



January 2025

National Drought Network Terms of Reference

Purpose and objective

The National Drought Network (NDN) is an information sharing forum where there is an opportunity for all jurisdictions to connect with drought stakeholders, to hear and share information related to drought. Through sharing information, the NDN aims to improve understanding and further develop collaborative relationships across the broader drought community which can be leveraged to assist in Australia's preparation, response, and recovery from drought events.

Functions

The function of the NDN is to share information:

- which is drought-related, non-sensitive and able to be made publicly available
- on drought policies, programs, and initiatives from all jurisdictions
- on drought conditions and impacts, drought indicators and data
- on case studies and lessons learned; and

Where appropriate the NDN will also do data collection, situation validating and sentiment testing.

Governance

The NDN is not intended to duplicate or replace existing networks, or local, state/territory or Commonwealth fora. It will not have a formal decision-making role.

Sponsor

The NDN is sponsored by the First Assistant Secretary, Farm Resilience Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The Sponsor provides continuing senior level commitment and support for championing the objectives of the NDN.

Chair

The Assistant Secretary, Drought Policy Branch, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will chair the NDN, leading and facilitating network meetings. The Chair will work closely with State and Territory counterparts through the Agriculture Ministers' Meeting Working Group (AMMWG) on

Drought to establish agenda items which are representative of both the Australian and State and Territory governments. The AMMWG on Drought is a forum to bring jurisdictions (parties under the [National Drought Agreement](#)) together to share and discuss drought-related policies and programs, information, and issues. A proxy may attend on the Chair's behalf if they are unavailable.

Secretariat

Secretariat support will be provided by the Drought Partnerships team, Farm Resilience Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The Secretariat will support the Chair and will assist in the development of meeting agendas and collation of supporting papers to facilitate productive engagement. States and Territories will be invited via the AMMWG to contribute to agenda items six weeks prior to each meeting. Finalised agendas will be distributed to invitees at least five working days prior to each meeting.

The Secretariat will track action items such as issues or information to be followed-up, and ensure outcomes are relayed to future meetings.

Minutes will be taken for internal use only. The minutes will inform development of meeting notes which will be distributed to invitees following each meeting and published on the department's [Drought Engagement](#) web page.

Invitees

As this is an information network, invites may be extended to agencies, organisations and persons who are drought stakeholders. Stakeholders may 'opt-in' to join the NDN by emailing the Drought Policy Branch, DAFF. As invitees may be representing the views and perspectives of their groups and organisations (rather than individual views), invitees can elect a suitable proxy to attend meetings when necessary.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (department) collects your personal information in relation to the National Drought Network for the purposes of administration of the network to ensure targeted and appropriate information for attendees, reporting on the attendance of organisations, and related purposes.

If you fail to provide some or all of the personal information requested in this document, the department may be unable to register you to join the National Drought Network.

The department may disclose your personal information to other Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies for the above purposes, provided the disclosure is consistent with relevant laws, in particular the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). Your personal information will be handled in accordance with Australian Privacy Principles.

See the department's [Privacy Policy](#) to learn more about accessing or correcting personal information or making a complaint. Alternatively, email the department at privacy@aff.gov.au

Frequency of meetings

The NDN will aim to meet at a minimum twice per year in virtual format. This frequency may increase as drought conditions worsen, as required. The Chair may also call additional meetings as necessary or arrange for offline meetings for deep dives on topics. Additionally, pre-recorded videos or webinars may be adopted from time to time. When scheduling meetings, consideration will be given to other meetings drought stakeholders may be attending, to avoid meeting clashes and maximise availability.

Review of Terms of Reference

This document will be reviewed yearly by members of the AMMWG on drought and informed by invitee feedback.

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.

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