



Future Drought Fund First Nations Advisory Group Terms of Reference

March 2025

Purpose

This Terms of Reference establishes a strategic policy relationship between the Farm Resilience Division (the FRD) of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Future Drought Fund First Nations Advisory Group (the advisory group). It aims to improve drought and climate resilience outcomes through the activities of the Future Drought Fund (FDF), benefiting First Nations peoples and the broader agriculture sector, landscapes and communities.

Scope

The advisory group provides independent, strategic policy advice on the design and implementation of FDF programs and activities, focused on:

- Informing the design process ;
on Country pilot program and **Future Drought Fund First Nations Advisory Group Terms of Reference**
- Ensuring FDF programs are inclusive of First Nations people using culturally sensitive approaches.
- Supporting capability and delivery reform within the FDF to embed First Nations perspectives for long-term outcomes.

The advisory group is not a decision-making body.

Membership

Membership consists of five members and one chair. Members' terms commenced on 28 January 2025 and will end on 30 June 2028. Members are engaged for their skills and expertise in areas such as environmental, social and economic initiatives, including drought and climate resilience, as well as their experience in First Nations engagement, water and land management and the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector. As such, members are not expected to provide place-based advice or act as a representative of a particular community or organisation.

Meeting Arrangements

The advisory group will meet as required, but not less than 4 times per year. Members will be remunerated to attend and undertake reasonable preparation for meetings, inter-state travel and consideration of out-of-session material. Guests may be invited to meetings, with the approval of the Chair.

Reporting

The advisory group reports to the FRD. This Terms of Reference and members' biographical information will be made publicly available on the department's website. The advisory group is reported on the Australian Government Organisations Register and AusTender. The FRD will report on the outcomes of the relationship, for example, through the FDF Annual Report.

Roles and responsibilities

First Nations Advisory Group

- Provide independent, strategic policy advice to the Farm Resilience Division of the department (see Scope).
- Comply with their respective Terms of Engagement and the Terms of Reference.
- Consider in its advice the parameters of FDF activities and decision making, including statutory requirements set out in the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019* and the *Future Drought Fund (Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2024-2028) Determination 2024*, and timeframes or funding limitations.

Farm Resilience Division

- Recognise First Nations people, businesses, organisations and communities as key stakeholders in the agriculture sector and dependent communities.
- Commit to supporting First Nations economic self-determination through the agriculture sector and recognise that caring for Country presents opportunities to support the resilience of the sector, landscapes and the people and communities that depend on it.
- Consider the advisory group's advice in its deliberations and the advice provided to the relevant financial decision maker.
- Provide administrative and secretariat support and undertake reporting (see Reporting).

Shared Responsibilities

- **Accountable:** Participate in reporting on the activities and outcomes of the partnership.
- **Cultural Safety:** Commit to ensuring a professional, culturally safe working environment. This includes preserving Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property and upholding the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent.
- **Collaborative:** Engage in discussions in good faith to achieve a shared goal. Both Parties will influence the agenda, determine priorities and activities with consideration to relevant statutory requirements and funding parameters, and provide advice by consensus, wherever possible.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the continuous connection of First Nations Traditional Owners and Custodians to the lands, seas and waters of Australia. We recognise their care for and cultivation of Country. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and recognise their knowledge and contribution to the productivity, innovation and sustainability of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. © Commonwealth of Australia 2025

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