

Commissioners Joanne Chong & Malcolm Roberts  
Future Drought Fund Inquiry  
Productivity Commission  
Online submission; cc: [future.drought.fund@pc.gov.au](mailto:future.drought.fund@pc.gov.au)

Level 3 329 Collins Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
[info@alca.org.au](mailto:info@alca.org.au)  
ABN 80 637 680 310

3 March 2023

Dear Commissioners,

**RE: Submission to the Future Drought Fund Inquiry**

The Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Productivity Commission's consultation on the Future Drought Fund.

Please note that ALCA is happy for this submission to be published in full.

**About the Australian Land Conservation Alliance**

The Australian Land Conservation Alliance is the peak national body representing organisations that work to conserve, manage, and restore nature on privately managed land. We represent our members and supporters to grow the impact, capacity, and influence of private land conservation to achieve a healthy and resilient Australia. Our members include:

- Australian Wildlife Conservancy
- Biodiversity Conservation Trust NSW
- Bush Heritage Australia
- Greening Australia
- Landcare Australia
- Nature Foundation
- Queensland Trust for Nature
- South Endeavour Trust
- Tasmanian Land Conservancy
- The Nature Conservancy Australia
- Trust for Nature (Victoria)

ALCA member land conservation efforts have influenced over 3 million square kilometres with more than 4,000 landholders. We have over 70,000 supporters and our combined annual turnover exceeds \$260 million. Together ALCA and its members address some of the most pressing conservation issues across the country, including restoring endangered ecosystems, building the protected area estate, tackling invasive species, expanding private conservation finance, and funding and using nature-based solutions to tackle climate change.

Through their active land management, ALCA member organisations are deeply embedded in rural communities and economies, providing jobs, securing significant regional investment, and safeguarding remaining native habitat, with its many positive spill-over effects for community, wellbeing, and food security. We seek to demonstrate the role and value of private land conservation as a cornerstone of the Australian economy.

Some ALCA members are statutory entities; the views expressed in this submission do not necessarily represent the views of the Government administering those statutory entities.

## Summary

In recent times, ALCA has made three separate submissions related to the operation of the Future Drought Fund. They include submissions to:

- Annual Report 2020-21 and the progress of the Future Drought Fund (with a focus on the future of the Fund's progress) on 24 December 2021;
- The National Drought Agreement review on 30 June 2022; and
- A new Australian Government drought plan on 7 October 2022.

The overarching theme of the submissions is that building environmental resilience – that is, resilience for biodiversity – prior to the disaster of drought will help mitigate its economic, social and environmental impacts. After the disaster of drought, environmental management activities – including, where relevant, a transition to sustainable land use change – will help build resilience back into the landscape, and into communities.

These three submissions are enclosed. Their recommendations remain highly relevant to the Productivity Commission's inquiry.

Whilst the escalating impacts of the climate crisis have taken hold within the Australian public consciousness, the parallel crisis facing our natural world is less widely known. The World Economic Forum has already declared nature loss (i.e. biodiversity decline) “a *planetary emergency*”<sup>1</sup> with four of the top eight most severe risks on a global scale over the next ten years identified as environmental risks<sup>2</sup>:

*“Humanity has already wiped out 83% of wild mammals and half of all plants and severely altered three-quarters of ice-free land and two-thirds of marine environments. One million species are at risk of extinction in the coming decades – a rate tens to hundreds of times higher than the average over the past 10 million years....*

***Human societies and economies rely on biodiversity in fundamental ways. ...over half the world's total GDP – is moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services.***<sup>3</sup>

Using the same methodology, **approximately half of Australia's GDP has also been demonstrated as having a moderate to very high dependence on nature**<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, and in response to the question identified on page 4 in the Commission's *Call for Submissions* document<sup>5</sup>, “Should the scope of the Fund be broadened to support resilience to climate change? Why or why not?”, ALCA recommends that yes, the scope of the Fund should be broadened to support resilience to climate change **and should also be broadened to support resilience for nature.**”

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<sup>1</sup> See: World Economic Forum, January 2020; <https://www.weforum.org/reports/nature-risk-rising-why-the-crisis-engulfing-nature-matters-for-business-and-the-economy>

<sup>2</sup> See: World Economic Forum, *Global Risks Report 2022*; [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_The\\_Global\\_Risks\\_Report\\_2022.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_Global_Risks_Report_2022.pdf); the risks are climate action failure (1<sup>st</sup>); extreme weather (2<sup>nd</sup>); biodiversity loss (3<sup>rd</sup>); human environmental damage (7<sup>th</sup>); and natural resource crises (8<sup>th</sup>).

<sup>3</sup> See: World Economic Forum, *Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy*, January 2020; <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-risks-report-2020>

<sup>4</sup> See: Australian Conservation Foundation, *The nature-based economy: How Australia's prosperity depends on nature*, September 2022; <https://www.acf.org.au/how-australias-prosperity-depends-on-nature>

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/future-drought-fund/call-for-submissions>

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to the Productivity Commission's consultation on the Future Drought Fund.

ALCA and its members are happy to make ourselves available should you wish to follow up on any issue raised in the submission; please do not hesitate to contact ALCA via (Mr Michael Cornish, Policy Lead).

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Jody Gunn**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Australian Land Conservation Alliance**