

Future Drought Fund's

Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative

Guidelines: Small Network Grants - Round 2

Key Dates



Note: Projects funded in this round must be undertaken between June 2024 and 30 June 2025, with final activity reports submitted no later than 25 July 2025.

All applications close 5pm AEDT (Victorian) time

About the Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative

The Australian Government's Future Drought Fund (the Fund) is a secure, continuous investment to help farmers and communities to prepare for drought.

The Fund is investing \$29.6 million over the next two years to implement the *Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative*, which extends and integrates the Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program (delivered by the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal, or FRRR), and the Drought Resilience Leaders Program (delivered by the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, or ARLF.)

The Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative brings together five elements that directly support communities to adapt to and prepare for the impacts of drought and enhance the public good in agriculture-dependent communities.

Element 1: [Small Network Grants](#) to develop and deliver one-off events or initiatives to strengthen community capability to build drought preparedness.

Additionally, other complementary forms of support within the broader *Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative* (but not contained within these guidelines) include:

Element 2: [Community Impact Program](#): An integrated package of support for community networks in 35 regions across remote, rural and regional Australia to enhance drought preparedness. Based on local engagement, it will deliver a tailored package of support, including Community Impact Grants (delivered by FRRR) and Community Leadership Activities (delivered by ARLF). This element is closed for applications.

Element 3: [A National Expertise Pool](#) where community organisations can access specialist expertise to activate drought resilience initiatives with their grant funds where required (delivered by FRRR).

Element 4: [A National Mentoring Program](#) (delivered by ARLF) that brings together mentees from agriculture-dependent communities who want to contribute to their community's drought resilience with experienced mentors.

Element 5: [A National Learning Network](#) that connects individuals and organisations who are committed to community drought resilience so that they can continue to learn from and support each other (delivered by ARLF).

About FRRR

FRRR is the only national foundation specifically focused on ensuring the social and economic strength of remote, rural and regional communities.

Our unique model connects common purposes and funding with locally prioritised needs. We believe targeted, well-informed investment in local organisations will stimulate ideas that create vibrant communities.

That is why our programs focus on building resilience and strengthening communities.

Program Information

Program Purpose

The Small Network Grants (Round 2) are designed to support simple initiatives that build stronger connectedness and/or strengthen social capital that enables regional people and communities to be more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought.

Funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund, this is part of the commitment to support Australian agricultural communities to build drought resilience.

Types of Projects Supported

The Small Network Grants will fund networks, community events, training initiatives, community infrastructure, development and learning initiatives that assist local people and communities to strengthen social capital and capability to prepare for future droughts.

Projects may include:

- **Networks:** Initiatives to strengthen the capacity, capability and coordination of professional, social or community networks.
- **Community Events:** Field days, conferences, forums, summits and seminars that facilitate professional, social and community connection to build understanding of drought and climate change associated risks.
- **Training:** Initiatives to improve skills and capacity in community risk management, planning and project delivery in relation to drought.
- **Community Infrastructure:** Small scale community infrastructure projects to improve connectedness, wellbeing and facilities.
- **Development and Learning:** Initiatives to facilitate professional, personal and leadership related development and learning to support drought preparation.

Small Network Grants are designed to support a wide range of locally relevant initiatives that will result in the following short-term outcomes:

1. Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness.
2. Improved access to and use of services, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness.
3. A greater diversity of community members and organisations contributing to drought preparedness activities.
4. Increased knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought.
5. Improved implementation of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought.
6. Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience.
7. Growth and improved strength of community-based networks.

In the long term, projects and initiatives will contribute towards stronger connectedness and greater social capital within communities, contributing to wellbeing and security.

Program Priorities

Priorities for program investment, which will be used to inform decisions about which applications receive support, include:

- Activities and initiatives that focus on long-term social connection, capability building and an increased capacity for people and communities to adapt to change over time;
 - Activities and initiatives that can make a clear and distinct linkage to building drought preparedness in local communities;
 - Simple, one-off, or seed-type initiatives that are tailored to meet local needs and the unique geographical, climatic and community context;
 - Delivery locations with higher potential for drought impact and outside the geographical reach of existing Future Drought Fund investment locations through the Community Impact Grants component of the Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative;
 - Demonstrated community readiness to support the project at a local level;
 - Opportunities for collaboration with a diverse range of community-based organisations at a local or regional level;
 - Initiatives that specifically engage local young people and First Nations people or communities; and
 - Project alignment with other [Future Drought Fund investments](#), or other community resilience initiatives.
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Funds Available

Applications are sought from locally based, not-for profit organisations that seek to undertake simple, one-off, or seed-type activities or initiatives that contribute to the stated program outcomes. Local collaboration is encouraged.

The Program will offer Small Network Grants in two streams.

Organisations may apply for no more than one request per round.

There is no minimum request.

This is Round 2 of 2.

Eligible Local Government Areas (LGAs) include:

Stream 1

All LGA's in an agriculture-dependent regional, rural or remote location (except Stream 2 locations). Priority will be given to locations where previous HRCPD activity has not been undertaken.

An indicative funding pool of **\$1,175,954** is available for Stream 1. Applications up to **\$20,000** will be accepted.

Stream 2

All LGAs from NSW Far West, NT Tablelands, NT Arid Lands, Northern QLD Dry Tropics and WA Great Southern regions only. **Refer Appendix 1.**

An indicative funding pool of **\$1,296,352** is available for Stream 2. Applications up to **\$50,000** will be accepted.

Cross-border (Federal NRM, State and Local Government) applications are allowable where locally relevant and will be considered on their merits.

Definitions

Drought Resilience: The ability to adapt, reorganise or transform in response to changing temperature, increasing variability and scarcity of rainfall, and changed seasonality of rainfall, for improved economic, environmental and social wellbeing.

Agriculture-Dependent: Agriculture-dependent communities refers to remote, rural and regional communities with a high economic dependency on agriculture and related industries.

Networks: An interconnected and open-ended circle of people linked by a shared interest, occupation, etc.

Not-for-Profit: An organisation that does not operate for the profit, personal gain, or other benefit of particular people (for example, its members, the people who run it or their friends or relatives).

Strategic Drought Resilience: Drought resilience that is achieved through a considered and collaborative process (with involved parties / stakeholders), which includes a plan to achieve a particular outcome¹.

Innovative Activities: Generating, diffusing and applying knowledge in order to do new things or do existing things in new ways².

What Can't be Funded

There are a range of areas that we **cannot fund** through this program, including:

- Projects that are not located in remote, rural and regional Australia;
- Projects that support core business and areas of responsibility of Federal, State and Local Governments;
- Applications from sporting organisations need to clearly demonstrate charitable outcomes and benefit to the wider community that are above and beyond the sporting activities of the club, and clear linkage to drought resilience. This is because the encouragement or advancement of sport, recreation and social activities are not considered charitable activities under Australian law;
- Prizes, gifts, trophies, or awards;
- Projects solely focused on animal welfare;
- Activities that do not directly support agriculture-dependent communities;
- Activities that primarily result in economic or environmental outcomes relating to drought preparedness, not social outcomes;
- Activities that do not directly strengthen community networking, wellbeing, drought preparedness, or reduce the risk of social isolation associated with drought;
- Activities that duplicate existing projects or services in a particular community;
- Activities where costs have already been incurred because the activity has already been undertaken or will have been undertaken prior to the start of the activity;
- Activities outside of Australia or involving overseas travel;
- Activities that provide private and/or commercial benefit rather than not-for-profit or social enterprise activities that enhance the public good in agriculture-dependent communities;
- Business activities where the primary purpose is for profit;
- Activities already funded through another Australian, state or territory, or local government program;
- Provision of funding to any person or organisation who have outstanding final reports from a prior Australian Government grant of financial assistance;

¹ https://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/features/word/search/?search_word_type=Dictionary&word=strategy, retrieved 2022

² Department of Agriculture, Water & Environment (2022) National Agricultural Innovation Agenda: Digital foundations for agriculture strategy (awe.gov.au). p.37

- Any costs that are not directly related to carrying out the activity such as:
 - Preparation of grant application materials;
 - Protecting or patenting intellectual property;
 - Activities of a distinctly commercial or proprietary nature that are aimed at selling or attracting investment;
 - Developing, building, or producing commercial prototypes to commercialise a research project outcome;
 - Creation of new institutions;
 - Establishing new commercial ventures;
 - Core business expenses not directly related to carrying out the activity, including administrative, overhead (and infrastructure not specified in a project budget) costs, staff salaries (unless directly engaged in delivering the Funding Program) and relocation costs, travel and living allowances;
 - Financial support for feasibility studies, or master plans;
 - Hospitality or catering beyond reasonable costs for providing refreshments at activity-related events such as workshops or field days;
 - Purchasing of infrastructure not specified in a project budget;
 - The conduct of activities that could be considered part of normal business or ongoing operations, unless integral to the delivery of the activity;
 - Purchase or acquisition of land or buildings;
 - Capital expenditure;
 - Activities involving political advocacy;
 - Production of clothing, equipment, or merchandise for distribution;
 - Subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone, and rent; and
 - Major construction or large capital works.

If unsure, please contact us to discuss your eligibility prior to lodging your application.

Please note: Staffing and reasonable program delivery costs to support the coordination and delivery of planned activity or project are considered an eligible expense.

Eligibility

To apply, you must meet the following criteria:

- Applicant organisation must be a not-for-profit organisation **with an ABN or Incorporation Certificate**. Organisations with or without DGR-1 endorsement are eligible. The proposed project must be for charitable purposes and offer clear public benefit;
- Organisations can submit one application per grant round;
- Projects must benefit communities in remote, rural or regional Australia that are agriculture dependent.

Please note, you will be considered ineligible if the:

- Application is submitted by individuals, sole traders, private or commercial businesses (as per the submitted ABN);
- Application is submitted by an organisation that is not a legal entity (i.e. a registered not-for-profit), without the written consent of the governing / partnering body who holds the ABN / Incorporation Certificate;
- Application is submitted without required financial documentation (see below);
- Overdue Final Report/s from any FRRR grants awarded in the previous seven years have not been acquitted (delivery organisations should check with legal organisation to see if there are any outstanding final reports);
- Application is for a project or activity that has already occurred / is occurring prior to the announcement of funding;

- Application is incomplete. **NOTE:** Due to the volume of applications received, applications are assessed based on the documentation received at the time of application. **FRRR is unlikely to follow up missing documentation after applications have been submitted.**

How to
Apply

Before beginning your application, please read the information on the following pages. It sets out critical, additional information that we require and explains why it is important.

FRRR accepts applications via its online application portal, Grants Gateway.

We recommend you download a sample copy of the application form for the relevant Stream you wish to apply for:

- [Stream 1 – Applications up to \\$20,000;](#)
- [Stream 2 – Applications up to \\$50,000.](#)

Click [here](#) to apply.



IMPORTANT NOTES: APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Please read the information below to support the planning and preparation of your project. It also sets out what you **MUST** include for your project to be considered. Contact FRRR if you have any questions about this information or any aspect of the application form.

Eligible legal entities

Every application needs to include an organisation that holds either an **ABN or Incorporation Certificate**. If your organisation does not have that, FRRR may still fund the project, but you need another organisation's support, which we refer to as the '**legal organisation**' (with your organisation being the **delivery organisation**). This situation often occurs often when the organisation **delivering** the activity or project is a branch of an overarching organisation - such as a local CWA or YMCA branch. In this case, the CWA or YMCA would be the legal organisation.

Even though your organisation may complete the application (and will be doing the work), **it is the 'legal organisation's' legal and financial information that needs to be provided**. They also need to provide a letter of support, confirming they are willing to play this role.

Why is this important?

The Future Drought Fund: Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought program will only distribute funds to not-for-profit organisations with an ABN or Incorporation Certificate and FRRR needs to know that the organisation with that ABN / Incorporation Certificate understands and agrees to carry out their responsibilities in relation to your project, if successful.

Financial information

Applications received without the requested financial information are ineligible. Providing incorrect financial information is currently the most common reason applications are not able to be considered. You must attach the following:

- For organisations that have **audited financial reports**: Attach the most recent annual audited statements.
- For organisations that **do not have an annual financial audit**: Attach the most recent 12 months Income and Expenditure Statement. If you have a Balance Sheet, please also submit this.
- For organisations **less than one year old**: Provide Bank Statements for the period you have been operating.

Please note:

- If financial documents are more than 18 months old, please provide an explanation as to why the organisation does not have more recent documents.
- Bank Statements are **only** acceptable as financial documentation if your organisation has been operating for less than one year.
- Please explain any deficits and steps to sustain the organisation financially.
- Provide a brief explanation of any large financial surplus or current assets and reasons why FRRR funds are still required.
- Income and Expenditure statements must cover a full 12-month period.

FRRR conducts a broad range of due diligence queries when reviewing applications, such as: reviewing current and past incorporation, DGR and ACNC status. If your organisation has happened to have their incorporation status, DGR status or ACNC status changed or ACNC registration revoked or voluntarily withdrawn, please let us know the reasons for this.

Please contact us if you cannot provide required financials or are unsure about what to provide.

Why is this important?

FRRR uses this information to understand your organisation's financial viability and ability to manage grant funds.

Project Budget

You must include a project budget that clearly shows the items that FRRR grant funding will be used for and shows all income and expenses related to your project.

Budgets should be realistic and must add up – i.e., total expenditure must match total income.

Applicant contributions in cash or in-kind are highly regarded. Quotes or detailed rationale for items over \$1,000 are required, where possible. Note: FRRR suggests costing unskilled volunteer labour at \$45 per hour.

For more info on costing volunteer labour, visit: <https://explore.fundingcentre.com.au/help-sheets/valuing-volunteer-labour>

Why is this important?

A clear budget helps FRRR to understand the size of your project, exactly how FRRR funds will be spent and helps demonstrate community support for your project through in-kind contributions either from your organisation or partners / community members.

Supporting Materials

FRRR strongly recommends that you provide supporting materials such as letters of support, community plans, survey results, photographs, media clips and research reports that can show broad community support and partnerships involved in the project.

Large documents should be referenced and explained in the application.

Why is this important?

FRRR seeks to fund projects that are well-supported by the broader local community, are locally led and delivered, show good partnerships, and benefit multiple parts of the community. As FRRR is not always familiar with your community, our staff consider support material as evidence toward understanding level of community need, benefit, and support.

Clear Project Information

A clear description is required of exactly **what** the grant funds will be used for, **when** and **where** the project will happen, **who** will benefit and **who** will be involved in delivering the project, **why** the project and grant funds are needed, **how** funds will be spent and **how** the activities and success of the project will be recorded, evaluated and shared.

Where possible, we encourage you to make it really clear that your community is ready and able to deliver the project and if required, can provide ongoing support for the initiative.

Why is this important?

FRRR needs to clearly understand your project to assess its merits. Applicants should focus on addressing what, when, where, who, why and how of the project, as this is the best way to clearly communicate the details of the project.

A ready community is best placed to achieve the aims of your project, so during assessment, our staff look for information that tells us that good leadership, skills and awareness exist in your community to support the project now and in the future.

Appendix 1

Stream 2: Eligible Local Government Areas (LGA's)

The below list of LGAs in the NSW Far West, NT Tablelands, NT Arid Lands, Northern QLD Dry Tropics and WA Great Southern regions are eligible to apply for grants up to \$50,000.

No other LGAs, other than those listed here, are eligible to apply for Stream 2 funding.

New South Wales

Region 1: NSW Far West
Balranald
Bourke
Brewarrina
Broken Hill
Central Darling
Unincorporated NSW
Walgett
Wentworth

Queensland

Region 12: Northern QLD Dry Tropics
Burdekin
Charters Towers
Isaac
Mackay
Palm Island
Townsville
Whitsunday

Northern Territory

Region 14: NT Arid Lands
Alice Springs
Central Desert
MacDonnell

Region 15: NT Tablelands
Coomalie
Katherine
Litchfield
Roper Gully
Unincorporated NT
Victoria Daly
West Daly

Western Australia

Region 19: WA Great Southern
Albany
Broomehill-Tambellup
Cranbrook
Denmark
Gnowangerup
Jerramungup
Katanning
Kent
Kojonup
Plantagenet
Woodanilling