



Media Release

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Building Drought Resilience in the Northern and Yorke Region

Community input towards a drought resilience plan in the Adelaide Plains, Barossa, Mid North, Yorke Peninsula and Southern Flinders Ranges will be the key feature of engagement activities due to commence in February 2022.

The development of a community-led drought resilience plan is a major component of the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program, part of the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund. The Northern and Yorke region is one of three pilot areas undertaking the program in South Australia.

The Northern and Yorke Regional Alliance, led by Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North (RDAYMN) has been selected to oversee the development of the drought resilience plan, along with 15 local government authorities and the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board.

The Drought Resilience Plan will empower local communities to prepare for future drought and adopt management practices in line with changing climate and environment conditions. It will also include identification of relevant information, infrastructure and networks required to enhance resilience and address the economic, environmental, and social impacts of drought.

RDAYMN Chair, Bill Vandeeper, notes the development of this community led plan will bring untold benefits to our regional communities.

"The Plan aims to improve access to water, which is a major issue for parts of the region, but it will also increase access to social infrastructure that will allow for communities to support each other during future droughts" said Mr. Vandeeper.

Legatus Group Chair, Mayor Phillip Heaslip, also agreed, reflecting on the significant changes in landscape management practices over time.

"As a farmer in the Southern Flinders Ranges, we historically reacted to the climatic conditions but what this plan aims to do is change the conversation to being prepared for drought, as it will always be a factor for agricultural communities" said Mayor Heaslip.

The consortium has appointed Edge Environment through an open tender process to deliver the co-design and creation of the Northern and Yorke Drought Resilience Plan. Edge Environment have a great understanding of the region with their previous work including a report on *Drought Proofing the North*, local Climate Change Adaptation Plans, and water pre-feasibility assessments.

Northern and Yorke Landscape Board Chair, Hon. Caroline Schaefer said Edge Environment bring a wealth of knowledge that will enhance our regional resilience capabilities.

This project is part of the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program and is jointly funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the Government of South Australia.



“I look forward to Edge Environment facilitating the community led design of the report. By allowing communities to develop place-based solutions, it builds stronger communities which is a resilience activity in itself” said Ms. Schaefer.

Edge Environment Executive Director, Dr Mark Siebentritt said the engagement activities will be integral in getting community input into the development of the plan with a focus on the experiences of farmers and community members from past drought and climate events.

“Hearing the stories from people who have experienced the impacts of drought and changing climatic conditions is fundamental in understanding the future needs of communities and we look forward to getting these conversations started in the 2022” said Dr. Siebentritt.

Regional Development Australia Barossa, Gawler, Light and Adelaide Plains Chair, Rolf Binder highlights the importance of these Regional Drought Resilience Plans to instil resilience in the region.

“Having the ability to draw out regional needs and priorities to inform future investments through collaborative planning enables us to best prepare for future droughts and improves social cohesion across the region” said Mr. Binder.

The Regional Drought Resilience Program is in its foundational year with the Northern and Yorke pilot activities set to run until 30 June 2022.

Media enquiries

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