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28 February 2024



## Central West Councils welcome grant to prepare Drought Resilience Plan

Five Central West Councils, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra, Orange and Weddin, are joining forces in collaboration with the NSW and Australian governments to support their local communities and businesses during future droughts through the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program.

Recognising the importance of proactive measures, the five Central West Councils are collaborating on the development of a Central West Regional Drought Resilience Plan. This comprehensive plan aims to bolster community and business preparedness, response capabilities, and recovery strategies in the face of drought challenges.

The Australian Government and the NSW Government, under the Future Drought Fund, are providing joint funding for this crucial initiative. The five councils have successfully secured a \$220,000 grant to develop a Regional Drought Resilience Plan to support local communities and businesses across all five Councils.

**Minister for Regional NSW Tara Moriarty** says the expanded program in NSW aims to help agricultural communities forward-plan to prepare for inevitable periods of reduced rainfall.

“This acknowledges each region in NSW is different and requires a tailor-made approach to drought preparedness to be truly effective. Having community-led Regional Drought Resilience Plans will help set them up for success.”

**Blayney Mayor Scott Ferguson** – “This initiative will offer essential guidance to prepare our community before drought affects us.

It will empower all levels of government with comprehensive strategies, encourage community involvement and regional cooperation to effectively manage the likely upcoming drought and flow on impacts.”

**Cabonne Mayor Kevin Beatty** said: “The last few years have been challenging for so many in our communities as we have experienced the devastating impacts of extreme weather events. With the possibility of an El Nino event on the horizon, it’s important we work together now

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to share experience and knowledge to build a plan with locally tailored actions to help our communities and businesses prepare for future droughts.”

“Often, we try and tackle issues in the middle of drought, which is the most challenging time. The Central West Regional Drought Resilience Plan does the preparation work now while we’ve got a chance to think about it, rather than under the pressure of trying to respond.”

**Cowra Mayor Ruth Fagan** welcomes the governments’ investment in the region and looks forward to working with businesses on resilient projects in drought conditions.”

**Orange Mayor Jason Hamling said** the beauty of this approach was that it puts local communities first.

“Instead of trying a one-size-fits-all answer to complex problems, this program begins with bringing community members together to learn from their experience of living with drought,” Cr Hamling said.

**Weddin Mayor Craig Bembrick** said: “I am excited that Weddin is part of this Regional Drought Resilience Planning. Drought is never far from our minds when we live in regional areas, and I am looking forward to seeing what actions are identified to help our community navigate the multifaceted challenges of drought.”

## What’s next?

Opportunities will be available for community consultations in each council area to develop a community-led resilience plan over the coming months.

For more information on the Future Drought Fund, visit

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/drought/future-drought-fund>.

For more information about the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program, visit

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/regional-drought-resilience-planning-program>.

## FACT SHEET

In NSW, the Department of Regional NSW manages the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program, to support identified regional councils to co-develop regional drought resilience plans with their communities to manage future risk. The NSW model for the program involves neighbouring councils working together to develop localised regional drought resilience plans.

The program acknowledges that we can learn from previous droughts and plan for broader community implications. The plan will present:

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- Historical and predicted impacts of drought in each region
- An evidence-based, triple bottom-line strategy to mitigate or adapt to future drought impacts
- A prioritised list of actions and pathways to build drought resilience, specific to the region and that addresses the needs of the community.

The Regional Drought Resilience Planning program is jointly funded by the Australian Government and NSW Government under the Future Drought Fund.

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