

Future Drought Fund – Farm Business Resilience Program

FEDERATION FUNDING AGREEMENT - ENVIRONMENT

Table 1: Formalities and operation of schedule						
Parties	Commonwealth New South Wales Victoria Queensland Western Australia South Australia Tasmania Australian Capital Territory Northern Territory					
Duration	This Schedule is expected to expire on 30 June 2030 or when all project deliverables outlined in this Schedule are complete.					
Purpose	<p>This Schedule will support the delivery of financial assistance from the Commonwealth to the State and Territory governments (States) to deliver the Farm Business Resilience Program (the program). The States will use this funding to provide eligible participants with access to subsidised learning and development opportunities that support long-term farm business resilience. The program aims to build the knowledge, skills and capability of participants to manage all kinds of risks, including drought and other climate risks.</p> <p>This Schedule is a further extension to the Future Drought Fund – Farm Business Resilience Program Schedule (2022-25), signed by all states in 2022.</p>					
Estimated financial contributions	Table 1.1: The Commonwealth will provide an estimated total financial contribution to the States of \$80m in respect of this Schedule.					
	Table 1.1 (\$)	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	Estimated total Commonwealth financial contribution	20,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000	80,000,000
	- NSW	\$5,397,093	\$5,397,093	\$5,397,093	\$5,397,093	\$21,588,372
	- VIC	\$4,838,366	\$4,838,366	\$4,838,366	\$4,838,366	\$19,353,464
	- QLD	\$4,202,118	\$4,202,118	\$4,202,118	\$4,202,118	\$16,808,472
	- WA	\$2,128,336	\$2,128,336	\$2,128,336	\$2,128,336	\$8,513,344
	- SA	\$2,123,137	\$2,123,137	\$2,123,137	\$2,123,137	\$8,492,548
	- TAS	\$779,431	\$779,431	\$779,431	\$779,431	\$3,117,724
	- ACT	\$219,305	\$219,305	\$219,305	\$219,305	\$877,220
	- NT	\$312,214	\$312,214	\$312,214	\$312,214	\$1,248,856

Additional terms	<p>States will be responsible for providing an agreed minimum co-contribution as specified in the agreed Program Implementation Plan and maintenance of effort to support the implementation of this Schedule. Estimated Commonwealth financial contributions are subject to, and will be scaled up to, matched (or otherwise agreed) co-contributions from the states up to the limits set out in Table 1.1. The Commonwealth's financial contribution will be finalised in the agreed Program Implementation Plan.</p> <p>States must deliver the program in accordance with the agreed Program Implementation Plan. Program Implementation Plans must be informed by and aligned to the Program Framework at Appendix A and the <i>Future Drought Fund (Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2024-2028) Determination 2024</i>. Program deliverables commence upon Program Implementation Plan execution, unless otherwise agreed.</p> <p>In addition to Paragraph 21 of the Federation Funding Agreement - Environment, and Schedule E, Clause 26 of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Commonwealth will provide states with a program Communication Plan and Co-branding guidelines. States must undertake program communications and branding consistently with the national guidance. 2. the announcement of a program or a project under this Schedule must be made jointly with the Australian Government and the relevant jurisdiction, unless otherwise agreed by the Commonwealth. 3. when referring to the program or a project under this Schedule, it must be described as "jointly funded by the Australian Government and (insert name of jurisdiction) under the Future Drought Fund". 4. case study content and other communication or promotional materials developed under the program may be used by the Commonwealth, where appropriate, in line with the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i>. <p>In addition to Part 4 of the Federation Funding Agreement - Environment, a program Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL Plan) will be developed by the Commonwealth in consultation with the States. States will negotiate with the Commonwealth to agree a format for progress reporting in the context of their Program Implementation Plan, and the MEL plan.</p> <p>States are expected to deliver the program in accordance with public sector ethical values and duties such as probity, accountability, and transparency. States must ensure that any delivery partners, contractors or subcontractors engaged under the program operate in accordance with this Schedule and subordinate program documentation.</p> <p>As per the provision in Subsection 22(4) of the <i>Future Drought Fund Act 2019</i>, where states do not meet the requirements of the agreed Program Implementation Plan, states may be required to refund to the Commonwealth part or all of any previously distributed funding that remains unexpended.</p>
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Table 2: Performance requirements, reporting and payment summary (2025-29)

Output	Performance milestones	Report due	Payment
<p>Deliver phase 2 Program Implementation Plan</p>	<p>Completion of a Program Implementation Plan (PIP), as evidenced in writing and signed by both the Commonwealth and the relevant state and territory government officials, outlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Program delivery approach and timing, including alignment with program framework (Appendix A) and any jurisdictionally tailored inclusions b) Program governance, risk management and stakeholder engagement c) Program budget, including State and participant co-contributions and any industry contribution and expected number of funded program participants d) Communication strategy (consistent with program Communications Plan and co-branding requirements) e) Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan (consistent with program MEL Plan) 	<p>30/11/2025 or within three months of the Schedule being signed by both parties, whichever is earlier.</p>	<p>50% Commonwealth financial contribution for 2025/26 identified in Table 1.1 as adjusted in accordance with the additional terms.</p>
<p>Delivery of Farm Business Resilience program</p>	<p>Completion of deliverables and provision of a progress report, as per the agreed Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan, detailing performance against this Schedule and the agreed Program Implementation Plan for reporting period to 31 December 2025.</p> <p>The progress report for this period should also detail performance (activities and outcomes) for the transition between Phases 1 (2022-25) and 2, as relevant, in accordance with the respective Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan and Program Implementation Plan.</p>	<p>28/02/2026</p>	<p>50% Commonwealth financial contribution for 2025/26 identified in Table 1.1 as adjusted in accordance with the additional terms.</p>
	<p>Completion of deliverables and provision of a progress report, as per the agreed Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan, detailing performance against this Schedule and the agreed Program Implementation Plan for reporting period to 30 June 2026.</p>	<p>30/08/2026</p>	<p>50% Commonwealth financial contribution for 2026/27 identified in Table 1.1 as adjusted in accordance with the additional terms.</p>
	<p>Completion of deliverables and provision of a progress report, as per the agreed Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan, detailing performance against this Schedule and the agreed Program Implementation Plan for reporting period to 31 December 2026</p>	<p>28/02/2027</p>	<p>50% Commonwealth financial contribution for 2026/27 identified in Table 1.1 as adjusted in accordance with the additional terms.</p>

Table 2: Performance requirements, reporting and payment summary (2025-29)			
Output	Performance milestones	Report due	Payment
	Completion of deliverables and provision of a progress report, as per the agreed Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan, detailing performance against this Schedule and the agreed Program Implementation Plan for reporting period to 30 June 2027	30/08/2027	50% Commonwealth financial contribution for 2027/28 identified in Table 1.1 as adjusted in accordance with the additional terms.
	Completion of deliverables and provision of a progress report, as per the agreed Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan, detailing performance against this Schedule and the agreed Program Implementation Plan for reporting period to 31 December 2027	29/02/2028	50% Commonwealth financial contribution for 2027/28 identified in Table 1.1 as adjusted in accordance with the additional terms.
	Completion of all deliverables and provision of a progress report, as per the agreed Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan, detailing performance against this Schedule and the agreed Program Implementation Plan for the reporting period to 30 June 2028.	30/08/2028	50% Commonwealth financial contribution for 2028/29 identified in Table 1.1 as adjusted in accordance with the additional terms.
	Completion of deliverables and provision of a progress report, as per the agreed Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan, detailing performance against this Schedule and the agreed Program Implementation Plan for reporting period to 31 December 2028	28/02/2029	50% Commonwealth financial contribution for 2028/29 identified in Table 1.1 as adjusted in accordance with the additional terms.
	Completion of deliverables and provision of a final report, as per the agreed Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan, detailing performance against this Schedule and the agreed Program Implementation Plan for reporting period to 30 June 2029.	30/09/2029	Nil
	Provision of an evaluation report, as per the agreed Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan, that describes the delivery, benefits and outcomes of the program as a whole and evaluates the program, including assessing the extent to which the outcomes have been achieved, or not.	31/12/2029	Nil

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this schedule as follows:

Signed for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by

The Honourable Julie Collins MP

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

2025

Signed for and on behalf of the State of New South Wales by

Signed for and on behalf of the State of Victoria by

The Honourable Tara Moriarty MLC

Minister for Agriculture; Regional New South Wales; Western New South Wales

2025

The Honourable Ros Spence MP

Minister for Agriculture; Carers and Volunteers; Community Sport

2025

Signed for and on behalf of the State of Queensland by

Signed for and on behalf of the State of Western Australia by

The Honourable Anthony (Tony) Perrett MP

Minister for Primary Industries

2025

The Honourable Jackie Jarvis MLC

Minister for Agriculture and Food; Forestry; Small Business

2025

Signed for and on behalf of the State of South Australia by

Signed for and on behalf of the State of Tasmania by



The Honourable Clare Scriven MLC

Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development; Forest Industries

2025

The Honourable Gavin Pearce MP

Minister for Primary Industries and Water

9/10/ 2025

Signed for and on behalf of the Australian Capital Territory by

Signed for and on behalf of the Northern Territory by

Ms. Suzanne Orr MLA

Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

2025

The Honourable Gerard Maley MLA

Deputy Chief Minister; Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries; Mining and Energy; Corrections; Renewables; Recreational Fishing

2025



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

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**Future
Drought
Fund**

Farm Business Resilience Program

Program Framework (2025-2029)

Future Drought Fund



Contents

Overview	1
Objectives and outcomes	4
Principles	5
Program elements.....	7
1 Learning and development.....	7
2 Knowledge sharing and transfer.....	10
3 Farm business planning	11
4 Performance assessments and benchmarking	12
5 Active follow-up.....	12
6 Eligibility and co-contributions	13

Overview

The Future Drought Fund

The \$5 billion Future Drought Fund (the FDF) is a key investment by the Australian Government that provides secure and continuous funding for initiatives that support our farmers and regional communities to prepare for drought and build climate resilience.

The FDF is legislated under the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019* and guided by the *Future Drought Fund (Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2024 to 2028) Determination 2024* (Funding Plan) and is delivered in accordance with the agreed role of the Commonwealth under the National Drought Agreement (NDA) 2024-2029 and aligned with the Australian Government Drought Plan.

The Drought Resilience Funding Plan and Future Drought Fund Investment Strategy

The Funding Plan serves as a framework for all expenditure from the FDF, it guides the design of the program and types of projects offered.

The Funding Plan has three inter-connected strategic objectives that will enhance public good and build drought and climate resilience through programs that:

- Build economic resilience – grow the productivity and self-reliance of the agricultural sector
- Build environmental resilience – improve the function of agricultural landscapes through effective management of the natural resource base
- Build social resilience – strengthen the social capital, wellbeing, and connectedness of rural, regional and remote agricultural communities.

During the 2024-2025 Australian federal Budget, the Australian Government committed \$519.1 million over 8 years from the FDF. This investment will be guided by the FDF Investment Strategy (2024-2028) across 5 priority areas, to give farmers and regional communities the tools, strategies and networks they need to prepare for the next drought and build climate resilience. The 5 priority areas are:

- i. Partnering for local solutions
- ii. Partnering for First Nations initiatives
- iii. Building knowledge, skills and capability
- iv. Innovating for transformation
- v. Measuring progress and knowledge sharing.

Farm Business Resilience program 2025-2029

The Farm Business Resilience program (FBR/the program) is one of a suite of programs under the FDF. The program initially ran from 2020-2022 and was subsequently extended to 2025 (Phase 1). In 2024, as part of the 'building knowledge, skills and capability' priority, \$83.2 million was announced to continue the program for a further 4 years of activities from 1 July 2025 until 30 June 2029 (Phase 2).

The program seeks to support long-term resilience of farm businesses by building the knowledge, skills and capability of participants to manage all kinds of risks, including drought and other climate risks. The program helps participants think ahead and take a proactive approach to developing strategies and identifying specific actions to build the drought and climate resilience of their business, the land, themselves and others in the business before times get tough.

The program provides participants with holistic business and risk management knowledge, skills and tools to improve the triple bottom line, i.e. participants' environmental, economic and social resilience. It aims to enhance farm business resilience which supports the broader agricultural sector and regional and rural communities, resilience via incremental, transitional and, where appropriate, transformational change and thereby contribute to long-term public good.

The Commonwealth partners with participating state and territory governments, who collaborate with industry and other specialist partners, to deliver the program. With flexibility at the core of the program, design and delivery is tailored and adapted to regional and industry needs, leveraging and complementing, rather than duplicating or competing with, existing state, industry, and Commonwealth programs.

While most existing initiatives approach resilience through the lens of productivity and profitability, NRM or sustainable farm practices, FBR is unique in its approach to incorporating these diverse learning areas without them comprising the sole program focus. The program plays a unique role and adds value within the broader landscape of initiatives by approaching resilience through the lens of holistic farm business management, risk management, and strategic planning. This means that practices, tools, knowledge and management strategies delivered through the program aim to support the triple bottom line by improving environmental, social and economic resilience.

The program supports capability and capacity building opportunities for eligible participants in a broad range of interconnected learning and development areas, such as: climate adaptation, NRM, transformational practices, business planning, decision-making and risk management, and personal and social resilience, including mental wellbeing. Participants are supported to undertake strategic business planning tailored to their farm business, further supported by professional advice.

Phase 2 of the program will build on the successes and learnings from the first phase. Improvements to the program will aim to achieve change at a meaningful scale by supporting a diverse range of participants (such as First Nation peoples, remote participants, young people and women). The program will also provide enhanced follow-up, peer learning and networking opportunities to support knowledge sharing beyond program participants, and ongoing learning and implementation after participants complete the program for enduring and where appropriate, transformational outcomes.

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Future Drought Fund Farm Business Resilience – Program Framework 2025-2029

The program will be available throughout the drought cycle (preparedness, response, and recovery) and will be flexible, responsive and adaptable to conditions and needs. Due to its focus on preparedness and resilience, it cannot provide in-drought assistance to directly address hardship or replace existing sources of support.

The program is delivered by jurisdictions and co-funded between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions in accordance with the *Federation Funding Agreement – Environment (FFA) – Future Drought Fund Farm Business Resilience Program Schedule* (FFA Schedule).

Funding for the Phase 2 program also includes \$3.2 million for the Commonwealth to continue the FDF Drought Resilience Scholarship program. The Scholarship program, recognises and supports leaders and innovators in the field of drought and climate resilience. It drives a continued focus on resilience, and supports innovation amongst scholars (farmers, practitioners, and researchers) to further build their drought and climate resilience expertise, adapt innovative technology and practices from across the globe, and share these learnings with their peers and the agricultural community. The connection between the scholarship program and the FBR program will provide an enhanced network for drought resilience scholars to share learnings. The Drought Resilience Scholarship program is funded through the FDF and is not co-funded or delivered by state and territory governments.

Purpose of this document

This framework outlines the guiding principles and core elements of the program. It is an appendix to the FFA Schedule for the 2025-2029 phase of the program and should be read alongside it. State and territory governments deliver the program in accordance with an agreed Program Implementation Plan and other relevant program documentation including the program Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan, and Communications Plan. Any further guidance will align with the Funding Plan and will apply to all jurisdictions and delivery. All documents should be read in conjunction with the Funding Plan.

Objectives and outcomes

The program aims to achieve objectives and outcomes aligned with the FDF’s strategic vision, aim and objectives as follows, consistent with the Funding Plan:

FDF Vision	An innovative and profitable agricultural sector, a sustainable natural environment, and adaptable rural, regional and remote communities – all with increased resilience to the impacts of drought and climate change.
FDF Aim	To build drought resilience, including climate resilience for the public good of the Australian agriculture sector, landscapes and communities.

Strategic objective (a)	Strategic objective (b)	Strategic objective (c)
To build economic resilience – growing the productivity and self-reliance of the agricultural sector	To build environmental resilience – improving the function of agricultural landscapes through effective management of the natural resource base	To build social resilience – strengthening the social capital, wellbeing and connectedness of rural, regional and remote agricultural communities

Robust performance monitoring and reporting will be required to ensure the program meets the strategic objectives, outcomes and outputs as documented in the Farm Business Resilience MEL plan. The MEL Plan is intended to outline how to demonstrate the program’s progress, achievement of outcomes and support continuous improvement. Performance monitoring and reporting should be guided by the Outcomes Reporting Framework in the NDA (2024-29).

Principles

The following principles underpin the program’s overarching scope and intent, and guide detailed design, delivery and reporting by all program partners across all program elements.

a) **Flexibility and tailoring to avoid a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach**

The program is flexible to meet the diverse, on-ground needs of participants, agricultural industries, and agriculture-dependent regions. Where possible, it must involve place-based, individual, or industry tailoring to ensure relevance and effectiveness in different contexts and circumstances, in line with program outcomes and objectives. This includes drawing on local sources, examples, case studies and champions. Tailored design and delivery should be undertaken in collaboration and partnership with trusted and knowledgeable delivery partners (including industry, First Nations organisations and other trusted advisors), where appropriate.

b) **Broad coverage and accessibility, focusing on priority cohorts**

The program seeks to achieve widespread participation administered in line with its eligibility principles, ensuring accessibility for participants across different regions and industries, while focussing efforts on those who need it most and priority cohorts (such as First Nations peoples, remote participants, young people and women). Delivery costs and participant co-contributions should be adjusted according to eligibility, the nature of the activity, individual circumstances and needs, and the expected balance of private benefit and public good.

c) **Drought resilience as a priority, with broader climate resilience co-benefits and outcomes encouraged**

While drought resilience is a core focus, the program is designed to also provide co-benefits by building resilience to other climate risks such as floods, heatwaves, fires and other severe climatic events. Building resilience in one area can improve the ability to manage other risks. This holistic approach is intended to amplify benefits for participants, their communities and the broader public.

d) **Focus on resilience, not hardship support**

The program is designed to enhance preparedness, risk management and resilience. It will not provide hardship support, including in-drought assistance, or replace existing sources of support. The program will be flexible and responsive to adapt to conditions and needs throughout the drought cycle (where appropriate) while maintaining a long-term focus on resilience and sound decision-making.

e) **Leveraging existing offerings**

The program builds on and aligns with existing initiatives, with a focus on filling gaps and addressing identified needs, rather than duplicating or competing with them. . The Commonwealth and jurisdictions actively work to leverage and coordinate existing expertise, delivery mechanisms and programs with similar objectives and outcomes from the Commonwealth, including the FDF, jurisdictions, and industry. Delivery partners and contracted service providers must be assessed as appropriately skilled and qualified. To enable coordination, the program seeks to establish and/or build upon both formal (governance and steering committees) and informal connections with complementary programs. Pathways for participants to implement their learnings outside the program will be explored and promoted as appropriate.

- f) **Contributing to incremental, transitional and transformational change**
The program provides practical knowledge, skills, and tools along with best practice and innovative approaches that can be implemented on farm to support incremental and transitional change. This sets the foundations to enable transformational change – both at the individual farm-level and, when adopted at scale, for the broader industry, community and landscape. Where appropriate, the program promotes transformational practices and supports participants to identify, plan for and adopt transformational changes to their farm business, both during and after the program.
- g) **Holistic and triple bottom line approach**
The program provides participants with holistic business and risk management knowledge and tools across a broad range of interconnected areas to improve overall environmental, economic and social resilience, aligned to the FDF's triple bottom line objectives. It embeds and reflects resilience principles to encourage participants to take a holistic and transformative approach to building resilience in their farm business.
- h) **Spill-over benefits to enhance the public good**
By strengthening individual farm businesses and supporting knowledge sharing and connections, the program aims to generate broader spill-over benefits for the agricultural sector, the environment, and regional communities which contribute to the public good. This includes increasing the proportion of the sector making proactive decisions before, during, and after drought, leading to stronger and more resilient industries and communities that are less in need of, and reliant on, government hardship support. While the program focus is improved resilience at scale, it acknowledges that some private benefit, including productivity gains, will be achieved through better planning and risk management practices. Wherever possible, data, knowledge and materials created for the program should be shared and freely made available in the public domain, in accordance with the Funding Plan.
- i) **Contributing to social resilience through connections, networks and knowledge sharing**
The program supports existing – and where appropriate establishes new– farmer networks, peer-to-peer learning groups, alumni mechanisms and other community-based knowledge-sharing forums (including yarning circles) to foster social connection, collaboration and shared resilience-building beyond the individual farm business to enhance the public good.
- j) **Foster a culture of continuous improvement**
The program fosters a culture of continuous improvement including through active follow-up mechanisms to encourage participants to implement learnings, and to identify and pursue further learning and development opportunities. However, follow-up support for past participants is not prioritised over engaging new participants, particularly priority cohorts. It is acknowledged that a culture of continuous improvement is more likely to support transitional and transformational change, which takes time to implement.
- k) **Targeted and adaptive communication**
Program communications are informed by and adapted to participants' understanding of drought and climate risk. To encourage engagement, messaging is tailored to different groups, reflecting their specific language, priorities, and willingness to engage with particular topics. It is also tailored during different points of the drought cycle or in the presence of other risks, natural hazards or disasters. Communication strategies are regularly reviewed and adapted to improve engagement and program uptake.

Program elements

The program has several core elements: learning and development, farm business planning, farm resilience performance assessments and benchmarking, active follow-up, and knowledge sharing.

Each element must be delivered in accordance with the program principles.

1 Learning and development

1.1 Learning areas

- 1) The program's learning areas support better risk management and resilience. All learning activities should aim to build capability and capacity of participants to identify, manage and mitigate risks to farm businesses, including drought and other climate risks.
- 2) The learning areas are aligned with the Funding Plan's triple bottom line objectives, to build environmental, economic, and social resilience. The program recognises these elements are interconnected and that the learning areas are likely to overlap and apply across learning categories. Learning areas can be delivered in either a modular or categorical format or integrated through comprehensive journeys or coaching models.
- 3) The below three key learning areas must be covered in the program. Course content should be flexibly tailored where appropriate based on participant knowledge, skills, need and context. Tailoring may occur for individual farm businesses, groups, priority cohorts, regions, industries, enterprises or production methods. For example, appropriate decision-making tools or methods for pastoral regions or farm systems, participant abilities and current farm business resilience levels.
- 4) Topics listed under the three key learning areas have been included as examples only, they are not exhaustive or mandatory and may apply across multiple learning areas:
 - a. **Economic resilience (strategic farm business management and planning):**
 - i. financial literacy (such as budgeting, business structures, governance models, access to finance and investment in farm assets and other equity investments), including, where appropriate, drawing on learnings from the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS)
 - ii. strategic planning and business management, including promoting awareness and understanding of the benefits of these skills and seeking professional advice
 - iii. best practice strategies and approaches for long term profitability and/or adverse event preparation and drought planning, including referring participants to the Farm Management Deposit Scheme
 - iv. benchmarking and monitoring performance (see section 4 Performance assessments and Benchmarking)
 - v. on and off farm diversification opportunities (e.g. carbon market, agri-tourism, contracting)
 - vi. economic self-determination for First Nations peoples, including by revitalising traditional practices to create new economic opportunities, such as aquaculture, native forestry and native grains agriculture

- vii. market access opportunities (e.g. product traceability, biodiversity stewardship, carbon neutral accreditation, sustainability accreditation)
- viii. decision-making tools, strategies and frameworks.

b. Environmental resilience (natural resource management):

- i. best practice drought management and climate adaptation approaches, and adoption of innovative and transformative practices and technology. Wherever possible, leveraging and partnering with existing Natural Resource Management (NRM) offerings. For example, existing industry Best Management Practices (BMP), Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) initiatives, the National Heritage Trust Climate Smart Agriculture Program, and local or regional Landcare groups
- ii. holistic NRM approaches (links between environmental, economic and social resilience) that improve the farm resource base (water, soil, land and other natural resources)
- iii. farm biosecurity (related to drought resilience and a changing climate) including the relationship between the management of invasive weeds, pests and diseases with on farm resources and productivity
- iv. caring for Country practices including for example, traditional fire management practices. These practices not only restore the environment but can also support agricultural activities
- v. landscape scale management and farm planning (such as farm mapping and design, pasture and grazing management, biodiversity and shelterbelts) with an emphasis on water management and soil and nutrient management (e.g. erosion control)
- vi. digital and data literacy (such as understanding and use of farm and climate forecast data).

c. Social resilience (personal and social resilience):

- i. farm transition, including where appropriate: early and proactive succession planning; successful retirement transitions, including ageing well on farm, and successful transitions to farming for aspiring new farmers. Succession planning should assist farm businesses to reduce risks of financial and logistical pressures and knowledge loss and mitigate the potential impacts (e.g. business stagnation resulting in poor performance) this change has on farm business resilience and the broader agricultural sector
- ii. leadership development, people management and continuous learning/education
- iii. community engagement and building trust, networks, and relationships within the farming community, including through formal and informal networks
- iv. supporting intergenerational knowledge sharing and cultural preservation for future generations
- v. supporting overall health and wellbeing approaches including improving and managing safety (including WHS), time and stress management, work-life balance and accessing support networks.

- 5) Links into existing programs and funding opportunities should be actively leveraged where they are complementary and appropriate, to avoid duplication across government and non-government sectors. For example, where NRM training and support exists in a region, the program should leverage and/or direct participants to it.

- a. Participants should be referred to programs for which they are eligible. Where possible, jurisdictions should ensure initiatives offered through the program, or aimed at program participants have streamlined eligibility requirements to reduce barriers to participation and, ensure that FBR participants can meet the criteria for referred programs.
- b. Similarly, and in recognition that it is not the program's role to provide clinical mental health services, the program should refer and provide participants with pathways to expert advice and support, where appropriate and available.

1.2 Delivery

- 6) Learning and development delivery should be flexible and tailored where possible to meet the diverse, on-ground needs of participants, industries, and regions.
- 7) Delivery will cater for different levels of engagement and participation to accommodate the needs, capability and capacity of participants. The program should prioritise supporting comprehensive engagement with program offerings (e.g. facilitated workshops across a range of learning areas, including farm business planning). However, a variety of delivery formats that cater to varying depth of participation should be utilised to increase engagement and participation opportunities, such as:
 - a. face to face group learning (e.g. facilitated workshops and yarning circles)
 - b. one-on-one support, such as intensive coaching
 - c. one-off learning sessions
 - d. broader events (e.g. one-off and larger scale events) to support knowledge sharing and network building with the wider community (see section 2 Knowledge sharing and transfer)
 - e. online learning and resources (e.g. self-paced learning modules, YouTube, webinars, toolkits and templates).
- 8) Delivery models can vary depending on context and circumstances, including the capacity and capability of existing potential delivery partners, such as one or a combination of:
 - a. partnering with industry, community (or similar) organisations
 - b. engaging private provider(s)
 - c. delivering directly via government.
- 9) Where possible, utilise and maintain existing capacity and relationships with delivery partners. A range of existing industry providers should be utilised to allow tailoring for different industries. Other delivery partners should be sought to deliver the program to industries that do not have existing capabilities or size to warrant a focused delivery model.
 - a. To maximise program, reach and public benefit, collaborative cost sharing arrangements should be considered, including for example: industry cost-shared delivery or partnerships, and/or industry scholarships or sponsorships (including to cover participant contributions in certain circumstances).
- 10) If new capabilities and capacity are required, where possible, the program will aim to establish them such that they endure beyond the life of the program and are not reliant on the program to be sustainable.

2 Knowledge sharing and transfer

- 11) The program takes an active approach to knowledge sharing and transfer, consistent with the FDF Funding Plan and Investment Strategy, as part of its aim to foster social connection, collaboration and shared resilience-building beyond the individual farm business. The program should empower participants to take ownership of building the knowledge and skills required to be better prepared to manage risks such as drought, which can provide benefits for the broader industry and community.
- 12) Benefits generated under the program, such as data, knowledge and materials developed or obtained through the program are, wherever possible, shared and made freely available in the public domain. This achieves public good by ensuring the benefits are shared by many (provide public benefits), rather than captured solely by individual businesses or industries for private commercial gain (private benefits).
 - a. Where products are developed by third parties under the program, the third party will generally own the Intellectual Property Rights. However, where allowable the Commonwealth and states and territories will be granted a licence to use those materials.
 - b. It is acknowledged that not all data and knowledge must be shared or made freely available. Some restrictions can be applied, especially when agreed upon with partners and participants. In doing so, consideration must be given to what data must be shared to best achieve the goals of the FDF (including reference to the Funding Plan's funding principles). For Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), restrictions on sharing are allowed, depending on the extent of the proposed restrictions and the specific situation, and usage will be agreed with the ICIP owners.
- 13) Examples of knowledge sharing and transfer activities supported by the program may include:
 - a. **Encouraging participation in existing networks**
 - i. support and utilise existing communities of practice, farmer networks, knowledge leaders, and alumni networks for participants during and upon program completion
 - ii. leverage existing knowledge-sharing opportunities within the FDF, such as Adoption and Innovation Hubs knowledge brokers, and Drought Resilience Scholars
 - iii. promote participation in established initiatives like Drought Resilience Scholarships, Hubs, Regional Drought Resilience Planning, and FDF Communities programs.
 - iv. encourage participants to engage in broader discussions on strategic drought resilience planning at regional, landscape, and community levels.
 - b. **Establish new networks**
 - i. support the formation of participant peer groups, ideally in a way that can sustain beyond the program (may include sessions where farmers/land managers/land custodians gather to discuss and problem solve potential seasonal concerns, reflect on previous skill-based training sessions, share learnings and discuss proposed changes, and implementation ideas for their farm businesses).
 - ii. support the formation of new communities of practice that are not limited to participants (may include First Nations peoples, other community members and organisations, service providers, farmers and/ or trainers and facilitators as appropriate)

- iii. facilitate skill-building and networking events for farming communities and agricultural advisors, such as large-scale events, open days, field days, and webinars.
 - iv. support to trainers through conferences or online communities of practice, enabling access to innovative resources and discussion forums.
 - v. training provider networks, such as a train-the-trainer (including drawing on Carbon Farming Outreach Program (CFOP) train the trainer program component, where applicable), to enhance training consistency and effectiveness.
- c. **Share knowledge amongst program partners**
- i. engage in national, cross-jurisdictional and cross-industry knowledge sharing to enable learning from past experiences and improve program implementation.
 - ii. sharing of data, knowledge and materials to leverage efforts and support an informed and consistent, where appropriate, approach across different jurisdictions and industries.
 - iii. leverage opportunities and facilitate collaboration and awareness across FDF and other relevant programs, including through cross-program meetings and forums at the state and territory government level.

3 Farm business planning

- 14) The program must provide participants with support to undertake farm business resilience planning and incorporate resilience planning into developed, or updated Farm Business Plans. This support may be provided through tailored professional support and advice, where appropriate. Plans should be informed by and incorporate relevant learnings from the program learning and development (see section 1).
- 15) Farm business planning is to be underpinned by the following key principles:
- a. planning focuses on knowledge, skills, and risk management strategies participants develop and utilise through the planning *process*, rather than solely producing a planning *document*. The process should support informed decision-making, adaptive management, and continuous improvement in farm business resilience.
 - b. there is no single approach or format for farm business planning - plans should be individually tailored and fit for purpose
 - c. planning guides decision-making and strategies for managing risk, including drought and climate risk as well as other relevant or emerging challenges or opportunities (e.g. preparing for emerging market and supply chain expectations).
 - d. planning is evidence-based, informed by relevant data and information internal and external to the business. This is intended to enable participants to understand their business needs in context and rely on robust planning to make future decisions and can provide baseline data where appropriate. It may also bolster credibility to provide confidence to banks, investors, insurers, and government agencies, potentially improving access to financing and support programs.
 - e. best practice planning approaches and resilience principles, new technologies or transformational approaches (where appropriate) applied practically at the farm level, should be considered

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- f. planning considers the whole of the farm business - goals and actions should consider the triple bottom line (economic, environmental, social), and the operational, tactical, and strategic aspects of the business
 - g. planning helps establish a baseline for farm business performance and supports the ongoing process of monitoring, reviewing, evaluating, and updating the plans.
- 16) The Commonwealth and jurisdictions will work together to provide resources and guidance to assist participants in undertaking this planning.
- 17) Participants will have the opportunity for professional advice and feedback on farm business planning, in line with the principles above. This will provide participants with individually tailored information and the tools to reflect on the potential effectiveness of the plan to improve the drought and climate resilience of their farm business.
- 18) The program must support participants to use their farm business planning to proactively manage risk. This includes active follow-up, including plan review (see section 5), and drawing participants' attention to opportunities, and seeking to establish pathways, to take action and implement their Farm Business Plan outside the program.
- a. Pathways may include government grant programs and concessional loans, or private sector funding and lending options.

4 Performance assessments and benchmarking

- 19) The program will support participants to understand and measure their farm business performance and overall resilience. Support will include farm business resilience performance assessment/benchmarking before during and after participating in the program. This may involve:
- a. individuals undertaking a series of self-assessments- to identify their professional performance (e.g. level of confidence to be resilient during the drought cycle, training needs), or
 - b. where applicable, benchmarking a business' performance against industry standards.
- 20) Performance assessments and individual benchmarking aims to:
- a. help identify and target support to participants' specific needs
 - b. capture baseline measurements through an initial self-assessment to assist in determining a benchmark for participants to track their progress against and identifying the impact or changes the program may have on the participant overtime
 - c. where appropriate, capture valuable, de-identified data to feed into the program's MEL to measure progress towards reaching outcomes, changes and impact over time.
- 21) The program will support participants to assess and monitor their performance against their self-assessment. This support may come in the form of repeating the assessment periodically – see section 5 Active follow-up.
- 22) The most appropriate method or tool to undertake this assessment may vary. This could be undertaken via an advisor or an appropriate tool, which may differ based on industry.

5 Active follow-up

- 23) The program will actively re-engage past participants, where appropriate, to promote continuous improvement and support implementation of learnings. Follow-up support for past participants will not be prioritised over engaging new participants, particularly priority cohorts. The nature

and mechanisms for active follow-up vary based on the level of the participant’s interaction and engagement with the program.

- 24) Active follow-up may include:
- a. refresher, new and advanced training, with performance assessments/benchmarking and planning playing a role in informing follow-up training needs
 - b. supporting touchpoints with advisors and coaches for participants post-program
 - c. the establishment of alumni networks and activities to further learning and support peer-connection (see section 2 Knowledge sharing and transfer)
 - d. reviews and updates to farm business planning (see section 3 Farm Business Planning)
 - e. periodic farm business resilience/performance assessments (see section 4 performance assessments and benchmarking)
 - f. opportunities to demonstrate intermediate and longer-term outcomes from the program.

6 Eligibility and co-contributions

- 25) The program takes a principles-based approach to determining eligibility of participants and their co-contributions. A flexible approach enables engagement from target participants to be prioritised, removing barriers to uptake for those who need it most. Meanwhile, it enables the program to reach a broad range of participants, leveraging co-contributions (where appropriate) to reserve program resources available for subsidised support for primary and priority cohorts. This aims to maximise the program’s public good outcomes balanced with potential private benefits.
- 26) Participant co-contributions should generally be sought where private benefits are expected from participation, consistent with the FDF Funding Plan (2024 to 2028). However, participant co-contributions should be scaled and adjusted according to the principles below - eligibility, participant characteristics and need, and likely public and private benefit (including relative costs and the nature of the activity and content).
- a. Generally, where content is anticipated to have stronger public good outcomes and/or participant need is greater (e.g. priority cohorts with less capacity to contribute), minimal or no participant co-contribution may be appropriate. Where the likely private benefit is substantial, and/or participant need is lower (e.g. well-resourced and knowledgeable farmers who can seek similar services independently), a higher co-contribution may be required, up to full cost. Practical feasibility should guide whether co-contributions are individually tailored, especially where a program offering is open to a wide range of participants.
 - b. Where appropriate, to address participation barriers for target and priority cohorts, in-kind contributions (e.g. time off-farm, travel) may be recognised instead. If co-contribution adjustments do not adequately remove barriers to participation, additional minor support (for example, travel or childcare assistance reasonably incurred to participate in face-to-face sessions) may be provided, where there is a genuine need.
- 27) When determining participant eligibility and co-contributions, jurisdictions should consider the following principles:
- a. **Eligibility – primary and priority target cohorts; non target cohorts**

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Future Drought Fund Farm Business Resilience – Program Framework 2025-2029

- i. The program primarily targets participation from primary production business owners, operators, managers, and others in the business, along with land managers/Traditional Owners. This includes individuals, partnerships, Trusts or companies that operate a primary production business within the agriculture, horticulture, pastoral, apiculture, or aquaculture industries.
 - ii. Priority target cohorts include First Nations peoples, women, young people, remote participants and other groups that may need additional support accessing programs.
 - iii. Non-target cohorts may access program support, where it does not prevent or diminish primary/priority cohorts accessing the program, but their participation would require a more substantial co-contribution (including fully self-funded). These cohorts include:
 - Those who solely operate in forestry, logging, fishing, and hunting and trapping industries who are not recognised First Nation organisations or communities
 - Those employed by very large, or multi-national corporations or own a farm business as a passive investment
 - Those undertaking farming activities as hobbies and/or recreation and not as a current, or genuinely potential, primary source of income.
- b. Participant characteristics and need, including consideration of:**
- i. means and likelihood of accessing similar services without support of the program, including potential barriers to participation or likely challenges accessing services without the program
 - ii. need and vulnerability, for example, primary producers facing cumulative climatic events that may have a greater need for services
 - iii. experience level, including whether the participant is new or returning
 - iv. number of members of the same farm business benefitting from the program.
- c. Likely private and public benefits and costs, including consideration of:**
- i. estimated cost (financial or otherwise) to deliver the relevant program support-more resource intensive vs low cost offerings
 - ii. nature of course content and delivery format – balance of private benefits vs public good outcomes extent and nature of participation – intensive and comprehensive vs short, open activities (e.g. available to a range of participants) vs targeted (tailored to a specific group or cohort)
 - iii. estimated cost (financial or otherwise) to the participant if participating.

Attachment A - Key concepts

Drought

Drought is one of several risks which calls for active preparation and adaptation. Drought is recognised as a recurring event that is best managed through stages. In accordance with the National Drought Agreement, the federal, state and territory governments' approach to supporting the agricultural sector to manage drought is built around a 3-stage cycle:

1. **preparing** (before drought),
2. **responding** (during drought)
3. **recovering** (after drought)

Drought Resilience and Climate resilience

Drought resilience: A key aspect of drought resilience is the ability to adapt, reorganise or transform in response to changing temperature, increasing variability and scarcity of rainfall and/or changed seasonality of rainfall, for improved economic, environmental and social resilience.

Climate Resilience: the ability to adapt, reorganise or transform in response to climate events. Climate change is driving an increase in the frequency and severity of climatic events, including drought. More frequent and severe droughts are one of the many impacts of climate change that farmers and regional communities need to prepare for, respond to and recover from. It is recognised that drought and climate resilience activities are often interconnected. The FBR program can consider a broader range of climatic risks where they meet the requirements in the Funding Plan.

First Nations peoples

First Nations peoples are considered a priority target cohort. This includes First Nations peoples, businesses, and organisations including members of First Nations agriculture dependent communities. This framework also refers to land managers, land custodians and Traditional Owners, in acknowledgement that individuals who are intended to be captured by the program may not see themselves as 'farmers'. These terms acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, businesses, communities and organisations, in agriculture dependent regions who are involved in agriculture and/or sustainable land practices such as practices to cultivate, maintain, and enhance the land for sustainable living. The inclusion of these terms are not intended to include land rights or ownership as an element of eligibility.

Holistic

'Holistic' should be considered as a comprehensive approach to managing the whole farm business as a system, considering the triple bottom line (e.g. improves economic, social and environmental resilience for current and future generations). Holistic does not refer to any specific land management technique or movement. The term is not required to be used in program communications, where it may not resonate with participants.

Incremental, Transitional and Transformational Change

Incremental change is the ability to preserve or restore a system (including its basic structures and functions) by preventing, preparing for, or mitigating the impacts of an event or risk. In the FBR context, incremental change may refer to "step-changes" or small (localised) and gradual

modifications made at the farm level, while maintaining or restoring existing methods of production. An example may include diversifying income with off-farm employment.

Transitional change is the ability to maintain the essential functions and structures of a system by modifying or changing some of its characteristics in response to future adverse events or risk. For example, a farm may change aspects of a production system by using different seed varieties or agronomic practices. Transitional change is considered more extensive than incremental change.

Transformational change may include change at a large, spatial scale. However, it is acknowledged that 'significant' changes or those that are considered transformational are subjective and relative and can also be achieved at a smaller scale, including within a business. For example, undertaking farm business planning for the first time may be considered transformational to some.

Transformational change may not be appropriate in all circumstances of the program, recognising that such change should not be forced on those who are not ready and that consideration should be given to the unique circumstances and contexts of participants. In some cases, facilitation of incremental and transitional change may help set the foundations that enable transformational change and can accrue to result in transformational change.

Public Good

All FDF investments must deliver public good as required under the FDF Act. The Funding Plan defines this concept as benefits that can be accessed or shared by many. Where private benefits are created, 'private or industry co-contributions (financial or in kind)' should be leveraged to offset them. The benefits achievable from the funding should outweigh the costs. Public good may also be established where significant spill over benefits exist for society and the economy, well beyond those derived by private beneficiaries. Related to the concept of public good is the need to achieve value for money and ensure investments are meaningfully dispersed and complementary.