

Central West Qld Remote Area Planning and Development (RAPAD) – Community Drought Support

Social and Economic Impacts

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1 Executive Summary

The objective of the Community Drought Support Package, funded by the Queensland State Government, is to provide support initiatives to strengthen the resilience of drought-affected Queenslanders by revitalising existing community support mechanisms within defined geographic regions.

Social and behavioural sciences acknowledge strength and resilience arises through continually bringing together a community to enable them to not only live together but to care about one another and share common hopes¹. Economic theory enables modelling that shows the financial outcomes that flow from community organised events.

The commonality of social purpose in the sample group plus the proportion of the population sampled for economic impact, provide sufficient reason to expect that the proportions shown in this sample can be applied across all activities that used the drought support funds.

The organisers of 10 community events were surveyed for the social impact and these plus two others were also surveyed for economic impact data. Total events supported were 114 across all six shires.

Key outcomes are shown here:

1. For every \$1 of community drought support funding, the community provided \$1.07 of volunteer labour to support the community events.
 - a. Nine (9) of 10 events were all committee volunteers with additional community volunteer support at the time of the event.
 - b. The 9 events enabled volunteers to play an extended role in their own community by volunteering which is known to strengthen community ties.
2. For every \$1 of community drought support funding, \$0.81 was spent on local purchasing, thus retaining funds in the community through supporting businesses and providing employment opportunities.
 - a. Social impact data shows that it was 70% of events further engaged the community through having local businesses and local fundraising groups e.g. P&C Associations, provide the services for the events.
 - b. This was particularly so for the Windorah Development Board (WDB) who in 2018 again ran the Windorah International Yabby Races. *The Yabby Races*

¹ Community Tool Box, Creating Good Places for Interaction <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/physical-social-environment/places-for-interaction/main>

boost employment and boost local business by encouraging passing traffic to spend more time in Windorah.

3. For every \$1 of community drought support funding, \$0.34c was retained as a community surplus to either support the community organisation for future events, or donated to selected charitable organisations.
4. For every \$1 of community drought support funding, \$1.31 is a direct benefit to the region in the form of local purchasing, paid local labour, or a surplus either retained or donated to a selected charity.
 - a. At the same time creating the opportunity for social interaction vital in times of drought. For the Muttaborra Flock Ewe Show committee their purpose was, *To attract people of all ages in the local Muttaborra, Longreach and wider community by providing an affordable, low cost day and evening event as a break from the current drought hardships and to promote the sheep industry.*
5. The numbers volunteering represents 13% of those living in communities in the RAPAD region's six shires included here.
6. Numbers attending these local community events were 1.69 times those living in the six shires which suggests the drought funds enabled committees to attract a high level of engagement in these events.
 - a. This happened even when competing events drew some in small communities away as happened for the Windorah car rally, *'In 2018 it worked exactly as we wanted because we are a community of 70 and even with fire training in Longreach and events on the same weekend that took people to Blackall and Eromanga we still got 40 locals attending.'*

Other key outcomes are shown below.

Other Social Outcomes

1. For 90% of events, organising groups report success in achieving intended social impacts where they used their drought support funds.
 - a. The Balyneety Rodeo and Gymkhana committee described it as, *We are a volunteer group and generally we want people, especially the men, to mix and talk to others. The men don't get away from the property work much, especially now in the drought. The women usually talk anyway and often get to town more. And talk is exactly what happened. The people talked and spent time with others they don't often see. It all happened as they watched or went in events and had meals and drinks together.'*

- b. The socialising opportunity was also achieved for the on-line Boulia Shire Council 10,000-steps Health Challenge through enabling and encouraging participants to interact with each other on social media.
2. For 80% of organisers they are highly confident the impact will benefit participants and the community for a long time through bringing them together to interact as a community.
 - a. For example the Longreach Netball Association report, *'The skills and knowledge the development clinic delivered to our community won't expire and it enables us to continue to offer netball as a continuously available community activity and meeting point.'*

Other Economic Outcomes

1. A summary of the relative contributions to running and funding the 114 events that were part of the community drought funding program is summarised below.

Table 1 Relative contributions

Summary		Notes	\$/ \$ funding
Community Drought Support Funding	450,000		
Community Volunteer Labour	<u>483,562</u>	1	1.07
	933,562		
Local purchasing	363,020	2	0.81
Other purchasing	852,443		
Paid Labour	72,300		0.16
Unpaid Community Labour	<u>483,562</u>		
	1,771,325		
Less Receipts	<u>991,835</u>		
	779,489		
Surplus(Deficit) donated or retained	<u>154,072</u>	3	0.34
Regional Impact		4	1.31

In summary

Social and economic data demonstrate that for the six (6) RAPAD shires the invested drought support funds have enhanced each communities' capacity to build its social and economic capital through their own efforts, even at a time of extended drought.

The drought support funds did so for the social outcomes and also provided the economic boost to these communities as part of a 12-month benefit that supports local employment and business.

2 Social Impacts

In survey sampling 10 events for the social impact made by the drought support funds across the RAPAD Councils' regions, there is clear reports of the multilayered social impact benefits to each community.

Social and behavioural sciences acknowledge that continually bringing together a community enables them to not only live together but to care about one another and share common hopes². This commonality of purpose in the sample group suggests that there is sufficient reason to expect that the proportions shown in this sample can be applied across all activities that used the drought support funds for this purpose.

Achieving intended social impacts

Social impact intended	Level of success	Evidence
<p>Two social impacts were consistently referred to by all organisers in relation to the use of drought support funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of function as a cohesive community able to survive and function together into the future Maintain the organising group as an operational group into the future. 	<p>Nine (9) of 10 organising groups report success in achieving intended social impacts where they used their drought support funds.</p> <p>(Note: 90% transposed across all events is 102 events fully achieving all intended social impacts.)</p>	<p>Self-assessment by organisers of the 9 events reported as successful contained these three elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive feedback from attendees during and after events Organisers' observations made during events of the level of interactions among community Favourable comparison to numbers and interest in previous events.

The Balyneety Rodeo and Gymkhana committee described it as, *We are a volunteer group and generally we want people, especially the men, to mix and talk to others.*

² Community Tool Box, Creating Good Places for Interaction <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/physical-social-environment/places-for-interaction/main>

The men don't get away from the property work much, especially now in the drought. The women usually talk anyway and often get to town more. And talk is exactly what happened. The people talked and spent time with others they don't often see. It all happened as they watched or went in events and had meals and drinks together.'

- 70% further engaged the community through having local businesses and local fundraising groups e.g. P&C Associations, provide the services for the events.
- 30% of the larger events used their drought support funds in-part to bring entertainers as an attraction to draw more community members to attend.
- The socialising opportunity was also achieved for the on-line Boulia Shire Council 10,000-steps Health Challenge through enabling and encouraging participants to interact with each other on social media.
- An event able to clearly demonstrate how the drought funds will deliver its expected long-term impact was the combined Birdsville and Bedourie State School Brisbane Ekka trip. They know from previous outcomes it is preparing students to travel away for high schooling which neither community can offer.
- For 100% of events the drought funds supplemented the community group's cost of conducting the event, for which they were grateful.

Other beneficial social outcomes

- The drought support funds were beneficial through enabling the community to function socially as a cohesive community even after multiple years of drought. The funds did this through reducing the financial burden on committees in staging events at a time of community hardship. *There was a good benefit for us in that the Ballyneety Club...could run the event even in another dry year, without being worried about asking the people to pay at the gate to cover costs.*
- For only one event was there a paid organiser and the other 9 events were all committee volunteers with additional community volunteer support at the time of the event.
- The 9 events enabled volunteers to play an extended role in their own community by volunteering which is known to strengthen community ties.
- For 7 of 10 events they raised funds for the organising community club or committee to be able to keep operating and able to fulfil their role of keeping communities interacting.
- Seven (7) also report raising money to donate to other organisations in their communities or families in need and most also donated to groups that serviced all of the RAPAD communities e.g. RFDS.

Extent to which the drought funds represented the best possible way to achieve intended outcomes

To answer the question on best possible ways to achieve their intended outcomes, committees were asked if, on the basis of the outcome, would they run the event again. In 9 of 10 cases the response was a definite Yes!

While 9 of 10 will do it again as for 2018, three committees made the same suggestion about when funds were distributed. They suggest a positive change would, if possible, be to make the funds available before the event.

How long might the impact last realistically?

- Eight (8) of 10 organisers are highly confident the impact will benefit participants and the community for a long time through bringing them together to interact as a community.
- The Longreach Netball Association said, *'The skills and knowledge the development clinic delivered to our community won't expire and it will enable us to continue to offer netball as a continuously available community activity and meeting point.'*
- The Bedourie and Birdsville P&Cs said of their student travel excursion to the Ekka, the social benefit may well be lifelong as, *The community benefits through the kids knowing more about the world outside...and it can make them better as community members...wherever they are.*
- Five (5) of the 10 events also point to the 'economic boost' provided to their local communities as part of a 12-month benefit that supports local employment and business. This was particularly so for the Windorah Development Board (WDB) who in 2018 again ran the Windorah International Yabby Races. *The Yabby Races boost employment and boost local business by encouraging passing traffic to spend more time in Windorah.*
- The drought funding support benefit that other committees refer to for the longer-term is that the community is better able to maintain its cohesion and ability to handle future difficulties through the events that bring them together as regularly as possible.

Social Impact Conclusions

The array of events referred to here were chosen to provide a practical assessment of the social impacts that followed from the use of the drought support funds. From the

10 events reported here it is clear that the community committees of the RAPAD region welcomed the opportunities afforded them by the drought support funds.

Committees were able to clearly state the social benefit of bringing their community together to interact with each other and that drought support funds reduced the burden in making events possible in the current drought.

At this particular time in the RAPAD region with an extended drought, the support funds meant there was less need for community committees to ask local, often cash-short, businesses to donate operational dollars. As well they were often able to offer fee-free entry and provide entertainment to draw people to the event.

The drought support funds have been well spent by community committees and achieved their targets of supporting social cohesion and resilience-building through events that have local appeal and which cycle funds through local business wherever possible, thus supporting local employment too.

RAPAD, and its member councils and communities, sincerely thank the Queensland State Government for the contribution it received from the Drought Support Funding Package.

3 Economic Impacts

The RAPAD region encompasses 396,609 km² or 22.9% of the area of Queensland. The population of the area of RAPAD as recorded in the 2016 Census was 10,546 people or 0.22% of the population of Queensland. The RAPAD region is a large sparsely populated area that requires significant effort to maintain social and community capital. This effort is often extended during periods of drought, when pastoral businesses are under financial, operational and emotional stress that has ramifications within local communities.

Supporting and maintaining community events during drought is a critical component of maintaining community capital when individuals and communities are under stress.

This review covers a total 114 projects across 6 of the 7 LGA areas that are part of RAPAD. Winton LGA was not included as they used their funds for their Way Out West Festival which as a significantly larger event, would be expected to skew the data from other smaller community events. Total funding for the 6 LGAs was \$450,000 or \$75,000 per shire. A summary of all the projects is attached at Appendix 1. Average funding per project was \$3,950.

A random sampling process was adopted to select 2 projects for each LGA area. A total of 12 projects were selected. The 12 projects selected had a total of \$67,282 in support funding, or 15% of the total funding. In terms of sample size, the representative sample is 12% by number and 15% by value. From a data sampling perspective this is a reasonable representation of the total population.

The economic questions for the 12 projects were as follows.

1. The total cost of running the event
2. Total receipts for the event
3. The estimated value of paid community labour
4. The estimated hours of community volunteer labour
5. The estimated number of community volunteers
6. The value of local purchasing
7. The number of attendees/participants

A summary of the outcomes across the 12 projects is shown in the following table. The details for each project are shown in Appendix 2.

The summary for the 12 projects is then extrapolated across the total funding program to estimate the regional impacts, based on the representative sample.

Table 2 Summary of project economic outcomes

Questions		Combined Sample	Extrapolated whole of region	Notes	Metrics
Funding	\$	67,282	450,000	1 % Total \$	14.95%
Total cost of running the event	\$	192,541	1,287,763	2 Funding \$ of total costs	34.94%
Total receipts for the event	\$	148,295	991,835	3 Surplus	(295,928)
Estimated value of paid community labour	\$	10,810	72,300	4 \$ paid community labour	
Estimated hours of community volunteer labour	hrs	2,892	19,342	5 \$ volunteer labour	483,562
Estimated number of community volunteers	ppl	193	1,291	6 % of regional population	13.7%
Value of local purchasing	\$	54,277	363,020	6 % of total costs	28.91%
Number of attendees/participants	No.	2,384	15,945	7 % of regional population	169%

Notes:

1. Funding in the sample group represents 14.95% of total funding
2. Funding \$ represent approximately 35% of the total costs of running the events. This represents a significant proportion of total costs, without which the events may not have proceeded, or may have been restricted.
3. The Surplus/(Deficit) on running the events (excluding support funding) is negative \$295,928
4. The value of paid community labour is relatively low. Of the 12 projects, only 4 had any paid community labour. Most of these events are put on by volunteer labour.
5. The estimated hours of community labour was calculated as 19,342 across all projects, or on average 241 hours per project. Valued at an estimated \$25/hour, the value of community labour is \$483,000 across the region. This is significant when you consider that it represents 37% of the total costs of running the events. The contribution of community labour is approximately equal to the community drought support funding.

6. An estimated 1,291 people were involved as community volunteers. Of the regional population (excluding Winton), this represents 13.7% of the population. This is a significant contribution by local people to make these events successful.
7. Local purchasing represents 29% of total purchasing, thus supporting local communities.
8. The total number of people attending the events was calculated as 15,900 or approximately 169% of the population of the region. Whether this is locals attending multiple events, or visitors from out of the region, this is a clear example of the engagement in these supported events.

From an accounting perspective, taking into account the value of volunteer labour, I have constructed a theoretical regional Profit and Loss from the combined events, to demonstrate where the funds have come from and where they have been deployed.

Table 3 Community Drought Support Funding Accounting Summary

Accounting Summary

Receipts	991,835
Less	
Local Purchasing	363,020
Other Purchasing	852,443
Paid Labour	72,300
Unpaid Labour	<u>483,562</u>
Total Expenses	1,771,325
Profit	(779,489)
Funding	450,000
Add Back Volunteer Labour	483,562
Surplus Deficit	154,072

This accounting summary shows that if community volunteer labour were accounted for at cost, the projects would have shown a deficit of \$779,489. This deficit was funded approximately 50/50 by drought support funding and volunteer labour. The final surplus to the community groups was either retained to support future projects, or donated to programs selected by the communities.

Comments from individual organisations in relation to a question of "what did the community drought support funding allow you to do", and what were surplus funds applied towards, are summarised below.

Table 4 Summary of responses to economic questions

Purchase prizes
Provide lunch
Without the funding may have had to reduce the size of the rally
Without the funding any shortfall would have had to have been provided by locals
80-100 juniors participating at carnivals/cluster days showcasing the uniforms plus their families, two presenters came from Netball QLD,
Surplus funds donated to RFDS \$2,500 and Aramac State School, \$500 to a young family who lost all equipment in a shed fire, repairs and maintenance to rodeo grounds on private property, plus retention of funds for next year
Surplus funds donated to WestnBreast, Breast and Prostrate Cancer Association of Queensland
Work Camp (correctional services participated as well)

An examination of the relative contribution between the community and the drought support program is shown below.

Table 5 Relative contributions

Summary		Notes	\$/ \$ funding
Community Drought Support Funding	450,000		
Community Volunteer Labour	<u>483,562</u>	1	1.07
	933,562		
Local purchasing	363,020	2	0.81
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Surplus(Deficit) donated or retained	<u>154,072</u>	3	0.34
Regional Impact		4	1.31

Notes:

- For every \$1 of community drought support funding, the community provided \$1.07 of volunteer labour to support the community events.

8. For every \$1 of community drought support funding, \$0.81 was spent on local purchasing, thus retaining funds in the community.
9. For every \$1 of community drought support funding, \$0.34 was retained as a community surplus to either support the community organisation for future events, or donated to selected charitable organisations.
10. For every \$1 of community drought support funding, \$1.31 is a direct benefit to the region in the form of local purchasing, paid local labour, or a surplus either retained or donated to a selected charity.