



Australian Government



Future  
Drought  
Fund

This project received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund

# TASAg Innovation Hub

## Regional Drought Resilience Priorities

Stakeholders were asked to share their perspectives on issues and opportunities in preparing for drought and building drought resilience. The following tables summarise the key themes and priorities that emerged from this engagement process in Tasmania.

Please get in contact with the Hub via [fdf.tas.hub@utas.edu.au](mailto:fdf.tas.hub@utas.edu.au) if you would like further information about our regional priorities or our current activities.

## Priority 1: Farm Planning and Preparedness

Activities that focus on helping farmers understand their options, develop, and follow plans and trigger points to guide decisions through the season, informed by accessible and useable data and information.

<p><i>Farm business and financial management</i></p> <p>Building business and financial skills to help farmers manage through difficult times.</p>	<p><i>Examples</i></p> <p>Processes to help farmers consider feasible options for diversification, value-adding, business growth, and investment. Farm planning programs that are cross-sectoral and recognise Tasmania's mixed-farming systems.</p> <p>Drought plans based on local rules of thumb / locally relevant information to help farmers make decisions based on how a season is progressing.</p>
<p><i>Farm management practices</i></p> <p>Building farmers' capacity to implement sustainable farm management practices that <i>will help farmers be prepared for dry seasonal conditions</i>.</p>	<p><i>Examples</i></p> <p><u>Livestock and pastures</u>: assessing pasture dry matter and feed on offer, feed budgeting, grazing management (stocking rates and carrying capacity), drought lotting, supplementary feeding and livestock nutrition and stock water needs, quality, and systems.</p> <p><u>Horticulture and cropping</u>: cover or inter-row cropping, site and cultivar selection, efficient water use and infiltration.</p> <p><u>Natural resource management</u> – practices that help build soil productivity, water holding capacity and carbon, healthy waterways, pest and weed control, ground cover maintenance and selection of pasture species.</p>
<p><i>Data to guide decisions</i></p> <p>Provision of locally relevant, accessible, understandable information and guidance as part of planning and decision making <u>and</u> support to understand how to use the information.</p>	<p><i>Examples</i></p> <p>Development of simple guides that are specific to Tasmania and help different types of farmers think about what to do ahead of drought, flood, bushfires, and other threats to lives and livelihoods.</p> <p>Working with ag service providers and/or farmers to build skills and capacity to apply or adapt existing decision support tools.</p> <p>Working with farmers to understand what (farm-level) data can be collected and how it can be used.</p> <p>Development of platforms that integrate or link different datasets and tools (e.g., linking farm information on pasture cover with farm management software)</p> <p>Establishing good sources of publicly accessible data and networks of sensors – and supporting farmers to understand and apply this information.</p>

## Priority 2: Water

Activities that contribute to a better understanding of catchment-scale water availability, allocations, and demand, and as well as farm-scale issues about reliable access and efficient use of water.

### *Water management and allocation*

Supporting a better understanding of river systems and catchments to inform sustainable water management and allocation to agriculture.

### *Examples*

Cross-sectoral insights of water availability, allocations and needs for different uses (agricultural, environmental, human consumption), considering future climate projections.

Activities to better understand water use in catchments that rely on natural flow.

Wider application of knowledge about crop water use to inform regional/catchment water requirements and planning.

### *Reliable water access*

Efforts to increase understanding about water availability (noting that irrigation expansion is out of scope)

### *Examples*

Building understanding of farm-level water access in the context of catchment management and natural flows of river systems, and use of seasonal forecasting tools to help farmers understand and plan.

### *Smart water use*

Supporting practices for efficient use of on-farm water.

### *Examples*

On-farm water audits to help identify ways to conserve water or use water more efficiently.

Building on-farm understanding of actual crop/pasture water use and needs.

Building skills and capacity in best practice irrigation management.

Learning from regions in mainland Australia representing current and likely future conditions in Tasmania - experimenting and adapting irrigation practices that are relatively new to Tasmania.

### Priority 3: Landscapes

Activities that contribute to valuing and increasing on-farm and broader scale health of soil, vegetation and waterways, the potential to access emerging markets, while contributing to drought preparedness.

Building farmer and land manager's knowledge and skills to build and measure on-farm natural capital in ways that also support drought resilience.

#### *Examples*

Working with groups of farmers/land managers to build understanding of and support to implement practices that build natural capital and drought resilience at landscape scale (e.g., pasture management, enterprise mix, revegetation and shelterbelt management).

On-farm demonstration and application of natural capital accounting that supports decisions about the value and contribution to farm business profitability and sustainability.

Working with farmers to understand indicators of soil condition, including soil organic matter, moisture, and water availability.

### Priority 4: Climate

Activities that contribute to an improved understanding of changes in climate and using this information **as a part** of contributing to other priority areas.

Understanding changes in climate and using this information *as part of* farm planning and preparedness.

#### *Examples*

Supporting farm-level planning for projected changes in climate, e.g., building farm management capacity in understanding forecasting and climate scenarios and to incorporate such knowledge in operational and strategic business planning.

Updating climate projections for Tasmania at required resolution for different farming sectors and land use for agriculture.

### Priority 5: Communities

Includes activities that build social connections, community leadership, and well-being of people and communities **as part of** contributing to the other priority areas.

Building connections and skills to help communities get through tough times.

Examples under this theme are closely related to the approaches used for extension and adoption (see below).

#### *Examples*

Group learning activities in projects are designed for secondary benefits such as conversation starters

	<p>around mental health and/or expanding the networks of participants for mutual support.</p> <p>Helping new or existing local or regional action groups operate people-centred processes more efficiently and effectively, and to strengthen the leadership capabilities of group facilitators.</p>
--	--