



Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program in Western Australia



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Future Drought Fund?

The Future Drought Fund is an Australian Government initiative to help Australian farmers and communities become more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought.

The fund invests annually in projects that will provide opportunities for farmers, allied industries and regional communities to:

- adopt new technologies
- improve their environmental and natural resource management
- refine their drought resilience planning and decision-making abilities

- participate in a range of community resilience activities.

How much money is available in the Fund?

The \$5 billion Future Drought Fund provides secure, continuous funding for drought resilience initiatives.

The Future Drought Fund will provide an investment of \$100 million each year from 2020 onwards to build drought resilience in regional Australia. It will help Australian farms and communities prepare for the impacts of drought.



How is the Future Drought Fund structured?

There are five themes under the Future Drought Fund:

1. Innovation and Adoption (regional Adoption and Innovation Hubs including the SW WA Hub, Innovation Grants)
2. Better Risk Management (focused on planning and preparedness)
3. Better Climate Information (focused on data-based decision-support tools and apps)
4. More Resilient Communities (focused on mentoring, networking and leadership training)
5. Better Land Management (focused on natural resource management).

What is the Regional Drought Resilience Planning (RDRP) program?

The RDRP program brings regional organisations, local government, communities and industry together to prepare for future drought risks by developing regional drought resilience plans.

These plans will identify priority actions to build resilience to drought in agriculture and allied industries across different regions. The RDRP program has been allocated \$9.85 million nationally in the foundational year (2021-22).

In Western Australia, the program will deliver three Regional Drought Resilience Plans in the foundational year. The three pilot regions are the Great Southern, Mid West and Wheatbelt.

Western Australia received just over \$1.3 million dollars for the program and the State Government provides in-kind contributions to support program delivery.

How does the RDRP program fit in under the Future Drought Fund?

The Regional Drought Resilience Planning (RDRP) program is one of the foundational programs under the Future Drought Fund in 2021-22 and fits under the 'Better Risk Management' theme. The RDRP program focuses on regional resilience planning.

The other program being delivered under the 'Better Risk Management' theme is the Farm Business Resilience Program which supports individual farmers and farm businesses to improve their drought resilience.

What is a Regional Drought Resilience Plan?

Regional Drought Resilience Plans are community led plans that identify priority actions that will enable regional communities to prepare for future droughts.

The plans will present:

- historical and expected impacts of drought in each region, based on the best available evidence
- an assessment of drought risk and adaptation pathways, based on expert input and extensive stakeholder consultation
- a pipeline of drought resilience projects specific to the region that address the needs and priorities of agriculture and allied industries and will inform future investments.

What is the relationship between the RDRP program and the Adoption and Innovation Hubs?

Regional Adoption and Innovation Hubs focus on collaboration and agricultural innovation. They facilitate networks for researchers, primary producers and community groups to work together to enhance implementation of drought resilient practices within their region.

There are eight Adoption and Innovation Hubs around Australia including two in WA – the South West-WA Hub and the Northern WA/NT Hub. Although the RDRP program will work with similar stakeholders in the region, the RDRP program focus is specifically on regional drought resilience planning and work covers smaller geographic areas.

Where will the RDRP program be implemented in WA?

During the foundation year 2021-22, the RDRP program is being piloted in the Great Southern, Mid West and Wheatbelt regions of WA.

- Great Southern includes Shires of Kojonup, Katanning, Woodanilling, Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Kent and Broomehill-Tambellup
- Mid West includes City of Greater Geraldton and Shires of Chapman Valley and Northampton
- Wheatbelt includes Shire of Kulin, Wagin, Dumbleyung, Lake Grace and Kondinin

Why were these regions selected for the pilot program?

Together, the three pilot regions cover over 670,000 km² of WA's grainbelt, the largest agricultural producing area in WA and a key contributor to the economy. In addition to large scale broadacre cropping, these regions support a diverse range of other primary production activities.

The three pilot regions all fall with the Bureau of Meteorology's South West Land Division forecasting area. The South West Land Division is amongst the most impacted regions in Australia experiencing consistent reduction in rainfall over the last several decades. Rainfall in this South West land division continues to decline with projections showing a further decrease in annual rainfall of up to 15% by 2030.

Other regions will be able to participate in the program in future years.

Who is responsible for delivering the program in WA?

The Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE) is working with the WA Government through the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to deliver the program in WA.

DPIRD has engaged three Regional Development Commissions (Great Southern, Mid West, Wheatbelt) to roll out the RDRP program in the pilot regions.

Who will be involved in helping to develop the regional plans?

The development of the plans will involve extensive stakeholder engagement, seeking input from:

- a variety of technical experts across a suite of social, economic, environmental fields
- Local Governments, industry, education and research institutions (Murdoch, UWA, Edith Cowan), farming groups and businesses, agricultural industry representative groups i.e. Grower Groups, Indigenous groups, relevant community organisations, relevant state government agencies, local champions and mental/rural health organisations.

Why should you participate in developing a regional drought resilience plan in your region?

The Future Drought Fund offers a unique opportunity for regional communities to access drought resilience data, tools, support, resources and networks as well as government funding to build their environmental, economic and social resilience to drought.

Under the RDRP program, regional organisations and communities are able to come together to share ideas, discuss the best ways to build resilience to drought in their region and identify their priorities for action.

Regional drought resilience plans will be tailored to local conditions and will include a pipeline of investable and fit-for-purpose drought resilience projects based on local needs and priorities. This means that regions will be better placed to apply for resources available through the Future Drought Fund and other opportunities.

Are there any funds for implementing the regional drought resilience plans?

The RDRP program will support small grants up to \$150,000 per region. Regions will be able to take forward priority actions identified in their regional drought resilience plans.

The targeting of this support will be developed through consultation with state and territory governments and others.

How will the plans benefit regional communities?

The regional drought resilience plans will help to ensure that our regional communities:

- are prepared for and more resilient to future droughts
- build environmental, economic and social resilience to droughts
- identify innovative and transformative drought projects to guide future investments
- improve natural resource management.

When will the plans be finalised?

The program is being implemented over 12 months across three pilot regions in WA. The regional plans are due to be finalised in June 2022.

How can I access the final plans for my region?

Once completed, the RDRP plans will be available via the Future Drought Fund website awe.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/drought/future-drought-fund.

More information

For more information about the Future Drought Fund, visit the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment's website awe.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/drought/future-drought-fund.

For more information on how DPIRD is supporting the Future Drought Fund, visit agric.wa.gov.au/FutureDroughtFund

To speak with someone about activities happening in the pilot regions, contact:

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