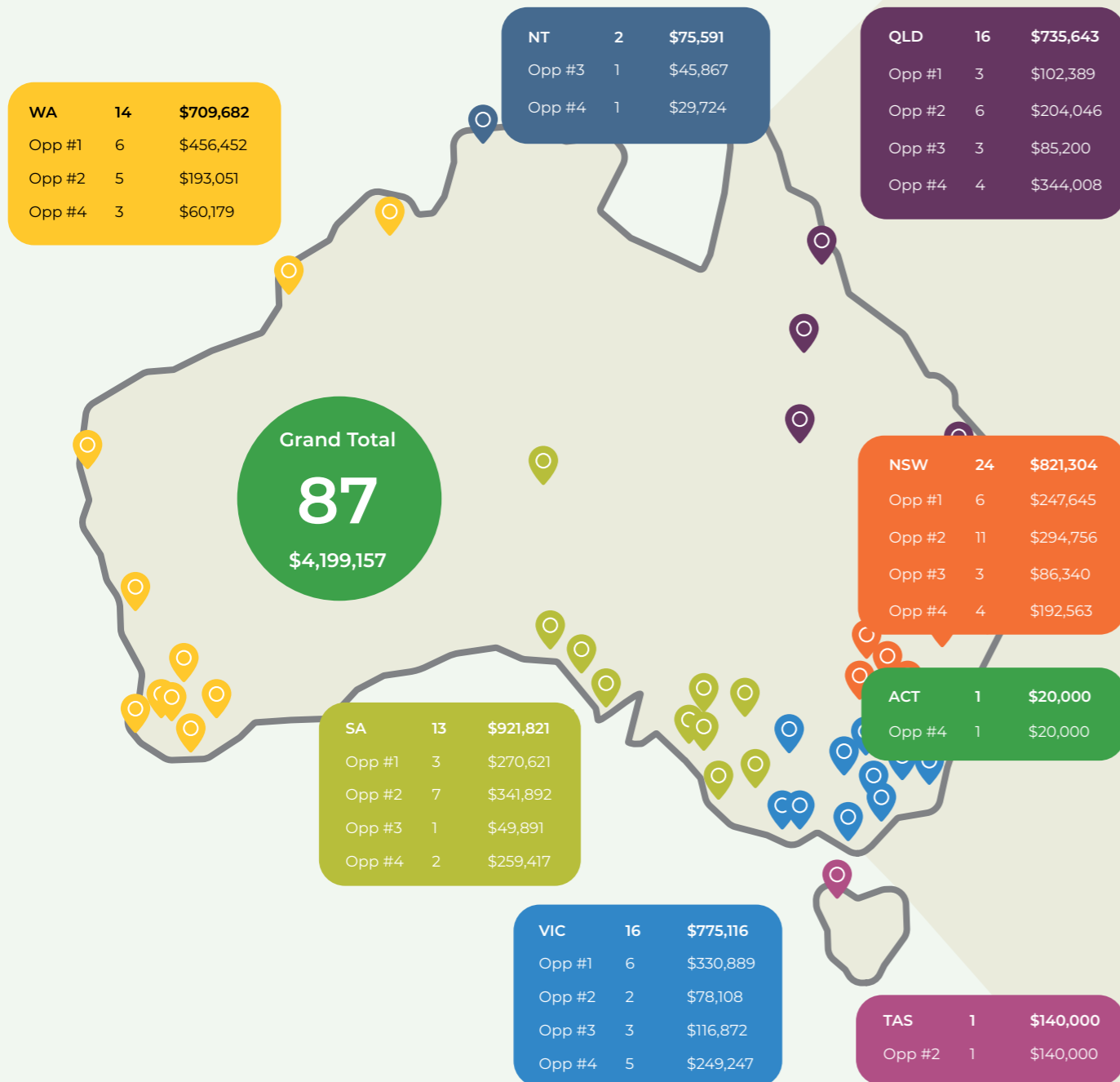
In addition, FRRR distributed plaques to successful funding recipients, promoting their participation and engagement with the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program. FRRR also shared and promoted the Drought Resilient Leaders and Mentoring, Climate Services (CSA) and Drought Resilience Self-Assessment Tool (DR-SAT) tools, as well as resources and information that supported the delivery of their project.

Additionally, seven 'Unsuccessful Applicant' feedback sessions were hosted by FRRR. While this was not a contractual requirement, and reportedly not commonly done by other funders, all participants were thankful for the feedback and opportunity to be part of a session to strengthen their future capability to seek funds.



# Snapshot of Completed Networks to Build Drought Resilience Grants

As noted earlier, FRRR awarded 93 grants, with 87 grantees completing their activities in the reporting timeframe.



## Table of Grants Awarded

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant
<b>ROUND 1</b>		
<b>Funding Tier 1: \$10,000 - \$20,000</b>		
The Australian Landscape Science Institute Limited (Bungonia)	<b>Reading Your Landscape</b> This project aimed to bring local landholders together to study and discuss innovative agricultural practice solutions in two field days and a series of webinars.	\$18,270
FarmLink Research Ltd (Temora)	<b>Improving Young Farmer Mental Resilience in Times of Drought</b> This project aimed to host an event for young farmers to build the skills and networks required to manage the impacts of stress during drought, intergenerational relationships and communicating effectively within family farm businesses.	\$18,096
Monaro Farming Systems CMC Incorporated (Cooma)	<b>Monaro Seasonal Outlook - Building Drought Resilience and Preparedness.</b> This project aimed to host a field day in the Monaro region that included a seasonal outlook presentation and discussion around the Farming Forecaster tool.	\$16,700
Murdi Paaki Regional Rugby League Council Incorporated trading as Creative Community Concepts (Gulgong)	<b>CCC Community Wellbeing Project</b> This project aimed to improve community resilience through education and mental fitness sessions in schools, and a community dinner.	\$10,000
Northern Rivers Community Gateway Inc - Women on The Land - Get Ready Empower Yourself (Casino)	<b>Women on The Land (WoTL) Preparedness Workshop Series</b> This project aimed to deliver five workshops to improve the confidence and reduce social isolation of rural and regional women	\$14,289
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
Glenrac Incorporated (Glen Innes)	<b>Resilience, Capacity and Community Connection</b> This project aimed to support several activities to build resilience, capacity, and community connection across the Glen Innes district.	\$49,870
North Coast Regional Landcare Network Inc (Lismore)	<b>Partnership Development Officer for NCRLN</b> This project aimed to support 11 local Landcare networks, facilitating community connection and knowledge sharing across the groups and communities.	\$50,000
<b>Funding Tier 3: \$50,001 - \$150,000</b>		
Riverine Plains Incorporated (Berrigan & Greater Shepparton)	<b>Enhancing Community Networks for Drought Resilience in the Riverine</b> This project aimed to deliver 30 workshops within the region to connect primary producers, landholders, and Indigenous custodians to build capacity and share knowledge.	\$102,300
Western Plains Regional Development Inc (Condobolin)	<b>Shoring Up Community</b> This project aimed to give local community groups the much-needed opportunity to hold meetings and get together as they prepare for future drought.	\$110,000



## Table of Grants Awarded cont...

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant
<b>Funding Tier 1: \$10,000 - \$20,000</b>		
Upper North Farming Systems (Orroroo)	<b>Tools, Tech and Transformation – UNFS and Its HUBS 2022</b> This project aimed to deliver a 'Tools, Tech and Transformation' workshop for farmers and agri-business followed by a series of nine Hub events.	\$20,000
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
Coorong District Council (Jabuk)	<b>Resilient Farmer Networks Building an Understanding of Managing Soil Carbon and Livestock Methane Production, Seasonal Climate Variability, and Seeking Opportunities In Times of Drought</b> This project aimed to increase opportunities for a diverse group of people and communities to participate in networking through the facilitation of four workshops across the Coorong and Tatiara districts.	\$31,000
WoTL Ltd (Rudall)	<b>Building the Women Together Learning (WoTL); Ambassador Network to Support Women in Ag</b> This project aimed to deliver five workshops focusing on future drought, climate projections and the impact on agricultural practices and rural communities.	\$29,625
<b>Funding Tier 3: \$50,001 - \$150,000</b>		
The Flinders Ranges Council (Quorn)	<b>Quorn Quandong Festival</b> This project's two-day community event aimed to bring expert speakers to present on the impacts of drought and climate change on the region to highlight the importance of forward planning and preparedness.	\$139,000
Mackillop Farm Management Group Inc (Padthaway)	<b>Limestone Coast Women in Ag Network</b> This project aimed to increase the resilience of women in the Limestone Coast region of SA to assist preparing for future drought through the delivery of four workshops for women in agriculture across the southeast region of SA.	\$70,817
Southern Cross University (Wudinna)	<b>Building Drought Resilience in Agriculture-Dependent Communities Through Mapping Young Farmer Information and Support Networks</b> This partnership project between Southern Cross University and Agricultural Innovation & Research Eyre Peninsula, a new 'network mapping' tool aimed to provide a detailed understanding of the Eyre Peninsula young landholders knowledge network.	\$77,163

## Table of Grants Awarded cont...

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant
<b>Funding Tier 1: \$10,000 - \$20,000</b>		
Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers (Bundaberg)	<b>Connecting Producers with an Invisible Support Network</b> This project aimed to provide a progressive opportunity to build capability of professional, social and community networks of producers in the Bundaberg region.	\$16,200
Destination Scenic Rim Inc (Boonah)	<b>Scenic Rim Round-Up</b> The Destination Scenic Rim (DSR) project aimed to build drought resilience and build social connection by hosting of four events with keynote speakers across the region.	\$12,000
Macintyre Ag Alliance Inc (Roma)	<b>Regenerative Ag Event for Adaptable &amp; Thriving Futures</b> This project's two-day event at farms across the Western Downs, aimed to provide collaborative events and opportunities to learn about new agricultural approaches to build drought resilience practices.	\$17,188
Red Earth Community Foundation South Burnett Limited (Murgon)	<b>Red Earth Community Foundation Leadership Forum</b> By supporting young people to respond to challenges and encourage leadership, the Red Earth Community Foundation (RECF) aimed to host a Leadership Forum.	\$18,524
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
GroWQ (Longreach)	<b>Resourcing and Supporting GroWQ</b> This project aimed to deliver two networking events: an Ag Industry Round Table facilitating collaboration; and a Technology showcase on innovation and business resilience in the agricultural sector and the wider community.	\$44,000
Longreach Regional Council (Longreach)	<b>Creating Sustainable Communities 'In the Bush'</b> This project aimed to facilitate four community workshops and events across issues relevant to different sectors of the Longreach community including youth issues, women's business and work topics.	\$32,500
Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd (Croydon)	<b>Croydon Shire Food Security Project</b> The project aimed to establish a community-led steering group through a central co-ordinator to build a food security strategy for the region.	\$37,125

## Table of Grants Awarded cont...

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant
<b>Funding Tier 1: \$10,000 - \$20,000</b>		
Charlton Neighbourhood House Inc (Charlton)	<b>Buloke First Peoples Art Trail</b> Understanding the need for a year-round meeting place to build community wellbeing and a place for engagement, particularly during times of drought, this project aimed to develop an open-air, self-guided Bush Tucker Garden that tells the stories of the local Djaara people and walking trail along the Avoca River.	\$21,000
Wairewa Public Hall & Recreation Reserve (Wairewa)	<b>Supporting Future Community Networking Opportunities</b> This project aimed to provide essential support to community groups in the Wairewa region to network in the lead up, during and after future drought, through the improvement of the public hall as an ongoing social meeting place.	\$14,509
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
Birchip Cropping Group Inc (Birchip)	<b>Filling the GAPP – A Forum for Future Farmers</b> This project aimed to deliver two activities: a GAPP (Growth, Adoption, Production and Profitability) regional event for new generation farmers and discussion group meetings.	\$49,500
Gippsland Agricultural Group (Bairnsdale)	<b>Gippsland Connect and Prepare Field Days</b> This project aimed to increase community connection and networking through two farmer field days.	\$50,000
Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc (Mildura)	<b>Creating an Online Learning Community to Help Farmers Manage Soil in Drought</b> This project aimed to create a new online learning community and network to help Mallee broadacre farmers prepare for future drought.	\$44,290
<b>Funding Tier 3: \$50,001 - \$150,000</b>		
AgBiz Assist Limited - Ovens Murray AgBiz Alliance (Tallangatta)	<b>Using Tech to Connect, Mitigate and Manage Drought In North East Victoria</b> This project aimed to bring people together informally in a series of meetups and dinners for those involved in agriculture, food and fibre, as well as a regional website to showcase agriculture, and newsletters and podcasts with information on provider networks across the region.	\$81,400

## Table of Grants Awarded cont...

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant
<b>Funding Tier 1: \$10,000 - \$20,000</b>		
The Liebe Group Inc (Dalwallinu)	<b>Women In Ag Networking and Diversification (WAND) Program: Strengthening Social Connection and Farm Business Resilience in the Regional Agricultural Community</b> This project aimed to host onsite field visits and an agricultural day show to provide participants with future planning knowledge for below-average seasons and increased business acumen to adapt to the negative effects of drought.	\$13,100
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
Shire of Ravensthorpe (Hopetoun)	<b>Hopetoun Community Networking Support</b> The project aimed to strengthen networks within the community through the installation of an electronic noticeboard at the Hopetoun Community Resource Centre.	\$38,540 (varied from \$39,298)
<b>Funding Tier 3: \$50,001 - \$150,000</b>		
Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Incorporated (York)	<b>Talkin' Soil Health - for Drought Resilience</b> This project aimed to connect a network of farmers, farming advisors and support services to an awareness of local support avenues through the 'Talkin' Soil Health' Conference.	\$104,000
<b>Round 2</b>		
<b>Funding Tier 1: \$10,000 - \$20,000</b>		
Tharwa Community Association Inc (Tharwa)	<b>Tharwa Community Hall Critical Repair and Remediation</b> This project aimed to support crucial repairs for the Tharwa meeting hall, improving a central meeting place for community.	\$20,000





## Table of Grants Awarded cont...

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant	
<b>Funding Tier 1: \$10,000 - \$20,000</b>			
NEW SOUTH WALES	Active Farmers Ltd. (Mangoplah)	<b>100 Mental Health Champions</b> This project aimed to support trainers and community members across 47 rural communities to attend a two-day mental health first aid course.	\$10,120
	Adavale Lane Community Centre Incorporated (Goonumbra)	<b>Setting Up a Connected Educational Environment to Run a Workshop on How to Prepare for a Drought</b> This project aimed to support a workshop that included insights, demonstrations and strategies that could be implemented locally to prepare for future droughts.	\$17,491
	Community College-Northern Inland Incorporated (Narrabri)	<b>Namoi Womens Shed</b> This project aimed to support improvements to increase the Namoi Women's Shed as a venue for training and collaboration.	\$13,731
	Eurobodalla Shire Council (Moruya)	<b>For the Farmers - Finding Connection in the Country</b> This project aimed to support two community networking events and a podcast series.	\$17,270
	Gwymac Incorporated (Inverell)	<b>Building Farm Resilience Through More Dynamic Soils and Pastures</b> This project aimed to host three workshops to provide information on drought resilience farming and climate change.	\$18,950
	Monaro Farming Systems CMC Incorporated (Cooma)	<b>Drought Preparedness on The Monaro – Feed Evaluating &amp; Drought Planning</b> This project aimed to deliver a three-day drought preparedness workshop that will build local producers' skills and capacity to evaluate and manage the impacts of drought.	\$19,050
	Weemelah Hall (Weemelah)	<b>Provide Additional Outdoor Facilities and Beautification to the Weemelah Hall Yard</b> This project aimed to support improvements to indoor and outdoor facilities at the Weemelah Hall.	\$18,832
	<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
Bermagui Pre School Co-operative Society Limited (Bermagui)	<b>The Moodji Futures Project</b> This project aimed to support local events including numerous sustainability workshops.	\$49,000	
Caragabal Country Golf Club Ltd (Caragabal)	<b>Improve Access, Safety and Efficiency of the Caragabal Country Golf Club as a Community Meeting Place</b> This project aimed to establish an online forum to increase knowledge sharing and stories across the community and support small upgrades to the central community meeting place.	\$50,000	
Clarence Landcare Incorporated (Grafton)	<b>Clarence Landcare Agriculture Network (CLAN)</b> This project aimed to support monthly field days and other events, training and meetings to provide training on best practice land and natural resource management skills.	\$40,520	

## Table of Grants Awarded cont...

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant	
NEW SOUTH WALES	Destination Tweed Ltd (Tyalgum)	<b>Cross-Sector Connectivity: Food + Nature + Arts</b> This project aimed to build drought resilience through four agri-food networking forums.	\$25,000
	Glenrac Incorporated (Glen Innes)	<b>Cultivating Skills and Community Connections for Glen Innes</b> This project aimed to support nine training workshops for community members and farming businesses, focused on drought and risk management planning.	\$48,340
	Mid Lachlan Landcare Incorporated (Canowindra)	<b>Using the Future to Learn from Past Droughts</b> This project aimed to support four local field days on drought resilience, on-farm drought preparedness plans and agricultural sustainability practices in the region.	\$27,560
	Tamworth Regional Landcare Association (Wallabadah)	<b>Regenerative Practices on the Liverpool Plains: Learning &amp; Working Together to Build Drought Resilience</b> This project aimed to build drought resilience through two education events and a farm tour day to build understandings of risks posed by drought and climate change.	\$18,955 (Varied from \$22,600)
	<b>Funding Tier 3: \$50,001 - \$150,000</b>		
	Kempsey Shire Council (Kempsey)	<b>The Macleay Valley River to the Sea Festival</b> This project aimed to support a community festival, involving a primary producer workshop to build long-term success in a post drought region, as well as mental health and resilience in times of drought.	\$56,960
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>			
NORTHERN TERRITORY	Kulgera Gymkhana Club Incorporated (Kulgera)	<b>Kulgera Gymkhana Club - Upgrade Facilities</b> This project aimed to support connectedness in this very remote region through supporting small scale community infrastructure improvements at a main community facility.	\$29,724
	Young Livestock Exporters Network (Darwin, Katherine & Townsville)	<b>YLEN Leadership program: Future-Proofing the Livestock Industry</b> This project aimed to support educational opportunities through two training events, a leadership program and stockperson course, designed to bring rural youth together to discuss the impacts of difficult times, including drought.	\$45,867
<b>Funding Tier 1: \$10,000 - \$20,000</b>			
QUEENSLAND	Burnett Catchment Care Association (Monto)	<b>Connecting Monto Producers to Build Resilience</b> This project aimed to support hosting of three workshops on strategies to prepare for drought, sustainability practices and soil health during drought.	\$19,000
	<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
Connecting Communities Australia Ltd (Isisford)	<b>Bright Spaces, Bright Faces: Renovation of the Isisford District Hospital Museum and Multi-Purpose Centre</b> This project aimed to support small upgrades at a community centre to enable this formal and informal community meeting space to be used year-round and host a community event on drought preparedness for the region.	\$28,508	

## Table of Grants Awarded cont...

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
Momentum Mental Health Limited (Toowoomba)	<b>Wellbeing and Drought Resilience Training for Darling Downs QLD Small Business Teams</b> This project aimed to support wellbeing and mental health workshops for rural businesses to provide training, skills and strategies to support the community to prepare for and during times of drought.	\$50,000
Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd (Dimbulah, Chillagoe & Croydon)	<b>Drought Resilience Awareness and Networking Forums for the Northern Gulf Region of Queensland</b> This project aimed to deliver three drought and farming forum events across regional QLD about the risks posed by drought in the Northern Gulf region.	\$49,700
Society of Precision Agriculture Australia (SPAA) Incorporated (Goondiwindi, QLD; Dalwallinu, WA; Kyalite, NSW; Underbool, VIC; Waikerie, SA)	<b>SPAA Community Field Days - Supporting Drought Resilience</b> This project aimed to support five community field days to build knowledge about agricultural practices relevant to the regions.	\$48,658
Stanthorpe Agricultural Society (Stanthorpe)	<b>"Connect with the World!" LED Sign Installation Project</b> This project aimed to support community infrastructure improvements to the Stanthorpe Agriculture Showgrounds to increase community usage of the venue.	\$50,000
Queensland Families and Communities Association Inc. (Diamond Valley)	<b>Neighbourhood Centres Engaging to Strengthen Community Connections and Wellbeing</b> This project aimed to support capacity building events including information evenings and drought preparedness packs, to share information to prepare for the impacts of drought.	\$46,740
<b>Funding Tier 3: \$50,001 - \$150,000</b>		
Flinders Shire Council (Hughenden)	<b>The Hub: Creating Connection, Strengthening Resilience and Activating Opportunity</b> This community project aimed to build drought resilience through small scale community infrastructure improvements to a main local meeting place.	\$150,000
Warra Public Memorial Hall Inc (Warra)	<b>Re-roofing and Installation of Insulation at the Warra Memorial Hall</b> This project aimed to support small upgrades to a central community centre used by farming groups and the community to share ideas, network and hold community information sessions.	\$115,500
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
District Council of Streaky Bay (Streaky Bay)	<b>Rural Women's Gathering 2022</b> This project aimed to develop the community's preparedness to the impacts of drought through a full-day networking event about understanding the risks posed by drought and climate change.	\$27,000
Limestone Coast Food & Agribusiness Cluster Ltd (Penola)	<b>Improving Regional Branding and Recognition of Local Agri-food Systems on SA's Limestone Coast.</b> This project aimed to build the region's preparedness to the impacts of drought by connecting residents through six networking events and six webinars.	\$24,450

## Table of Grants Awarded cont...

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
Tumby Bay Progress Association Incorporated (Tumby Bay)	<b>Improving Farmer Skills in Effective Communication and Digital Literacy, Lower Eyre Peninsula</b> This project aimed to build drought resilience through enabling 50 locals to participate in a 16-week communication and literacy training program.	\$45,000
WoTL Ltd (Lameroo, Cleve, Keith & Minlaton)	<b>"100 Billion Reasons" – A Program to Upskill Rural Businesses in Modern Human Resource Leadership</b> This project aimed to support two training workshops and an online forum for rural groups across four regions in rural South Australia to prepare agricultural industries and communities for 2030.	\$49,891
<b>Funding Tier 3: \$50,001 - \$150,000</b>		
Marama Community Incorporated (Marama)	<b>Marama Community Hall Revival</b> This project aimed to support small improvements for this regional South Australian town's central meeting place to increase its use year-round.	\$150,000
University of South Australia (Loxton)	<b>Strengthening Wellbeing and Deepening Social Support in a Drought-Affected, Agriculture-Dependent Community</b> This project aimed to strengthen the capacity of community networks in the regional town of Loxton with the help of 'Wellbeing Warriors' to promote mental health and wellbeing within their networks, through three tailored workshops.	\$148,458
Wudinna and Le Hunte District Agricultural Horticultural & Floricultural Society Incorporated (Wudinna)	<b>Wudinna Showgrounds Water Harvest</b> This project aimed to support the local community to build preparedness to the impacts of drought.	\$109,417
<b>Funding Tier 3: \$50,001 - \$150,000</b>		
Big hART Inc (Wynyard)	<b>The Watershed Project</b> This project aimed to support community engagement events including three community dinners, a networking breakfast, two film screenings and two workshops across the North West coast of Tasmania.	\$140,000
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
Binginwarri Recreation Reserve (Binginwarri)	<b>Upgrade of Binginwarri Recreation Reserve's Existing Toilet Block</b> This project aimed to build drought resilience through small scale community infrastructure improvements at this central meeting place for the community.	\$40,000
Food Next Door Co-op Ltd (Nichols Point)	<b>Strengthening Connections Between Farming and Young People at the Community Demonstration Farm</b> Through a short training course and discussion forums with Young Farmer groups and local hobby farmers, this project aimed to support building drought resilience.	\$35,826



## Table of Grants Awarded cont...

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant
<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
VICTORIA	<b>Gippsland Future Fodder - Connect and Prepare Initiatives</b> Gippsland Agricultural Group (Omeo) This project aimed to support this local community group to engage with local farmers to assist them to develop action plans to prepare for the impacts of drought.	\$42,920
	<b>Connecting Spaces and Places - Murrabit</b> Murrabit Advancement Association Inc (Murrabit) This project aimed to support improvements for a local community meeting place.	\$37,318
	<b>Wimmera Rural Table Gathering</b> Partners In Ag Incorporated (Rupanyup) This project aimed to support a full day event to bring rural women together to discuss the impacts of drought and a changing climate for the region.	\$28,608
	<b>Supporting a Resilient Community - Mental Health First Aid Training</b> Paynesville Neighbourhood Centre Inc (Paynesville) This project aimed to build the skills and understanding of the risks posed by difficult times, including during drought, through a series of eight mental health first aid courses for local community leaders.	\$26,772
	<b>Soil Moisture and Informed Decisions</b> Southern Farming Systems Ltd (Inverleigh, Streatham & Bairnsdale, VIC and Longford, Tas) This project aimed to support training sessions across five locations in VIC and TAS and online webinars to share information and resources to build local knowledge about the risks posed by drought at the local level and strategies to manage during drought times.	\$45,810
	<b>Native Grassland Management on Farms in South-West Victoria</b> Trust for Nature (Victoria) (Shelford) This project aimed to support a forum to connect farmers, rural landholders and experts to discuss local issues faced in preparing for drought.	\$21,900
	<b>Funding Tier 3: \$50,001 - \$150,000</b>	
Indigo Shire Council (Cornishtown)	<b>Country Halls Connected for Farming Community Resilience</b> This project aimed to support a Drought and Farm Resilience workshop for communities in the Indigo Shire, a collaborative Capacity Building and Drought Resilience Hall Committee workshop, bringing hall committees together across three communities, and small upgrades to community facilities to hold these workshops.	\$98,843
Mallee District Aboriginal Services Limited (Kerang)	<b>Shed Refurbishment to Create a Gathering Space for Kerang Aboriginal Elders and Leaders and Community</b> This project aimed to support small upgrades to community infrastructure critical for a year-round meeting place for the community to build connections and resilience.	\$136,420
<b>Funding Tier 1: \$10,000 - \$20,000</b>		
Facey Group Inc (Wickepin)	<b>Farm Business Forum for New and Early Career Farmers in the Facey Group Catchment and Surrounds</b> This project aimed to support a full day community forum to build the community's understanding of local risks posed by drought and climate change.	\$20,000

## Table of Grants Awarded cont...

Organisation (Location)	Project	Grant	
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	Nyabing Progress Association Inc (Nyabing) <b>Nyabing Community Hub Accessibility and Functionality Project</b> This project aimed to support small upgrades to this central community meeting place.	\$10,701	
	Shire of Coorow (Leeman) <b>Leeman Community Networking Beach Shelter Project</b> The project aimed to support improved social connection and community wellbeing, providing new infrastructure that will assist the community to prepare for and adapt to future drought events.	\$10,938	
	<b>Funding Tier 2: \$20,001 - \$50,000</b>		
	The Agricultural Collective Ltd (Broome) <b>Livestock Leaders Drought Resilience Workshop</b> This project aimed to support a Livestock Leaders Drought Resilience event to bring together twenty young people to learn about leadership, communication and information sharing through a variety of mediums.	\$35,000	
	Balingup Progress Association Inc (Balingup) <b>Balingup - A Call to Action</b> This project aimed to support a local event to improve the community's understanding of risks posed by drought and climate change.	\$24,359	
	Blackwood Basin Group (BBG) Incorporated (Boyup Brook) <b>Strengthening Community Capabilities and Networks for Future Drought Resilience</b> This project aimed to provide essential training at a local level to improve drought preparedness.	\$31,592	
	Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee (Karridale) <b>Lower Blackwood Online Community Forum &amp; Information Hub</b> This project aimed to build the community's capacity to implement sustainable agriculture objectives and drought resilience through an online Community Forum and Information Hub.	\$49,850	
	Shire of Pingelly (Pingelly) <b>People of Pingelly - Past &amp; Present</b> This project aimed to deliver a compilation of video stories and forums to collate community members' experiences of droughts and the coping and support mechanisms they used to deal with the impacts of drought.	\$44,895	
	Southern Rangelands Pastoral Alliance Inc. (Carnarvon) <b>Showcasing Our Resilience - Sharing Our Stories Across the Southern Rangelands</b> This project aimed to produce videos and podcasts to share approaches and ideas for mitigating the effects of drought.	\$34,425	
	<b>Funding Tier 3: \$50,001 - \$150,000</b>		
Outback Academy Australia Limited (Roelands, WA; Loxton, SA; Shepparton, VIC & Deniliquin, NSW) <b>Strengthening Drought Resilience Through Collaborative Aboriginal Networks and Connected Regenerative Farming Hubs</b> This project aimed to support building drought resilience in Indigenous networks by supporting four regional events and a national online event to connect Indigenous farming communities.	\$146,966		
Saltwater Country Ltd. (Gibb) <b>Saltwater Country-ACV Collaboration for Kimberley Indigenous Drought Resilience</b> This project aimed to help build drought resilience by providing access to animal and land management information crucial during times of drought for the region, improving the skills, capacity, and networks of First Nations station workers.	\$145,316		

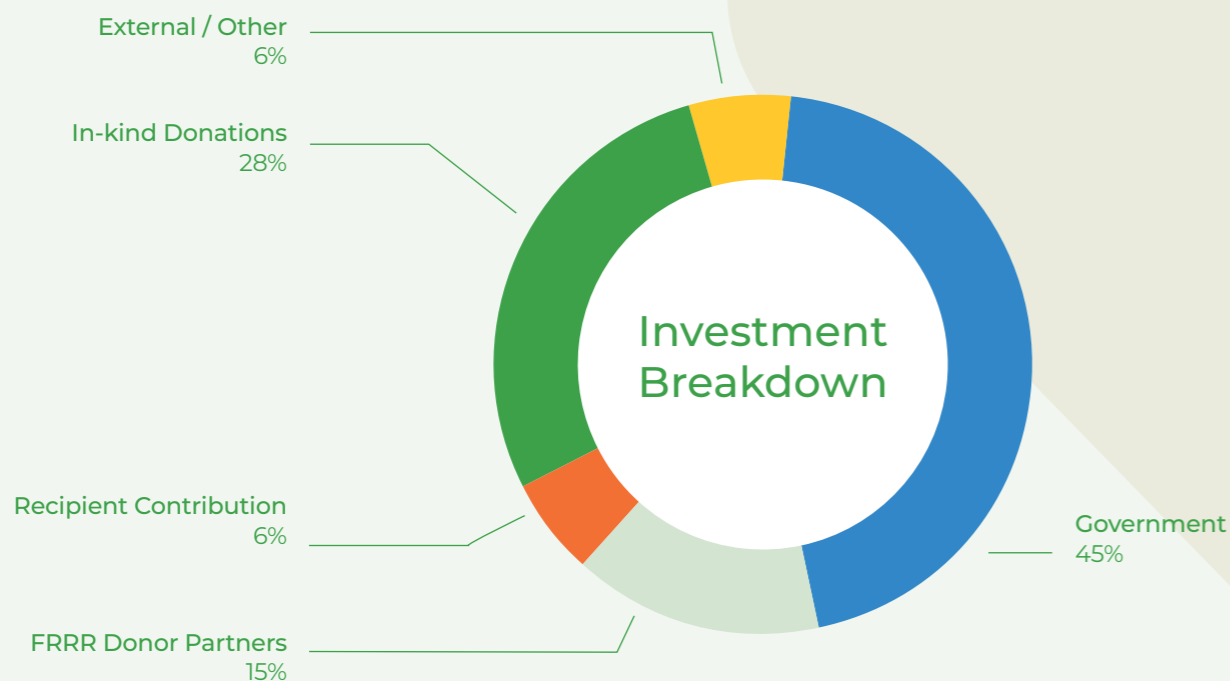
# Program Leverage

During the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program, a total of 87 completed projects were delivered by not-for-profit organisations, supported by grants totalling \$4,199,157. While actual funds leveraged were not reported on in their acquittal reports, applicants indicated they would contribute \$386,083 in cash and expected to attract an additional \$1,934,236 in in-kind support, plus a further \$439,011 in external funding, making the total project value \$6,958,487.

Assuming that they were able to achieve these goals, by partnering with FRRR and our donors, local community based organisations and their local partner organisations, the Australian Government's \$3,375,000 granting contribution to this program has most likely been doubled. The chart shows the relative contributions toward the total project value.

## Activities by State, by Opportunity Type and Funding Tier

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
<b>Opp #1</b>		<b>71</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>124</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>324</b>
Tier 1		6		1					7
Tier 2		35		20	30		28	64	177
Tier 3		30			94		8	8	140
<b>Opp #2</b>		<b>58</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>204</b>
Tier 1		15		11	10			3	39
Tier 2		43		15	52		2	17	129
Tier 3					9	24		3	36
<b>Opp #3</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>133</b>		<b>199</b>
Tier 1		10		8					18
Tier 2		9	4	25	10		133		181
<b>Opp #4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>64</b>
Tier 1	3	2					25	5	35
Tier 2		0	1	2			8	1	12
Tier 3		0		1	5		11		17
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>791</b>
	0%	19%	1%	10%	27%	3%	27%	13%	100%



# Program Reach

Nationally, the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program has strengthened community capacity by significantly increasing the number of opportunities for community stakeholders from a broad cross section of backgrounds to come together and work collaboratively towards drought preparedness and resilience. There was great diversity in the scope of the projects across the states, with each project providing local solutions to strengthen social and community networking, increase support, enhance engagement and improve wellbeing.

**Total Participants**  
**37,841**

Men **21,927** (58%) | Women **15,313** (42%)

Gender unknown **601 - 1%**

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First Nations **1,319 - 3.48%**

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Aged < 35 **6,506**  
Most aged 45-54, closely followed by 35-44 and 55-64

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**Participants by Opportunity Type**

1 - Capacity Building <b>25,352</b>	2 - Events <b>10,090</b>
3 - Training <b>1,423</b>	4 - Infrastructure <b>976</b>

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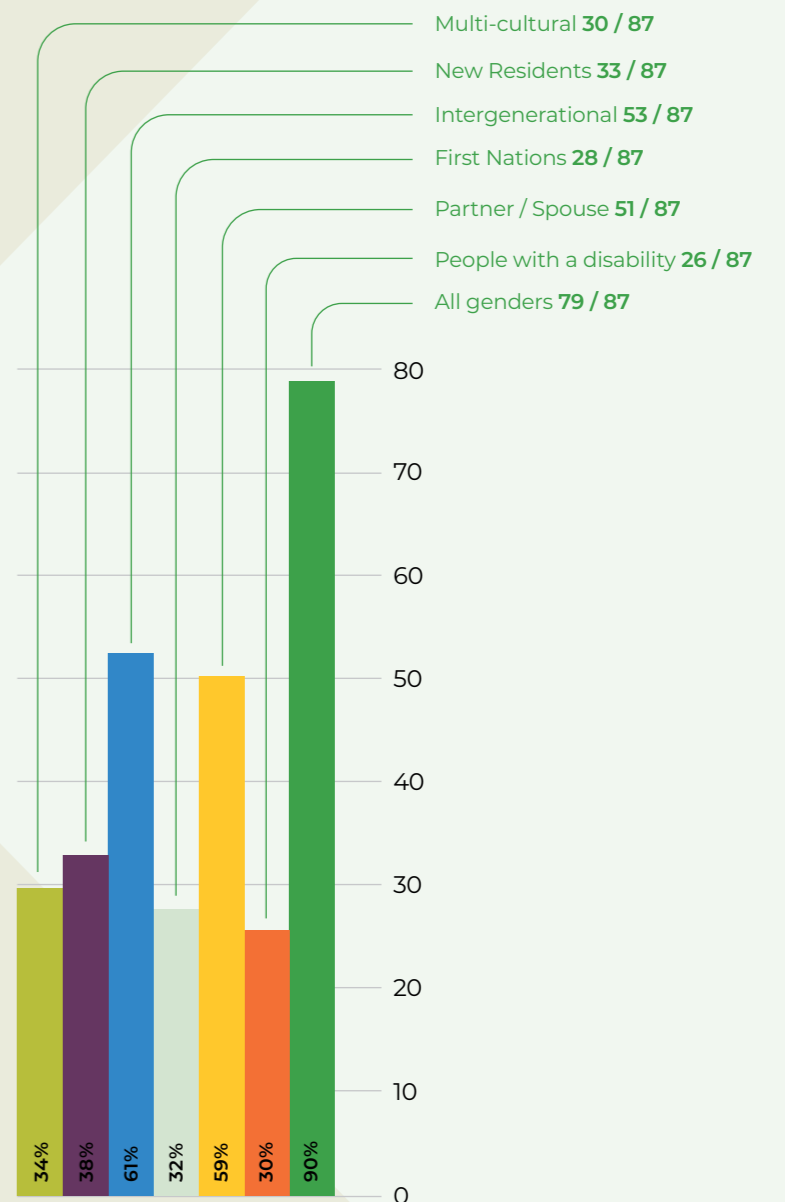
Most Funding to SA **\$921,821**

Most Projects in NSW - 24

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**Total Activities - 791**

Projects were generally diverse and inclusive



# New South Wales

In NSW, 24 grants to the value of \$821,304 were distributed across the state. Networks to Build Drought Resilience grants provided funds for 150 events, activities, forums and conferences, with a total of 5,442 people participating in projects across the state.

NSW	Number of grants	Value
Opportunity 1: Network capacity, capability or coordination	6	\$247,645
Opportunity 2: Events	11	\$294,756
Opportunity 3: Training	3	\$86,340
Opportunity 4: Small-scale community infrastructure	4	\$192,563
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>\$821,304</b>

In regard to demographic diversity of participation across projects in NSW, grantees reported that:

- 83% of projects demonstrated gender diversity with 48% of participants identifying as female
- 37% of projects attracted partners or spouses
- 46% engaged with First Nations
- 37% engaged with community members with disabilities
- 62% had an intergenerational focus
- 37% delivered projects that engaged with new residents and
- 33% involved community members from multi-cultural backgrounds.

# Queensland

In QLD, 16 grants to the value of \$735,643 were distributed across the state. Networks to Build Drought Resilience grants provided funds for 83 events, activities, forums and conferences with a total of 3,445 people participating in projects across the state.

QLD	Number of grants	Value
Opportunity 1: Network capacity, capability or coordination	3	\$102,389
Opportunity 2: Events	6	\$204,046
Opportunity 3: Training	3	\$85,200
Opportunity 4: Small-scale community infrastructure	4	\$344,008
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>\$735,643</b>

In regard to demographic diversity of participation across projects in QLD, grantees reported that:

- 81% of projects demonstrated gender diversity with 53% of participants identifying as female
- 50% of projects attracted partners or spouses
- 31% engaged with First Nations
- 12% engaged with community members with disabilities
- 62% had an intergenerational focus
- 37% delivered projects that engaged with new residents and
- 56% involved community members from multi-cultural backgrounds.

# South Australia

In SA, 13 grants to the value of \$921,821 were distributed across the state. Networks to Build Drought Resilience grants provided funds for 210 events, activities, forums and conferences with a total of 10,356 people participating in projects across the state.

Participant data is notably high in SA. This is driven in part by one of the projects being about social media outreach (which alone engaged more than 6,800 people). Other projects were run out of SA but had reach into other states, which is also reflected in participant numbers as they were not reported on separately.

SA	Number of grants	Value
Opportunity 1: Network capacity, capability or coordination	3	\$270,621
Opportunity 2: Events	7	\$341,892
Opportunity 3: Training	1	\$49,891
Opportunity 4: Small-scale community infrastructure	2	\$259,417
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>\$921,821</b>

In regard to demographic diversity of participation across projects in SA, grantees reported that:

- 77% of projects demonstrated gender diversity with 64% of participants identifying as female
- 77% of projects attracted partners or spouses
- 31% engaged with First Nations
- 46% engaged with community members with disabilities
- 62% had an intergenerational focus
- 38% delivered projects that engaged with new residents and
- 46% involved community members from multi-cultural backgrounds.



## Victoria

In VIC, 16 grants to the value of \$775,116 were distributed across the state. Networks to Build Drought Resilience grants provided funds for 215 events, activities, forums and conferences with a total of 2,680 people participating in projects across the state.

VIC	Number of grants	Value
Opportunity 1: Network capacity, capability or coordination	6	\$330,889
Opportunity 2: Events	2	\$78,108
Opportunity 3: Training	3	\$116,872
Opportunity 4: Small-scale community infrastructure	5	\$249,247
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>\$775,116</b>

In regard to demographic diversity of participation across projects in VIC, grantees reported that:

- 81% of projects demonstrated gender diversity with 47% of participants identifying as female
- 44% of projects attracted partners or spouses
- 19% engaged with First Nations
- 31% engaged with community members with disabilities
- 62% had an intergenerational focus
- 38% delivered projects that engaged with new residents and
- 19% involved community members from multi-cultural backgrounds.

## Northern Territory

In NT, two grants to the value of \$75,591 were distributed across the state. Networks to Build Drought Resilience grants provided funds for 5 events, activities, forums and conferences with a total of 152 people participating in projects delivered in NT.

NT	Number of grants	Value
Opportunity 3: Training	1	\$45,867
Opportunity 4: Small-scale community infrastructure	1	\$29,724
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$75,591</b>

In regard to demographic diversity of participation projects in NT, the two projects reported gender diversity with 63% of participants identifying as female, one engaged with partners and spouses, one engaged with First Nations, while both involved participants from the general community more broadly.

## Western Australia

In WA, 14 grants to the value of \$709,682 were distributed across the state. Networks to Build Drought Resilience grants provided funds for 101 events, activities, forums and conferences with a total of 15,414 people participating in projects across the state.

Participant numbers in WA were well above other states. This is largely driven by the reported 14,073 participants in the Lower Blackwood Online Community Forum & Information Hub, known as Talkin' After Hours.

WA	Number of grants	Value
Opportunity 1: Network capacity, capability or coordination	6	\$456,452
Opportunity 2: Events	5	\$193,051
Opportunity 4: Small-scale community infrastructure	3	\$60,179
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>\$709,682</b>

In regard to demographic diversity of participation across projects in WA, grantees reported that:

- 85% of projects demonstrated gender diversity with 18% of participants identifying as female
- 71% of projects attracted partners or spouses
- 28% engaged with First Nations
- 28% engaged with community members with disabilities
- 57% had an intergenerational focus
- 50% delivered projects that engaged with new residents and
- 28% involved community members from multi-cultural backgrounds.

## Tasmania

In TAS, one grant to the value of \$140,000 was awarded. It provided funds for 24 events, activities, forums and conferences with a total of 332 people participating in this project.

This grant focused on Opportunity 2 – Events that facilitate professional, social and community connection to build understanding of risks posed by drought and climate change in agriculture-dependent communities throughout Australia.

In regard to demographic diversity of participation within the one project in Tasmania, this grantee reported gender diversity with 50% of participants identifying as female, engagement with First Nations community and an intergenerational focus.

TAS	Number of grants	Value
Opportunity 2: Events	1	\$140,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$140,000</b>

## Australian Capital Territory

In ACT, one grant to the value of \$20,000 was awarded. It provided funds for three events, activities, forums and conferences with a total of 20 people participating in the project.

ACT	Number of grants	Value
Opportunity 2: Events	1	\$20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

This grant focused on Opportunity 2 – Events that facilitate professional, social and community connection to build understanding of risks posed by drought and climate change in agriculture-dependent communities throughout Australia.

In regard to demographic diversity of participation within the one project in ACT, this grantee reported gender diversity with 50% of participants identifying as female, engagement with partners or spouses and an intergenerational focus.

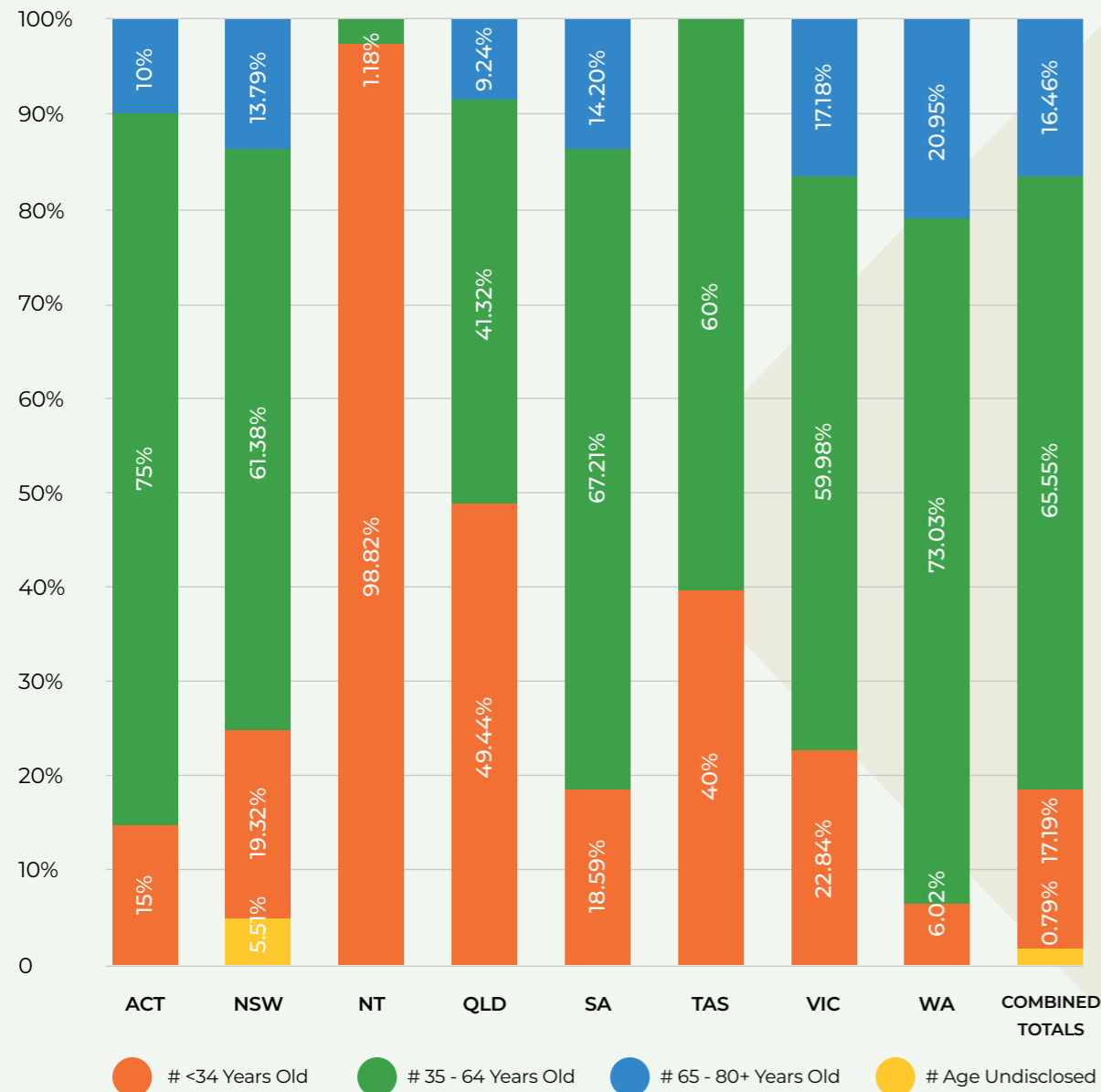
## Gender and First Nations Participation by State and Opportunity Type

		# Female Participants	# Male Participants	Gender Undisclosed	First Nations Participants	Non-First Nations Participants	Undisclosed
ACT	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	
	Opp #4	10	10			20	
NSW	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,635</b>	<b>2,206</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>4,511</b>	<b>601</b>
	Opp #1	933	942		98	1,777	
	Opp #2	1,402	1,041	601	231	2,212	601
	Opp #3	153	100		0	253	
	Opp #4	147	123		0	270	
NT	<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>56</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>151</b>	
	Opp #3	90	50		0	140	
	Opp #4	6	6		1	11	
QLD	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,817</b>	<b>1,628</b>		<b>101</b>	<b>3,344</b>	
	Opp #1	299	252		73	478	
	Opp #2	1,171	1,110		18	2,263	
	Opp #3	276	195		0	471	
	Opp #4	71	71		10	132	
SA	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,585</b>	<b>3,771</b>		<b>504</b>	<b>9,852</b>	
	Opp #1	4,801	2,198		0	6,999	
	Opp #2	1,706	1,540		504	2,742	
	Opp #3	50	6		0	56	
	Opp #4	28	28		0	55	
TAS	<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>166</b>		<b>66</b>	<b>266</b>	
	Opp #2	166	166		66	266	
VIC	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,272</b>	<b>1,409</b>		<b>158</b>	<b>2,522</b>	
	Opp #1	740	740		4	1,475	
	Opp #2	183	63		0	245	
	Opp #3	110	394		0	503	
	Opp #4	240	213		154	299	
WA	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,734</b>	<b>12,680</b>		<b>159</b>	<b>15,255</b>	
	Opp #1	2,176	12,272		153	14,295	
	Opp #2	546	397		4	398	
	Opp #4	12	12		1	23	
<b>Total Participants</b>		<b>15,313</b>	<b>21,927</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>35,921</b>	<b>601</b>
<b>% of Participants</b>		<b>40.47%</b>	<b>57.94%</b>	<b>1.59%</b>	<b>3.49%</b>	<b>94.93%</b>	<b>1.59%</b>

# Participants in Activities by State and Age Group

## Age Breakdown by State

In this chart, we have grouped some of the age ranges, categorising them as younger, middle and older-aged people. For the most part middle-aged people made up the largest group of participants. However, the exceptions were in the NT, where 98.82% were under 35, largely driven by the YLEN and The Agricultural Collective projects focused on that age group; and in QLD where 49.44% were also in the under 35 range, with the middle-aged group making up 41.32% of people.



# Age of Participants by State and Opportunity Type

In reviewing this table, please note that while participant numbers were reported by age by state, the breakdown of ages by Opportunity Type was, for the most part, provided as a percentage of the total number of participants. These have therefore been rounded to the nearest whole number and so in some cases, the number by Opportunity Type will not match the total number by State.

		# <15 Years Old	# 15-24 Years Old	# 25-34 Years Old	# 35-44 Years Old	# 45-54 Years Old	# 55-64 Years Old	# 65-74 Years Old	# 75-84 Years Old	Sum of 85+ Years Old	# Age not known	
ACT	Total	0	1	2	3	9	3	2	0	0		
	Opp #4	0	1	2	3	9	3	2	0	0		
NSW	Total	348	177	526	997	1,391	953	688	62	0	300	
	Opp #1	54	104	107	306	355	456	358	36	0	100	
	Opp #2	294	71	372	632	913	427	309	25	0		
	Opp #3	0	0	39	42	94	62	14	1	0		
NT	Total	6	127	17	1	1	0	0	0	0		
	Opp #3	0	126	14	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	Opp #4	6	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	200	
	Opp #4	6	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	0		
QLD	Total	402	612	689	489	586	348	205	105	8		
	Opp #1	42	42	56	109	101	68	88	45	0		
	Opp #2	350	562	594	194	270	200	70	41	0		
	Opp #3	0	6	36	155	200	59	6	5	6		
SA	Total	16	493	1,416	2,271	2,736	1,953	1,340	130	0		
	Opp #1	0	428	1,072	1,632	2,025	1,221	621	0	0		
	Opp #2	15	49	337	621	666	712	718	128	0		
	Opp #3	0	0	6	17	28	5	0	0	0		
TAS	Total	66	66	0	166	0	33	0	0	0		
	Opp #2	66	66	0	166	0	33	0	0	0		
VIC	Total	130	136	346	415	740	453	298	105	58		
	Opp #1	80	61	87	168	488	305	139	94	57		
	Opp #2	0	13	112	43	30	30	18	0	0		
	Opp #3	0	26	87	123	167	62	38	0	0		
WA	Total	110	81	738	3,633	3,473	4,150	3,150	74	4		
	Opp #1	45	48	630	3,454	3,279	3,982	2,987	22	0		
	Opp #2	64	32	106	164	190	167	162	52	4		
	Opp #4	1	1	2	15	4	1	1	0	0		
Grand Total		1,078	1,694	3,734	7,975	8,936	7,893	5,683	478	70	300	
		37,841	2.85%	4.48%	9.87%	21.08%	23.61%	20.86%	15.02%	1.26%	0.18%	0.79%



# Program Outcomes

Over the two rounds of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program, a total of 93 grants were awarded.

Over the course of the first year of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program, a total of 87 completed projects were delivered by not-for-profit organisations nationally to the value of **\$4,199,157**.

As can be expected in large-volume granting, seven projects either did not go ahead or funds were either fully or partially returned. In this case:

- One request was withdrawn prior to funds being paid:
  - South Coast Alliance Inc.
- Four grant recipients returned funds due to extenuating circumstances:
  - Lockyer Valley Growers Inc.
  - Southern Rangelands Pastoral Alliance Inc.
  - Twin Rivers Men's Shed Association Inc
  - Central West Farming Systems Inc.
- Two returned part funds due to changes in their project:
  - Shire of Ravensthorpe
  - Tamworth Regional Landcare Association

At the time of writing, one recipient - Cookamidgera Community Landcare Inc - is yet to complete their project and acquit their grant, and the Department provided approval to complete this final report omitting data from this project. The recipient had spent approximately 60% of grant funds on planned items relating to a modest hall upgrade, and was awaiting access to a qualified tradespeople to complete the project.

A full list of projects completed by State, NRM Region and Opportunity Type is included from page 86.

## Broad Overall Outcomes

Grant recipients completed a Final Activity Report template that captured participation data, as well as outcome-related insights that were mapped against Year 1, and progress towards Year 2-4 outcomes of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience MEL Framework. From reviewing the comments provided in grantees' final reports, it is evident that there are common themes and broad community benefit delivered through the Networks to Build Drought Resilience projects:

- The Networks to Build Drought Resilience grant program has provided agriculture-dependent communities **with opportunities and resources to strengthen social and community networking, engagement and wellbeing**. Through these actions, communities report being more resilient to the impacts of climate change, including drought, and social capital is increased in these communities.
- Through the two grant rounds, communities have utilised funds to **increase community connectedness and collaboration, strengthen social networks and develop positive relationships between stakeholders and sectors**. As part of the evaluation process, each grantee was asked to detail the learnings and outcomes for their project, and describe how the project has increased awareness, changed attitudes and encouraged preparedness for future droughts. Grantees provided evidence that demonstrates the reach, impacts and outcomes of their projects in their shared aim of building an enduring resilience to drought. These Networks to Build Drought Resilience grants have enabled a broad range of projects to occur, with **local communities identifying and delivering relevant projects** that build their capacity and resilience, both in the short and long-term. The **different opportunity types that grant recipients aligned their projects to provided scope for innovative and practical ways** to enhance engagement, connectedness and collaboration at a grassroots level.
- **Social networks have grown** through formal and informal avenues, with grantees generally reporting

that **greater diversity in participation** in community networking events and conferences has led to a **greater sense of belonging**.

- By sharing insights and learnings on drought preparedness within communities and between sectors, there has been a **significant increase in connectedness and collaborative practices**. In addition, sharing stories, knowledge and experiences in these settings **has validated the social impacts of drought** for community members, **and highlighted the importance of seeking support and providing support** to one another.
- Through the broad range of projects there has been a **significant increase in skill development**, an increased understanding of technology and how it can support drought preparedness and the **importance of mental health strategies** and approaches for both individuals and communities.
- There's an **acknowledgement of the need to continue to adapt** and grow during times of uncertainty. Participants have a lived experience of the impacts, challenges and opportunities that come with drought and are resourceful and resilient. **Ensuring communities are resourced to actively support one another** through stronger networks and improved infrastructure improves the collective wellbeing and helps agriculture-dependent communities to be more sustainable long-term.
- Community networks have had access to information and training, **increasing the capacity of community networks to participate in regional drought resilience planning**. Grantees provided feedback to say the Networks to Build Drought Resilience **projects have been the catalyst for change**, with many looking at actioning and implementing new strategies going forward.
- **Increased social connection** through Networks to Build Drought Resilience projects in local networks have built greater community capacity, particularly for communities that are not currently in drought to be better prepared for future drought. Feedback from grantees highlighted that while many people

in communities have lived experience of the impacts of drought and are aware of the need for drought preparation, there was a **recognition that taking a proactive approach when not in drought has built their capacity and readiness** for the next drought event. Workshops provided participants with the opportunity to reflect on experiences from previous droughts and formulate strategies to better respond to future droughts. In particular, **Opportunity 1 projects have built greater awareness and helped communities and networks to identify gaps** so they can move forward to the adoption and action stage of drought preparedness.

- **Diverse demographics have contributed important insights** to improve drought preparedness, with different attitudes building capacity in communities. Through workshops, communities were able to strengthen existing networks and create new networks, to help them implement these strategies. Through the **informal nature of the discussion groups** and by bringing people together to **brainstorm the topic of drought preparation**, the projects have encouraged greater drought preparedness. In addition, exploring **insights from First Nations groups** gave a **different perspective** on drought preparation, helping create a shared sense of purpose and community belonging. Traditional Owners shared their traditional practices with landholders to help with climate adaptation, providing insights and learnings to strengthen awareness and understanding across both networks and the broader community.
- Communities have an **increased awareness of web-based tools** that will enable Australian farmers to adapt to climate variability and related trends, assess future resilience and access resources to prepare for future climate challenges. Twenty-two of the 24 Opportunity 1 grantees indicated that their project participants were aware of their local Drought Innovation Hub, with 18 delivery organisations now having direct contact. Thirty percent of Opportunity 1 grantees have now used the Drought Resilience Self-Assessment Tool or Climate Services for Agriculture (CSA) tools and reported finding these useful in planning.



- **Field events provided informal opportunities for networking and awareness raising.** These events not only **increased network membership** but generated greater awareness of the opportunities for social connectedness in these communities. For example, Gippsland Agricultural Group reported that their farmer and community field days significantly strengthened the capacity of their organisation to deliver content to facilitate learning and drought preparedness as well as an experience that extends beyond the farmers into the wider community.
- Grantees indicated there is a **strong interest from the farming community around regenerative agriculture, soil conservation and on-farm water management and in rural sustainability across the broader community as well** - all of these are relevant to drought recovery and preparation for future extreme events. Regenerative farming projects continue to be a common theme, with broadly interpreted scope by applicants.
- To increase access, participation and diversity in network demographics, **engagement of young people, women and First Nations community members required a targeted approach.** This was achieved through strategically linking with organisations and community groups, formal and informal communications strategies, connecting with community leaders and champions, maintaining flexibility in project design and approach, and ensuring projects were focused on attracting people not already part of networks. For example, Riverine Plains made a considered effort to target diversity by linking in and working with community leaders. As such, several workshops specifically targeted groups who may not be part of traditional landholder networks such as Traditional Owners, women and young people. Engagement activities were tailored to suit the needs of Traditional Owners, working collaboratively to gather their input by way of case studies that showcased their culture and views. Women's networks were targeted by working with leaders in the community, setting a date, time and venue that suited them. Young people were approached and engaged in events, particularly through field days.

- **Small workshops created a safe and trusted spacing,** proving to be an excellent way for attendees to increase their networks. Not only did they meet other people within their demographic, providing valuable networks for the future, they were able to meet professionals from the different sectors, building their capacity and providing support for the future. These workshops, such as those held by Upper North Farming Systems, were able to bring government, industry and the community together, to improve collaboration and co-ordination between community groups and sectors to achieve a common goal.

- Volunteers in communities have provided feedback that the injection in **funding in their communities has given a renewed sense of hope and lifted motivation levels.**

*“Community members were amazed that our volunteer team had travelled so far to work on the old hospital building. It undoubtedly had a motivating effect on people and encouraged future community projects.”*

Connecting Communities Australia Ltd, QLD, Opportunity 4, Tier 2

- Programs encouraging greater **engagement of female participants had positive outcomes.** There was a strong recognition of the importance of resourcing female community members and the need to address current gaps in some regions.

*“The project hosted activities that built the capacity of the Women on the Land (WoTL) Ambassador Network so that the individual ambassadors have the skills and confidence to host personal and professional development opportunities for women in their local community. Each regional event provided women with a range of new skills & knowledge that they can take into their businesses. One of the main benefits was providing a forum for people to meet and connect to other women in their local community.”*

Women on the Land Ltd, SA, Opportunity 2, Tier 2

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Outcomes

As part of the programmatic foundational documents completed to establish the program, FRRR integrated the MEL outcomes in the end-to-end granting process, articulating the outcomes sought in program guidelines, the application form and final report form questions.

This has enabled the rich collation of MEL feedback, mapped against each Opportunity Type and intended community outcomes against the Year 1 MEL outcomes and the contribution toward Year 2-4 MEL outcomes. A copy of the MEL framework is included in the Appendix. While projects were assigned a primary Opportunity Type, in many instances there was significant overlap between the outcomes under each Opportunity Type.



WoTL ambassadors

### Opportunity 1 – Network Capacity, Capability or Coordination

These projects were designed to **strengthen the capacity, capability, and coordination of professional, social or community networks in agriculture-dependent communities to build drought resilience.**

They resulted in:

- Increased social connection in local networks;
- Increased community engagement, a shared sense of purpose and community belonging;
- Increased access, participation, and diversity in network participation; and/or
- Improved coordination and collaboration between social networks, other community organisations and sectors in local communities.

### Year 1 Outcomes

Through these projects there are **stronger synergies and connections** across these communities. These projects have helped **strengthen the capacity and capability of community network organisations** in agriculture-dependent communities and **increased coordination and collaboration** of social networks with other community organisations. These projects provided increased opportunities to **share problems and work collaboratively** to solve them, as well as share innovative ways to build drought resilience.

Across both grant rounds, 24 projects to the funding value of \$1,407,996 focused on Opportunity 1, with grantees demonstrating an **increased level of social connection** in local networks, as well as an **increase in participation and diversity** in network participation. Nationally, there was an even spread of Opportunity 1 projects across NSW, VIC and WA with each of these states delivering six projects that sought to strengthen the capacity, capability and coordination of professional, social or community networks in agriculture-dependent communities to build



drought resilience. SA and QLD delivered three projects each. There were 324 events, activities, forums and conferences delivered, with 25,352 people involved with these projects.

Grantees provided feedback that there was a **significant growth in collaborative practices** across communities and networks, creating a shared sense of purpose and community belonging, with 70% reporting that they were extremely satisfied or overwhelmed by the growth of the network. In addition to increasing the diversity and reach, projects sought to improve coordination and collaboration between social networks, other community organisations and sectors in local communities. The 24 grantees reported they are now linking with an additional 222 groups across their respective regions as a direct result of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience grants.

Grantees were asked to describe how their network had grown and whether diversity had increased. Those delivering Opportunity 1 projects reported that there was an **increase in access, participation and diversity in network participation, with 55% reporting their network membership had doubled**, and two projects resulting in all new network membership. Eighty-one percent of respondents reported there had been a shift in diversity of their networks, with higher representation of female participants. Across the Opportunity 1 projects, 29% of grantees engaged participants who had a disability and 45% engaged First Nations community members. Across these projects there was a greater representation of younger community members engaging in activities, with 34% under the age of 45 years.

Other insights from grantee feedback include:

- ▶ **Projects identified peer leaders** within the regions willing to pass on their knowledge, experience and skills in using technology to build drought resilience.
- ▶ Developing **farmer-based networks with support from local organisations increased awareness and understanding** of how changing farming practices can help farmers survive the next drought.
- ▶ Many farmers expressed **comfort and optimism in gathering, seeing and hearing the stories of their peers**, including their individual strategies to build resilience on their farms and in their communities.

- ▶ Grantees reported the events with **panels from different sectors, organisations and businesses increased awareness** by educating the community on things such as the benefits of natural soil carbon, how to set smart goals in farm management, how to maintain good mental health, and learning about the benefits of good management practices such as grazing, tillage, water conservation, infiltration, cover crops and managing / monitoring the seasonal tasks from local agronomists. Attitudes and approaches shifted comfortably through discussions with presenters, with one grantee saying *“If farmers become aware of what to do it empowers them to take steps to prepare for future droughts.”*
- ▶ Many projects highlighted that although **bringing different stakeholders together could be logistically challenging**, participants reflected that they had **more in common than expected**, building a **shared understanding and greater sense of belonging**. The sharing of ideas **increased awareness of drought preparedness** and highlighted shared values and thoughts, which in turn moved the mindset from individual thinking to a collective approach.
- ▶ Through increased opportunities to connect, community members have developed **collective understanding as well as an appreciation of the rich history and diverse identities**.
- ▶ Social and cultural activities provided a much-needed opportunity to engage in relaxed settings, the farming community **attendees built their social networks during these events**, whether it was around sharing tips on managing livestock and foot and skin issues during the recent and the expected wet weather ahead, challenges with farm worker shortages, getting prepared for future droughts or story telling about past drought and bushfire events.
- ▶ **Focusing on the needs of younger community members is important**, including providing resources to support mental health, wellbeing initiatives and programs to support young people to stay socially connected. Recognising the **impact of drought on children on farms** is necessary to ensure adequate support is offered in a timely way. Maintaining intensive industries in a region helps to keep young people engaged and provide greater economic stability for their future.

- ▶ The isolating nature of drought means that social connectedness can be disrupted. Developing **social media platforms across communities allows another forum for connectedness**.
- ▶ Projects that focused on **culturally-aware practices created greater awareness of enhanced approaches to drought preparedness and resilience** at a local level.
- ▶ It is important to **share information on drought preparedness and resilience in multiple ways**, through newsletters, pamphlets, community notice boards as well as through social media and websites. **Online tools have a broader benefit** and allow those in the community to share and connect without the social anxiety that can occur when struggling with mental health.
- ▶ **Resilience** in the face of drought, fire and adversity **requires awareness building and preparedness, along with an action plan**. Many of the participants had been exposed to drought in their life and others had faced other adversities such as fires and floods.

- ▶ An inclusive approach to community engagement was important to ensure participants were comfortable.

*“It was crucial to begin workshops by breaking down walls and uniting the group to understand they are all in this together and their experiences are not singular. This vulnerability was an attitude shift that proved significantly influential in describing the role social connectedness plays in drought resilience”.*

The Agricultural Collective Ltd, WA, Opportunity 1, Tier 2



The Agricultural Collective



Vocal Locals, SA

## Contribution Toward Year 2-4 Outcomes

As noted above, the projects delivered in year one of the program increased opportunities for diverse people and communities to participate in networking events such as field days, conferences, forums, summits and seminars. These activities have set the communities up well for the future, to continue to build knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change. Networks have strengthened and grown, with a focus shifting to information sharing and looking strategically towards adopting innovative ways to manage drought preparedness. Individuals and groups coming together have worked collaboratively to identify, anticipate and solve problems and through stronger participation, they have contributed towards building a positive community culture.

As a result of these projects, these communities are moving towards a shared focus, with community networks now having stronger capability to work together at a local level to undertake strategic drought resilience planning. There is a greater number of local networks, programs and initiatives addressing drought preparedness and seeking to enhance drought resilience.

*"With visibility and understanding of their networks, Ag Innovation & Research, Eyre Peninsula (AIR EP) can now be more strategic about where they direct and apply their efforts to be more efficient and effective in achieving their goals to better engage with young farmers, and in turn help build and strengthen young farmers' networks. In turn this increased connection will help AIR EP deliver more education and training aimed to build young farmer knowledge about drought resilient practices, at the same time building stronger young farmer information and support networks so both the farm, business and young farmer social support network will be more resilient to the impacts of future droughts."*

Southern Cross University, SA, Opportunity 1, Tier 3

*"Drought is difficult to predict, however building a strong network where all producers and the extended community have a pathway for continued improvement in their farming practices via progressive, active and social farming systems will make that community more resourceful, adaptable and thriving. This project has provided a significant opportunity to assess our organisation's strengths and weakness, share future priorities and generate a powerful list of actions that are shared, and with accountability and support to achieve them."*

Gippsland Agricultural Group, VIC, Opportunity 1, Tier 2

## Opportunity 2 – Events

These projects were designed to provide events that facilitated professional, social and community connection and build understanding of risks posed by drought and climate change in agriculture-dependent communities throughout Australia.

They resulted in:

- Increased opportunities for diverse people and communities to **participate in networking events** such as field days, conferences, forums, summits and seminars;
- **Building knowledge and understanding** of the risks posed by drought and climate change;
- Contributing to building a **positive community culture** and providing people and communities with an opportunity to **work collaboratively** to solve problems;
- Fostering **higher rates of innovation** in the local economy and agricultural sector; and/or
- **Improved regional branding and recognition** of local agri-food systems.

## Year 1 Outcomes

Opportunity 2 projects have **increased professional and social network diversity and strategic capability and increased participation in community social networking events and conferences**. These projects were delivered in innovative ways that linked community members and broader groups. Through field days, conferences, panel discussions, online engagement and community workshops, community members were able to **connect, learn and share insights to support drought preparedness and build greater resilience**.

Across both grant rounds, 32 projects to the funding value of \$1,251,853 focused on Opportunity 2, with grantees delivering events that facilitate professional, social and community connection to **build understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change** in agriculture-dependent communities across Australia. Nationally, there was a range of projects delivered, with 11 in NSW, seven in SA, six in QLD, five in WA, two in VIC and one in TAS. There was a total of 204 events, activities, forums and conferences delivered, with 10,090 people involved with these projects.

Grantees provided feedback that there was a **significant growth in collaborative practices** across communities and networks as a result of these grants, creating a **shared sense of purpose and community belonging**, with 87% reporting that they were more than satisfied by the growth of the network. In addition to increasing the diversity and reach, Opportunity 2 projects sought to improve coordination and collaboration between social networks, other community organisations and sectors in local communities. Grantees provided **feedback on the growth of their networks** with 32 grantees now linking with an additional 207 groups across their respective regions.

Grantees delivering Opportunity 2 projects reported that there was an **increase in access, participation and diversity in network participation**, with 40% reporting their network membership had doubled (at a minimum) and 3 projects identifying that they had all new network membership. Eighty-one percent of respondents reported there had been a growth in diversity of their networks through **higher representation of both male and female participants**.

Across the Opportunity 2 projects, there was engagement with **participants from diverse backgrounds**, with 34% of the projects engaging with people with disabilities and 31% engaging with First Nations community members.

Insights from grantee feedback:

- **Workshops provided the chance to reflect** on learnings from past droughts and then **formulate strategies** to be used for responding to future droughts. They were also able to **strengthen existing networks and create new networks**, to help them implement these strategies. Through the informal nature of the discussion groups and by bringing



people together to brainstorm the topic of drought preparation, these projects encouraged greater drought preparedness.

- Skills based workshops provided opportunities for **hands-on learning**, which provided a relaxed environment for **intergenerational connection** between older and younger participants.
- The first year of funding has encouraged communities to **identify gaps and anticipate future actions** necessary to develop greater resilience to drought.
- Events provided **opportunities for conversations** around the role of food systems, tourism, industrial development, innovation and entrepreneurship, liveable communities, workforce capability, natural resources and connectivity.
- Workshop **speakers and facilitators were able to provide critical information, share contacts and useful online links** to support programs and government resources.
- Panel discussions **highlighted the importance of working collaboratively** to build economic, environmental and social resilience in farming.
- Field days provided participants with opportunities to **link producers with consumers**, improving market chains.
- Some grantees reported that events encouraged participants to start or continue **conversations about farm succession**. By family farm members feeling more empowered to have these conversations, better farm decisions can be made - not only in relation to drought, but regarding operations, practice changes and business decisions in both the short and long-term.
- One grantee provided feedback that their project **informed participants about options** for different farm management approaches and provided **a safe learning environment** to help shift attitudes through exposure to new technology that can help them prepare for future droughts. This project helped participants **build technical skills** to better utilise data collection and technology systems to more **proactively monitor and make timely decisions** within their livestock and pasture / grazing systems, enabling resilient and strong businesses.

- Events focusing on regenerative agricultural practices provided participants with information **on new tools** to build drought resilience into their business models, farming practices and landscapes. Through these events, there was a focus on the importance of **adopting different approaches and mindsets needed to anticipate drought** long before it occurs and **manage drought more intentionally** with fewer adverse impacts on their land and profitability. They learnt that regenerative ag practice ensures grazing lands recover more rapidly due to improvements in soil and plant communities that make landscapes more resilient and drought tolerant. One project took community members on a tour around their region to showcase options. Feedback from the grantee included:

*“Many of our tour participants told our committee that they came on the tour due to interest in regenerative ag principles to better manage drought, but they are time poor and often without the capacity or confidence to investigate or test new ideas. They appreciated the opportunity to take some time out on our tour to see how the practices are being put into action by progressive local farmers, and this increased their confidence to try new approaches at home.”*

Macintyre Ag Alliance Inc, QLD, Opportunity 2, Tier 1

- **Growers are open to the discussion** around climate, and the flow-on effects such as being prepared for future droughts. Many have already adopted innovative practices and are ready to put broader strategies into action to build more resilient communities.
- While some participants take **theory** and put it into practice, **some learn by doing**, so a **mix of delivery methods is required** to meet the needs of the community members.

*“The project and series of networking events across the sectors has allowed for a greater understanding of the key issues that our local farmers face in navigating the growth and supply of local, fresh produce for their community. Adding the participation of local First Nations people, and those from the Arts and Entertainment sector has provided a platform for greater understanding and awareness of local food supply and the difficulties faced by local farmers in times of drought.”*

Destination Tweed, NSW, Opportunity 2, Tier 2

*“The best thing about this program is the people you meet and the ideas they have, and we learn from each other. Listen to your Elders, meet your neighbours. The field day at Peel was really getting a broad range of people who participate in landscapes to understand how to manage them, and how to make them more resilient against drought and other climate impacts. We can also reach a far greater audience online.”*

The Australian Landscape Science Institute Limited, NSW, Opportunity Type 2, Tier 1



The Australian Landscape Science Institute, NSW

## Contribution Toward Year 2-4 Outcomes

With year one of the program providing increased opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds and communities to participate in networking events such as field days, conferences, forums, summits and seminars, **networks have grown both professionally and socially**. Through these events, knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change have increased, and with improved coordination occurring at a local level, **community groups and networks are working collaboratively** to better understand how they can solve problems together and find solutions to improve drought preparedness and resilience.

In the subsequent years of this program, through strengthened networks, communities will have the **opportunity to increase rates of innovation** in the local economy and agricultural sector. Communities can continue to share information and learn from one another, strengthening capacity across regions to prepare for future droughts.



*“A key achievement of the program has been the way in which it has drawn diverse networks of the community into a shared space, and fostered connections across art, science, environment and agriculture. Our events and activities have attracted audiences from across a 200km stretch of coastline, with an age range between 10 and 75, from varying sectors and backgrounds including universities, agriculture, government and non-government organisations, community groups, tourism, as well as independent community members. Through this funding we were able to run a series of workshops focused on engaging young women in STEM. A particular focus was on thinking about what role technology can play in a more sustainable future - in areas such as farming and agriculture, sustainable land management and climate science. In this way, young women’s perspectives are broadened around future career paths they can aspire to, applying STEM careers to solving issues around climate change and drought.”*

Big hART Inc, Tasmania, Opportunity 2, Tier 3

### Opportunity 3 – Training

These projects were designed to provide **training opportunities to improve the skills, understanding and capacity of community network members to participate in community risk management, planning and community driven projects that build drought resilience.**

They resulted in:

- Increased **access to information and training** to build drought resilience in their communities;
- **Building knowledge and understanding** of the risks posed by drought and climate change; and/or
- An increase in the **role and profile of professional, social and community networks** in regional drought resilience planning.

### Year 1 Outcomes

Opportunity 3 projects have increased access to information and training to build drought resilience. Through community-driven projects, planning and training, social networks are playing an **active role**

**in building prepared and resourceful communities. Training events covered a broad range of agriculture-related topics, including use of technology** in agri-business, **sustainable farming techniques** and resilient soils and pastures, through to **social wellbeing initiatives** such as Mental Health First Aid and Lifeline’s Accidental Counsellors online workshops. Some activities were delivered through **face-to-face formats** with a mix of panel discussions and facilitated workshops, while other training was **delivered online** through webinars, with digital delivery increasing access and engagement to training opportunities.

Across both grant rounds, 11 projects to the funding value of \$384,170 focused on Opportunity 3, with grantees coordinating training opportunities to **improve the skills, understanding and capacity of community network members to participate** in community risk management, planning and community-driven projects that built drought resilience. Nationally, these projects were delivered in five states, with three projects in NSW, one in NT, three in QLD, one in SA and three in VIC. There was a total of 199 events, activities, forums and conferences delivered, with 1,423 people involved with these projects.

Grantees provided feedback that there was a **significant growth in collaborative practices** across communities and networks, creating a **shared sense of purpose** and **community belonging**, with 100% reporting that they were satisfied by the growth of the network. In addition to increasing the diversity and reach, projects sought to improve coordination and collaboration between social networks, other community organisations and sectors in local communities. The 11 grantees reported they are now linking with an additional 114 groups across their respective regions as a direct result of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program.

Grantees were asked to describe how their network had grown and if the diversity has increased, and those delivering Opportunity 3 projects reported that there has been an **increase in access, participation and diversity in network participation**, with 100% reporting their network membership had grown, and 36% indicating their network had doubled. Ninety percent of respondents reported there had been a **shift in diversity of their networks**, with higher representation of female participants. Across the Opportunity 3

projects there was an emphasis on **linking with general community members** and **encouraging intergenerational involvement** in projects. Across these projects there was a **greater representation of younger community members** engaging in activities, with 47% under the age of 45 years.

Insights from grantee feedback:

- **Broad cross-section of stakeholders** has been involved in these projects, including but not limited to representatives from local government, scientists, educators, local businesses, social enterprise, producers, mental health services, community organisations, financial support services, government department representatives and agri-businesses.
- **More social connection and training** for younger farmers in some regions would be **beneficial.**
- Training sessions provided the opportunity for people to come together in a safe and supported environment to meet new people, share experiences and increase awareness of current topics. An important **part of these events was the new connections and relationships** formed and the **peer-to-peer learning** between participants.
- Training sessions **increased community knowledge of services** in the regions and provided understanding of the roles that services provide across social, emotional, mental, physical, economic, financial, legal, practical and agricultural domains in the preparation for drought.
- Training that built **awareness of mental health challenges** and supported participants to look

after their **personal wellbeing**, in addition to those in their community, was extremely well received. Some sessions raised awareness about the **impacts of social isolation** and the importance of strong relationships, with one grantee feeding back that participants felt comfortable sharing experiences and looking at ways they could make positive changes in their farming community as soon as they left the session.

- In some communities, there is an **identified need for mental health training for “Trusted Advisors”** such as agronomists, stock agents, bankers and accountants going forward.

*“Amongst the topics covered were strategies for drought preparation and mitigation, impacts of climate change on the environment in the Top End and industry-specific mechanisms to lessen the impact of drought and encourage swift recovery in response to less rain. The courses and ongoing access to the webinars and resources will provide those across the community and related industries with information to be prepared for future droughts.”*

YLEN, NT, Opportunity 3, Tier 2

*“The workshops taught clear steps on how people in these teams can support their colleagues and customers who are impacted by drought, whilst also maintaining their own wellbeing. These important steps gave the participants tangible tools to support members of our community.”*

Momentum Mental Health Limited, QLD, Opportunity 3, Tier 2



YLEN



Women on The Land, NSW

## Contribution Toward Year 2-4 Outcomes

Through projects delivered in the first year of the program, communities have had access to information and training to build drought resilience in their communities, building knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change. This has provided communities with the **chance to learn from one another and share innovative ways to build drought resilience**. Through training, events and workshops, participants have been able to learn from peers, community members and agri-specialists, and discuss what has and hasn't worked in the past and what can be done in the future to build drought preparedness and resilience. There is a stronger **awareness of the need for planning at a local level** and through increased knowledge and skills, community members have **greater capacity to identify and adopt transformative ways to build drought resilience**.

*"The project enabled access to the community to attend extension events to upskill and use new-found tools to become more resourceful. The Community of Practice created from this project will provide ongoing learning opportunities in a peer-to-peer environment, enabling landholders to be more adaptable to impacts of drought and climate change."*

Gwymac Incorporated, NSW, Opportunity 3, Tier 1

*"The project has enabled YLEN to engage with members on drought resilience directly through the engagement of specialists and having the online portal to continue the delivery of resources and future webinars. These resources are invaluable to young industry members developing their careers. It has also provided the growth of social platforms to discuss drought challenges and enable members to grow their personal networks nationally."*

Young Livestock Exporters Network, NT, Opportunity 3, Tier 2



Charlton Neighbourhood House, VIC

## Opportunity 4 – Infrastructure

These projects provided **small-scale community infrastructure activities to foster connectedness, improve wellbeing and make community facilities resilient to the impacts of drought**.

They resulted in:

- **New and improved existing meeting places** so they can be used year-round to support community wellbeing, improve connectivity, increase knowledge sharing; and/or
- **Increased access** to, broadened and increased community usage of the facility.

## Year 1 Outcomes

Opportunity 4 projects have **improved access to community infrastructure**, leading to **greater use of local facilities** by individuals and groups in the community, and helping to **reduce social isolation and improve community wellbeing**. Across both grant rounds, 20 projects to the funding value of \$1,155,138 focused on Opportunity 4, with grantees seeking funds for **small-scale community infrastructure projects to increase connectedness, improve wellbeing and make community facilities resilient to the impacts of drought**. Nationally, these projects were delivered across six states and one territory, with four projects in both NSW and QLD, five projects in VIC, one project in NT, one in



Indigo Shire Council's Country Halls project

ACT, two in SA and three in WA. There were 64 activities delivered in total, with 976 people involved with these projects.

Grantees delivering Opportunity 4 projects reported that there has been an **increase in access, participation and the size of their network**, with 40% reporting their network membership had doubled (at a minimum) and three projects identifying that they had all new network membership. Eighty-one percent of respondents reported there had been a **growth in diversity of their networks** through higher representation of both male and female participants. Across the Opportunity 4 projects, there was strong engagement with participants from diverse backgrounds, with 35% of the projects engaging with people with disabilities and 35% engaging with First Nations community members.

Grantees indicated that they had **increased access, participation and diversity in network participation**, with 85% of projects reporting that their network had grown as a result of the project delivery. Recipients provided feedback on the **growth of their networks** with 20 grantees now linking with an additional 82 groups across their respective regions and 100% of grantees reporting that they were more than satisfied by the growth of the network.

Analysis of the feedback from grantees indicates there was also **significant growth in collaborative practices across communities and networks**, creating a shared sense of purpose and community belonging. Additional insights from grantee feedback include:

- **Investment in community assets** has greatly improved access to local meeting places and hubs, creating revitalised indoor and outdoor spaces for broader community benefit. These spaces allow for new opportunities to gather for workshops, training, network meetings, group gatherings or informal social events.
- These funds have **created better facilities** that will **enable network gatherings** now and in the future. Investment in **small-scale infrastructure** will help facilities to remain fit for purpose so they are **more resilient to the impacts of future droughts**.
- Grantees provided feedback that by investing in local infrastructure, **participants had greater confidence that they can plan events**, and will be able to meet and connect with other community members in the long-term.
- Investment in both physical and virtual community hubs through these grants has **enabled greater access to information sharing and awareness raising**. The flexibility provided through this opportunity type has **enabled communities to identify how best to address local needs**, from small projects to large projects, to encourage greater connectedness and reduce social isolation.

*“The increased social cohesion that has occurred as a result of this project not only makes us feel proud, but it is also exciting, and we aim to use the new momentum to continue strengthening our community and networks so that they are well-established and active before difficult times.”*

Binginwarri Recreation, VIC, Opportunity 4, Tier 2

*“As people in the community get time to gather, they will be able to reconnect with each other and share valuable information between them. We are also now waiting for the remnants of COVID to disappear. The Weemelah community will be resilient in readiness to tackle further droughts.”*

Weemalah Hall, NSW, Opportunity 4, Tier 1

*“By upgrading the generator and kitchen goods we have made the Kulgera Gymkhana Grounds a functional space where community members can get together, socialise and reduce the feelings of isolation that are associated with remote living and develop stronger connections within the community.”*

*As a community we now have grounds that can be used for other events as they arise, such as playgroups, community days, training courses and industry events.*

*The development of our space allows us to facilitate more opportunities for our community to come together, to build strong community connections and partnerships, to debrief about the challenges and successes of life on a remote cattle station and community.*

*By having a shared space, we can continue to build on the community connectedness and ensure that when tough times come, be it drought, fires or accidents that we as a community have strong bonds that can support each other through. We also value the opportunity for community members to come together and share ideas and practices that they are implementing on their station to help prepare them for future environmental challenges.”*

Kulgera Gymkhana Club Incorporated, NT, Opportunity 4, Tier 2



Kulgera Gymkhana Club, NT



Mallee District Aboriginal Services, VIC

## Contribution to Year 2-4 Outcomes

With improved access to and greater utilisation of community infrastructure through these Networks to Build Drought Resilience grants, communities already have **enhanced opportunities to problem share and work collaboratively to solve problems**. These benefits will be felt into the future, as **most projects focused on making these hubs more sustainable** so the benefits can be experienced in both the short and long-term. Improved meeting places in these communities **support overall wellbeing, improve connectivity, increase knowledge sharing**, and communities have better access to facilities that broaden and increase community usage.

*“The community has been asking for a culturally-safe gathering space for many years. This project has provided a facility that begins to meet this need identified by the local Aboriginal community. As a result, the community will achieve a greater sense of social wellbeing, as well as improving health outcomes, building resilience and strengthening community connectedness.”*

*The importance of knowledge sharing from Aboriginal Elders was highlighted in letters of support for the*

*project application, showing the importance of a meeting place where Elders can go and relax and be themselves, having a place they can call their own and yarn with grandchildren, thus passing on cultural knowledge. Koori customs are centred on oral communication of stories being passed from one generation to the next.*

*The benefits and outcomes from this project will be measured over the next few years by assessing improvements in health outcomes, the level of community participation and the preparedness of the community to be prepared for the impacts of drought.”*

Mallee District Aboriginal Services Limited, VIC, Opportunity 4, Tier 3

*“Our project has injected renewed enthusiasm into our small community. Locals have volunteered time, resources and energy during the project, and this indicates a change in attitudes towards community connectedness. We have been able to socially connect on new levels during the project working-bees. The community looks forward to working together to host functions and events that support each other to be resilient to the impacts of future droughts.”*

Marama Community Incorporate, SA, Opportunity 4, Tier 3



# Learnings and Recommendations for Broader Application to Programs

Below are a few observations which FRRR suggests may have broader application for future programs.

- **Operating conditions** in the community **remain challenging due to climatic and pandemic conditions**. With communities still recovering from the impacts of the COVID pandemic and recent floods, volunteers and community members are returning to support roles slowly, and organisations and community groups are recalibrating. **Allowing more time for project delivery** would ensure that outcomes are better supported, and community capacity building initiatives are more sustainable in the long-term.
- Diversified project delivery models enable communities to consider projects and initiatives that are best suited to their local circumstances. Programs should therefore **not be prescriptive in the method of delivery** and **allow for communities to determine what will work best**.
- Engagement activities should include a **strong educational element** to build understanding of the program, especially if it is new. More broadly, building **relationships with First Nations groups** that can then translate into applications **takes time** and a dedicated focus and implementation plans should allow for that.
- While **online engagement is useful and necessary, it cannot replace face-to-face community visits** that build relationships, local understanding of issues affecting communities and **informal program awareness development that results in applications over several future rounds**.

- Future Drought Fund **partner liaison was a solid focus** during the program to ensure projects were suitable and not duplicating other funded initiatives in specific state locations.
- **Early understanding of the timing, reach and nature of other related activities** made any required program's linkages easier to manage and to communicate.
- **Appropriate, accessible and contextual terminology is a critical** consideration in conveying a new concept such as drought resilience, both in the naming of programs as well describing the aims and outcomes sought. **'Resilience' as a word and concept remains a vexed subject**, with many communities reporting negative connotations at a local level given the increasing use of the term by government (particularly in communities in bushfire recovery), and often ambiguous or interchangeable meaning. In future, and ongoing work, **a shift to 'drought preparedness' as a primary concept and term should be considered** given its practical grasp by the average community participant. Across different states, other communities also reported different **connotations of the term drought**, with some preferring to use 'dryness', a concept to be followed up and explored in further program evaluations.

# Insights for the Future

There is a **strong appetite in the community to plan ahead** for future droughts - not just on-farm but across the community as a whole, as there is strong recognition of the interdependence of the viability of the local community and the farmers that surround it. Care should be taken in communicating any future programs to **clarify exactly who is eligible and what 'drought resilience' looks like**, as distinct from resilience more generally. Further, there needs to be clear explanation as to how any future focus on drought resilience building, as it relates to building community-wide social outcomes, is different to economic or environmental outcomes, which are often on-farm and landholder specific.

The **most impactful projects** in the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program had very **strong local leadership**, but also **strong external support**. The **value of involving a broad cross-section of the community in designing their projects**, as well as having the right external support was clear.

FRRR's involvement in the broader Future Drought Fund programs and initiatives has provided a welcome opportunity to highlight **the importance of community-led initiatives and government / philanthropy partnerships** and provides useful insights to ensure duplication is minimised and collaboration maximised.

Future Drought Fund partner liaison has been a valuable element of the program, but required solid focus to ensure projects were suitable and not duplicating other funded initiatives in specific state locations. Allowing sufficient resourcing to ensure that liaison occurs is critical to success.

Additionally, **timing and reach of other Future Drought Fund support** have been key considerations in the nature and scope of projects supported in the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program, and this remains **a complex task for most communities to navigate and understand**. The **opportunity for an increased level of**

**brokered information sharing by the Department** at a federal, state and regional level still exists to ensure that collaboration opportunities are maximised to realise a genuine 'joined-up' approach of program investment streams.

Ultimately, **relationship building has been vital** to the success of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program and that strong foundation will underpin the success of any future program delivery

**Historically, 'getting together' during drought was generally recognised as a positive activity, although not always widely accepted as having lasting benefit. The investment in the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program has enabled two critical changes to occur within grassroots communities across Australia. Firstly, it has provided opportunities for communities to come together to squarely place the 'future drought' conversation on the table, something that in the past has largely been unspoken of in a proactive and widescale manner. Secondly, it now provides an evidence base about the practical benefit to local people and communities to move beyond general theoretical recognition, towards a deeper understanding of the investment and community constructs required to adapt to a drying, and unpredictable, climatic future.**

**While often silent, assumed and under-resourced in past droughts, this program has proactively enabled an emphasis on the importance of social connectedness, highlighted the importance of community networks and deep social bonds, and invested in the practical skills, knowledge and community-wide awareness required to be better prepared for drought into the future.**

**Significant opportunity exists to implement a tailored and localised approach to building drought resilience from 'the ground up' in communities that are likely to be impacted by drought in the future.**

# APPENDICES

## Video Case Studies

Project Title	Opportunity Type	State	Organisation
<a href="#">YLEN Leadership program: Future-Proofing the Livestock Industry</a>	1	NT	YLEN
<a href="#">Country Halls Connected for Farming Community Resilience</a>	1	VIC	Indigo Shire Council (note cross-over with Riverine Plains project)
<a href="#">Improving Young Farmer Mental Resilience in Times of Drought</a>	2	NSW	FarmLink Research
<a href="#">Strengthening Wellbeing and Deepening Social Support in a Drought-Affected, Agriculture-Dependent Community with the help of 'Wellbeing Warriors' to Promote Mental Health and Wellbeing Within their Networks (Vocal Locals)</a>	1	SA	University of South Australia

## Case Studies

Opp. Type (Primary & Secondary)	Organisation	State	Story
1 - Network Capacity 3 - Training	Active Farmers Ltd	NSW	<a href="#">Farmers Train Their Brains to Weather the Dry Times</a>
3 - Training 1 - Network Capacity	Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc.	VIC	<a href="#">Mallee Farmers Given Access to Online Soil Management Training</a>
1 - Network Capacity 4 - Infrastructure	Gippsland Agricultural Group	VIC	<a href="#">A Comfortable Field Day for the Farmers</a>
3 - Training 1 - Network Capacity	Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee	WA	<a href="#">Talkin' After Hours Connects Karridale</a>
2 - Events 1 - Network Capacity	Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd	QLD	<a href="#">Forums Build Drought Resilience in Queensland's Northern Gulf</a>
1 - Network Capacity 2 - Events 3 - Training	Outback Academy Australia	WA, SA, VIC	<a href="#">Outback Drought Resilience</a>
2 - Events 1 - Network Capacity 3 - Training	Upper North Farming Systems	SA	<a href="#">Tools, Tech and Transformation</a>
4 - Infrastructure 1 - Network Capacity	Marama Community Inc.	SA	<a href="#">Reviving Marama's Community Hall</a>

# Farmers Train Their Brains to Weather the Dry Times

Grant:  
**\$10,120**

**Project Title:** 100 Mental Health Champions

**Organisation:** Active Farmers Ltd

<b>State:</b> NSW	<b>LGA:</b> Temora	<b>NRM:</b> Riverina LLS	<b>Opportunity Type:</b> 1 - Network Capacity 3 - Training	<b>Primary Outcome:</b> Broadened and strengthened social and community networks across Australia by providing mental health training.
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In 2015 in Mangoplah NSW, Active Farmers was born to bring the entire community together through regular group fitness classes in a fun and interactive environment. The classes were designed to mimic the 'team sport effect' and create a sense of community and belonging. Led by multiple volunteer committees and a team of 33 qualified personal trainers, Active Farmers now exists in more than 45 small farming communities across the country.

With farmers approximately twice as likely to take their lives by suicide, Active Farmers decided to harness their network and provide mental health training to volunteers. The goal was to shift the mindset now to be stronger during times of adversity.

In 2021, Active Farmers partnered with regional provider Wimmera Primary Care Partnership to deliver relatable mental health first aid training to volunteers and personal trainers. These volunteers are critical as many hold multiple roles in the community and are therefore well-connected. They are like-minded, they've lived through drought too, which makes them ideal people to reduce the stigma around mental health.

Through the project, which received a \$10,120 grant from the Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience program, 100 people across 56 postcodes were upskilled in mental health first aid training. A 'train the trainer' approach equipped volunteers to feel more prepared to assist the community with mental health support. The training was delivered online over four days. Active Farmers acknowledged there would be great value in providing

this course face-to-face, however running it online made it accessible, so they could reach a diverse audience across time zones. Of course, as is often the case in rural areas, internet connections were sometimes a hindrance.

Beyond the skills and knowledge imparted, the project also created a network across the nation, whether to discuss farming practices or to find a shoulder to lean on. Learnings from drought experience can be shared, including building healthy habits, taking time to relax and the importance of looking after your health in tough times. These are often the first things to go when not in a positive mindset, and groups in different areas of the country can now support each other through the favourable and not-so-favourable seasons.

The Active Farmers network is now able to confidently access resources, know when and how to refer to support services, and generally have people on the ground able to ask the hard questions and offer support.

*"I just wanted to thank Active Farmers for the opportunity to do the mental health first aid course; although some aspects were a little confronting, it was a great course. I felt I got a lot out of it. Lissy the group facilitator for the workshop was fabulous. Thanks again."*

Lyn, Active Farmers Participant

The ongoing physical sessions provide more than fitness – they offer an opportunity to stay connected and become mentally and physically fit in a safe and inviting space. Active Farmers wants communities to remember that there's a holistic approach to being 'active' – it's not just about squats and burpees.

The new skills within the various communities mean people are taking a proactive and grassroots approach towards health in a drier, constantly changing farming environment. With a professionally skilled group of community volunteers that link into everyday rural life, these communities will be better prepared to face inevitable climate challenges and tough times.



*"Upskilling people across our network in Mental Health First Aid will only have a positive flow on effect into the future - no matter what our communities are faced with. Becoming skilled in Mental Health First aid will help us on our mission of building more resilient and stronger rural communities."*

# Mallee Farmers Given Access to Online Soil Management Training

Grant:  
\$44,290

**Project Title:** Creating an Online Learning Community to help Farmers Manage Soil in Drought

**Organisation:** Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc

State:	LGA:	NRM:	Opportunity Type:	Primary Outcome:
VIC	Mildura	Mallee	3 - Training 1 - Network Capacity	Created an online learning network to share information specific to protecting Mallee soils and built understanding of the risks of drought by sharing the impacts of different seasonal conditions on soil health.

Mallee Sustainable Farming (MSF) is situated in Mildura on the border of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. It brings together farmers and researchers to build more efficient, profitable and sustainable farming businesses in the Mallee region, which frequently experiences low rainfall.

MSF wanted to provide greater access to information and training for farmers in the region so that they were better equipped to build drought resilience within their communities. The challenge, however, was that farmers are often time-poor and unable to leave the farm. As a result, some farmers tend to lean on traditional knowledge when it comes to managing their soils before, during and after drought, and sometimes aren't aware of new scientific learnings and approaches that can prove crucial in farming.

MSF used a \$44,290 grant from the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program, funded by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund, to create an online learning community that helps educate farmers on how to protect, manage and repair soils before, during and after drought.

The platform provides a 'one-stop-shop' for place-based soil resources and support that can be accessed in ways that meet farmers' preferred learning styles and accommodate scheduling difficulties. Having the training accessible online also means that it can't be cancelled due to poor weather conditions or disrupted by factors such as COVID restrictions.

The program is built around a schedule that provides information to farmers at the time of year when it's most relevant, which increases engagement levels. The success of the project has surpassed the expectations of MSF who initially targeted 200 group members. At the time of reporting, the group had reached 362 members and was growing at a rate of 10 members per week.

The sessions attracted a diverse group of participants across all age-groups. It also increased connections with a wide range of consultants, government agencies and research bodies.

This project has established a readily mobilised group where experts can quickly disseminate technical content related to local environments, emerging seasonal conditions and new research.

Overall, the project has established the groundwork for long-term learning, two-way engagement and ongoing support that means farmers in the Mallee can make proactive decisions when it comes to soil management rather than being reactive. The group will continue to grow over time and the project leaves a legacy of enhanced adaptability and resourcefulness.



*"The approach has been so successful that Mallee Sustainable Farming will continue to manage the group and use it as a way of both disseminating information and understanding audience needs concerning soil management for the foreseeable future."*

# A Comfortable Field Day for the Farmers

Grant: \$42,920

**Project Title:** Gippsland Connect and Prepare Field Days

**Organisation:** Gippsland Agricultural Group

State:	LGA:	NRM:	Opportunity Type:	Primary Outcome:
VIC	East Gippsland	Gippsland	1 - Network Capacity 4 - Infrastructure	Increased social connectedness, more diversity and participation in a strong network created a pathway for continued improvement in farming practices via progressive, active and social farming systems. Also upgraded local meeting place facilities, which increased year-round community usage.

For many remote, rural and regional communities, drought has been impacting families and businesses for years. Even though it is not always covered in mainstream news, those living in certain parts of Australia know all too well what lasting effects drought can have. For many working in the agriculture industry, the thought of current and future drought can be a stressful and frightening prospect with crops and livestock often hit the hardest. However, in each of these communities there is a fighting spirit, often driven by community-led groups and not-for-profits (NFPs) that work hard to support the wider community.

One of these groups is the Gippsland Agricultural Group who are driven by achieving results for farmers in the south east region of Gippsland in Victoria. The organisation is made up of Central and East Gippsland farmers and service providers that have joined forces as people with the shared desire to improve productivity, profitability and sustainability using research, collaboration, product trails and demonstrations to communities in the area.

One example of how Gippsland Agriculture Group planned to achieve this was by holding multiple

field days. The Gippsland 'Connect and Prepare' field days were designed to build a sense of place and connection for farmers. Research conducted shows that farmers are most comfortable learning from other farmers in informal settings such as walking around a paddock talking or learning while doing. For Gippsland Agricultural Group, providing resources like easy access to agricultural service providers, mental health and financial support, as well as strategies and tactics and practical learning, are all key to strengthening preparedness and resilience to future drought events.

Using a \$42,920 grant through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund Networks to Build Drought Resilience program, Gippsland Agriculture Group held two farmer field days. Both days focused on farmer mental health and wellbeing by bringing health service providers to an environment where farmers are comfortable and feel they will be more likely to engage with services. Each day also featured key staff from other agricultural networks to encourage relationship development, project collaboration and sharing of ideas and resources. The first field day targeted producers, with a focus on networking and connecting with one another and relevant agriculture service providers.

While the field days are a great way to network and increase social interaction, the key purpose of the events is to build knowledge and skills with the estimated 200 producers, 15 agricultural agencies and service providers, and eight agricultural produce-led focus groups.

These events increased participant knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought by offering a program that shared information on climate variability. The events carried positive messaging about the resilience of regional producers focusing on practical, implementable drought preparedness solutions for everyday mum and dad farms.

In addition to funding the field days, the grant also enabled the installation of basic toilet facilities at a site frequently used for social and professional networking events. The community now has access to a space that supports educational, social and networking activities in a safe and hygienic space.



*"Drought is difficult to predict, however building a strong network where all producers and the extended community have a pathway for continued improvement in their farming practices via a progressive, active and social farming systems will make the community more resourceful, adaptable and thriving. This project connected producers and the wider community to Gippsland Agricultural Group and increased network membership."*

# Talkin' After Hours Connects Karridale

**Project Title:** Lower Blackwood Online Community Forum & Information Hub  
**Organisation:** Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee

Grant:  
\$49,850

State:	LGA:	NRM:	Opportunity Type:	Primary Outcome:
WA	Augusta-Margaret River	South West Region	3 - Training 1 - Network Capacity	Increased social connectedness and participation by establishing an online platform where farmers and the community can learn about regenerative agriculture and sustainable land management practices and their role in managing drought risks, at a time and place that is convenient for them.

Karridale, in the Blackwood region of southwest Western Australia, is home to a rich agricultural community. Established in 1991, the Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee (LBLCDC) draws its membership from local landholders who have an interest in sustainable agricultural and land management practices that will protect and conserve their special environment.

There is growing interest and awareness among local farmers of regenerative agriculture principles as a way to sustainably manage their land and productivity and strengthen their drought resilience. However, the LBLCDC identified a need for greater understanding of these principles, as well as how to implement them.

They noted a lack of access to resources and expertise to support farmers in creating resilient and responsive landscapes. They also saw the need for more peer-to-peer support and believed that conversations could combat isolation and foster a sense of community among local farmers.

In 2022, the LBLCDC decided to develop an online community forum and information hub that could bring the community together to connect and learn. Supported by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund, FRRR provided \$49,850 to assist the

LBLCDC with the design and delivery of their digital platform.

Driven by a content manager, the establishment of their online community (known as Talkin' After Hours) allowed for the development of significant new drought resilience content. Although hampered by short timelines, the platform produced and delivered six webinars and five podcasts, with a further podcast, six written pieces and six short videos also developed and ready for release over the coming months. Each piece of content focused on one farm landscape management component that assists land managers to prepare for drought.

Feedback from platform users has been incredibly positive, with one user noting that they got more useful information from one 90-minute Talkin' After Hours webinar "than in a whole year's worth of ag school".

*"The ability to be able to share ideas, discuss and compare notes on issues, actions and solutions with other community members in a safe and convenient space has and will promote a more adaptable and resourceful community."*

The LBLCDC has been excited by the level of engagement with the platform, based on webinar registrations and content download figures. Across the six webinars delivered, there were 525 registrations and 11,175 YouTube views. In addition to this, there were 1,482 downloads of the podcasts. There was an even split of male and female participants involved, with a broad range of community members engaging with the project. While 70% of participants were between 45-64 years of age, it's anticipated that given the online delivery format of the project, engagement will continue to grow, particularly with younger community members as they access podcasts and webinars recordings.

This new network is expected to expand as new community members become aware of the project. Going forward, they intend to continue expanding the platform to reach more community members as they release their developed content, and also intend to engage with their local Indigenous group, the Undalup Association Inc, for their input and ideas on content.

Talkin' After Hours has increased the social connection of Lower Blackwood farmers and landholders. The interactive and engaging platform has helped build their resilience to future drought and fostered community and connection by developing a cohesive, relevant and applicable resource base for individual and community learning.



*"The easy access and on-demand format of the content allows landholders to access learning opportunities and information at a time and place that is convenient for them. It also offers the ability to share ideas, discuss and compare notes on issues, actions and solutions with other community members in a safe and convenient space, and promotes a more adaptable and resourceful community."*

# Forums Build Drought Resilience in Queensland's Northern Gulf

Grant:  
\$49,700

**Project Title:** Drought Resilience Awareness and Networking Forums for the Northern Gulf Region of Queensland

**Organisation:** Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd (Operating as Gulf Savannah NRM)

State:	LGA:	NRM:	Opportunity Type:	Primary Outcome:
QLD	Mareeba	Northern Gulf	2 - Events 1 - Network Capacity	Increased community connection by providing opportunities in person and online to learn about and discuss the risks posed by drought and explore potential solutions that aim to build preparedness and resilience.

The far northern tip of Queensland - Gulf country - extends from wide plains through to tropical rainforest, but mostly comprises dry tropical savannah country. It is a very isolated region, yet is a productive beef grazing area, with some areas of horticulture. About 10,000 people live in 234,000 square kilometres - an area the equivalent size of Victoria. About 25% of people in the Gulf region identify as Indigenous.

Gulf Savannah Natural Resource Management (GSNRM) connects science, technology and landcare to improve productivity for farmers and graziers. Drought is a common challenge, with frequent extended dry seasons recorded over the last 30 years. GSNRM saw an opportunity to bring together producers for a series of forums across the region to strengthen networks and generally build the community's capacity to better respond to the impacts of drought.

To make the most of the time, organisers planned a farm visit during the Farming Forum, followed by information sessions and a lunch. With most graziers travelling long distances, their session was over two days, providing an opportunity for participants to not only gain new knowledge and skills but also reinforce and strengthen connections between these very isolated residents at social events.

The face-to-face events provided a mix of guest speakers to impart knowledge and practical implementation skills or planning sessions to start putting the ideas into action. This included building understanding of the risks posed by drought by exposing participants to discussions about the future of the region in the face of adverse climatic conditions and then discussing potential solutions. This approach empowered community members to make business resilience changes and fostered partnerships and collaboration between growers, graziers, agronomists, extension officers, industry, drought hub and government.

The organisers also recognised that, by far, the greatest risk posed by drought and the unpredictable nature of climate change is deteriorating mental health. The Unbreakable Success Matrix program, which involved online learning supported by live group discussions and mentoring, gave people the tools to mentally cope with those elements of their lives that cannot be controlled. This structure enabled geographically diverse individuals to come together over several weeks and develop an understanding of how others are coping or not coping, and receive the benefits of listening to the coaching and ideas from the facilitators.

Regular touch points enabled people to get to know each other better and therefore, as the program progressed, saw more vulnerable sharing and thus greater problem solving within the group. Assessment showed the 'fear factor' had significantly reduced for all respondents.

These events had the support of the Gulf Cattlemen's Association and the FNQ Growers Association and were promoted widely through a range of different databases. This ensured a diverse cross-section of the community participated, beyond those that GSNRM normally engages with.

In total, 106 people participated in the three events, ranging from 15 to 74 years, although around 80% were aged 45-64. Around 15% were 15-24. Participants were often intergenerational and reflected a mix of new and established residents and was reflective of the general community.

The opportunity to contemplate drought and climate change in a supportive atmosphere and consider how prepared they are, or not, saw 42% of respondents say that the forums had 'definitely prompted' them to change something in their business, while another 25% said they were 'somewhat prompted'. Almost 100% of all respondents said that each speaker session was either 'very valuable' or 'valuable'.

For the GSNRM group itself, their network has increased dramatically and it has also seen significant increases in the interconnections between virtually all aspects of the industry, especially across sectors.



*"What we are most proud of is the fact that we developed and conducted events which delivered to landholders relevant information that was valued and improved their knowledge and skills in drought resilience strategies."*

# Outback Drought Resilience

Grant:  
\$146,966

**Project Title:** Strengthening Drought Resilience Through Collaborative Aboriginal Networks and Connected Regenerative Farming Hubs

**Organisation:** Outback Academy Australia Limited

State:	LGA:	NRM:	Opportunity Type:	Primary Outcome:
WA	Bunbury	South West Region; SA Murray Darling Basin; Murray; Goulburn Broken	1 - Network Capacity 2 - Events 3 - Training	Increased connectedness between First Nations farmers, creating opportunities to address planning, capacity and capability needs to build resilience, to meet market, improve environmental outcomes, and achieve social outcomes such as employment and a reset opportunity for youth at-risk.

In many farming communities, sharing knowledge and experiences with other farmers can be extremely beneficial for building skills, capacity and preparedness. For First Nations farmers and farming relationships, sharing knowledge and practices is integral to the supply chain and strengthening drought resilience through collaborative Aboriginal networks and connected regenerative farming hubs.

For organisations like Outback Academy Australia, supporting opportunities for Aboriginal farmers to grow their networks is their main goal. Outback Academy is a majority Aboriginal-led not-for-profit organisation that drives game-changing and inclusive approaches to agricultural and horticultural business, education, employment, health and wellbeing.

Across four states, Outback Academy has established Alliance Hubs to support a minimum of 18 Aboriginal farms and organisations. Each hub focuses on strengthening the capacity of individual farmers and organisations, to understand and mitigate drought and climate risk, along with strengthening the coordination between others in their networks.

In March 2022, Outback Academy received a \$146,966 grant through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience program to support four regional in-person events and

a national online event to connect Aboriginal farming communities to share methods and techniques best used in a changing climate.

The events were held in Roelands (WA), Loxton (SA), Shepparton (VIC) and Deniliquin (NSW). The activities were focused on the following:

- (a) knowledge sharing about drought and climate change;
- (b) fostering innovation by integrating the best of traditional ecological knowledge and modern farming techniques to mitigate drought and climate change risks; and
- (c) providing Aboriginal people and communities the opportunity to work collaboratively across farms, regions and states to solve drought problems.

Ongoing meetings with managers created important and crucial communications between networks of farmers but also put them in touch with relevant government, NRMs and ag specialists to increase external collaboration.

The effectiveness of the project was measured through attendance at gatherings - Western Australia and Victoria being the most attended - and the feedback from farmers themselves, as well as from participating agencies.

Many farmers expressed comfort and optimism in gathering and hearing the stories of their peers, including their individual strategies to build resilience on their farms and in their communities, and were grateful for the opportunity to repair Country and build social, cultural, environmental and economic strength.

*“Workshops addressed the perception that agriculture is separate from cultural and natural resource management, and that First Nations people are not engaged in farming or have an interest in agriculture to the same level as cultural heritage, and cultural and natural resource management. Another achievement was the respectful exchange between Western scientific-based knowledge and systems and Aboriginal knowledge, also referred to as traditional ecological knowledge, to improve farming systems and address the impacts of drought, extreme weather events and climate change.”*



*“Farmers expressed the value of gatherings, and collaboration as highly valuable to themselves and to all stakeholders in the business of agriculture in Australia. Value included bringing their knowledge about, and connection to Country while working as agricultural producers. All shared a view that current challenges, including drought, have been caused by climate change and past poor agricultural practices that have impacted soil and the environment broadly including cultural resources that were intact and kept Country healthy for millennia. Resilience was viewed as assisted by opportunities like the gatherings to share information with peers and other stakeholders, and to see new and old knowledge systems and technologies in practice that can and so address drought and other climate change causes and impacts.”*





# Tools, Tech and Transformation

Grant:  
**\$20,000**

**Project Title:** Tools, Tech and Transformation – UNFS and its HUBS 2022

**Organisation:** Upper North Farming Systems

State:	LGA:	NRM:	Opportunity Type:	Primary Outcome:
SA	Northern Areas	Northern and Yorke	2 - Events 1 - Network Capacity 3 - Training	Increased community connections by providing opportunities for people in the community to come together, socialise and network, at the same time as learning about new farming systems and techniques to improve drought resilience.

Upper North Farming Systems' (UNFS's) mission is to facilitate capacity building and empowerment of the agricultural community across the upper north region of South Australia. The group focuses on adapting and connecting farmers so they can learn from each other and from their shared experiences, and not farm in isolation. They do this by bringing farmers together in what they call Hubs. It's a large and diverse geographical area, encompassing Booleroo Centre, Crystal Brook, Hallet, Jamestown, Laura, Peterborough, Nelshaby, Orroroo, Quorn and Wilmington. It's a harsh climate, and when times are tough, they are very tough. The region has experienced significant declines in population and services over the past 30 years and the social fabric of communities in many areas has become frayed.

With the majority of communities in the region still reliant on agriculture, the social toll of the latest drought - the longest dry on record in 2020/21 - was evident, with symptoms of volunteer burn-out, self-isolation and mental health related issues.

Farmers know technology is essential, and farming systems have evolved significantly since the previous major drought, with stubble retention, improved efficiency of water use and a better understanding of livestock nutrition.

These communities are adaptable, open to innovation and aided through programs that promote not only professional connection, but also social and community

connections, especially as these areas are typically not well-served by government research bodies and private consultants.

There are currently 11 Hubs under UNFS - eight geographical Hubs: Booleroo / Appila, Morchard / Orroroo / Pekina / Black Rock, Melrose, Gladstone / Laura, Jamestown, Nelshaby, Quorn and Wilmington and three non-geographic Hubs: Ladies on the Land, New Farmers and the Ag Tech Hub. The establishment of the Hubs in 2019 recognised the need to retain networks within the group and foster the tackling of issues on a smaller scale, as well as the importance of coming together on a social level.

A \$20,000 Networks to Build Drought Resilience grant enabled UNFS to deliver the 'Tools, Tech and Transformation' workshop for farmers and agri-businesses. The key event was followed by a series of nine Hub events to provide the opportunity for networking, info-sharing, and learning about new farming systems and techniques to improve drought resilience. A 'farmer-to-farmer' learning model was recognised as a valuable and efficient mechanism to improve the productivity, profitability and sustainability of the agricultural industry in low rainfall zones.

The project reached 205 participants across 10 events that spanned six sector networks (Farm Business, Research Institute, NFP's / Community Organisations, Consultants, Off Farm Business, Government Agency). Targeting farmers and agri-business directly, attendees

learnt about tools aimed at improving efficiencies, sustainability and outcomes of operations like automatic feeding, as well as technology evolutions and business systems like satellite imagery on the farm scale, and succession and transition planning. Importantly, the solutions offered were all commercially available to be adopted on-farm, and farmers were able to speak directly with professionals in the fields, with discussions encouraged. They left with up-to-date knowledge to help them build more resilient farming systems.

The Hub events ensured accessibility for farmers who couldn't afford too much time away from their land. They were able to talk with neighbours and researchers about the outcomes of the 2021 season and what they might be able to do better next time. Questions like when and how to de-stock, how to ensure you're looking after genetics and bloodlines, and considerations around agisting, planting times, and upgrading tech vs repairing machinery were raised. Each Hub session included a training session in a tool, tech or system (identified from the key event by their elected Hub Representative), as well as a planning session identifying how to implement the new skills and knowledge on-farm, and where they require additional support.

Through the project, participants built knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change and learnt new concepts on a range of topics that can be adapted for drought and climate preparedness.

Communities had the opportunity to connect, train, converse (something many would not normally do in their usual day-to-day business) and lean on systems and each other so they are more prepared for future challenges.



*"Through the Tools, Technology and Transformation event series, farmers and landholders have been provided with an abundance of information that can be adapted and changed on farm. Therefore, these tools that have been taken from the events can help farmers change their way of thinking and help their preparedness for drought or any other climate challenges they may face."*

# Reviving Marama's Community Hall

**Project Title:** Marama Community Hall Revival

**Organisation:** Marama Community Incorporated

Grant:  
\$150,000

State:	LGA:	NRM:	Opportunity Type:	Primary Outcome:
SA	Karoonda East Murray	SA Murray Darling Basin	4 - Infrastructure 1 - Network Capacity	Small-scale community infrastructure projects to foster connectedness, improve wellbeing and make community facilities resilient to the impacts of drought

It has been more than 20 years since Marama had an active Hall Committee. In the past, the Hall had been central to keeping the community together. However, after years of neglect, it was in a state of disrepair and not able to be used. With the district experiencing severe drought, a lot of local residents were feeling isolated and vulnerable. There was a shared view that having a place to meet would provide much-needed opportunities to connect with each other and assist in building capacity by strengthening social and community networking, support, engagement, and wellbeing to be more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought.

After attending a drought meeting, which highlighted the importance of connectedness and social networking in helping to reduce the feelings of isolation and improving mental wellbeing, 26 locals decided it was time to reactivate the Committee of Marama Community Inc. Their first project would be restoring the hall which had fallen into disrepair after around 15 years of no use. The power wasn't even connected!

With a \$150,000 grant from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund Networks to Build Drought Resilience program, the committee was able to fund the underpinning, roof replacement, ceiling replacement, stone work, paint the interior, electrical work (including air-conditioning) and new toilet facilities.

The project relied on a big commitment from volunteers and local contractors at working-bees to get the job done. But it was worth it. The Committee knew upgrading this meeting place would build drought resilience by offering somewhere able to be used year-round to support community wellbeing, improve connectivity, increase knowledge sharing in both formal and informal meetings; and broadly to increase access to, and community usage of, the facility. It would benefit a range of volunteer and community groups to be able to access a meeting space and empower the community to look forward, plan and host events, connect and reduce isolation.

Since completing the renovations on the Hall the community has seen a dramatic shift in the attitudes of residents. Not only did the project give them a reason to meet throughout construction, but they now have a shared space to use that they can be proud of.

The committee reported that the project has injected renewed enthusiasm into their small community, with people more open to working together, to sharing ideas and motivated to connect. There is a sense of pride and achievement among all who contributed.

The Hall has hosted a number of important community events since its completion and is booked in to host future events held by key industry groups that will benefit the community by improving abilities to adapt, re-organise or transform in response to a changing climate, increasing variability and scarcity of rainfall and changed seasonality of rainfall.



*"While it is still very early days, and our community is still coming out of several drought-affected seasons, we believe that the Hall revival project has already changed local attitudes in a positive way. The community is very aware of the effects of drought and has been able to access different ways of dealing with the effects through a wider local program of events in 2020 and 2021. Our Hall revival brings the opportunity closer to home, right to our door-step. By being able to host events, partner with supportive groups, network with agricultural specialists, and support our nearest neighbour in the community, we are encouraged to meet together in a positive way. This will encourage access to a range of measures to be prepared for future droughts."*



Farm visit, WOTL, SA



Destination Tweed Ltd, NSW



FarmLink Research, NSW



Farm walk, Wheatbelt NRM, WA



## Grant Recipients' Final Reports

A separate document has been collated providing a snapshot of each project and key outcomes, based on the final reports submitted by the grant recipients. This will be an addendum to this report. Additional detail beyond what is included in the addendum is available upon request.

# Projects by State, NRM and Opportunity Type

State	NRMs	Opp Type	Name	Amount
ACT	ACT	4	Tharwa Community Association Inc	\$20,000
NSW	Riverina LLS	1	Riverine Plains Incorporated	\$102,300
NSW	North Coast	1	North Coast Regional Landcare Network Inc	\$50,000
NSW	North West	1	Tamworth Regional Landcare Association	\$18,955
NSW	Riverina LLS	1	Active Farmers Ltd	\$10,120
NSW	South East	1	Eurobodalla Shire Council	\$17,270
NSW	South East	1	Bermagui Pre School Co-operative Society Limited	\$49,000
NSW	South East	2	Monaro Farming Systems CMC Incorporated	\$16,700
NSW	Central West	2	Murdi Paaki Regional Rugby League Council Incorporated Trading as Creative Community Concepts	\$10,000
NSW	North Coast	2	Northern Rivers Community Gateway Inc	\$14,289
NSW	Central Tablelands	2	The Australian Landscape Science Institute Limited	\$18,270
NSW	Riverina LLS	2	FarmLink Research Ltd	\$18,096
NSW	Northern Tablelands	2	Glenrac Incorporated	\$49,870
NSW	Central West	2	Adavale Lane Community Centre Incorporated	\$17,491
NSW	Central Tablelands	2	Mid Lachlan Landcare Incorporated	\$27,560
NSW	North Coast	2	Kempsey Shire Council	\$56,960
NSW	North Coast	2	Clarence Landcare Incorporated	\$40,520
NSW	North Coast	2	Destination Tweed Ltd	\$25,000
NSW	South East	3	Monaro Farming Systems CMC Incorporated	\$19,050
NSW	Northern Tablelands	3	Gwymac Incorporated	\$18,950
NSW	Northern Tablelands	3	Glenrac Incorporated	\$48,340
NSW	Central West	4	Western Plains Regional Development Inc	\$110,000
NSW	North West	4	Weemeloh Hall	\$18,832
NSW	North West	4	Community College-Northern Inland Incorporated	\$13,731

State	NRMs	Opp Type	Name	Amount
NSW	Central West	4	Caragabal Country Golf Club Ltd	\$50,000
NT	Northern Territory; NQ Dry Tropics	3	Young Livestock Exporters Network	\$45,867
NT	Northern Territory	4	Kulgera Gymkhana Club Incorporated	\$29,724
QLD	Northern Gulf	1	Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd	\$37,125
QLD	Burnett Mary Regional	1	Red Earth Community Foundation South Burnett Limited	\$18,524
QLD	South East	1	Queensland Families and Communities Association Inc	\$46,740
QLD	South East	2	Destination Scenic Rim Inc	\$12,000
QLD	Desert Channels	2	Longreach Regional Council	\$32,500
QLD	Southern Arid Queensland Landscapes	2	Macintyre Ag Alliance Inc	\$17,188
QLD	Desert Channels	2	GroWQ	\$44,000
QLD	Maranoa Balonne and Border Rivers; Western; Mallee; Murray Darling Basin, SA	2	Society of Precision Agriculture Australia Incorporated (SPAA)	\$48,658
QLD	Northern Gulf	2	Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd	\$49,700
QLD	Burnett Mary Regional	3	Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers	\$16,200
QLD	Central West	3	Burnett Catchment Care Association	\$19,000
QLD	Condamine	3	Momentum Mental Health Limited	\$50,000
QLD	Condamine	4	Warra Public Memorial Hall Inc	\$115,500
QLD	Southern Gulf	4	Flinders Shire Council	\$150,000
QLD	Maranoa Balonne and Border Rivers	4	Stanthorpe Agricultural Society	\$50,000
QLD	Desert Channels	4	Connecting Communities Australia Ltd	\$28,508
SA	Eyre Peninsula	1	Southern Cross University	\$77,163
SA	SA Murray Darling Basin	1	University of South Australia	\$148,458



## Projects by State, NRM and Opportunity Type

State	NRMs	Opp Type	Name	Amount
SA	Eyre Peninsula	1	Tumby Bay Progress Association Incorporated	\$45,000
SA	Northern and Yorke	2	Upper North Farming Systems	\$20,000
SA	South East	2	MacKillop Farm Management Group Inc	\$70,817
SA	Eyre Peninsula; Murraylands / Riverland	2	WoTL Ltd	\$29,625
SA	Northern and Yorke	2	The Flinders Ranges Council	\$139,000
SA	Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board	2	Coorong District Council	\$31,000
SA	South East	2	Limestone Coast Food & Agribusiness Cluster Ltd	\$24,450
SA	Eyre Peninsula	2	District Council of Streaky Bay	\$27,000
SA	Murray Darling Basin; Eyre Peninsula; South East; Northern and Yorke	3	WoTL Ltd	\$49,891
SA	SA Murray Darling Basin	4	Marama Community Incorporated	\$150,000
SA	Eyre Peninsula	4	Wudinna and Le Hunte District Agricultural Horticultural & Floricultural Society Incorporated	\$109,417
TAS	Cradle Coast	2	Big hART Inc	\$140,000
VIC	Gippsland	1	Gippsland Agricultural Group	\$50,000
VIC	North East	1	AgBiz Assist Limited	\$81,400
VIC	Corangamite	1	Trust for Nature (Victoria)	\$21,900
VIC	North East	1	Indigo Shire Council	\$98,843
VIC	Mallee	1	Food Next Door Co-op Ltd	\$35,826
VIC	North East; East Gippsland	1	Gippsland Agricultural Group	\$42,920
VIC	Mallee; Wimmera	2	Birchip Cropping Group Inc	\$49,500
VIC	Wimmera	2	Partners In Ag Incorporated	\$28,608
VIC	Mallee	3	Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc	\$44,290

State	NRMs	Opp Type	Name	Amount
VIC	East Gippsland	3	Paynesville Neighbourhood Centre Inc	\$26,772
VIC	Corangamite; Glenelg Hopkins; East Gippsland; North NRM TAS	3	Southern Farming Systems Ltd	\$45,810
VIC	East Gippsland	4	Wairewa Public Hall & Recreation Reserve	\$14,509
VIC	North Central	4	Charlton Neighbourhood House Inc	\$21,000
VIC	West Gippsland	4	Binginwarri Recreation Reserve	\$40,000
VIC	North Central	4	Mallee District Aboriginal Services Limited	\$136,420
VIC	North Central	4	Murrabit Advancement Association Inc	\$37,318
WA	Rangelands	1	Southern Rangelands Pastoral Alliance Inc	\$34,425
WA	Rangelands	1	The Agricultural Collective Ltd	\$35,000
WA	South West	1	Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee	\$49,850
WA	South West, WA; Murray Darling Basin, SA; Murray; Goulburn Broken, VIC	1	Outback Academy Australia Limited	\$146,966
WA	Peel Harvey Region	1	Shire of Pingelly	\$44,895
WA	Rangelands	1	Saltwater Country Ltd	\$145,316
WA	Wheatbelt	2	Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Incorporated	\$104,000
WA	Northern Agricultural	2	The Liebe Group Inc	\$13,100
WA	Wheatbelt	2	Facey Group Inc	\$20,000
WA	South West Region	2	Balingup Progress Association Inc	\$24,359
WA	South West Region	2	Blackwood Basin Group Incorporated	\$31,592
WA	South Coast	4	Shire of Ravensthorpe	\$38,540
WA	South West Region	4	Nyabing Progress Association Inc	\$10,701
WA	Northern Agricultural	4	Shire of Coorow	\$10,938
<b>Total Grant Funds Acquitted (Adjusted grant funds)</b>				<b>\$4,199,157</b>

# Program Guidelines

## Key Dates

Opens  
25 May 2021

Closes  
05 July 2021

Grants Announced  
by October 2021

Note: Projects funded in this round must be undertaken between 25 October 2021 and 27 June 2022, and fully acquitted no later than 19 August 2022.

All applications close 5pm Victorian time (AEST).

## About the Future Drought Fund

The Future Drought Fund is a long-term Australian Government investment fund established under the Future Drought Fund Act 2019, and provides a sustainable source of funding to help Australian farmers and communities become more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought. The purpose of the Fund is to enhance the public good by building drought resilience. The Fund is part of the Government's Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan.

The Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program (the Program) is one of the Fund's foundational programs, to build community capacity by strengthening social and community networking, support, engagement, and wellbeing. These actions will build an enduring resilience to the impacts of climate change, including drought, and enhance the public good in agriculture-dependent communities.

## About FRRR

FRRR's vision is for a vibrant, resilient, and revitalised remote, rural, and regional Australia.

We believe targeted, well-informed investment in people and organisations that are in and of their place will stimulate ideas that lead to actions, both big and small.

Investing in local people and organisations that are connected, who know and understand the local context, and who can mobilise and activate resources can transform a community's view of itself and drive its future.

That is why our programs focus on building resilience and strengthening communities.

# Program Information

## Program Purpose

The program is designed to build strong social connectedness, strengthen social capital, and support transformative activities that enable regional communities to be more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought.

It is part of the Australian Government's commitment to support agriculture-dependent communities across Australia to be sustainable and productive.

## Types of Projects Supported

The Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program will fund events, projects, activities, training, and small-scale infrastructure that assist communities to build their capacity by strengthening social and community networking, support, engagement, and wellbeing to be more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought under **four opportunity types**:

**Opportunity 1 - Projects that strengthen the capacity, capability, and coordination of professional, social or community networks in agriculture-dependent communities to build drought resilience.**

Criteria: Applicants must address how the proposed project will contribute to one or more of the following outcomes:

- Increase social connection in local networks;
- Increase community engagement, a shared sense of purpose and community belonging;
- Increase access, participation, and diversity in network participation; and/or
- Improve coordination and collaboration between social networks, other community organisations and sectors in local communities.

**Opportunity 2 - Events that facilitate professional, social and community connection to build understanding of risks posed by drought and climate change in agriculture-dependent communities throughout Australia.**

Criteria: Applicants must address how the proposed project will contribute to one or more of the following outcomes:

- Increase opportunities for diverse people and communities to participate in networking events such as field days, conferences, forums, summits, and seminars;
- Build knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change;
- Contribute to building a positive community culture and provide people and communities with an opportunity to work collaboratively to solve problems;
- Foster higher rates of innovation in the local economy and agricultural sector; and/or
- Improve regional branding and recognition of local agri-food systems.



**Opportunity 3 - Training to improve the skills, understanding and capacity of community network members to participate in community risk management, planning and community driven projects that build drought resilience.**

Criteria: Applicants must address how the proposed project will contribute to one or more of the following outcomes:

- Increase access to information and training to build drought resilience in their communities;
- Build knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change; and/or
- Increase the role and profile of professional, social and community networks in regional drought resilience planning.

**Opportunity 4 - Small-scale community infrastructure projects to foster connectedness, improve wellbeing and make community facilities resilient to the impacts of drought.**

Criteria: Applicants must address how the proposed project will contribute to one or more of the following outcomes:

- Improve new and existing meeting places so they can be used year-round to support community wellbeing, improve connectivity, increase knowledge sharing; and/or
- Increase access to, broaden and increase community usage of the facility.

The program will offer three tiers of grants to not-for-profit organisations totalling \$4.5 million over an 18-month period.

Round 1 aims to fund approximately 50 projects:

1. \$10,000 to \$20,000 (approximately 26 projects, events, or activities per round);
2. \$20,000 to \$50,000 (approximately 17 projects, events, or activities per round);
3. \$50,000 to \$150,000 (approximately 6 projects, events, or activities per round).

These grants are available thanks to a partnership between the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and FRRR, and a wide range of collaborative donors.

**Key Dates:**

	Round Opens	Round Closes	Announced
Round 1	25 May 2021	5pm AEST, 5 July 2021	Mid-October 2021
Activity must take place between 25 October 2021 and 27 June 2022.			
Round 2	20 September 2021	5pm AEDT, 1 November 2021	Late February 2022
Activity must take place between 28 February 2022 and 27 June 2022.			

**Funds Available & Key dates**

**Definitions**

- Final activity reports from both funding rounds must be submitted no later than 19 August 2022.
- Unsuccessful applicants from Round 1 may reapply in Round 2.

Organisations may submit a maximum of one application per round and deliver activities that meet one or more of the criteria described in Opportunity 1, 2, 3 and/or 4.

Where projects are a combination of Opportunity types (e.g. an event, and small-scale infrastructure request) applicants **must address one or more of the criteria under each opportunity** they are applying for.

**Drought resilience** means the ability to adapt, reorganise or transform in response to changing temperature, increasing variability and scarcity of rainfall and changed seasonality of rainfall, for improved economic, environmental and social wellbeing.

**Agriculture-dependent communities** refer to remote, rural, and regional communities vulnerable to the impacts of drought.

**Networks are informal or established groups of people that meet to facilitate professional, social and community connection, resulting in improved community wellbeing over time.**

**Not-for-profit refers to an organisation that does not operate for the profit, personal gain or other benefit of particular people (for example, its members, the people who run it or their friends or relatives).**

**What grant funds can't be used for**

There are a range of areas that we **cannot fund** through this program, including:

- Projects that are not located in remote, rural, and regional Australia.
- Projects that support core business and areas of responsibility of Federal, State and Local Governments.
- Applications from sporting organisations need to clearly demonstrate charitable outcomes and benefit to the wider community that are above and beyond the sporting activities of the club, and demonstrate a clear linkage to drought resilience. This is because the encouragement or advancement of sport, recreation and social activities are not considered charitable activities under Australian law.
- Prizes, gifts, trophies, or awards.
- Projects solely focused on animal welfare.
- Activities that do not directly support agriculture-dependent communities.
- Activities that benefit a single individual rather than build long-term drought resilience and enhance the public good in agriculture-dependent communities.
- Activities that do not directly strengthen community networking, wellbeing, drought preparedness, or reduce the risk of social isolation associated with drought.

- Activities that duplicate existing projects or services in a particular community.
- Activities where costs have already been incurred because the activity has already been undertaken or will have been undertaken prior to the start of the activity.
- Activities outside of Australia or involving overseas travel.
- Activities that provide private and/or commercial benefit rather than not-for-profit or social enterprises activities.
- Business activities where the primary purpose is for profit.
- Activities already funded through another Australian, state or territory, or local government program.
- Provision of Funding to any person or organisation who have outstanding final reports from a prior Australian Government grant of financial assistance.
- Any costs that are not directly related to carrying out the Activity such as:
  - preparation of grant application materials;
  - protecting or patenting intellectual property;
  - activities of a distinctly commercial or proprietary nature that are aimed at selling or attracting investment;
  - developing, building, or producing commercial prototypes to commercialise a research project outcome;
  - creation of new institutions;
  - establishing new commercial ventures;
  - core business expenses not directly related to carrying out the Activity, including administrative, overhead (and infrastructure not specified in a Project budget) costs, staff salaries (unless directly engaged in delivering the Funding Program) and relocation costs, travel and living allowances;
  - financial support for feasibility studies;
  - hospitality or catering beyond reasonable costs for providing refreshments at Activity-related events such as workshops or field days;
  - purchasing of infrastructure not specified in a Project budget;
  - the conduct of activities that could be considered part of normal business or ongoing operations, unless integral to the delivery of the Activity;
  - purchase or acquisition of land or buildings;
  - capital expenditure;
  - activities involving political advocacy;
  - production of clothing, equipment, or merchandise for distribution;
  - subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone, and rent;
  - major construction or large capital works.

Please contact us to discuss your eligibility prior to lodging an application if you are unsure.

## Eligibility

To apply, **you must** meet the following criteria:

- Applicant organisation must be a not-for-profit organisation **with an ABN or Incorporation Certificate**. Organisations with or without DGR-1 endorsement are eligible. The proposed project must be for charitable purposes and offer clear public benefit.
- Organisations can submit one application per grant round.
- Projects must benefit communities in remote, rural, or regional Australia that are agriculture-dependent.

Please note, **you will be considered ineligible** if the:

- Application is submitted by individuals, sole traders, private or commercial businesses (as per the submitted ABN).
- Application is submitted by an organisation that is not a legal entity (i.e., a registered not-for-profit), without the written consent of the governing / partnering body who holds the ABN / Incorporation Certificate.
- Application is submitted without required financial documentation (see below).
- Final report/s from any FRRR grants awarded in the previous seven years have not been acquitted (delivery organisations should check with legal organisation to see if there are any outstanding final reports).
- Application is for a project or activity that has already occurred / is occurring prior to the announcement of funding.
- Application is incomplete. **NOTE:** Due to the volume of applications received, applications are assessed based on the documentation received at the time of application. **FRRR is unlikely to follow up missing documentation after applications have been submitted.**

**Before beginning your application, please read the information on the following pages. It sets out critical, additional information that we require and explains why it is important.**

FRRR accepts applications via its online application portal, Grants Gateway.

We recommend you [download this printable copy of the application form](#).

Click [here](#) to apply.



## How to Apply

**Need help?**

Phone 1800 170 020 or email [futuredrought@frrr.org.au](mailto:futuredrought@frrr.org.au)



# Audited Financial Statement

# Financial Statement



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Progress Report – Annual Report

Section 1: Audit Opinion

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal

This Audit Opinion is prepared for the purposes of the Grant Agreement (Agreement) between the Commonwealth represented by the Drought Minister and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) for the Future Drought Fund: Networks to Build Drought Resilience Project (Project).

Scope

We have conducted an independent audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards of the Statement of Income and Expenditure provided by FRRR for the period 1 March 2021 to 23 January 2023 which specifies an amount of \$3,535,255 of expenditure on the Project, in order to express an opinion on it for the purposes of the Agreement.

Our audit involved an examination of 33% of transactions. This was conducted on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amount of expenditure incurred. This included an examination of the FRRR's financial records and receipts, and an evaluation of the policies and procedures used to calculate the expenditure on the Project. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether the methodology used to calculate the expenditure on the Project, is in accordance with the Agreement, and that the figure stated is true and fair.

This Audit Opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

We confirm that in our opinion, FRRR has incurred \$3,535,255 for the period of 1 March 2021 to 23 January 2023 in expenditure on the Project (as defined in the Agreement) in accordance with the terms of the Agreement.

RSD Audit



Print Name: KATHIE TEASDALE  
Position: PARTNER  
Date: 09/02/2023

RSD Audit Pty Ltd  
ABN 85 619 186 908  
Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

## Future Drought Fund - Networks to Build Drought Resilience program

1 March 2021 - 26 January 2023

### Project Budget Expenditure

#### Total Administration and Project Funding Expenditure:

Grant funding received to date	\$ 3,750,000.00
Grant Funding expensed to date	\$ 3,535,254.71
Co-contributions received to date (cash and in-kind)	\$ 1,138,058.29
Cash co-contributions expensed to date	\$ 1,067,706.25
In-kind contributions	\$66,053.00

Describe in-kind contributions provided to date towards project delivery

Bank Fees	\$68.00
Management Support	\$32,735.00
Office Rent	\$18,500.00
Printing and Stationery	\$900.00
Telephone / Internet	\$8,850.00
Recruitment	\$5,000.00

The \$216,516.75 of unspent program funds has been approved to carry forward to support the delivery of the Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative.

# Budget Line Item Expenditure

## Project Administration Budget

Budget line item	Grant funding allocated (\$)	Cash contribution (\$)	Grant funding expended to date (\$)	Grant funding expended (%)	Explanation for delays in expenditure relative to progress of project
Program Management	137,950.00		137,950.00	100%	
Program Support	94,800.00		94,800.00	100%	
Oncosts	22,873.00		22,873.00	100%	
Recruitment and Retention	25,000.00		25,000.00	100%	
Office and IT Staff Expenses	14,761.00		14,761.00	100%	
Travel and Accommodation	20,020.00		9,073.38	45%	Offset increased communication costs
Community Engagement	4,000.00		4,569.24	114%	
Communications and Marketing	42,490.00		52,577.33	124%	
Audit and Insurance	3,106.00		3,106.00	100%	
Reporting	10,000.00		10,000.00	100%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$375,000.00</b>		<b>\$374,709.95</b>	<b>99.92%</b>	

Budget line item	Grant funding allocated (\$)	Cash contribution (\$)	Grant funding expended to date (\$)	Grant funding expended (%)	Explanation for delays in expenditure relative to progress of project
<b>Activity 1 - Capacity Building</b>					
10 projects @ \$20,000	150,000.00	50,000.00	34,435.50	23%	Reallocation of Activities
8 projects @ \$50,000	300,000.00	100,000.00	420,316.01	140%	Returned funds \$3,644.74
4 projects @ \$150,000	450,000.00	150,000.00	600,334.50	133%	
<b>Activity 2 - Events</b>					
10 projects @ \$20,000	150,000.00	50,000.00	132,850.50	89%	Returned funds \$12,157.50
8 projects @ \$50,000	300,000.00	100,000.00	422,956.50	141%	Returned funds \$17,111.25
3 projects @ \$150,000	337,500.00	112,500.00	383,082.75	114%	
<b>Activity 3 - Training</b>					
10 projects @ \$20,000	150,000.00	50,000.00	54,900.00	37%	
8 projects @ \$50,000	300,000.00	100,000.00	233,227.50	78%	Returned funds \$29,055.00
3 projects @ \$150,000	337,500.00	112,500.00	\$374,709.95	100%	
<b>Activity 4 - Community Infrastructure</b>					
20 projects @ \$20,000	300,000.00	100,000.00	78,810.75	26%	
10 projects @ \$50,000	375,000.00	125,000.00	205,378.00	55%	Return of funds \$758.00
2 projects @ \$150,000	225,000.00	75,000.00	594,252.75	264%	Return of funds \$112,500.00
Surplus to be added with other unallocated variations			\$13,058.29		
<b>Project total</b>	<b>\$3,375,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,125,000.00</b>	<b>\$3,160,544.76</b>	<b>93.65%</b>	
<b>Networks to Build Drought Resilience program total</b>	<b>\$3,750,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,125,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,535,254.71</b>	<b>94.27%</b>	



# MEL Framework Crosswalk

Funding Program Guidelines	Contract	MEL Program Logic, and FRRR Grant Agreement	MEL Outputs	Funding Program Application Form	Final Activity Report from Grant Recipient
Opportunity Type	Opportunity Criteria	Outcomes	Potential Indicators	Question	Question
1 - Projects that strengthen the capacity, capability and coordination of professional, social or community networks in agriculture-dependent communities to build drought resilience.	<p>Increase social connection in local networks.</p> <p>Increase community engagement, a shared sense of purpose and community belonging.</p> <p>Increase access, participation, and diversity in network participation.</p> <p>Improved coordination and collaboration between social networks, other community organisations and sectors in local communities.</p>	<p><b>Year 1</b></p> <p>Increased opportunities for individuals and communities to network.</p> <p><b>Year 2-4 Outcomes</b></p> <p>Community networks have stronger capability to undertake strategic drought resilience planning.</p> <p>The number of, and participation in, local networks and programs to enhance drought resilience increases.</p>	<p>Increased coordination and / or collaboration of social networks with other community organisations or sectors.</p>	<p>Describe how your project will increase social connection to be better prepared for drought in the future (for individuals and as a whole network).</p> <p>Describe how your project will increase coordination and / or collaboration of your network with other community organisations or sectors.</p>	<p>Describe how your project has increased social connection to be better prepared for drought in the future (for individuals and as a whole network).</p> <p>Describe how your project has increased coordination and / or collaboration of your network with other community organisations or sectors.</p>
2 – Events that facilitate professional, social and community connection to build understanding of risks posed by drought and climate change in agriculture-dependent communities throughout Australia.	<p>Increase opportunities for diverse people and communities to participate in networking events such as field days, conferences, forums, summits and seminars.</p> <p>Build knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change.</p> <p>Contribute to building a positive community culture and provide people and communities with an opportunity to work collaboratively to solve problems.</p> <p>Foster higher rates of innovation in the local economy and agricultural sector.</p> <p>Improve regional branding and recognition of local agri-food systems.</p>	<p><b>Year 1</b></p> <p>Increased participation in community social networking events / conferences.</p> <p>Increased diversity of event network participation.</p> <p><b>Year 2-4 Outcomes</b></p> <p>Evidence of learning and exchange within agriculture-dependent communities.</p>	<p>Increased individual participation in professional, social and community networking events.</p> <p>Increased participant knowledge of drought resilience as a result of participation in professional, social and community networking events.</p> <p>Increased diversity of event participation compared to current levels.</p> <p>Increased capacity and capability of professional, social and community network organisations.</p>	<p>Describe how your event will increase access and diversify participation for individuals within your network.</p> <p>Describe how your event will increase participant knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change.</p>	<p>Describe how your event has increased access and diversified participation for individuals within your network event.</p> <p>Describe how your event has increased participant knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change.</p>

Funding Program Guidelines	Contract	MEL Program Logic, and FRRR Grant Agreement	MEL Outputs	Funding Program Application Form	Final Activity Report from Grant Recipient
Opportunity Type	Opportunity Criteria	Outcomes	Potential Indicators	Question	Question
3 - Training to improve the skills, understanding and capacity of community network members to participate in community risk management, planning and community driven projects that build drought resilience.	<p>Increase access to information and training to build drought resilience in their communities.</p> <p>Build knowledge and understanding of the risks posed by drought and climate change.</p> <p>Increase the role and profile of professional, social and community networks in regional drought resilience planning.</p>	<p><b>Year 1</b></p> <p>Increased access to information and training to build drought resilience.</p> <p><b>Year 2-4 Outcomes</b></p> <p>Communities learn from and share innovative ways to build drought resilience.</p> <p>Community networks have stronger capability to undertake strategic drought resilience planning.</p>	<p>Increased participant knowledge of drought resilience as a result of participation in professional, social and community networking events.</p> <p>Increased capacity and capability of professional, social and community network organisations.</p> <p>Evidence of learning and exchange within agriculture-dependent communities.</p>	<p>Describe how the training will increase the skills and knowledge and capacity of community network members to build their understanding of, and resilience to future droughts.</p> <p>Describe how you plan to share your skills and knowledge to build drought resilience in your local community.</p>	<p>Describe how the training has increased the skills and knowledge and capacity of community network members to build their understanding of, and resilience to future droughts.</p> <p>Describe how you have shared your skills and knowledge to build drought resilience in your local community.</p>
4 - Small-scale community infrastructure projects to foster connectedness, improve wellbeing and make community facilities resilient to the impacts of drought.	<p>Improve new and existing meeting places so they can be used year-round to support community wellbeing, improve connectivity, increase knowledge sharing.</p> <p>Increase access to, broaden and increase community usage of the facility.</p>	<p><b>Year 1</b></p> <p>Improved access to and greater utilisation of community infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Year 2-4</b></p> <p>Increased opportunities to problem share and work collaboratively to solve problems.</p>	<p>Facilities improved with broader use by community organisations to increase community connectedness and knowledge sharing.</p> <p>Increase in visitation / utilisation data on community infrastructure.</p>	<p>Describe how the infrastructure will increase the ability of your network members to socially connect, improve community wellbeing, and enhance the facility for future droughts.</p> <p>Describe how the project will increase visitation or utilisation of your community infrastructure or facility.</p>	<p>Describe how the infrastructure has increased the ability of your network members to socially connect, improve community wellbeing, and enhance the facility to be resilient to the impacts of future droughts.</p> <p>Describe how the project has increased visitation or utilisation of your community infrastructure or facility.</p>