

Future Drought Fund: Funding Information

This table details the payment information for the Innovation Challenges Pilot program as required under Section 27A of the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019*.

All payments in this table are GST exclusive.

Table 1 Innovation Challenges Pilot program

Organisation	Region	Legislative purpose	Program description	Total amount payable	Total amount payable, but not yet paid as at 31 August 2026	Total amount paid as at 31 August 2026	Payment date	Payment amount
Deakin University	Victoria	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>Building Drought Resilience Through Simulation-Based Learning for Farmers and Rural Communities</i> – The project develops a science based drought simulation tool to help farmers and rural communities strengthen resilience, risk literacy, and decision making under uncertainty. The tool converts climate forecasts into interactive, real-time scenarios mirroring real drought conditions.	\$1,186,850.00	\$978,046.33	\$208,803.67	11/08/2026	\$208,803.67
Outback Academy Australia Limited	New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania,	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>Thriving Country Thriving Communities - Traditional Ecological Knowledge Meets New Science and Technologies to Support Drought Resilience</i> –	\$1,943,000.00	\$1,511,233.33	\$431,766.67	11/08/2026	\$431,766.67

OFFICIAL
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	Victoria, Western Australia		This project establishes an innovative, co-designed farm planning and management model aimed at accelerating climate smart agriculture in partnership with First Nations farmers across five states. The project aims to enable agricultural planning and production practices that restore the health of Country and strengthen community wellbeing, while building resilient agri-businesses capable of withstanding climate change, food insecurity and drought.					
Australian Fodder Industry Association Limited	New South Wales, Victoria	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>Transforming Australia's Fodder System. A Collaborative Network for Tough Times</i> – This project plans to address access to fodder during extreme dry for farmers. Facilitating a pilot Fodder Community Network, this coordinated, community-led system links fodder producers, users, and service providers to improve preparedness, trust, and knowledge sharing before, during, and after drought.	\$1,690,000.00	\$1,381,666.67	\$308,333.33	18/08/2026	\$308,333.33
Molongghip & District Enterprises Pty Ltd	New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>Transformative AI-Driven Soil Microbiome Analysis and Customised Biofertiliser Development for Enhanced Drought Resilience Across Australian Agricultural Systems</i> – This project aims to deliver an AI-enabled soil microbiome analysis platform that advances how farmers understand and manage soil biology. Through field trials, farmer mentoring and	\$1,972,625.00	\$1,540,079.00	\$432,546.00	11/08/2026	\$432,546.00

OFFICIAL
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			Australia-wide knowledge sharing, this project creates substantial opportunities for community benefit, supporting a broad cohort of producers to adopt innovative, biologically informed farming strategies.					
Seed Force Pty Ltd	New South Wales, South Australia , Victoria, Western Australia	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>SowSure - A Farmer-Led National Trial of Crop Establishment Protection for Drought Resilience</i> – The project establishes trial sites across four states to test an innovative cropping solution (SowSure) under real farming conditions. This crop establishment protection initiative offsets the cost of seed, fertilizer, and sowing with automatic parametric insurance triggered by low rainfall, to examine whether rapid financial support can reduce early season risk and strengthen farmer confidence.	\$982,049.00	\$761,593.66	\$220,455.34	11/08/2026	\$220,455.34
Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action	Victoria	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>Optimisation of production and on farm demonstration of beneficial microbes to alleviate drought stress in cereal crops</i> – The project will develop scalable production systems and seed coating technologies, integrating soil, plant, and microbiome profiling with gene expression analysis to enhance drought tolerance in wheat and barley.	\$1,624,436.00	\$1,624,436.00	\$0.00		
Berries Australia Limited	New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria,	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>Bioreactors - Turning runoff into a resource for the protected cropping berry industry</i> – The project will enhance drought resilience in the horticultural sector by demonstrating	\$813,006.00	\$668,033.34	\$144,972.66	20/08/2026	\$144,972.66

OFFICIAL
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	Western Australia		bioreactors as an innovative solution for recycling and sterilising drainage water in substrate grown berry systems. By converting nutrient rich runoff into clean irrigation water, bioreactors aim to reduce demand for fresh water, prevent nutrient discharge into waterways, and help safeguard yields during periods of drought.					
Arca Sustainability Pty Ltd	Western Australia	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>Farm Forward, Building Drought and Climate Resilience in Western Australia's Broadacre Sector</i> - The project establishes a coordinated system to accelerate applied innovations that enhance drought resilience across broadacre farming systems through science based assessments, adaptive planning and participatory learning. The project technology enables climate risk analyses, farm specific adaptation roadmaps and on farm trials for large scale implementation.	\$286,605.00	\$221,641.33	\$64,963.67	11/08/2026	\$64,963.67
Desert Channels Queensland Ltd	Queensland	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>RAINS - Resilient Agriculture through Innovation in Native Seeds</i> – The project supports QLDs rangeland farmers to better prepare for and recover from drought by restoring native pastures and improving soil health. It will collect and store locally adapted native grass seed and beneficial soil microbes to enhance germination and early growth even under challenging post drought conditions.	\$1,401,500.00	\$1,051,400.00	\$350,100.00	11/08/2026	\$350,100.00

OFFICIAL
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The University of Newcastle	New South Wales, Western Australia	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>Hydro Harvester Pilot Program - A First Nations Led Water Resilience Initiative</i> – This project will upgrade and deploy a desiccant based atmospheric water generation unit (Hydro Harvester) for use in a First Nations led farm in WA. The system will establish a supplementary, climate resilient water source to support the cultivation of native wattle seed, strengthening both drought resilience and long term economic stability in agricultural production.	\$1,904,166.00	\$1,443,321.66	\$460,844.34	11/08/2026	\$460,844.34
Riverine Plains Incorporated	New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>WaterSmart Decisions - Scaling Farmer Confidence in Water Use Efficiency Technologies</i> – The project aims to transform uncertainty into confidence by enabling farmers and agronomists to trust, adopt, and benefit from emerging water use efficiency technologies. Building on soil-moisture probes, weather networks, and irrigation decision support tools, the project will validate new technologies that address farmers' concerns regarding data reliability, accuracy, and practical value.	\$1,986,020.00	\$1,581,753.33	\$404,266.67	11/08/2026	\$404,266.67
James Cook University	Queensland	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>CLOVER - Climate-smart Optimisation for Valuable & Efficient Irrigation</i> – The project combines a decision support tool, AI-enhanced high resolution weather forecasting, and IoT-based automation system to enable predictive irrigation management based on	\$1,599,407.00	\$1,333,829.33	\$265,577.67	18/08/2026	\$265,577.67

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			forecast conditions and real time crop water deficits. The aim is to shift irrigation from a reactive practice to a predictive, data-driven process that improves water-use efficiency, yield outcomes, and farm profitability.					
Mallee Sustainable Farming Ltd	New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria	s21(1)(c) – Carrying out a project that is directed towards achieving drought resilience	<i>Accelerating the adoption of farmer led intercropping and multi species innovations in southern Australia's fragile low rainfall environments to deliver high impact, evidence based sustainable land management and drought resilience</i> – The project plans to accelerate the adoption of high impact drought resilience innovations across fragile, low rainfall farming systems. The aim is to scale intercropping and multi-species practices from proof-of-concept to adoption , by engaging farmers, First Nation groups, advisers, researchers, and agribusiness. By integrating agronomic, environmental, and economic data, the aim is to generate practical evidence on soil health, biodiversity, profitability, and drought resilience.	\$1,997,000.00	\$1,497,637.66	\$499,362.34	11/08/2026	\$499,362.34
Innovation Challenges Pilot				\$19,386,664.00	\$15,594,671.64	\$3,791,992.36		\$3,791,992.36

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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