



Future Drought Fund

The Australian Government will continue to help farmers and regional communities prepare for future droughts through ongoing investments from the \$5 billion Future Drought Fund. Australia's farmers are facing the reality of more frequent and severe droughts with significant economic, social and environmental impacts. The best time to prepare for drought is before drought hits. The Future Drought Fund is supporting this through better planning for drought, the uptake of drought resilient farming practices, and stronger community leadership and networks.

What's in this year's budget

The 2022-23 Federal Budget allocates \$94.5 million in funding from the Future Drought Fund. This fully allocates the \$100 million available each year under the Fund for the first four years out to 2023-24, covering the life of the *Drought Resilience Funding Plan*.

The investments build on previously announced programs, which are delivering:

- improved planning for drought by farmers. Over 1,060 farmers have participated to date, with a target of reaching as many as 17,000 over the next 3 years
- Regional Drought Resilience Plans, setting out strategies and actions to get better prepared for drought. Fifteen regions have planning underway, with the aim of having plans in place for all agricultural regions over the next three years
- new digital tools that help farmers, agribusiness and others understand how the climate into the future might impact their region, farm and what they grow; how resilient they are to those changes; and things they can do to become more resilient
- Projects to trial, demonstrate and extend drought resilient farming practices and technologies include:
 - 46 projects under an Innovation Grants funding round, supporting projects to develop, demonstrate, extend and commercialise drought resilient technologies and practices
 - 80 projects under way to trial and demonstrate land management practices supporting productivity during droughts
 - 26 projects recently announced under the Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes program.
- 8 regionally based and focused Innovation Hubs, with over 40 local shopfronts, to provide practical advice and support to farmers on drought resilience strategies and practices
- 2-3 Adoption officers in each Hub to work with farmers and communities to drive the uptake of innovation in drought resilience technologies and practices, and to provide feedback to the regional Hub.
- 93 projects to strengthen and support the role of community organisations and networks in preparing and responding to droughts
- up to 450 drought resilience community leaders across 12 regions, and a national drought preparedness mentoring network of up to 550 people.

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Additional 2022-23 Budget investments include:

- **\$40 million** to deliver long-term trials of drought resilient farming practices
- **\$14.3 million** in grants for demonstration and extension of drought resilience practices
- **\$10 million** to implement a drought resilience commercialisation initiative
- **\$21.6 million** to support drought resilient communities
- **\$1.6 million** to establish drought resilience scholarships
- **\$7 million** to deliver the Climate Services for Agriculture platform across Australia.

Through **long-term trials**, prospective new **drought resilient farming practices** will endure robust testing to determine and demonstrate their potential. This will provide farmers with the confidence and information they need to try the practices themselves. Funding will establish a national network of drought resilient farm laboratories to support robust testing, as well as being a place for farmers to 'look and learn'. An expert committee will guide the design of the farm laboratories and trials and will include consultation with industry.

Funding for **demonstration and extension** of proven **drought resilient farming practices** will help farmers understand and adopt those practices. It recognises that there are many proven practices out there, and the gap is support for adoption by farmers. It complements research and development (R&D) efforts by Rural Research and Development Corporations and other researchers by providing a pathway for translating R&D into impact. Two grant rounds will support both Australian and internationally generated R&D.

The **drought resilience commercialisation initiative** will help people turn their good ideas into commercially backed, drought resilient farming technologies and practices. It will provide commercialisation facilitation support to Australian innovators, and fund activities that help get good ideas to commercial proof of concept stage.

Funding for **drought resilient communities** will provide tailored support for up to 35 regions for community leaders, networks and organisations to lead local action to prepare for droughts.

Drought resilience scholarships will recognise and support leaders and innovators in the field of drought resilience through the prestigious Nuffield Australia awards. It will drive a continued focus on drought resilience even in good times, and support innovation.

The **Climate Services for Agriculture** platform makes climate information more accessible and useful for farmers. Additional funding will complete the development of the platform. Farmers, agribusinesses, communities and others nationwide will be able to access information on how the future climate might affect their region and the things they grow. This helps people to plan for future droughts and other climate risks.



Why is this important

Drought is an enduring feature of the Australian landscape. It has significant economic, social and environmental impacts.

The \$5 billion Future Drought Fund is the key investment by the Australian Government to build drought resilience in Australia's agriculture sector, the agricultural landscape, and communities.

These investments build on previous Future Drought Fund programs, and seek to achieve a meaningful and measurable improvements in:

- planning for future droughts by farmers, agribusinesses, communities and regions
- the uptake of farming practices and technologies that support continued productivity during times of drought, and faster recovery coming out of drought
- the role of community leaders, networks and organisations in helping communities prepare for, and live through, droughts.

How much will this cost

	2022-23 \$	2023-24 \$	2024-25 \$	2025-26 \$	TOTAL \$
Long-term trials of drought resilient practices*	5.0	15.0	5.0	5.0	40.0
Grants to activate drought resilience practices	6.3	8.0	0.0	0.0	14.3
Drought resilience commercialisation	4.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Resilient communities	11.0	10.6	0.0	0.0	21.6
Drought Resilience Scholarships	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	1.6
Climate Services for Agriculture	0.0	7.0	0.0	0.0	7.0
Subtotal	27.1	47.5	5.0	5.0	94.5

Note*: This measure contains \$10m additional funding across 2026-27 and 2027-28.

More information

For more information about our commitment to help Australian farms and communities prepare for future drought, visit awe.gov.au/budget

For more information about the specific FDF investments from this Budget, visit www.awe.gov.au/dfd

For more information about the 2022-23 Budget, visit budget.gov.au

