

Gascoyne Development Commission

THE GASCOYNE 20 DROUGHT PLAN 25

SUMMARY

The Gascoyne Drought Plan is the first version of a plan that supports the Gascoyne – its communities, environments and economies – to better prepare for, withstand, and recover from drought and other climate-related events.

A drought resilience plan is important because it helps communities prepare for and adapt to the changing climate.

The Gascoyne drought plan is intended to reflect the needs of communities, industry, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders from across the Gascoyne.

By planning ahead, communities can protect livelihoods, safeguard essential water resources, strengthen mental and social wellbeing, and mitigate the risk of, or recover more quickly after drought. Planning ahead also supports long-term economic stability and ensures that natural and cultural assets remain healthy for future generations.

What is drought resilience?

Drought resilience is defined as the ability to adapt, reorganise or transform in response to changing temperature, increasing variability and scarcity of rainfall and/or changed seasonality of rainfall, for improved economic, environmental

and social resilience. Drought resilience helps communities to prepare for, protect against, managing during and responding after drought and other impacts of a changing climate.

Drought vulnerability assessment

The Gascoyne Drought Plan examines how different sectors of the Gascoyne's community, environments and economy are exposed to four types of drought:

- Meteorological drought: not enough rainfall.
- Hydrological drought: low surface or groundwater supply.
- Vegetative drought: insufficient pasture or plant growth.
- Institutional drought: limits caused by rules, policies or water restrictions.

This first version focuses on six sectors: pastoralists, horticulturalists, Traditional Owners, towns, tourism and fisheries. The drought vulnerability assessment identifies local vulnerabilities – such as water supply limits, impacts on primary industries, and risks to towns and natural ecosystems.

It sets out high-level strategies as a framework to guide coordinated action to reduce these risks.

Recommended Strategies



1. Regional coordination and social capital

Strengthen coordination across communities, formalise drought response networks, improve governance, support local leadership, and expand mental-health services.



2. Pathways for knowledge sharing

Improve access to information through knowledge brokers, community networks and school-based education to build long-term awareness.



3. Resilient economies

Enhance freight and logistics, promote Gascoyne branding, support regenerative land and water management, and diversify into tourism, carbon farming and renewable energy.



4. Resilient natural and cultural assets

Support Traditional Owner-led land restoration, improve bushfire management, and protect natural assets that underpin tourism, fisheries and community wellbeing.



5. Resilient towns

Ensure secure, safe drinking water for all communities, and upgrade flood-mitigation and catchment-level planning to manage both drought and flood risks.

Next steps

In early 2026, the Gascoyne Development Commission will be talking directly with stakeholders across the Gascoyne communities about this first version of the Gascoyne drought resilience plan. These conversations will help identify priority actions for the Gascoyne's diverse communities, different sectors of the economy, and the natural assets that support these.

These conversations will help shape the next step: a practical, detailed action plan for the Gascoyne.

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