

Media Release**For Immediate Release – 13.11.19****\$1M Drought Funding 15 projects**

The Federation Council area is currently identified as drought affected by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and was subsequently invited to apply for \$1 million in funding from the Federal Governments Drought Communities Extension Program.

The program will provide \$1 million to drought impacted communities in support of local community infrastructure and other drought relief projects.

Council has now formally submitted its application to the Federal Government, which was endorsed at the October Council Meeting. The projects included in the application were developed in consultation with the community through Council's Drought Committee, which met in early October 2019 to identify and discuss the projects for consideration. Projects needed to meet the Extension Program guidelines, which were that:

- Projects needed to require a minimum grant amount of \$25,000.
- Projects must contribute to local employment, the local economy and lead to the retention of businesses, services and facilities.
- Projects must be completed by Tuesday 30 June 2020.

Federation Council Mayor, Cr Patrick Bourke said, "Council's application consisted of 15 projects, which will have a positive, impact both on the communities within Federation Council and the Agricultural Sector more broadly."

"The projects submitted as part of the application consist of 10 community infrastructure projects, four event based projects, and a Drought Support Officer position for the period of the funding. Corowa District Landcare will host this position. The projects range from Water pipeline projects, installation of Bureau of Meteorology approved weather stations and soil moisture probes, public facility upgrades, town improvement projects and a range of Agricultural Industry Events."

"This is an exciting opportunity to deliver projects that will provide a significant benefit to our communities whilst the ongoing drought is impacting, and we are very grateful to the Federal Government for the opportunity to apply for this funding."

"We're looking forward to working with the project proponents, including partnering with other stakeholders in many cases, to deliver these projects over the next seven months." Mayor Bourke said.

An outline of the 15 projects is available below or from Council's website www.federationcouncil.nsw.gov.au

Ends.

Media Enquiries

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List of Projects

Infrastructure Projects

Urana Reliable Water Pipeline Project (\$250,000)

This project will allow for a more reliable source of water for the Urana Aquatic Centre. Council is in discussion with Riverina Water for an allocation of around 800 mega litres from the Colombo Creek system. Riverina Water County Council (RWCC) – will use of the existing RWCC pipeline to Urana Water Treatment Plant from Colombo Creek to Urana, Aquatic Centre. The project will extend this pipeline approximately 2 km to allow Council to fill/supplement the Aquatic Centre water, in times of low or zero flows in the Billabong Creek. The current water supply for the Aquatic Centre is via the unregulated Billabong Creek system. In dry times such as the last two years, and the millennium drought, the Aquatic Centre dries up. The Aquatic Centre not only provides significant social and economic benefits to the region when full, but also provides a water supply for Council to water numerous other areas and facilities in the area with untreated water. The water from the Urana Aquatic Centre is used to service the Urana Caravan Park, Urana Swimming Pool, local tree plantations and the Victoria Park Recreation Ground. Historically, (raw) water from this site has also been accessed by local landholders during severe periods of prolonged drought to supplement stock water supplies, and whilst this is not common Council practice, it is an essential support service, which has been provided. The rationale that underpins the Reliable Water Project provides a more stable supply for water-based recreation, which underpins the local tourism economy.

BOM Weather Station/s Installation (\$70,000)

This project will see the installation of two new Tier 1 Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) approved weather stations in the LGA. Currently there are no recognised BOM approved stations in the shire.

Morundah Main Street Park Upgrade (\$25,000)

Project would see installation of an irrigation system including an irrigation pump, new landscaping and new culverts to allow overnight camping and increase the ability for people to stay overnight.

Boree Creek Park Sprinkler Installation (\$25,000)

Installation of an irrigation system to ensure the Tim Fischer Park remains green all year round. Since Tim Fisher's death the park in his home town has drawn many visitors who have been keen to learn more about his contribution to Australian politics.

Rand Recreation Reserve Toilet Upgrade (\$140,000)

This project will upgrade the toilets at the Rand Recreation Reserve and ensure they meet current compliance codes. The project will see the addition of a baby change area and the inclusion of an all abilities stall.

Morundah Theatre Improvements (\$100,000)

Project will install include a new sound system including sound desk, microphones and speakers (\$64,000), a storage shed at (\$10,000), and a new air-conditioning system (\$26,000) in the Morundah Paradise Palladium Theatre.

Rand Town Improvement Projects (\$65,000)

The Rand Town Improvement Planning Committee has developed a Town Improvement Plan, which includes a number of projects including Silo Art and Town Beautification. This project would see the redevelopment of a disused rail precinct on the edge of the town centre. This project is the first stage of the redevelopment of the site and includes local farmers and an earthmoving contractor removing unwanted vegetation and landscaping the area in preparation for further development. The project will also see the installation of pathways and a range of street furniture such as seating and benches.

Soil moisture data probes across the Federation Council (\$25,000)

Riverine Plains have established a network of weather stations and soil moisture probes in southern NSW, with several within the Federation Council region. Obviously, soil moisture information is of high value in seasons of dry/drought conditions. While farmers highly value the information provided by soil moisture probes, the variation in climatic conditions and soil types across the region means that there is a large degree of uncertainty of understanding if the soil moisture probe information is relevant across the LGA. It is proposed to install a further 5 soil moisture probes (at approx. \$5K per probe) within Federation Council across areas and soil types not currently represented. The probes will be located on farming land with farm owners signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which clearly outline obligations and ongoing requirements. All information / data from the probes once installed will be available for public access via the Riverine Plains website.

Oaklands Cemetery Toilets (\$80,000)

This project will develop new amenities in the small town of Oaklands. The existing facilities are aging and do not meet current compliance codes. Assessments from engineers and builders have suggested a new build would be cheaper than trying to redevelop and retrofit the existing amenities building.

Rand Memorial Hall Toilets (\$30,000)

The toilets at the Memorial Hall in Rand are a long-standing project, which has remained uncompleted due to a lack of funding. Council has \$80,000 to undertake the project however since initial quotes were received, the estimates for completion have increased, requiring a further \$30,000 to ensure they can be finished.

Event Projects

Federation Council Breakfast Event Series (\$25,000)

This project will see the sponsored participation for women across the Federation Council area to attend a range of Breakfast Event Series. The Breakfast Event series workshops stemmed from the idea of approaching local women of all walks of life to speak about their experiences so that others may benefit. The events help to recognise the achievements of local women and inspire those listening to strive to appreciate the depth of knowledge and experience in our area. The series promotes social connection between women within our region and the events provide a forum for women to develop networks and support each other, which is so important during times of difficulty. This project would sponsor season's passes for a person for a year at \$100. Two hundred and fifty women from right across the LGA will be included in the event series.

Building Resilience in Federation Council – Event Series (\$70,000)

This project will support to the farming communities of the Federation Council. It will fund a range of workshops providing information to those working in the agricultural sector on how to maintain mental health in stressful times and how to detect issues with both family and farming business employees. A series of modules will be delivered to farmers across the Federation Council. Six full-day workshops are proposed focusing on building resilience and sustainability. The workshops will focus on topics such as mental health and communication, self acknowledgement and health, financial management, strategic planning, legal requirements when employing staff, legal requirements when shifting machinery, tracking grain at harvest and ensuring paddock records are retained and maintained.

Sustainable Livestock Production – Drought & Recovery Events (\$25,000)

Corowa District Landcare (CDL) have identified that local producers are interested in livestock and pasture extension and education activities/resources that relate to the current drought conditions. CDL will deliver a series of events that cover topics and issues such as livestock management, ground cover, soil health, grazing management, increasing production, new technologies, and labour allocation and prioritisation. In this project, land managers and farming families in the Federation Council Region areas will build knowledge and skills to implement sustainable agricultural practices, and learn about new and emerging technologies that may contribute to the sustainability, productivity and resilience of their food and wool production in periods of drought. CDL will work closely with Murray Local Land Services to ensure the best knowledge and practices are implemented. This will be achieved with expert agricultural trainers and guest speakers for 4 sessions/workshops in the first half of 2020. Other activities include a study tour to local properties of interest.

Soil Moisture Probe Measurement Event (\$25,000)

There are an existing network of soil moisture probes (and additional probes from the above project) across the Federation Council region. While farmers are very interested in the soil moisture probe data, they are generally not confident in the interpretation of the data, and what it may mean for their crop management decisions in dry years. This project will review different options for enhanced user customisation for more meaningful presentation of data, conduct a series of informal workshop sessions and generate information sheets, on how to interpret the information to minimise risk and confidently make decisions across different soil types in variable seasonal conditions.

Industry Support

Drought Support Officer (\$45,000)

This project will see the appointment of a Drought Support Officer for a period of approximately 6 months. The support officer's role will be to act as a referral point for farmers across the LGA, ensuring access to key support programs and initiatives. They will be required to develop a strong understanding of drought conditions in an effort to drive and shape policy decisions on behalf of Council. The position will also liaise with key state and federal government agencies regarding drought related programs and initiatives and assist in the liaison and coordination of funded drought projects.