



# POLICY BRIEF

## LAND-BASED LIVELIHOODS

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The **Outback Alliance** is a cross-sectoral group of non-government organisations and individuals whose goals are to drive the development of policies for the better development, welfare and protection of Outback Australia's communities and environment. The Alliance has four thematic focus areas: environment, health, land-based livelihoods, and economic development. Each theme is informed by Indigenous Connection to Country perspectives, context, and cultural respect.

### LAND-BASED LIVELIHOODS - POLICY FIT FOR THE OUTBACK

Land-based livelihoods in the Outback include pastoralism, tourism and mining, including Indigenous enterprises, as well as supporting activities such as natural resource management services, and also smaller land-based activities such as local horticulture, aquaculture, bush food production, etc. Together they contribute significantly to the national economy, and manage an enormous area of Australia on behalf of the nation. Support through management, marketing, training or partnerships for these need to allow for their Outback context.

### KEY 2021 POLICY PRIORITIES

- A. **Outback Sensitive Procurement**: include criteria that value working with Outback processes (for example, requiring local expression of needs mediated through locally networked organisations, and valuing economies of scope associated with these existing social networks).
- B. **Working across funding silos**: Coordination in timing and criteria is achieved across funding sources for NRM, regional development, infrastructure, indigenous programs, health and social services delivery and local government in outback regions, such that linked outcomes can be achieved through integrated program delivery, with devolved granting where appropriate.
- C. **Demonstrated local demand**: Require all external service providers to demonstrate genuine local engagement in determining local service needs and provide a plan for implementing these that is publicly approved. The locus of control needs to shift to communities; co-design of programs is critical.
- D. **Capacity building**: All policy engagement demonstrates flow-on and durable impact on local capacity, human and physical resources.

### OUTBACK SENSITIVE PROCUREMENT

The Outback is different: governance and procurement that reflects this will provide better value for Government, deliverers and Outback communities. Currently the focus is on providing short-term, output focused funding; however, in the Outback, an environment of continuous improvement (at all levels) is required. This would be assisted by:

- Creating/strengthening and building procurement networks for the Outback.
  - Regional and remote procurement channels should be established, whilst recognising that low volume and large transport fees result in high costs for goods and services relative to larger cities and major regional centres. Networks for the Outback could be achieved by using online platforms for tendering etc (e.g. the Outback business [www.allquotedirect.com.au](http://www.allquotedirect.com.au) helps with tendering).
  - Aboriginal tourism business research has shown the need for [clustering of procurement of goods and services](#) (especially advertising and booking). Developing/supporting geographic or sectoral clustering could benefit this.

- Supporting clustered procurement for small and emerging businesses;
- Extending partnership approach to industry bodies - the application of competitive project/output-based approaches to sustainable agriculture and NRM is crippling the ability to be adaptable to land manager/community needs.

## WORKING ACROSS FUNDING SILOS

To avoid disjointed funding (and policy) affecting land-based livelihoods which has a negative effect on uptake, community attitude and business improvement:

- Simplify and shorten the time taken to apply and receive funding.
- Take into consideration the effects that uncontrollable factors, such as seasonal condition and markets, have on the ability of primary producers to deliver land-based programs in set timeframes. More flexibility is required.
- Map funding sources and the navigation pathways to these, to reduce wastage of time and money on applications that do not proceed.
- Pastoral Acts need to adjust to what the country needs in the future rather than what was aimed for in the past.
- Policy needs to explore non-technical solutions, such as change management, social science and psychology.

## DEMONSTRATED LOCAL DEMAND

Outback enterprises, support agencies and communities benefit from locally-driven and locally-delivered programs that deal with the issues identified as priorities by the community.

For example, in Julia Creek the local community came together and identified that volunteer burnout was having a massive impact on resilience to natural disasters as well as the ongoing delivery of services via grassroots community groups – across all sectors. They worked together to develop a solution that involved identifying skills training and mental health needs of those volunteers and then developed a weekend-long program of capacity building and social events to address the issues. This project came to fruition because the community was able to identify the appropriate solution to a priority need and then work on implementation. Council supported the process and auspiced funds. It was a fit-for-purpose solution, designed very carefully for a remote and burnt-out community of volunteers. This project was funded through [Tackling Regional Adversity through Integrated Care \(TRAIC\)](#).

Important elements are:

- Establish funding guidelines that allow communities to allocate as they see fit - one size does not fit all
- Develop the procurement network and clusters of enterprises
- Enable local management and ownership of land-based enterprises
- Quantify the ‘outback spend’ and map money flows
- Quantify the airline seats flying in/out/around the Outback
- CSIRO has developed transport models for how goods and produce are moved around – this can help explore the demands that are satisfied, other opportunities and other efficiencies.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

All policy engagement should demonstrate flow on and long-lasting impact on local capacity, human and physical resources. Education and training programs should be embedded in any service delivery and part of deliverables. Physical resources should be built and left in place. There should be a requirement for local employment in programs.

- For example, the E-Beef Smart Farming program in Northern Queensland aims to support producers by showing how technology can support timely management decisions that enhance pastures, ground cover soils, land condition, business profitability and adaptability. Graziers have the opportunity to see, touch and discuss the application of new and innovative technologies that will improve their grazing and land management, profitability and adaptability at demonstration [E-Beef Smart Farms](#) and E-Beef innovation hubs. Learning groups promote peer-to-peer learning, technology trialing using available tools, and better decisions using data sets to improve financial viability and land management.

