



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry



Future
Drought
Fund



SA
DROUGHT
HUB

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SA Drought Hub Impact Case Study

Background

South Australian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SA Drought Hub) activities are underpinned by a comprehensive co-design process engineered to capture the state's drought-resilience priorities.

This approach engages stakeholders from across the agricultural spectrum, including: producers; grower groups; research organisations and researchers; industry peak bodies; government, nongovernment and private extension officers and networks; local government; and a range of agricultural service and equipment providers.

With its headquarters in Roseworthy and regional nodes staffed in Minnipa, Port Augusta, Orroroo, Loxton, and Struan, the hub ensures statewide coverage of all pastoral, low, medium and high rainfall agricultural production zones. The hub support numerous drought

resilience building events and activities across the state, as well as an additional five multi-hub projects (in collaboration with other Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs), all of which align with the priorities identified through the co-design process.

The hub also supports industry based interns to engage in regionally based on-ground activities that increase extension and adoption of research findings.

The suite of projects comprises a diverse range of activities across the key SA agricultural commodity sectors of grains, livestock and viticulture. Projects are primarily delivered through the SA Grower Group network, with project service provision through a broad range of hub partners.

The SA Drought Hub team works directly with hub partners and primary producers across the state to deliver on-ground project activities.

Identifying knowledge and practice gaps

One of the SA Drought Hub's first tasks was to identify gaps in existing drought resilience knowledge and practices. This involved a comprehensive co-design process involving 279 people representing hub partners and other stakeholders across all aspects of drought resilience: community, economic, management, agronomic and environmental. Through this consultation, the hub captured 991 suggestions about current knowledge gaps as well as ideas for building drought resilience. These were developed into 10 themes that remain the core focus of Hub activities:

1. Community resilience and wellbeing through support, collaboration and access to technologies
2. Farm planning and decision making to manage climate and operational risk
3. Farm business management
4. Livestock and fodder management strategies, technologies and innovations
5. Crop and pasture management strategies, technologies and innovations
6. Access to drought information and technical support
7. Soil and land management strategies, technologies and innovations
8. Water security and management strategies, technologies and innovations
9. Native vegetation, biodiversity, pest management strategies, technologies and innovations
10. Upskilling advisers, researchers and key influencers.

The full Node Co-Design Workshops Report, which includes a description of each theme and all of the 991 ideas received, can be downloaded from sadroughthub.com.au/resources.



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Project details can be found on the hub website.



Co-designing projects

Following the effort to identify knowledge gaps and set priorities, the hub works collaboratively with its partner organisations to co-design projects. Key to this is ensuring that projects recognise and add value to past and current investments, are tailored to local farming systems and environmental conditions, engage local and regional stakeholders in the design and delivery of projects, and are of the highest priority to end users.

An initial series of workshops identified node's priorities as well as opportunities for project design and delivery at the outset of the Hub. Since that time projects have been developed through the SA Grower Group Network, SA Landscape Boards, research partners, and industry groups with delivery on the ground driven primarily through the grower groups. The co-design process remains ongoing to ensure the identified priorities are regularly reviewed and continue to be addressed across the hub network.

Support for access to funding

The hub has directly supported more than 40 organisations – spanning landscape boards, farming systems groups, community organisations, research providers and local government – in securing project funding totalling more than \$30 million to date. This has included from the following grants programs funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry through the Future Drought Fund (FDF):

- Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes grants
- Innovation grants
- Extension and Adoption of Drought Resilience Farming Practices grants
- Long Term Trials of Drought Resilient Farming Practices grants
- Climate Smart Agriculture grants

The hub also provides support for participation in other FDF initiatives, including the Farm Business Resilience, Drought Resilience Leaders, Networks to Build Drought Resilience Grants, My Climate View, Regional Drought Resilience Planning, the Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought programs.

In addition to successful grant applications, the hub has provided significant support during the establishment and implementation phases of programs and projects. Although this has not been valued in monetary terms, it has been extremely important in attaining synergies and collaborations across the whole FDF program and the project provider network in SA.

Learning, communication and extension

The SA Drought Hub asks participants at field and workshop based learning events to complete evaluation surveys that capture feedback on their level of engagement, satisfaction with the events, and the benefits from attending. The surveys are also used to inform the design of future events. Of 816 participants who completed evaluation surveys between the commencement of the SA Drought Hub and June 30th 2024:



95%

agreed or strongly agreed that the content of this activity was easy to understand



88%

agreed or strongly agreed that they the content of the activity was relevant in helping them to prepare for, or respond to, future drought

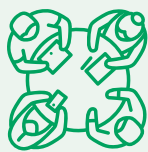
92%

agreed or strongly agreed that they would be likely to consult/use the materials provided again



94%

agreed or strongly agreed that they content of the activity was relevant to their needs; and



89%

agreed or strongly agreed that they would be confident in sharing their new skills and knowledge with peers



78%

agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of the activity, they are likely to make a practice change, or consider making a practice change.

Fostering collaboration

The crux of the SA Drought Hub's impact lies in its ability to foster collaboration and relationships – and, as a result, achieve outcomes – that would not have occurred in the hub's absence. The hub has enabled partnerships across the agricultural sector at a breadth and scale not previously seen in SA. By building a large, interconnected network and guiding it in a common direction, the hub has helped forge links throughout multiple regions across farming systems groups, landscape boards, agribusinesses, research groups, industry bodies and producers.

Importantly, the hub has recognised the excellent work already being performed across the state. The hub builds upon that work by bringing together multiple stakeholders to collaborate on shared interests – in many cases playing a coordinating role that ensures relevant information is shared among those who can benefit from it, without duplicating previous efforts.

MORE INFORMATION



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Each year the hub provides an annual report on impacts and achievements. These can be found on the Hub website.



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