

Brief comments received

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1	The Green Revolution is being superced by the Soil Revolution. Regenerative Agriculture has proven biology is a far superior plant production management method over the common standard of chemical inputs and tillage
2	Some parts of the FDF initiatives are good others not hitting the mark. 2. Not much to help businesses for the next drought. 3. Need to cover a wider scope of farmers to get information out there. 4. Now is the time to act on what the consultants are promoting. 5. Use of existing infrastructure for seed storage in a drought. 6. Rebates for utilities .ie develop policies with company's to offer a rebate during the drought period. 7. Development of drought tolerant crops. 8. Follow up not real good at times. Have to ring to find out information. 9. Available information to be in a one stop shop website as it gets confusing due to so many organisations being involved with it. 10. Soil testing good but still waiting for a follow up on the recommendations from it.
3	Excerpt from Inquiry into Part 3 of the Future Drought Fund Act 2019 Call for submissions: The Commission is looking for evidence on ways the Fund is supporting or not supporting drought resilience, and answers to the following questions: Are the funding principles, vision, aim, strategic priorities, and objectives of the Funding Plan appropriate and effective? Attachment B: 7. support a range of activities or projects at a mixture of levels, such as the farm, regional or national level. Per Eligibility criteria in your Long Term Trials document, the horticultural industry is not considered an "Eligible Agricultural Industry". It would occur to me that from the perspective of drought innovation and resilience that any agricultural industry that requires water to survive, should be an eligible industry. Four-year-old apple trees can produce good quality fruit yields of 25 t/ha with an irrigation requirement of 100 L/ tree per week or approximately 2 - 3 ML/ha per season. A review of your eligibility criteria should be immediately undertaken, to ensure that horticultural hubs like Stanthorpe QLD are not left 'high and dry' during future droughts.
4	Inefficiencies in the grant tendering processes that results in poor quality spend. Just before Xmas a major grant tendering round was published - closing date early January. Sign off from many proposed participants is not possible and hence work that is of regional importance is foregone. This situation results in low grade investments from the Act. No published strategic plan that provides organisations an annual scope of works, guidance of when funding is being disseminated - this is either a reflection of inadequate staffing to administer or poor targeting. The lack of strategic targeting may reflect inadequate national consultation by DAWE and an over-reliance on co-design by universities and other parties - rural communities are not engaged adequately.
5	On behalf of Tasmanian partners I would like to endorse the Tas Farm Innovation Hub's submission to this enquiry (March 2023). Hub partners have been involved in the co design process underpinning this process since early 2021. As the Tas Hub submission identifies, it has taken time and effort to build relationships with partners, their constituencies and farmers generally across Tasmania. We are particularly pleased to have built the basis for beneficial projects with Palawa kani and look to further opportunities in this space. Co design with communities has been an important principle behind the FDF since its inception. The Minister's Second Reading Speech in 2019

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	emphasised the importance of government agencies working with communities to develop on ground programs and projects with farmers and communities to achieve the objectives of the legislation. This has taken time to achieve in Tasmania as the Hub submission indicates. The Hub submission also notes the plethora of FDF projects in the state and which the Hub is now beginning to play a coordinating role. The Hub architecture and processes are now in place. Not only should this be acknowledged but government should be planning to use this architecture to achieve further effective outcomes for drought resilience beyond the current designated timeframe for the program. Pam Allan, Chair Tas Farm Innovation Hub Advisory Board
6	What is this about. Ordinary farmers and members of the community do not even know what this is or who you are or what the benefit is to us other than most likely more red and green tape. Seriously why would we bother if you are part of creating a man made drought via ripping more water from production via mdba plan that uses flawed or no science and is actually wrecking the environment for votes in inner city and South Australia to the detriment of country people. Even staff at mdba have commented that this is poor legislation but no one wants to fix it.
7	You are correct. We received a grant for \$150000 but then had to return it due to delays in the project. We asked for an extension but this was denied. As a result of this the entire project had to be re-assessed and encountered considerable delay. We will complete the mens shed stage in September this year but the all important Hub component may never get off the ground as large grants are not common now. This is a real shame because the community really needs this project.
8	Our community project, which was funded as part of the FDF, focused on improving the social resilience of our small rural community. I am farm owner and business person, and our farm had just weathered 3 years of drought and 2 years of flood, therefore, I understand the importance of economic outcomes. However, in a small rural community the real and measurable impacts of improving social resilience outcomes are going to be exponentially more important, more widely felt and more tangible and real than any economic outcomes. Small rural communities rarely have the populations needed to make community projects economically viable, but those same small communities provide the social, mental and spiritual support that farmers need during times of hardship. Funds that improve the social resilience of a small community are literally saving lives and livelihoods in times of hardship and giving communities the facilities they need to band together and help each other through, as only small community can.
9	In a world grappling with climate change challenges, investing in community resilience is crucial. The Future Drought Funding, allocated to our organisation and communities for the Events Support Officer project, will be transformative. It aims to foster social cohesion, bring our community together, and enhance preparedness for future droughts, laying the foundation for a stronger, more resilient community. The Events Support Officer project plays a vital role in strengthening our community's social fabric. Thanks to the funding, we will employ a dedicated officer to support the organising of diverse community events, including agricultural shows, workshops, and cultural festivals. These events create opportunities for interaction and collaboration among various community groups, fostering dialogue, building relationships, and nurturing a sense of unity and shared purpose. By creating platforms for engagement and collaboration, the project facilitates knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and collective action. Workshops, resources, and training programs provide community members with valuable skills and information to host events and better prepare for future droughts. We will tap into the collective wisdom and experiences of our communities, leading to innovative and sustainable drought mitigation strategies. Strengthening community cohesion through this project equips us to withstand drought challenges and adapt effectively to future adversities. The allocation of Future Drought Funding has been instrumental in making the Events Support Officer project possible. The financial support provides resources to employ the dedicated officer, support community events, and deliver training programs. This funding ensures the project's smooth operation, sustainability, and long-term impact. Additionally, it empowers the project team to collaborate with local stakeholders, experts, and organisations, leveraging their expertise and resources to enhance the project's effectiveness. Without this funding, the project's scope and potential impact on community resilience would be severely limited. The Events Support Officer project underscores the immense value and importance of investing in social resilience within our communities and region. While physical infrastructure, environmental considerations, and technological advancements are crucial, the social fabric of a community forms the

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	<p>foundation for resilience. By investing in initiatives that foster community cohesion, promote collective action, and bring people together, we equip our community to face future challenges with resilience. The project exemplifies how investing in social resilience is an investment in the well-being, sustainability, and long-term prosperity of our community.</p>
10	<p>FRRR funding was used to kick-start the revitalization of the historic Balingup Town Hall. Prior to receipt of the FRRR grant, the hall was under-utilized and considered to be a 'white elephant'. A committee was formed under the umbrella of the Balingup Progress Association to run a major three day event to raise awareness of drought and climate change impacting our region. This event brought together people of all ages and its success has encouraged the committee to: • run a further series of music based events that encourage social inclusion, • enter into a three year Service Level Agreement (\$8000 per annum) with the Shire, and • pursue a lease agreement with the Shire for the management of the Town Hall. The committee has amazing plans for the future of the Town Hall. The facility is very popular with young people and their families who now enjoy informal 'jam/open mic' sessions which are great for mental health. The committee aims to make all community activities free and, to this end, plan to use the SLA to develop the hall as a premier wedding venue. This will be a boost to the local tourist industry and will help provide another income stream to prepare the community for the adverse financial impacts of drought. Without FRRR funding, this project would never have got off the ground. Thankyou!</p>
11	<p>The Future Drought Fund has been a critical resource for the Mardawi Community Project to progress our critical work within the Ngarrindjeri community. The grant funding has enabled us to build social resilience and community preparedness for drought and climate change within our region. This has included engaging within our community through local meetings, information sessions and other activities. We will be able to develop strategic partnerships, establish networks with other affected regions, and provided education and training programs within the Ngarrindjeri community. This initiative will be dramatically beneficial for our Ngarrindjeri people. We will be able to better understand the impacts that drought can have on our community, plan for short and long-term drought risk strategies, and develop a more resilient, connected, sustainable and vibrant Ngarrindjeri community. We believe that investing in social resilience within communities is essential for tackling the long-term effects of climate change and drought. Communal knowledge, social capital and traditional knowledges passed down through generations is crucial for building resilient communities in the face of ongoing climate variability, and droughts due to climate change. Social resilience is the glue that binds us and ensures our Ngarrindjeri people remain resilient, and remain tied to country. Investing in social resilience, is essential for our people and our communities to remain sustainable in the long-term. We are extremely grateful for the funding received through the Future Drought Fund and the Networks to Build Drought Resilience or Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Program grant, that has enabled us to is essential for the Ngarrindjeri people.</p>
12	<p>As a Youth focussed program the opportunity the grant has given Wheatbelt & Beyond Youth Mentoring (WBYM) is to expand and offer many more young adolescents in Rural, Regional & Remote WA the opportunity for ongoing and consistent support. WBYM addresses social and physical isolation of high school students in District High Schools with a confidant and support mentor from outside of their community. Mentors, parents/caregivers, schools, community and regions all gain from students' increase in confidence and resilience, along with better engagement in school and their community. Workforce skilling and retention and career aspiration are also benefits seen from both mentor and mentees. All this builds a solid foundation of preparedness for drought and difficult times for all parties. Investing in the social resilience of our young people impacts positively throughout the community and regions. During the chronic times of drought, engaged young people bring a positive aspect and hope to all and contribute to the social fabric and human capital in our communities. Our mentors bring skills and support where there is a lack of consistent and timely support in times of need. Our simple, agile, cost effective, all inclusive, consistent and ongoing program has an impact on so many. Our young people are our future. Economic and environmental projects are essential to build towards drought resilience, but having a foundation of care and support for our young people and therefore also their parents/caregivers, school, business, community and region adds to the social resilience essential for a community and region to continue to thrive through the difficult and chronic time of drought.</p>

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13	<p>I would like to make a comment on the Business Resilience Program being rolled out by Agriculture Vic. As far as I am aware and have been able to find out there have been no business resilience workshops held in the Wimmera Mallee- that fit the brief. I was thinking that there would be comprehensive workshops were we would get assistance in budgeting, machinery replacement, stock containment etc. this is very disappointing as a small property owner I thought this was a great proactive concept. The only groups I have seen deliver anything like this is the farming systems groups eg BCG - they are running a farm expansion day and sessions for young farmers through the drought hub. Perhaps a consideration to run more things through farming systems group. They are independent, have farmers trust and as far as I can see - get things done.</p>
14	<p>The over-arching theme of the inaugural Quandong Festival, held in Quorn in SA's Flinders Ranges, was the bush foods industry, and the opportunity it presents, particularly to the agricultural sector, as a viable mechanism for diversification away from traditional farming methods which are generally susceptible to the impact of drought. The festival offered information sharing and workshop opportunities giving relevant agencies and individuals the opportunity to highlight, particularly to the local agricultural sector, the potential benefits that could be delivered through diversification, away from standard agricultural practices utilising native 'bush foods'. Overall attendance at the event well exceeded expectations, and all sub-events on the festival program, such as the free-to-attend workshops and forums, were well attended, often with standing room only. The primary benefit of growing plants that are native to the area is their natural compatibility with local soil types and weather conditions, which makes them resilient to drought and enhances their viability for commercial production and use. Expert speakers presented on the inevitability of future drought and climate change and the need for primary producers to consider diversification, potentially into cultivation of more drought-tolerant species. Topics for presentations, Q+A and panel-led conversations and workshops were carefully tailored by the organisers to address these issues. One speaker, Angus Jones, shared his firsthand industry experience as a 'wild foods' harvester, grower and wholesaler, and promoted the various associated environmental, cultural and health benefits. Post-event feedback from Angus indicates that many attendees had very little understanding or previous exposure to wild, or 'bush foods' such as wattle seed, and were keen to learn more and to follow up on this topic. Angus reports that the festival provided a great platform for education and awareness of the potential to incorporate edible Acacias into existing land management and farming practices to create on-farm resilience and diversity in an ever-changing climate. Andrea Tschirner, Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator - South Australian Arid Lands Landscape Board hosted a full program of discussions featuring expert speakers from all over Australia who were selected for their accessibility, knowledge and expertise. The (app.)155 attendees were exposed to themes and key messages including: • Scale and extent of bush food industry in regional SA and across the country • Native food plant crops with most commercial potential for central Flinders region • How farmers, landowners and local businesses can get involved with the industry • Sources of information or technical advice • Understanding the importance and potential of native perennial grass species in food production – better suited to arid climates The range of presentations on industry diversification and potential of bush food projects in semi-arid region enabled networking between farmers, landowners and native food industry experts and facilitated meaningful discussion between session participants and expert panel members. Being a small rural council with a minimal rate-payer base, The Flinders Ranges Council could not have undertaken this project without the funding support awarded through the Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program, Round 1 2021 via the FRRR.</p>
15	<p>In 2021 we received funding through the FDF Networks to Build Drought Resilience program to significantly enhance our biennial Talkin' Soil Health conference in regional South Western Australia. The event brought together 200 landholders and agricultural industry representatives under the theme 'Building Resilience from the Subsoil up'. The funding dramatically enhanced our capacity to bring together an international quality event in terms of its programming, presenters and its ongoing legacy in terms of a community of practice, case studies and extension tools. The event came as WA emerged from COVID and for many attendees it was the first time they had been at a significant public event since the start of the pandemic. The enthusiasm in the room, the clear value farmers gained from debating issues with their peers, case studies and being challenged by new thinking was inspirational. Feedback made it clear that the event was seen as the best held yet and it solidified its place as the largest and most popular farmer event of its type in Western Australia. It was intended to build resilience through building networks and this was achieved beyond our expectations. These</p>

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	types of events are important to an industry facing unprecedented change through changes in climate and market expectations. While socially based outcomes are difficult to evaluate, especially in monetary terms, one only need speak to attendees or read the survey feedback to understand that supporting these kinds of events can have long lasting impacts on landholder confidence to embrace change. Social investment does not have to be bricks and mortar to inspire long term legacy of action.
16	- Support for social resilience needs to continue under FDF and support local place based initiatives, State programs don't get to rural areas and small towns where its needed most, funding needs to go to regional organisations (not big national programs, who take all the administration funds and then leave little funding for local organisations or expect that cash strapped communities will do the work in kind. - Broaden the scope of the RFCS to include drought (climate change) planning and preparedness, and wellbeing i.e Farm Business Resilience. - Invest in regional leadership programs, not only the national / state programs to build rural and regional leadership - Drought is a long term challenge, funding programs to build drought resilience social, economic and environmental needs to be over longer periods of time (short term funding doesn't enable good planning, participation or result in long term outcomes), planning, engagement and administration needs to be funded if you want good programs delivered with reportable and measurable outcomes. - States need long term support to deliver Regional Drought Resilience Plans, with sufficient funding for regional organisations to collaborate and deliver aspects of the plans. These plan need to be reviewed and renewed on three year cycles, to ensure currency and respond to changing conditions and needs. - Consider LGA programs that support local drought resilience infrastructure i.e community water points / bores
17	With the financial help of FRRR grant the future use and availability the Warra Memorial Hall will be available for many years to come, as a vital center point for many activities in our rural community and surrounding areas. The hall is a much more user friendly building in the extreme climatic conditions of the Western Downs of Queensland. Without support of this kind such structures will fall into disrepair and become not an asset but a liability to the community.
18	Methods to reach farmers to influence, educate and inspire farmers to embrace climate resilience can be very challenging. Farmers are generally time poor and have limited resources to tackle major farm improvements with longer term vision. Achieving good attendance numbers at off-farm workshops and in online webinars has been challenging. Lack of digital capacity and connectivity in some rural areas can also be an impediment. It would be my suggestion that in person, on farm engagement may be more successful using field officers who deliver locally specific, very practical climate-ready solutions to small groups of neighbouring farmers who share common problems and challenges. These small networks may also offer a range of ongoing supports to one another - social connection, equipment and labour sharing, grant opportunities in local catchments, etc. I would also suggest that the language is important in terms of encouraging farmer and farming community participation. After three very wet years including numerous storm and flooding events, the word "drought" is hardly top of mind. I would suggest that programs speak about resilience to all forms of "climate disruption". In certain localities and for certain farming sectors risks may vary, but all farms should focus on locally relevant planning and improvements to improve resilience for all possibilities - the dry, the hot, the cold and very wet years along the lines of Dorothy Mackellar's famous poem "...of drought and flooding rains...." Recent years have offered real experiences of both. Assistance to farmer must include the science and education, but it should also be about real, on-the-ground practical infrastructure, soil and environmental improvements. Grants to develop individual farm master plans, using local field officers (in person site visits, bringing digital and mapping assistance), to identify resilience measures for all foreseeable risks - drought, bushfire, flood / storm damage, heat wave, bio security and disease risks, etc. Funding / assisted finance options could then follow on the back of developed master plans.
19	The FRRR Future Drought Fund grant we received has strengthened the social ties of our community. By upgrading the toilets at our community hall, we have not only saved water (no more leaking!) but we have had renewed interest by our local community for attending community events and holding new ones. Upgrading the toilets would not have been possible without the amazing generosity of FRRR and their donors. Not only were we unable to raise such a large sum of money, it was hard to entice people to fundraising and social events when the toilets didn't work properly. Being a farming community, rainfall is one of the most commonly discussed topics at every event we hold!

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	<p>Now that we can hold frequent events at the Hall with greater numbers of attendees, there is much more frequent and in-depth discussion about how we will face drought in the future together as a community and what we can do to plan for it now, both practically (sharing resources and knowledge) and socially (ie: increasing our social cohesion and sense of community so that we will know when anyone is struggling and how we can help). After several tough years in our community (natural disasters, deaths, massive changes to local industries/livelihoods), being given the generous gift of funding from FRRR and their donors to upgrade our community hall toilets so they are useable, has increased our community's sense of resilience and belief in the goodness of people ie: when we work together, we can deliver on projects that enhance our community, both now and for decades to come (plus fairy godmothers do exist! 😊). Everyone is so proud of our new toilet facilities and we are so grateful to FRRR for the opportunity to make them a reality. We look forward to hosting many more events at our community hall for our community. When drought comes again (which is practically guaranteed!), we will gather at our hall regularly to support each other and share advice and knowledge on how to not just survive droughts, but thrive together as a strong and resilient community. During our time working on the toilet facilities upgrade, we were privileged to hear so many stories about what gathering at our community hall means to our local community: people shared stories of loneliness, overwork, overwhelm, depression, anxiety, grief and stress and how, by meeting with their neighbours/friends (same thing in our community's case!), the load was made lighter and solutions to problems found. The capacity for gathering with culturally similar, local people who are experiencing the same life experiences as oneself as an ongoing source of building resilience must never be underestimated. No matter what the economy and the environment throw at us, we handle it better together, as a community. Thankyou so much FRRR and donors - no matter how many times we say thankyou, it still seems insufficient, your generosity means so much to our community! Thankyou!</p>
20	<p>The process has only just been completed as in we have only just received funding for our project so I find it hard to comment on how it is making a difference in our communities yet. The actual process for receiving funding was rushed with a very short timeline for managing community consultation considering the size of the area that was part of our region. Being lead organisation was stressful as the process had such tight timelines which were almost impossible to meet when dealing with so many different community groups across a huge area of the state.</p>
21	<p>I do not support the interim summary for Regional Drought Resilience Planning as 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. I believe that adequate weight has not been given to the benefits of the RDRPs. Regional planning benefits and coordination outcomes are critical and cannot be undertaken by the Drought Hubs or other FDF programs. It cannot be understated how beneficial this process and the outcome (a regional drought resilience plan) has been for the communities. I urge for consideration of supporting the RDRP 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. Round 1 regions are yet to receive guidelines and funding of implementation grants. For relevant and efficient delivery on planned actions, the timing between final plan delivery (and approval) and receipt of implementation funding must be decreased.</p>
22	<p>The FBRP has been a hugely beneficial program for my husband and I. It has helped us identify and and implement improved strategic management and planning procedures and systems - we have been able to identify weak spots within our business management systems in order to strengthen our overall business functions and improve productivity but also financial performance regardless of seasons. We have really modernised our communication systems with staff, we have introduced new ag</p>

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	budgeting software, we have brought in specialist animal nutrition experts to boost productivity and performance in all seasons, we have employed a book keeper, we have made investments off farm and have a plan for our own retirement needs which separates us from the business longer term. Our program facilitator was so good we have engaged him privately for another year to help build on the excellent outcomes we received from the program. It has been life changing for us and our business - like driving with the lights on!
23	The funding provided to Paynesville Neighbourhood Centre (PNC) enabled Mental Health First Aid training to be delivered to 43 community members, including community leaders and staff from Rural Financial Counselling Service. This training has helped to strengthen the community by training people to identify the signs of help needed by others in the community and provide support when required. This training is an important part of building resilience in the community and is key to bringing the community together. Without the funding provided by FRRR, we would not have been able to provide this training for the community.
24	Our region was significantly impacted by drought from 2018-2020. Destination Scenic Rim utilised the Grant finds to host the Farm Gate Trail. Access to this grant assisted our farmers (as part of Agritourism) to showcase their products to many visitors over the course of one day. The funds were used for the Farm Gate Trail and 24 Farms/Producers participated in the event. The event drew over 2500 people to the region which equated to over \$250,000 in spend in one day. The Funding assisted the local producers with advertising, promotional and printed materials and regional awareness raising.
25	As part of a NFP group supported through a Future Drought Fund's (FDF) Better Prepared Communities (BPC) Programs grant, I'm providing feedback on the social resilience component of the FDF's BPC. While acknowledging the Productivity Commission's finding "short term programs... are unlikely to deliver long-term gains", the BPC-based grant contributed to enhancing adaption in our region. Our relatively small, grassroots-driven Project was of meaningful value to our community. It is unclear whether assistance would have been provided without the FDF opportunity accessed via FRRR. While the Productivity Commission Interim Report identified issues with relevance, overlap and measurement of the BPC Programs (interim finding 11), please consider it shouldn't mean current arrangements failed, or that the FDF "may not be best placed to support community resilience activities". Measuring outcomes of social capacity/resilience programs is challenging. But this does not mean that there is no value/role for FDF in explicitly investing in building rural social resilience. The transformative value of social resilience projects are often recognized only in hindsight, after a community has 'weathered' another climate-induced disruption. Climate change is creating uncertainty for rural communities. Our region (Northern Tablelands NSW) was once considered "safe country" for drought. But 2018-19 brought extreme weather and catastrophic bushfires. Ongoing climate uncertainty severely tests the confidence, (and resilience), of rural communities. In the face of increased climate change uncertainty, it is vital that we build capacity to encourage resilience in the 3 interconnected spheres: economic; environment; and social (individuals and communities). The Commission (p11 Executive Summary) states "economic and social investments alone will not provide sustained resilience...if landscapes are not well-positioned to cope with a changing climate". While true, I also argue that social resilience is the fundamental foundation from which subsequent economic and environmental resilience is generated. Community resilience develops from the ground-up: resilient communities need resilient individuals. Without a community of capable individuals, success in the other spheres is compromised. FDF is in a valuable position to co-ordinate funding of vital community-focused/driven social resilience programs that specifically target resilience for drought and climate change uncertainty. Furthermore, if the Productivity Commission wishes the FDF to prioritise objectives to "maximize public benefit", there is also value in their investing to build the social resilience of rural communities. Communities who are not coping with drought and climate change impacts are unable to afford or find the impetus needed to generate "positive environmental spillover benefits" for our nation. They will ultimately generate less transformative change and hence return on (tax-payer) investment.
26	The Future Drought fund enabled me to meet future leaders passionate about their rural community. They were all innovators, free thinkers who are connected to their communities and knew from first hand experience just what their community needed and I was one of them! After completing the training, I went on to complete my Resilience

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	<p>First Aid training and completed the training to become a facilitator for Mental Health First Aid so that I can take this training to small rural communities at a minimal cost to reduce the suicide rate amongst our farming community. Through my Community efforts I became the Rural City of Murray Bridge Citizen of the Year 2022! The contacts I made through this course allowed me connections into the most impacted communities. The facilitators inspired all of us and provided the most up to date information and techniques in how to engage our community and work together building connection and support throughout Australia.</p>
27	<p>Burnett Catchment Care Association's experience with programs under the Future Drought Fund has been hugely positive. In previous drought programs there has been little to no opportunity for NRM groups and community groups such as ourselves to be involved. These new programs such as DAF's Farm Business Resilience Program and FRRR's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Program has been so positive for us smaller groups to be involved and actually allowing producers to be proactive in becoming prepared for the next drought and building some resilience in their businesses. Past programs were purely reactive and often targeted the producers who were not prepared and only wanted "handouts". These new programs actively engage the community and producers at the grassroots level and help with preparedness. As an organisation who deal with hundreds of producers right across the Burnett region who have all experienced drought, particularly over the last 5 years, we applaud these programs.</p>
28	<p>Our organisation received funding to work with youth in our local rural communities through schools to prepare them for what to expect during drought, encompassing aspects of a changing climate, mental health, as well as environmental, social and economic influences. Connectivity between people, climate and the environment emphasise the importance of a social focus through such projects and programs like the Future Drought Fund. Our project gets kids talking, builds awareness and carries a take home message reaching beyond the school grounds. We know that taking action not only educates, but helps heal, and funding the investment in social resilience is a way forward. Allocating funding to lead organisations is useful in promoting connections with communities as a starting point in understanding the local on-ground needs. As with many Government funds that disseminate funding to lead organisations, I believe a framework that can be implemented uniformly helps ensure equity and opportunity, whilst having the movement to acknowledge regional diversity.</p>
29	<p>BIAS: Consideration needs to be given to the fact most of the submissions are beneficiaries of the FDF in some way. LACK OF COMMERCIALITY: - Public and social good is commendable and should be supported but there is a major lack of commercial know-how and commercial pull-through in the FDF generally. The Aus government can not fund all climate resilience matters, there needs to be some focus on private market pull-through. There needs to be a balanced effort here or this becomes an ineffective taxpayer funded gravy train - that should be a noble initiative that results in products/ideas exported as a matter of motivation and obligation. GLOBAL MARKETS: While we appreciate the FDF is domestically focused, this does not make much sense when other similar landscapes and climates should benefit from the products and services developed within the FDF network. Furthermore, it is a global market, taking a national view on risk innovation and resilience innovation is missing the major demand-led driver (outside Australia). It is not too far a stretch to suggest there is a national security element to this - assuming there are products and services of value within the FDF, which we all know there should be.</p>
30	<p>Macintyre Ag Alliance, a not-for-profit organisation operating in the Goondiwindi region, has been awarded two Future Drought Fund grants over the past two years, which have had a tremendous impact on our local grass-roots organisation, local community and region. Our first grant saw more than 200 producers, consultants and community members attend our 2022 Agribusiness summit, with the theme 'preparing for future drought and climate variability'. This event inspired and supported participants to become more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought, by linking them with experts and networks that brought dynamic and holistic ideas and concepts to our region and supported farmers to build drought resilience on their farms. Our second grant saw nearly 60 farmers and consultants across the Goondiwindi region participate in a three-day regenerative agriculture event across the Western Downs, which included four farm visits and two networking dinners, giving participants the opportunity to see regenerative</p>

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	<p>ag practices in action at nearby farms, and to learn new knowledge, tools and skills to introduce regenerative ag practices on their own farms. It also saw the creation of educational resources, including case studies and a video promoting regenerative ag practices in our region as sustainable, profitable, productive and the way of the future to a wider audience. These resources helped further the reach of the learnings and are a valuable educational asset to our farming community. Both grant activities built drought resilience in our community by giving participants access to experts, building networks, and sharing information and learnings from progressive farmers who value sustainability and production and have drought-proofed their properties through regenerative or sustainable ag practices. Similarly, both projects have helped foster higher rates of innovation in the Goondiwindi ag sector by giving participants (and the friends and families they talk to) new knowledge to apply to their own farms that will promote improved soil and water health, and more resilient financial, social and environmental landscapes, building a long-lasting resilience to the effects of drought and climate change. Both projects would not have been possible without federal funding. The value and importance of the federal government investing in social resilience in regional Australia is not to be underestimated and is critical in enabling our grass-roots organisation to take practical action to better prepare our region for drought into the future. Macintyre Ag Alliance urges the federal government to maintain current arrangements for the Better Prepared Communities Program, as limiting the program to a focus on economic and environmental programs alone would preclude us from having the opportunity to bring valuable events and projects to our region that build social capital and community resilience to better prepare for future droughts.</p>
31	<p>Neighbourhood Centres in Queensland play a key role in Far West Communities affected by regular drought events. They are important points of referral, connection and development not only in townships but surrounding regions. The funding helped support those communities to become empowered to respond in a way that was relevant for them and make a real difference on the ground.</p>
32	<p>I think having a broader focus on climate change resilience rather than just drought resilience is essential. Where I live there is a lesser risk of direct impacts of drought, whereas climate change will/does affect us all. I also think having a focus on mitigation as well as resilience is critical.</p>