

10 July 2023

The Productivity Commission
Submission to the Future Drought Fund Act
Via online portal

Dear Commissioners

Thank you for your interim report on the Future Drought Fund. We are writing to suggest a reconsideration of the sections on the Regional Drought Resilience Planning (RDPR). There have been three RDRPs in our region and we believe the RDRPs have a multitude of benefits which greatly offset any risks identified.

Achievement and benefits of the RDRPs include:

- Coherent regional focus on what drought means in the region or place.
- Bringing together diverse, cross-sector stakeholders with a focus on drought.
- Taking an evidence-based approach in relation to addressing drought in the region (a more granular approach).
- A regional co-design approach to drought with key regional priorities for action in the short, medium, and long term.
- Alignment of the RDR Plans with other supporting regional initiatives for greater impact and outcome.

The Monitoring Evaluation and Learning consultants (Coutts J&R) interviews from round 1 of RDRPs in Queensland concluded they were “*generally satisfied with the draft plans, their usefulness, ease of understanding and relevance in terms of potentially contributing to a coordinated response to drought resilience*” concluding “*stakeholders in some regions gained a new understanding of drought related impacts*”.

Several challenges were addressed by the Commission. However, this does not warrant cessation of the RDRPs as these issues raised can be addressed as follows:

- Integration issues: Ensure that the Drought Fund Framework is integrative.
- Consultation fatigue: The RDRPs are owned (via a Memorandum of Understanding) with key regional bodies. As such, the consultation fatigue occurs due to multiple short term funded projects. This can be rectified by addressing how different sub-programs under the Future Drought Fund are integrated. This action does not require the RDRP project to cease.



- Implementation: The initial RDRP funding did not consider implementation funding. This has been a central shortcoming in the design of the program which can be addressed.

We urge for reconsideration of supporting the RDRPs with suggestions for improvements to any perceived shortcomings being addressed via the overall Future Drought Fund design. Suitable governance mechanisms to address drought as part of disaster resilience and provide timely funding for delivery and implementation of the plans are a critical factor for progressing effectively with the implementation stage.

Yours sincerely

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