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SQNNSW Innovation Hub Newsletter #22

Planning for a drought resilient future

The SQNNSW Innovation Hub team continued its business planning this month, with the help of the Hub's Executive, Node Managers, Members and Network Partners.

Hub Director, Professor John McVeigh, said more than 20 key stakeholders participated in discussions about the invaluable lessons learnt since establishing the Hub, and what the Hub might look like into the future.

"Our focus was on how we can help the agricultural industry build resilience to drought in the future," Professor McVeigh said.

"Dr Phil Currey, facilitator, was quick to note how engaged and passionate the participants were throughout the entire workshop. There was a sense of positivity and recognition for the outstanding work being done by the Hub Executive, Nodes, Steering Committee, Members, and other stakeholders."

While the Hub's development continues, the business planning workshop – supported by the Australian Government's Agricultural Innovation Hubs Program – was a crucial step towards shaping its future direction.



Mentoring delivers practice change

A mid-session review of the Regenerative Agriculture Mentoring Program (RAMP) found more than 80% of participants are taking at

least one step towards regenerative agriculture, and 55% of participants recorded at least three changes. This is exciting news from the RAMP program, supported by the SQNNSW Innovation Hub, via the Agricultural Innovation Hubs Program. Among the changes participants have committed to cover cropping, stock rotation, composting, on-farm monitoring of soil health, and biodiversity surveys.

[Find out more >>](#)



New pathways to new markets

The global coffee industry has demonstrated how crop certifications and traceability standards not only contribute to sustainable value chains/landscapes and support farmers, but also motivate consumers to buy specific products.

In the past three decades, smart-climate and sustainable production technologies have been adopted by farmers in many agricultural producing countries around the world.

The SQNNSW Innovation Hub's Dr Vivekananda Mittahalli explores how traceability has secured new customers for the coffee industry, and potential areas of exploration for other industries.

[Find out more >>](#)



Changing perceptions of agriculture

New research from AgriFutures Australia has found almost one-fifth of the wider community believe rural industries have not changed in the past 50 years, and only 13% are very or extremely likely to consider working in ag. At the SQNNSW Innovation Hub, we're supporting projects and events that encourage the next generation into ag careers – which most definitely look very different to those available in the 1970s!

[Find out more >>](#)



Boosting regional soil capacity

The Hub's Regional Soil Coordinator, Cameron Leckie, joined his peers from across the country at the Soil Science Australia's National Soil Science Extension Team (NSSET) Community of Practice activities in Tasmania this month.

The coordinators were joined by local soil extension and natural resource management group staff members, as they honed their extension skills, visited various field sites and undertook the two-



day Registered Soil Practitioner training.

If you want to catch up with Cameron in April, he will join Mitchell Landcare for workshops on April 11-12, heading to Eulo the week after to take some soil samples and speak to local landholders.

[Read more from Cameron >>](#)

Ag Industry Roundtable

The SQNNSW Innovation Hub's Longreach Node Manager, Ally Murray, and Knowledge Broker - First Nations Engagement, Dr Raelene Ward, were among the 15 ag service providers at the GroWQ Ag Industry Roundtable in Longreach on Thursday, March 23.

Supported by the SQNNSW Innovation Hub, the roundtable brought together service providers from across the region, to share their projects and programs.



[Find out more >>](#)

Coming up



Farming Family Reboot

Do you want to reboot your farming family? EOIs are open for places in the 2023 events. This is a free, three-day event with catering and accommodation included.

[Find out more >>](#)



Celebrating graduates

Lismore, NSW, April 22

The first cohort of RegenAg students from SCU are celebrating on Earth Day. Speakers include Soil CRC CEO Michael Crawford, NSW DPI climate research scientist Cathleen Waters and Churchill Fellow (and Next Gen Committee member) Jacob Birch.

[Find out more >>](#)



Regen Ag teacher training

Lismore, Coffs Harbour, online

The May 2 & 3 and online Regenerative Agriculture Professional Learning for Educators workshops are designed to inform science, agriculture, geography and general classroom teachers and teacher educators with the most current and relevant issues and science surrounding regen ag.

[Find out more >>](#)



Business growth

Bingara & Warialda, May/June

Wanting to set your business up for further success and growth? Action coach Mark Blume will be running business workshops to assist Gwydir Shire Council residents with all things business

Science to Practice

Various/online, June 6-8

This event brings together farmers, researchers, government, industry and the community to explore innovative tools and practices.

[Find out more >>](#)

Keep up-to-date

You can check out the event listings at the end of this newsletter, visit our Hub website or follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Eventbrite](#) for more about our current news and events.

Quick bites from your Hub stakeholders

2-in-5 landholders experience drought regularly

The first *Seasonal Conditions Reporting, Monitoring and Forecasting Report* from NSW DPI has found two in five landholders experience a major drought every 4-7 years, and that better access to information would help landholders improve their management practices. To have your say on what's important as NSW DPI continues to improve their program, you can [take the survey here](#).

\$1.9 million methane reduction project

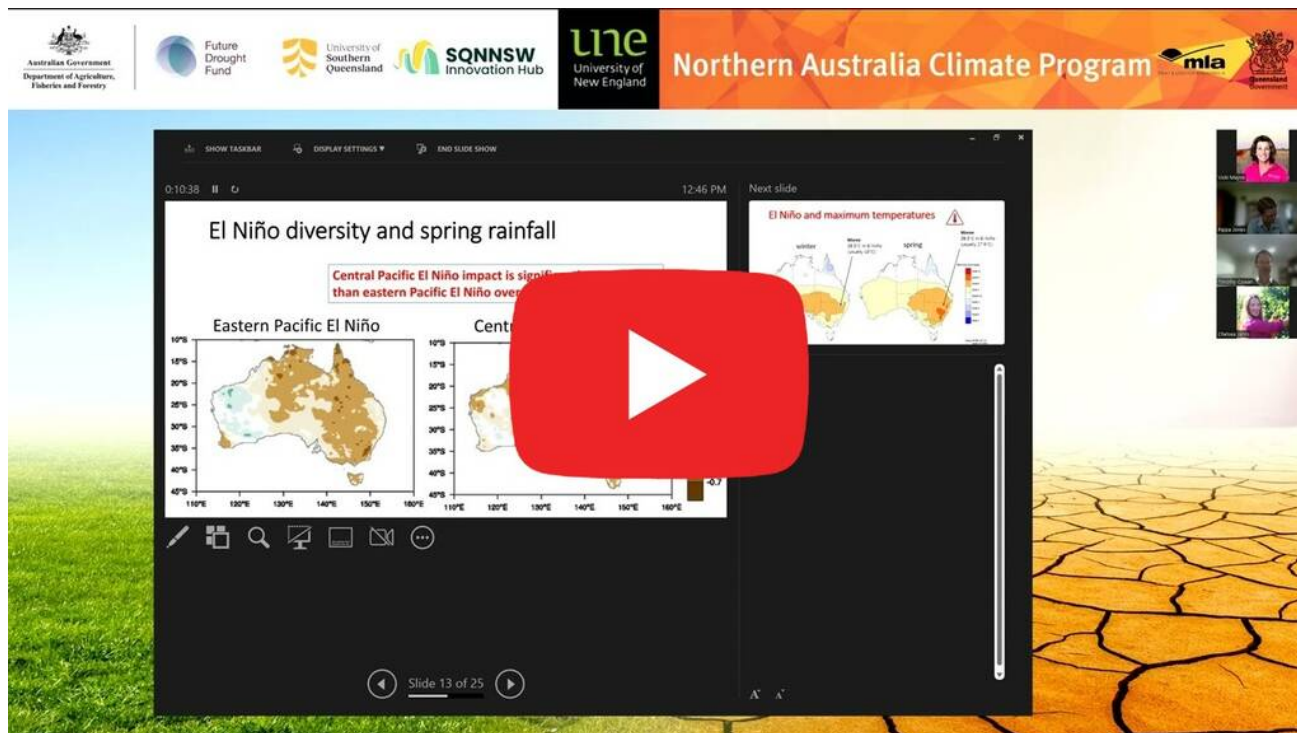
The University of New England will lead a ground-breaking research collaboration that will help the nation's sheep graziers overcome an important barrier standing in the way of carbon neutrality, thanks to a \$1.9 million grant from the Australian Government's Methane Reduction in Livestock Program (MERiL). [Read more](#).

Supporting red meat and livestock production

The Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC) together with Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) brought nine scientists from around the world together on Tuesday March 21 in Sydney for a day-long summit to discuss the scientific evidence in support of red meat and livestock production in today's society. [Read more](#).

MLA's online Carbon Calculator is live

An online, greenhouse gas (GHG) calculator based on the Sheep and Beef Greenhouse Accounting Framework tool for sheep and beef producers has been launched by Meat and Livestock Australia. [Find it here](#).



Did you miss the Northern Australia Climate Program webinar on forecasting for decision making? Organised by the Hub's Narrabri Node, this webinar covered the April to June Outlook, and how to best utilise forecasting tools to help with decision making. Australia is now on [El Niño watch](#), so check out this informative webinar to help your on-farm planning.

Opportunities for you

Scholarships

Nuffield Australia – new drought resilience scholarship

Keen to travel overseas to bring home new drought resilience tools and practices from international leaders in the field? The Future Drought Fund and Nuffield Australia are partnering for the first time in 2024 to offer at least five Aussie farmers overseas study scholarships in drought resilience. Through a Nuffield Drought Resilience Scholarship, you'll build your drought resilience knowledge and grow your industry and community's capacity to deal with dry times. Each scholarship is valued at \$35,000. If you work in food and fibre and are aged between 28 and 45, [apply now](#). Applications close on 9 June 2023.

Art competitions

2023 First Nations Art Competition

Applications for Southern Queensland Landscapes and University of Southern Queensland's 2023 First Nations Art Competition are now open. First Nation artists from the 28 Nations in Southern Queensland are invited to enter for the chance to win from a total prize pool of \$18,000. [Click here](#) for the full terms and conditions. Entries close June 2.

Spirit of the Bush photo comp

Rural Aid's Spirit of the Bush photography competition is back. Submit your entry before May 29, for the chance to be featured in the organisation's 2024 calendar, and other prizes. [Details here](#).

Events calendar

*This calendar includes events from the Hub, its Members and Partners and Supporters, and events supported by the Australian Government. Please contact organisers for more information. Events in **bold** are organised or supported by the SQNNNSW Innovation Hub, or include a Hub speaker.*

April

- 3-4 – [Grazing Naturally](#), NSW LLS, Noona NSW
- 4 – [Maximising ecosystems opportunities webinar](#), Landcare Farming
- 18-20 – [Farming Family Reboot](#), Armidale Node & Rural Aid, Armidale NSW**
- 28 – [Young Farmer Business Program Conference](#), NSW DPI, Tamworth NSW

May

- 2 – [Australian Organic Market Report 2023 Launch](#), Brisbane QLD
- 3 – [Regenerative ag: professional learning for educators](#), Lismore NSW**
- 4 – [Regenerative ag: professional learning for educators](#), Coffs Harbour NSW**
- 5 – [Business growth in challenging times](#) (#1 of 2), Gwydir Shire Council, Bingara NSW**
- 6 – [Business growth in challenging times](#) (#1 of 2), Gwydir Shire Council, Wialda NSW**
- 10 – [Regenerative ag: professional learning for educators](#), online course starts**
- 10 – [Hort apps & hacks](#), Growcom, Aratula QLD
- 11 – [Hort apps & hacks](#), Growcom, Stanthorpe QLD
- 12 – [Hort apps & hacks](#), Growcom, Gatton QLD
- 19 – [Climate adaptation workshop](#), HLW, Pomona QLD

June

- 2 – [Business growth in challenging times](#) (#2 of 2), Gwydir Shire Council, Bingara NSW**
- 3 – [Business growth in challenging times](#) (#2 of 2), Gwydir Shire Council, Wialda NSW**
- 5-7 – [Hort Connections](#), Adelaide SA
- 6-8 – Science to Practice, online/various locations**
- 21 – [National Renewables in Agriculture Conference](#), Dubbo NSW

August

- 7-10 – [Weeds NSW Conference](#), Dubbo NSW

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