

Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub

**Submission on
the draft investment plan and funding strategy for the
Future Drought Fund 2024-2028**

The Southern NSW Hub's drought preparedness activities

The Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (the SNSW Hub or Hub) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission as part of the consultation process on the next phase of the Future Drought Fund (FDF).

The SNSW Hub was launched two and a half years ago in June 2021. Its primary mission is to support farmers and rural communities in the southern NSW region in preparing for and mitigating drought impacts and capitalising on opportunities for recovery from drought. Foundational activities accomplished in the start-up phase included the recruitment of suitably qualified staff, the formation of a Hub Board, and the establishment of the Hub's Knowledge Broker Network.

The Knowledge Broker Network consists of 22 members (contributing a total of 8.6 full time equivalents worth of time) located across the Hub footprint and are mostly based in Hub partner organisations. These Knowledge Brokers are working with their communities to identify the major opportunities and barriers to drought resilience. Through the process of co-design, they are formulating targeted activities that respond to these opportunities and barriers.

The SNSW Hub has delivered its ['Baselining Drought'](#) study. This study included an extensive survey of farmer, community and first nations perceptions of drought and its impacts across southern NSW. The project garnered 260 stakeholder representations via the multi-faceted data collection process across the five distinct geographic nodes of the Hub. The insights from this report are critical to shaping our objectives and activities for the future. We are using it as a starting point to co-develop programs of work for the future Hub.

The SNSW Hub started with an initial \$8 million of funding from the Future Drought Fund, combined with partner cash contributions of \$900,000. Since then, the Hub has secured an additional \$20.6 million in cash investment and \$12.3 million of in-kind contributions from partners and stakeholders in Southern NSW. This funding has supported 13 on-the-ground projects which seek to enhance the resilience of primary producers, communities and landscapes to drought. These projects cover activities ranging from the demonstration of known practices to long term field trials, to the development of early warning indicators for communities. These projects have seen the Hub partner with farming systems groups, Rural Research and Development Corporations, universities, peak bodies, state departments, and other Drought and Innovation Hubs to deliver impact.

The projects above also demonstrate the enhanced levels of collaboration and cooperation that the Hub has fostered amongst partner and collaborator organisations within its footprint. This has resulted in higher quality projects, which are better coordinated on the ground, and improved networks and information sharing. The Hub has also worked to enhance the skills of extension staff in its partner organisations, providing detailed training in values-based engagement and co-design.

Following an extensive stakeholder consultation process, the SNSW Hub has developed a Hub prospectus for 2024-2028 (attached to this submission). The prospectus is a high-level vision for the Hub's operations for the 2024-2028 period and proposes the inclusion of five on-the-ground programs of work or Key Impact Areas:

- **Social and Cultural Resilience – farming, First Nations and regional**
- **Enhancing and Preserving the Natural Environment**
- **Ground Cover**
- **Soil Health**
- **Water and Water Use**

The prospectus is based on the Hub receiving annual cash investment of \$6.25 million from the FDF and partners along with in-kind contributions. This reflects:

1. current investment levels and activity plus inflation impacts;
2. what is required to maintain current momentum of on the ground activities and collaborations; and
3. an enhanced and targeted focus on five **Key Impact Areas** for climate resilience identified for southern NSW.

The Hub is seeking \$4.25 million of FDF funding per annum to deliver on this prospectus.

Discussion questions

1. Does the draft funding plan provide an appropriate framework to guide spending on drought resilience initiatives?

The draft funding plan provides a well-structured framework to guide spending under the *Future Drought Fund*. It is noted that the definition of ‘drought resilience’ included in the funding is broader than that previously articulated. The Hub is supportive of this broader definition.

2. Which current FDF programs should be retained?

The SNSW Hub strongly supports the continuation of the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs.

The SNSW Hub considers that the following programs (in no particular order) should be retained in some format: Climate Services for Agriculture, Farm Business Resilience Program, Regional Drought Resilience Planning, and Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative.

The content and intent of the following grants should remain: Long-term Trials of Drought Resilient Farming Practices grants, Drought Resilience Soils and Landscapes grants, Extension & Adoption of Drought Resilient Farming Practices grants, Natural Resource Management Drought Resilience Program, Drought Innovation Grants.

However, the grants rounds should be refined to promote collaboration and not competition. Partnering and collaboration across industry and the region is a founding principle of the Hub and again has been cited as a core benefit of the Hub. For such partnering and collaboration to occur, the FDF should consider change to the nature of the open grant rounds.

Further grants in these areas should be longer term in nature, allow for appropriate solution design and delivery (that is – not be restricted to extension and adoption) and allow sufficient development time such that co-design and collaboration can be effectively employed.

Over the 2024-28 period we will continue to work to increase collaboration across the SNSW region to synchronise efforts and share best practices. Competitive grant rounds historically used by investors in agricultural RD&E have typically had a negative effect on regional collaboration and partnership and the ability to effectively co-design programs of work. We have seen this effect on Hub partnerships when competitive investment opportunities have occurred over the last two and a half years. Partnering and collaboration enhances the efficiency and impact of regional efforts to build resilience against drought and climate variability. Where resources and capacity are finite, they need to be employed optimally.

3. Which current FDF programs could be integrated with existing programs or built upon to drive efficiency or to maximise impact?

There is scope to merge the Drought Resilience Soils and Landscapes grants, Extension & Adoption of Drought Resilient Farming Practices grants and Natural Resource Management Drought Resilience Program into one larger program potentially with several rounds. These could be grouped together to create national cross-Hub initiatives in our five **Key Impact Areas**: social and cultural resilience, enhancing and preserving the natural environment, ground and canopy cover, soil health, and water and water use. These impact areas were identified and agreed across the national hub network and so there is real scope for regional programs with national impact. Were any merger to occur the total value of money offered should be increased or at least not decreased.

If funding rounds are used, they should be improved by lengthening the funding call period to allow more effective co-design of bids, and also to allow more collaboration (rather than competition) amongst groups that can work together. Further to this, the scheduling of funding rounds over the Christmas/New Year period is also likely to affect the quality of applications owing to the family and childcare responsibilities faced by applicants at this time of year and many organisations being closed. It certainly impacts the wellbeing of the people and organisations writing applications.

4. How should the Hubs' role be better defined to deliver more impact for their regions? Are the proposed funding options for the Hubs appropriate?

The Hubs should continue to play a key role in knowledge broking, capacity building and facilitating greater collaboration along with delivery of on the ground projects through partners and stakeholders. The SNSW Hub **strongly supports** the options raised in the draft investment strategy for the Hubs to deliver investment in regional priority projects (including potential RDRP projects). The SNSW Hub also strongly supports the Hubs:

- receiving core FDF investment to deliver cross-Hub or cross region projects;
- leveraging and coordinating further investment from RDCs and industry to support climate resilience in the region; and
- values-based engagement and people centred design to co-create place-based solutions for people and communities in their footprint.

The Hub's 2024-2028 Prospectus closely aligns with the idea of regional priority projects. It proposes a set of embedded **Key Impact Areas** to achieve on the ground impact for the next four years. These are programs of work co-designed with stakeholders, which will achieve targeted outcomes for drought and climate resilience in southern NSW.

It is noted that the on the ground programs in the current Hub model have been achieved through investment and grant activities outside the core Hub funding. Whilst the Hub has successfully secured valuable on the ground projects, the time and other resources consumed in doing that far from efficient and the reactive nature of the process has meant inadequate co-design and that there is not a cohesive program, aligned as closely as possible with the priority areas for southern NSW and therefore, the impacts are less targeted.

For the future it is suggested that these **Key Impact Areas** already identified with stakeholders would:

- be a core investment by the FDF through the Hub head agreement;
- be converted from Impact areas to impact statements to detailed work plans using co-design and values-based engagement strategies, *prior to commencement* (we are working to have this completed prior to 1 July 2024);
- set out agreed, targeted impacts up front – with a MEL framework guiding development, implementation and reporting;
- use a combination of research, development and extension tools to develop and deliver outcomes – depending on the issue or opportunity being pursued;
act as a mechanism to secure co-contributions from industry – both cash and in-kind more effectively leveraging the FDF investment around clear programs of work; and
- adhere to our current operating model and be undertaken by our partners and stakeholders who are best placed/skilled for delivery in the region, not by the Hub *per se*.

These **Key Impact Areas** are designed to support social, environmental and economic resilience for agriculture and agricultural focussed communities in southern NSW and are as follows:

1. **Social and Cultural Resilience**: *Encompasses our commitment to strengthening both rural and First Nations communities and fostering both economic and social well-being.*
2. **Enhancing and Preserving the Natural Environment**: *Drives efforts to ensure a sustainable ecosystem for future generations.*
3. **Ground and Canopy Cover**: *Optimising land productivity and promoting effective ground and canopy cover management practices to prevent soil erosion, improve water retention, and enhance ecosystem health.*
4. **Soil Health**: *Prioritising soil health and fertility to enhance agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability.*
5. **Water and Water Use**: *Promoting responsible water resource management for a sustainable water supply and ecosystem health.*

2024-28 SNSW Hub Impact Areas



The SNSW Hub notes the Productivity Commission recommendation that Hub funding should be extended for two years under the next funding plan, with continued funding for each Hub depending on a satisfactory mid-term performance review. While strongly endorsing the need for performance review and evaluation of Hub impacts, the SNSW Hub believes the recommendation for two years of funding for Hubs is not consistent with the broader conclusion of the PC review about the need for longer term transformational change. Providing the Hubs with only two years of funding would only allow for short-term incremental activities to be undertaken. The provision of four years of funding is recommended.

The SNSW Hub supports the Productivity Commission recommendation to release a public statement of expectations for the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs program and individual Hubs. The SNSW Hub recommends that DAFF work with Hubs in the development of these statements of expectations.

The SNSW Hub recommends that the intellectual property provisions in future Hub Head agreements be drafted to allow for greater collaboration between Hubs and Rural Research and Development Corporations.

5. What implementation pathways and governance options are the most appropriate ways of actioning regional plans?

We are keen to understand the process for creation, final content and FDF expectations around implementation of the Regional Drought Resilience Plans currently in development across the region. Implementation of these is likely to be complex and community expectations high. If there is a plan to have Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs look after the implementation of these plans:

- early design discussions about what, how and when would be highly beneficial for communities, the FDF and Hubs; and
- adequate funding would need to be provided to the Hubs to allow for the rollout and oversight of these plans.

7. How should public and private good be balanced in a future iteration of the FBR program? Should the program require farmer co-contributions?

The social and economic imperatives for drought and climate resilience are significant and potentially outweigh any private gain derived through the FBR and other FDF programs.

8. Should the FDF provide training on how best to use and interpret information from existing climate tools, including but not limited to 'My Climate View'? If so, who could benefit most from such training? Investment in the implementation of such tools is critical. Significant sums of R&D funding are expended to develop valuable planning and decision support tools, which are often underutilised owing to a lack of extension activities and training. Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs are well-placed to fill this gap.

The SNSW Hub recently collaborated with Meat and Livestock Australia to deliver training on tools created as part of MLA's Forewarned is Forearmed project. Five face-to-face pilot workshops delivered to 32 producers in different regions across southern Australia, and to different industries. Thirty-seven advisors representing the red meat, dairy, grain, wine, sugar and cotton industries completed FWFA train-the trainer workshops.

9. Should the long-term goal for CSA be providing adaptation information to better support practice change in response to climate projections?

The long-term goal of CSA should be to provide clear climate signals – providing guidance on predicted changes in growing conditions into the future. It should be the remit of local experts to explore adaptations appropriate to unique situations.

10. Should the FDF prioritise natural capital management projects through discrete programs (such as a new Drought Resilience Soils and Landscapes program) or should NRM continue to be embedded throughout most streams of investment? Or both?

We would recommend core investment in our **Key Impact Areas**.

11. How can First Nations communities be supported so that their knowledge and practices to care for country can be maintained for the benefit of their communities and land?

The SNSW Hub considers that First Nations communities should be supported by the FDF to:

- address issues related to food security, which impact on a considerable percentage of First Nations peoples;
- improve the condition of landscapes and increase their resilience to drought so as to alleviate the suffering that First Nations people experience in relation to damaged environments; and
- allow for the passing on of culture, including through increased availability of bush foods during drought.

Over the next four years the SNSW Hub is committed to developing and delivering a dedicated First Nations Engagement Strategy. This strategy will be designed in collaboration with First Nations communities, highlighting the shared commitment to partnership, engagement, and knowledge sharing. Development and delivery of the Strategy will be led by First Nations Engagement Officer(s). Their responsibilities will extend beyond the strategy itself. These will include advising the Hub of First Nations priorities and providing cultural competency training to Hub staff to build their capabilities in First Nations community engagement. Furthermore, the FNEOs will actively build relationships with other agencies and organisations across the region, helping to inform project identification and prioritisation. In cases where project or grant applications do not align with, or are unsuccessful in securing FDF funding, FNEOs will act as concierges, guiding applicants to other opportunities or community service providers.

12. Should the FDF focus on innovation, or broader extension and adoption of tried and tested practices to enable change at scale in Australia? Or both?

In seeking to build drought and climate resilience, it does not make sense for the FDF to exclude any strategy. The FDF should therefore fund initiatives all along the research, development and extension continuum rather than excluding research or other innovation approaches. The SNSW Drought & Innovation Hub has an expanding track record of building programs of work along all stages of this continuum and delivering these programs through its partners. Funding programs such as the *Long-term Trials of Drought Resilient Farming Practices* grants and the *Drought Innovation Grants* allowed for knowledge gaps in drought resilience to be tackled. There should be more opportunities for knowledge gaps to be filled in the next phase of the FDF. We also have excellent outcomes from our Innovation Hubs grant program that contribute to climate resilience in the areas of community resilience, AgTech adoption and biosecurity preparedness.

13. Should transformational change, and partnerships that facilitate it, be prioritised by the FDF? What incentives or programs would best support transformational change?

To support transformational change, and partnerships that facilitate it, the FDF should establish longer term programs and the funding model should incentivise collaborative, co-designed bids (see response to question 2 for further details). Funding for on the ground projects in **Key Impact Areas** should be embedded in Hub core funding so that they are well designed and long-term in the delivery for transformational impact.

Or should the FDF continue to also build incremental change – that eventually lead to transformation – and focus on the preconditions (knowledge, skills, and support etc) that enable individuals and communities to make transformational changes?

The SNSW Hub is supportive of the Productivity Commission's suggestion to focus on more long-term transformative funding programs and agrees with the finding in its interim report that short term incremental programs have high transaction costs.

14. What Drought Resilience Innovation Challenges could be targeted in the proposed new innovation pilot program?

The Hub suggests that the challenges areas include the five **Key Impact Areas** that the Hub identified in its prospectus:

- ***Social and Cultural Resilience***
- ***Enhancing and Preserving the Natural Environment***
- ***Ground Cover***
- ***Soil Health***
- ***Water and Water Use***



SOUTHERN NSW
DROUGHT
RESILIENCE
ADOPTION & INNOVATION HUB
PROSPECTUS 2024-2028

FOR CONSIDERATION IN
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEXT
Future Drought Fund
four year funding
strategy



SOUTHERN NSW
Innovation Hub

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE,
LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES



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INTRODUCTION

This prospectus provides insight into the Hub's journey, achievements, vision, and outlook. It outlines the path the Hub will take to evolve its operations, strategy, and output should funding continue beyond 2024. This forward-looking approach demonstrates the Hub's commitment to long-term impact and sustainability in addressing the challenges of drought and climate variability in Southern NSW.

INTRODUCTION





THE ROLE OF THE HUB

The Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (The Hub) is one of eight similar entities established across Australia. It is a joint venture, a partnership of interested and co-investing organisations, hosted by Charles Sturt University and based at Wagga Wagga. Its primary mission is to support farmers and rural communities in the Southern NSW region in preparing for and mitigating drought impacts and capitalising on opportunities for recovery from drought. The Hub achieves this by working through its partner organisations to provide farmers and communities with valuable knowledge, tools, and practices and by undertaking research where there are knowledge gaps. It acts as a bridge, connecting them with local agricultural experts, innovative practices, and cutting-edge research and technologies. The inception of the Hub was driven by the recognition of significant opportunities related to drought and climate resilience in the region. The partners behind the Hub observed that organisations across the region frequently operated in isolation, often leading to information silos, duplication of effort, increased costs and missed opportunities for greater impact. Additionally, top-down initiatives often struggled to effectively address the needs of farmers, rural and First Nations communities. In contrast, initiatives designed in collaboration with these communities were often better targeted, leading to better support, greater uptake, and improved outcomes.

In response to these challenges, the partners identified a need for a regional coordinator committed to capacity building, fostering collaboration and, reducing duplication across the region and ensuring that initiatives are developed with, not for, stakeholders to increase their impact. The Hub aims to change how Southern NSW identifies and addresses agricultural and drought-related issues. It fosters collaboration among stakeholders to tackle these challenges collectively, reducing duplication of efforts and maximising return on investment. To facilitate this, the Hub provides a platform for partners and regional stakeholders to share insights and ideas. Instead of relying on a single Knowledge Broker, the Hub has invested in a network of 22 Knowledge Brokers closely integrated into local communities and key agricultural industries. These Knowledge Brokers engage with communities and stakeholders, identify challenges and research gaps, and share knowledge and resources from partner organisations and the broader hub network. As well as more traditional project and initiative design processes, the Hub has developed and adapted the co-design concept into people-centred design process appropriate to the Australian agricultural innovation system. This is a data-driven approach to project and initiative development that aims to incorporate local perspectives and voices throughout the process. This ensures that local and industry stakeholders' views are heard, projects and initiatives are more targeted, relevant, and more likely to be adopted. The Hub has integrated this people-centred design approach into its operations, supported by a bespoke training and design process.

Despite being a relatively new organisation, the Hub's initial two years of operation have yielded many positive results. Feedback from partners and stakeholders and the outcomes showcased in the 2022-23 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning reports underscore the Hub's significance as an asset within the Southern NSW community.

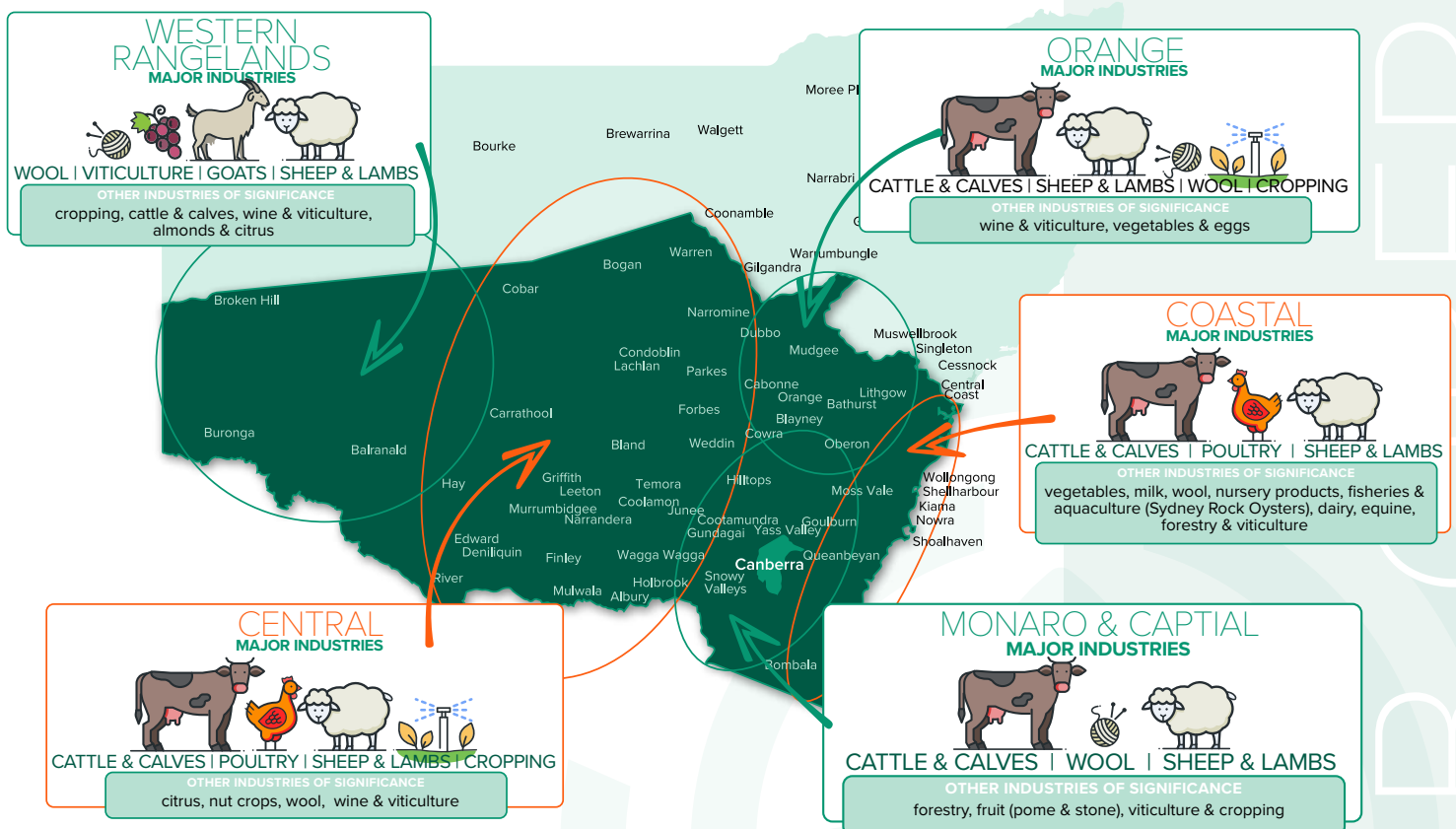
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AREA OF OPERATION

The Hub's geographical boundary encompasses the Macquarie River catchment, including its upper reaches, irrigation areas, and lower Darling River areas. It extends to the Hunter catchment's western and southern edges, near the Sydney Catchment and Hawkesbury River mouth. The southern and western boundaries align with the Victorian and South Australian borders.

The region's farming systems encompass all the major agricultural sectors - aquaculture, wine, dairy, grain cotton, livestock, and horticulture along with many emerging industries. It covers diverse geographical features and climatic variations, intensive and extensive systems; dryland and irrigated production. The Hub identifies five sub-regions corresponding to unique terrain, environment, and industries, allowing more tailored solutions to be developed for specific challenges and opportunities.



Geographical boundaries of the Southern NSW Drought Innovation Hub & the major agricultural industries across the Hub's catchment

Partnerships

The Hub is currently a consortium of seven regional partners, including industry and community groups, researchers, education institutions, resource management practitioners and government agencies. The Consortium operates under a Collaboration Agreement that defines governance, roles, and decision-making processes. The Collaboration Agreement has worked well and is considered fit for purpose. Should the Hub's operations be funded beyond 2024, partners will be confirmed and new agreement implemented for 2024-28.



Governance

The Hub is overseen by an advisory Board comprising the Hub Director, seven members nominated by the Lead Partners and an independent Chair. The Board oversees the strategic direction, financial management, and operational effectiveness of the Hub. It ensures accountability, guides key decisions, and supports stakeholder engagement, playing a crucial role in the Hub's success.

BOARD MEMBER	ROLE
Mr. Barry Irvin AM (Chair)	Executive Chairman, Bega Cheese Limited
Prof. Michael Friend	Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & Innovation Charles Sturt University
Ms. Cindy Cassidy	Director, Southern NSW Drought Resilience and Innovation Hub
Prof. Lorrae van Kerkhoff	Director, Institute for Water Futures, Australian National University
Mr. Ron Heinrich, OAM	Farming Systems Group Alliance Nominee
Ms. Kate Lorimer-Ward	Deputy Director General, Agriculture, NSW Department of Primary Industries
Mr Barney Hyams	Chair, Riverina Local Land Services
Mr Ross Thompson	Foundation Director, Centre for Applied Water Science, University of Canberra
Mr John Warlters	CEO, Rural Aid Ltd



Hosting Arrangements

The Hub is hosted by Charles Sturt University (Charles Sturt) at its Wagga Wagga campus. The ongoing affiliation with Charles Sturt provides credibility and institutional support to the Hub's operations. It grants it access to Charles Sturt's extensive resources, including research expertise, educational networks, and facilities. The hosting arrangement is expected to continue should the Hub's operations be extended beyond 2024.

INNOVATION
HUB





ACHIEVEMENTS

Within two years, the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub has achieved significant milestones, establishing itself as a key regional resource. These achievements have set a strong foundation for the Hub to continue its important work across the region.

Establishing the Knowledge Broker Network

The Knowledge Broker Network (KBN) is a distinctive feature of the Southern NSW Hub, consisting of a Chief Knowledge Broker, a Knowledge Broker Coordinator, a First Nations Engagement Officer and 22 part-time Knowledge Brokers strategically positioned within partner organisations across the region. This network is a vital connection point, promoting collaboration and dismantling barriers between organisations and information sources (Appendix 1).

Conceived initially to translate science into practice for their region, the role of Knowledge Brokers has grown beyond its initial scope. It now operates as a collective to break down information, knowledge, and sectoral silos and enhance efficiency in drought resilience and agricultural innovation across the region. Knowledge Brokers within this network act as intermediaries, bridging the gap between research findings and the practical needs of stakeholders. Their role involves disseminating up-to-date information on drought resilience, innovative practices, and research findings to ensure stakeholders remain well-informed. Simultaneously, they establish and nurture connections between various stakeholders and organisations, facilitating knowledge transfer and collaboration.

This collaborative approach effectively addresses historical challenges in the region, including limited collaboration and duplicated efforts.

Originally the Hub was viewed as a mechanism to better provide drought preparation resources, support and connectivity. It has provided improved collaboration with other FSGs, Unis and through the KB network.

PARTNER



Knowledge Broker
Network Coverage.



Establishing the Knowledge Broker Network CONT.

The KBN facilitates effective communication and connects stakeholders with relevant opportunities. The network's strong local presence ensures that the voices of farmers, rural communities, and First Nations groups are heard and amplified within the Hub and across the broader region. This approach actively incorporates stakeholders' voices and perspectives into the design process, significantly enhancing the likelihood of project success. The role of Knowledge Brokers extends beyond information dissemination; they actively educate, motivate, influence, teach, mentor, and support stakeholders to ensure access to essential knowledge and support:

Facilitate Information Flow:

Knowledge Brokers act as intermediaries who facilitate the exchange of information between partners, collaborators, and stakeholders across the region. They are vital in disseminating relevant, up-to-date information on drought resilience, innovative practices, and research findings. This includes sharing information from researchers, experts, and funding agencies with farmers, First Nations communities, and other stakeholders. Likewise, they collect valuable insights, feedback, and challenges faced by stakeholders and relay this information back to the relevant teams within the Hub for further analysis and action.

Encourage Collaboration:

Knowledge Brokers actively foster collaboration by connecting stakeholders with shared interests and objectives. They help create partnerships and networks that drive innovation and resilience in Southern NSW.

Connect Stakeholders with Projects or Grants

One of the key responsibilities of Knowledge Brokers is to establish and maintain strong connections between various stakeholders, including farmers, researchers, industry experts, and funding bodies. They understand each stakeholder's specific needs, aspirations, and capabilities, enabling them to identify potential project opportunities or suitable grants aligned with the Hub's priorities. They act as matchmakers, connecting stakeholders with relevant projects or funding opportunities to enhance regional drought resilience. On some occasions, Knowledge Brokers also support stakeholders throughout the project or grant application process.

Integrate with Enabling Functions:

Knowledge Brokers collaborate closely with the enabling functions of the Hub to ensure a seamless flow of information and effective coordination of activities. For instance, they share valuable insights from First Nations communities with the First Nations Engagement Officer, enabling the Hub to develop culturally appropriate and responsive initiatives. Additionally, they work with Modern Extension & Adoption to design training and extension programs that address the specific needs of stakeholders and promote the adoption of innovative practices.





Network Development

The Hub's commitment to collaboration is ingrained in its DNA. Over the past two years, the Hub has developed an extensive regional network of more than 40 collaborating organisations, including Research and Development Corporations, Cooperative Research Centres, Local Government Organisations, and Landcare and Natural Resource Management groups (Appendix 2). The formation of this regional network has increased both the quantity and quality of collaborations to improve drought resilience and innovation across Southern NSW (2023 MEL Report). This collaborative network provides the Hub and its stakeholders with access to diverse skills, knowledge, and networks spanning scientific research, policy analysis, and practical experience. This enriches the Hub's capabilities and expertise, broadens its reach and that of its partners, facilitates more extensive information dissemination across the region, and solidifies the Hub's reputation through its affiliation with respected organisations.

Additionally, these collaborations have created a network of stakeholders committed to the region's agricultural and environmental resilience, ensuring sustainability beyond individual projects. As a testament to their effectiveness, these collaborations have attracted significant co-investment to the region, facilitating the development of numerous projects tailored to meet the specific needs of local communities, farmers, and stakeholders. They have also established a robust feedback loop, allowing for ongoing dialogue and stakeholder input, providing valuable insight to inform the Hub's strategic decisions and project directions.

Our partnership with the Hub has significantly strengthened our regional networks. It has provided us valuable opportunities to establish connections with organisations and individuals we would not have had access to otherwise.

PARTNER

People-Centred Design

The principle of people-centred design guides every aspect of the Hub's operations. The evidence-based solution development process enabled by this design philosophy has improved collaboration, streamlined resource allocation, and enhanced outcomes in these fields. This approach leverages the diverse expertise of stakeholders, ensuring that all perspectives are considered. This strengthens the solutions developed and fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among participants. By involving farmers, community members, and First Nations groups in project and initiative design, the Hub utilises the invaluable local knowledge and experience that often goes untapped in traditional research and development processes. People-centred design reinforces the activities of the Knowledge Broker Network, serving as a catalyst to break down silos and promote cross-sector collaboration. This approach empowers communities to actively engage in shaping their future. The participatory nature of this approach further amplifies the voices of farmers, rural communities, and First Nations groups, ensuring that their unique needs and priorities are at the forefront of decision-making. This empowerment fosters a sense of ownership, commitment, and a shared vision for the region's future. People-centred design helps to ensure that projects are specifically tailored to address local challenges, significantly increasing their chances of success. This tailored approach is vital to address the region's diverse landscapes, farming systems, and community dynamics.

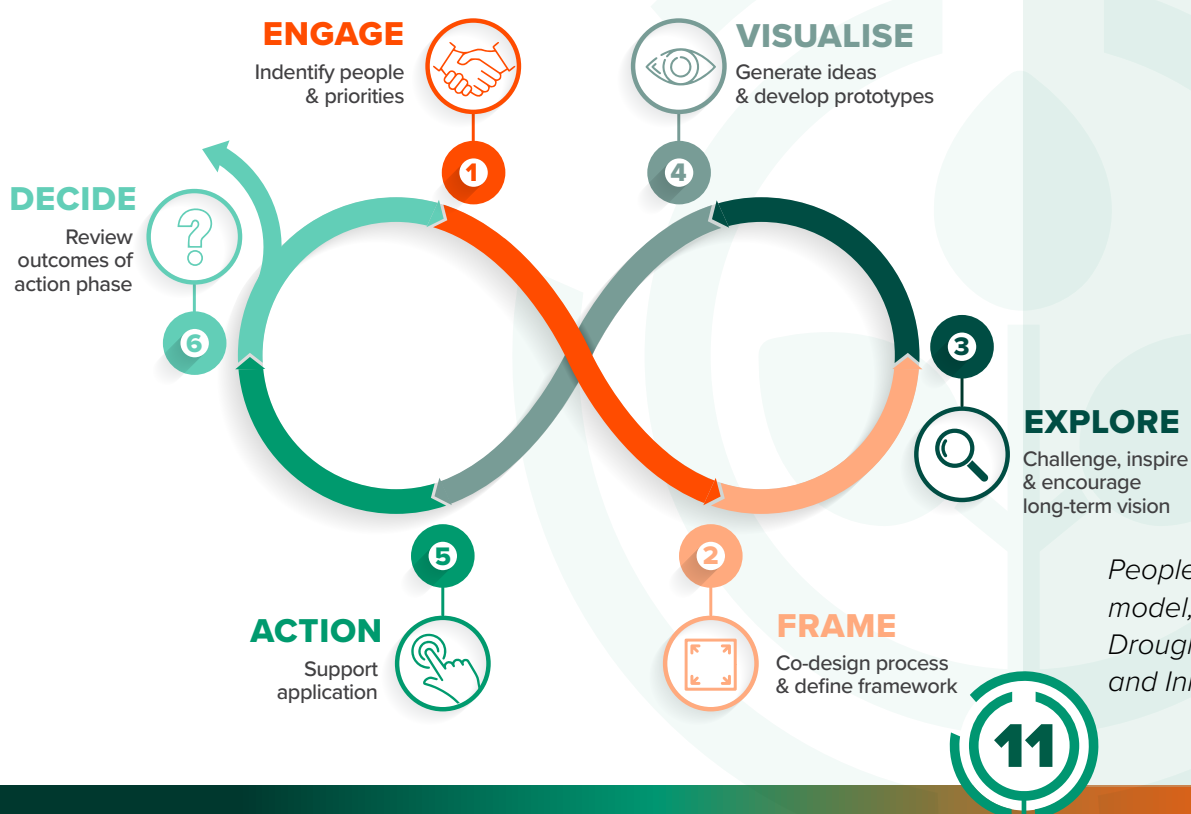


People-Centred Design CONT.

By involving communities and stakeholders directly in the solution development process, the Hub ensures that initiatives are relevant and rooted in the realities of the region. This approach enables the Hub to address a wide range of challenges effectively.

Beyond its immediate benefits, people-centred design can play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of FDF programs and grants. The Hub actively contributes valuable insights to the FDF, facilitating targeted and cost-effective funding initiatives. The feedback-driven insight provided continually identifies areas of need and opportunity, ensuring FDF programs remain adaptive and responsive to emerging challenges. By actively engaging with stakeholders, the Hub enhances the FDF's capacity to address the evolving needs of regional communities effectively. The annual Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Report validates the effectiveness of the people-centred design approach by highlighting improved stakeholder engagement, resource allocation, and alignment with community needs. This design approach has benefited the Hub's internal operations and sparked interest and collaboration among Hub partners and stakeholders. Notably, it has also played a pivotal role in securing funding for six new Hub partnership projects, underscoring its potential for driving innovation and project development.

The Hub has developed a six-step model to provide a structured yet flexible framework for collaborative solution development. This model outlines a clear path for involving communities and stakeholders while allowing adaptation to specific topics, communities, and projects. This flexibility enables Hub staff and stakeholders to customise tools, tactics, and processes to suit the unique requirements of different initiatives. It ensures that people-centred design remains a practical and adaptable approach for addressing various challenges.



People-centred design model, Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub



People-Centred Design CONT.

The Hub has delivered several activities to increase awareness of people-centred design model and develop the capabilities of staff and stakeholders:

- A people-centred design team was formed to integrate this into the Hub's operations.
- Targeted training was held to develop skills among staff and stakeholders.
- Monthly expert-led webinars promote innovation and resilience.
- Monthly articles offer insights for stakeholders.
- Materials were developed to ensure the consistent application of people-centred design principles.
- Knowledge Brokers created action plans with their local communities to identify drought priorities.

First Nations Engagement

The Hub operates on the traditional lands of several First Nations communities and benefits from their invaluable insights into land management, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation. Drought and climate change disproportionately affect First Nations¹ communities due to historical dispossession and enduring policies that have affected their opportunities and cultural ties to the land. Drought and climate change can significantly impact food security in First Nations communities. Research highlights that almost 30 per cent of Aboriginal people living in isolated areas experience food insecurity. The regions served by the Hub have many isolated First Nation communities, some of whom have reported food insecurity – particularly during times of drought. These communities also have a profound cultural connection to native flora and fauna, which these challenges threaten, impacting their ability to pass down cultural practices and traditions.

The Hub has taken proactive steps to address these challenges, including appointing a First Nations Engagement Officer (FNEO) who works alongside the Knowledge Broker Network. The role of the FNEO is to engage directly with First Nations communities, foster collaboration, and provide essential training and support to Hub staff. This support enhances cultural awareness and capabilities within the Hub for effective First Nations engagement. Supported by the FNEO, the Hub has actively engaged with First Nations stakeholders across the region. In the 22-23 Financial Year, the Hub conducted 18 individual consultations with First Nations communities, identifying opportunities for its support:

- **Enhancing effectiveness through research:** Research is needed to develop specific knowledge areas to improve the Hub's effectiveness in working with the farming and First Nations communities. This includes a framework of practice and shared values and strategies.
- **Building capacity in the Hub team and partners:** The Hub's First Nations Engagement Officer has worked with the Hub team and across projects to grow the Hub's capacity for First Nations engagement.

¹ <https://soe.dcceew.gov.au/indigenous/pressures/climate-change>



Project Development & Delivery

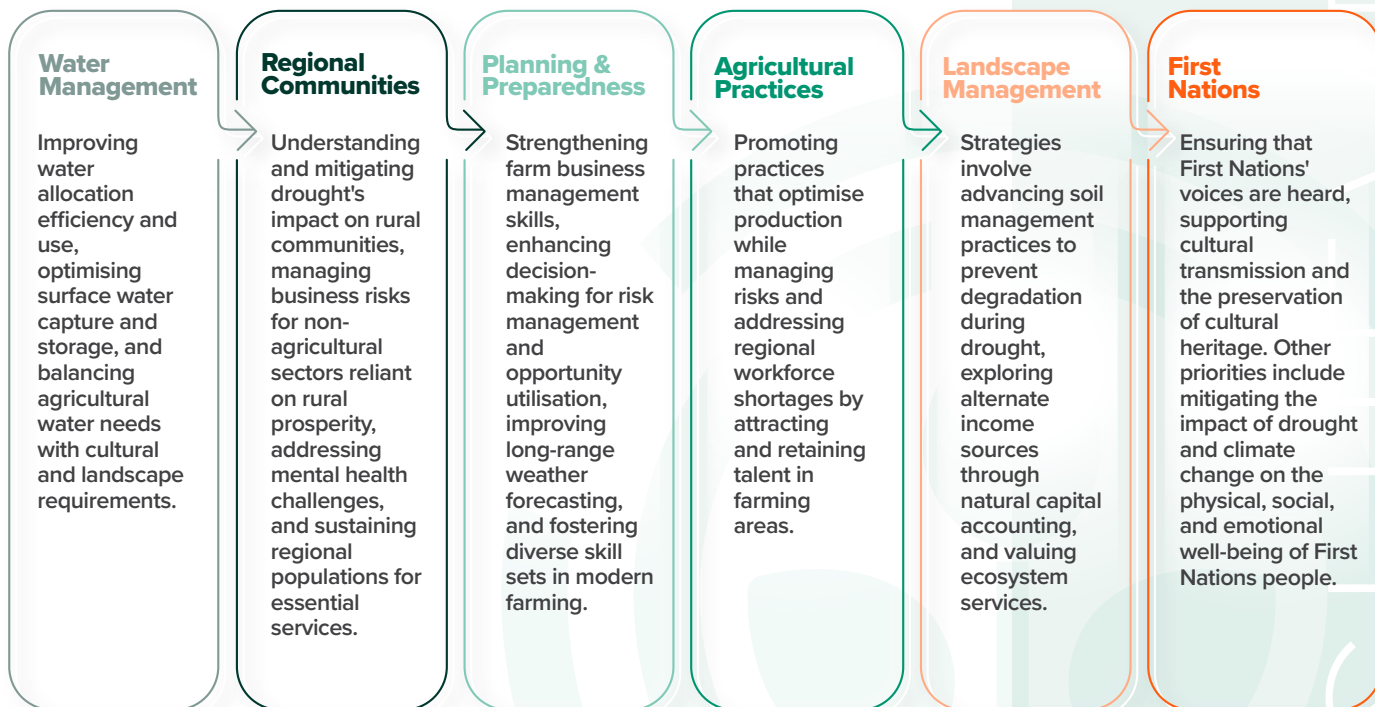
Through initiatives like the Knowledge Broker Network, the baselining drought project, and ideas forums, the Hub has identified key issues and opportunities for investment and effort in Southern NSW.

Baselining Drought Report

The Hub conducted an extensive assessment of drought's implications in Southern NSW, engaging stakeholders via face-to-face and online consultations, open submissions, and surveys. This comprehensive effort spanned from June to December 2022. It provided insights into various dimensions of drought's impact, from financial strain on farm businesses to challenges faced by rural communities, including the unique experiences of the indigenous community.

Priority Areas of Action

The Hub leveraged insights from the baselining drought report and the guidance of the KBN to identify pivotal challenges and opportunities in Southern NSW. These informed the development of Priority Areas of Action for the Hub. These Priorities shape the Hub's strategic direction, steering its initiatives towards targeted impact:





Project Development & Delivery CONT.

Learning Activities

Over the past year, the Hub has successfully delivered numerous learning activities to its stakeholders, which have been instrumental in fostering knowledge exchange, promoting innovation, and enhancing drought resilience within the Southern NSW region:

- 59 farm walks or field days
- 51 workshops conducted with farmers and various stakeholders
- 42 seminars or conferences
- 22 activities relating to on-farm trials and demonstrations
- 12 webinars

Feedback from participants suggests that these activities have increased their knowledge and understanding of subjects relevant to improving drought resilience. Some participants have reported intent to change on their farms because of these activities. In addition, the Hub developed five products from its learning and training activities, including several of those listed above. These included a Digital Irrigation Masterclass, Notion and YourDATA online data sharing platforms, recorded webinars called 'Expanded Horizons', Baselineing Drought Case Studies, and a Stock Confinement Virtual Tool.

We're now more efficient with improved timing and management skills in irrigation practices. We really would like to see how far we could push it and save water, which also translates into power usage reduction.

ATTENDEE
CITRUS GROWER





Project Development & Delivery CONT.

Tools, Products & Services

The Hub has taken a leadership role in coordinating the development and successful delivery of several impactful projects across the Southern NSW region, including:

- **Preparing with Hindsight Case Studies:** This project involved collecting experiences from various landholders throughout different stages of the 2018/19 drought, including pre-drought, during the drought, and the recovery phase. These case studies were published on the website and distributed at events like Henty Field Days.
- **Stock Confinement Virtual Tool (3D Confinement Feeding Tool Demonstration):** Utilising virtual reality technology, several hundred individuals had the opportunity to use headsets and experience the 3D confinement feeding tool firsthand at the Hub/ Charles Sturt stand. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, emphasising the proactive use of innovative technology to demonstrate on-farm techniques and approaches.
- **Digital Irrigation Masterclass Workshops:** These workshops have played a pivotal role in raising participants' awareness of the opportunities for improving irrigation practices, a critical aspect of building drought resilience. The reported impact on participants has been significant.
- **Video on the Importance of Carbon in Soil:** A video was created to generate interest in the role of carbon in soil health. Collaborators like Select Carbon, LLS, and NSW DPI contributed to this effort. Member feedback from CWFS highlighted the positive reception of engaging video content compared to static posts.

Several projects have also been collaboratively designed and initiated with First Nations communities:

- **Community Garden Project (Tumut):** The community garden offers fresh food, bush tucker, and educational, social, cultural, and career opportunities, contributing to economic empowerment within First Nations communities.
- **Youth Projects:** Two youth projects are being collaboratively designed with local communities, including Local Councils, the LALCs, local police, and schools. These projects serve a dual purpose of providing opportunities while fostering cultural education and transmission among younger generations.
- **Landcare Project:** This project, delivered in partnership with the Hub, FarmLink, Aboriginal custodians, and Landcare, enriches the environment and strengthens cultural ties to the land. It promotes Indigenous land management practices and ecological knowledge.

In addition, 13 projects are underway, including 7 Hub-Specific Projects, 2 Collaborative Projects with the National Hub Network, 3 Agricultural Innovation Hubs Program projects and 1 GRDC funded initiative.

Communication & Engagement

The Hub's Communication and Engagement activities are designed to inform, promote, and raise awareness of the Hub and its activities and engage with its regional partners and stakeholders. Hub communications are driven by a stakeholder-centric approach, producing communication outputs that are regionally relevant, timely, and credible. Despite the Hub's relative youth, it has established a solid foundation for effective engagement:

- **Newsletters:**

The Hub's SPOKE newsletter is distributed monthly to approximately 350 subscribers and consistently achieves an open rate of 50 per cent, surpassing industry averages. The Newsletter is targeted at partner organisations who themselves have carriage of direct grower and community engagement.

- **Social Media:**

The Hub maintains an active social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The Hub and its partners undertook 1,678 social media activities during 2022/2023, reaching an average of 733 people per activity.

- **Media Relations:**

The Hub's media relations activities have generated significant regional media coverage over the past 18 months, boosting its profile and visibility.

- **Extension Communications:**

Although many of its projects are still being developed or are in the early stages of delivery, the Hub has effectively communicated project outputs.





Securing Co-Investment

The Hub's success in attracting co-investment is a significant achievement. The Hub laid a strong foundation with an initial \$8 million funding from the Future Drought Fund, combined with partner cash contributions of \$900,000 and in-kind contributions of almost \$11 million. Beyond this, the Hub secured an additional \$19.4 million in cash investment and \$12.3 million of in-kind contributions from partners and stakeholders in Southern NSW.

PROJECT	SOURCE	CASH	IN-KIND
Drought Resilient Mixed Farming System Trials	Commonwealth – Future Drought Fund - Long-term Trials of Drought Resilient Farming Practices	\$6,229,926	\$5,323,788
Risk Wi\$e – Action Research Group Lead	Grains Research & Development Corporation	\$3,822,135	\$1,824,985
Agricultural Innovation Hubs Program	Commonwealth – Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	\$2,500,000	\$2,432,980
On-farm Water Management - Drought Preparedness & Resilience, Production and Environment	Commonwealth – Future Drought Fund - Adoption of Drought Resilient Practices	\$1,509,599	\$432,940
Adoption Officers	Commonwealth – Future Drought Fund	\$1,125,000	N/A
Saving Our Soils During Drought	Commonwealth – Future Drought Fund - Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes grant program	\$1,000,000	\$240,000
Improved drought resilience through optimal management of soils and available water	Commonwealth – Future Drought Fund - Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes grant program	\$997,600	\$120,000
Creating landscape-scale change through the promotion of resilient pasture systems	Commonwealth – Future Drought Fund - Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes grant program	\$983,950	\$1,010,500
Building Landcare Community and Capacity, Soils Coordinator	Commonwealth – Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	\$375,000	N/A
Drought Management for Health and Longevity of Perennial Horticulture Plants	Commonwealth – Future Drought Fund – Cross Hub project	\$250,000	N/A
Climate Coaching for on-farm decision making	Commonwealth RR&D4 program via Meat & Livestock Australia	\$190,820	N/A
Managing Rangelands for drought resilience	Commonwealth – Future Drought Fund – Cross Hub project	\$183,333	N/A
Improved drought resilience through optimal management of soils and available water (co-contribution to FDF project)	Grains Research & Development Corporation	\$100,000	\$900,000
Additional cash investment in the AgTech Calculator project under Ag Innovation Hubs program	Meat & Livestock Australia	\$100,000	N/A
TOTAL		\$19,367,363	\$12,285,193

Economic impact

Since its establishment, the Hub has attracted a total of \$51.5m of cash and in-kind investments. A REMPLAN analysis, conducted for the Hub in 2023, found that the flow-on effect of these investments could lead to an additional \$127.5m of economic output across the region. Corresponding to this were increases in employment, peaking in 2023 at 103 jobs, \$24.1m in wages and salaries, and \$50.3m in value-added economic activity. This analysis did not incorporate the potential value of any productivity or environmental benefits generated by the Hub's activities, although this may be considered as part of future Hub initiatives or investments.



BUILDING UPON THE FOUNDATIONS 2024-28 STRATEGY

The Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub's strategy for 2024-2028 is dedicated to enhancing the drought resilience of Southern NSW's agricultural sector, rural communities, and First Nations peoples. Our strategy is rooted in collaboration, innovation, and adaptability. Through a network of partnerships, knowledge exchange, research and strategic initiatives, the Hub aims to empower stakeholders to thrive despite the challenges posed by climate variability and drought. The strategy draws from experiences and achievements in the 2020-2023 period and builds on the Hub's successes over that period. Development of the strategy was guided by the contents of the Productivity Commission's Interim Report, qualitative and quantitative research involving the Hub Board, partners, and staff, and input from a stakeholder survey conducted in August 2023. After confirming the Hub's continued operations, these proposals will undergo a six-month socialisation and testing process starting on July 1, 2024. During this period, the Hub will engage with partners, collaborators, and stakeholders to gather insights, refine the strategy, and ensure alignment with regional needs. This collaborative effort aims to prepare a comprehensive strategy guiding the Hub's operations from 2024 to 2028.

The Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub is committed to the principles of communication, collaboration, and people-centred design. We will work with partners, collaborators, and stakeholders to coordinate the development of initiatives that empower our farmers, rural and First Nations communities and enable them to thrive in the ever-evolving agricultural environment of Southern NSW. Together, we are building a resilient and innovative future for agriculture in our region.

Purpose



The Hub exists to provide farmers, rural communities, and First Nations peoples with the knowledge, resources and skills needed to build resilience and thrive in the face of climate variability and drought. The Hub is dedicated to advancing sustainable agricultural practices, enhancing water management, supporting rural communities, and promoting environmental sustainability. By fostering research, innovation, collaboration, adaptability, and learning from and incorporating First Nations knowledge and practices, the Hub aims to create a resilient region that can navigate the challenges posed by drought and a changing climate.

Vision



Connected and adaptable people and places, prepared to respond to future challenges and capitalise on opportunities.



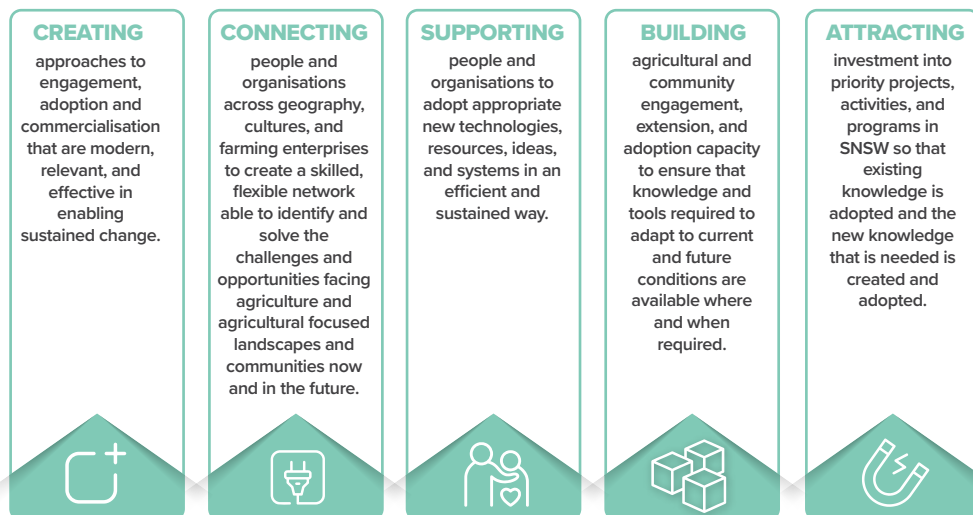
The Hub envisions a future where the region is crossed by a vibrant and responsive network through which partners, collaborators, and stakeholders communicate, share knowledge, and collaborate to build a resilient and sustainable region. This network brings together farmers, researchers, industry experts, and rural and First Nations communities to exchange ideas, share best practices, and improve their resilience to climate and drought challenges.





Objectives

The Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub is dedicated to enhancing drought resilience and climate resilience, by fostering collaboration and knowledge transfer among the region's diverse stakeholders. By doing so, the Hub will empower communities, farmers, and industries to access the necessary research, tools, information, and resources to navigate and thrive in the face of drought and changing climatic conditions. It will achieve this by:



Themes

Three interconnected themes underpin the operations and activities of Hub 2.0. They form the foundation for its activities and operations, ensuring alignment with the Future Drought Fund's objectives, and reminding stakeholders and the communities served of their obligations.



Impact Areas

Five Impact Areas underpin the Hub's future operations and commitment to fostering resilience and sustainability across Southern NSW. These Priorities align closely with Resource, Social, and Financial themes, creating a comprehensive approach to address the multifaceted challenges faced by farmers, First Nations, and rural communities – in the context of building resilience to drought and climate variability.

- **Social and Cultural Resilience** encompasses our commitment to strengthening both rural and First Nations communities and fostering both economic and social well-being.
- **Enhancing and Preserving the Natural Environment** drives our efforts to ensure a sustainable ecosystem for future generations.
- **Ground Cover:** Optimising land productivity and promoting effective ground cover management practices to prevent soil erosion, improve water retention, and enhance ecosystem health.
- **Soil Health:** Prioritising soil health and fertility to enhance agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability.
- **Water and Water Use:** Promoting responsible water resource management for a sustainable water supply and ecosystem health.





Enabling Functions

Six Enabling Functions form the backbone of the Hub's operations. Derived from the Themes and Impact Areas, they identify the critical functions and capabilities required to fulfil the Hub's mission.

- **Modern Extension and Adoption:** Developing extension and adoption methodologies, tools, and skills to enable uptake of cutting-edge agricultural practices, technologies, and research findings by farmers and communities, promoting the adoption of innovative solutions.
- **Regional Coordination:** Increasing collaboration across the SNSW region to synchronise efforts and share best practices. This enhances the effectiveness and reach of regional efforts to build resilience against drought and climate variability.
- **Community and First Nations Engagement:** Fostering meaningful collaboration and engagement with rural and First Nations communities, incorporating local and traditional knowledge and values into the Hub's initiatives.
- **Leveraging Investment:** Attracting additional resources and funding to support development of drought and climate variability resilience by showcasing the value and impact of the Hub's initiatives, thus enhancing the reach and scale of projects.
- **Research & Innovation Brokerage:** Introducing stakeholders to innovative technologies and solutions that enhance drought resilience and climate adaptation. Hub university partners conduct research in areas of identified need. The Hub connects stakeholders with cutting-edge tools and practices developed by internal and external innovators.
- **Capacity Building and Skill Development:** Empowering stakeholders through capacity-building workshops, training programs, and skill development initiatives and equipping farmers and communities with the knowledge and tools required to navigate drought and climate change challenges effectively.

STRATEGY
2024-2028



Operating Principles

The Hub's operating principles serve as a compass, guiding all aspects of its work. They emphasise the importance of people, collaboration, inclusivity, and innovation in the Hub's day-to-day operations, ensuring that the voices of stakeholders are heard and valued at every stage.



Purpose: The Hub exists to support farmers and rural and First Nations communities to prepare for drought and improve their climate resilience.

People: The Hub places people at the centre of its operations, engagement and activities.

Partnership: The Hub is both the product of partnership, and it creates and maintains networks to foster collaboration, break down silos, and improve regional outcomes.

Priority: The Hub follows a process of people-centred design to identify and deliver against the priorities of its funders, partners, and stakeholders.

Participation: The Hub engages stakeholders at every stage of the project development process, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued.

Progressive: The Hub works with partners and stakeholders to identify, extend, or develop innovative solutions, practices and technologies that contribute to their priorities.

Process: The Hub follows consistent processes to ensure that people-centred design is central to its day-to-day operations.

Organisational Structure

The Hub acknowledges that it may need to adapt its organisational structure to effectively incorporate the evolution of its role and functions. It's important to note that discussions about organisational structure will only begin once the strategy has been finalised, following the principle that structure should align with strategy.



KEY INITIATIVES

The Hub will develop and deliver several key initiatives in support of its 2024-2028 strategy. These initiatives play a vital role in enhancing regional resilience and sustainability, ultimately contributing to a prosperous future for the agricultural sector, rural communities, and First Nations peoples.

Increasing the Hub's Focus on Climate Resilience

The Hub is intensifying its focus on climate resilience, aligning its efforts with the recommendations outlined in the Productivity Commission's Interim Report. This strategic shift recognises the intrinsic link between drought management and climate resilience and by doing so, it will equip stakeholders with the tools and knowledge they need for a more proactive approach to drought preparedness. One of the significant advantages of this realignment is that it fosters greater synergy and collaboration among various organisations operating in the region's drought mitigation and climate resilience spaces.

The Hub is exceptionally well-positioned to support this expanded focus by leveraging its extensive network of partners and collaborators. The strong community connections and networks enabled by the Knowledge Broker Network can simplify and accelerate this transition. Moreover, the Hub's current systems, processes, and operational frameworks can be quickly adapted to support this expansion. By coordinating these efforts, the Hub can deliver multiple benefits: a harmonised approach between two deeply interrelated sectors, optimised allocation of resources, and reduced duplication and overlap to enhance impact on ground.

Enhanced collaboration with & between FDF Programs including Hub Initiatives

The Productivity Commission's Interim Report emphasised the need for improved coordination of Future Drought Fund (FDF) programs. In response, the next iteration of Hub funding will be designed to accommodate more active collaboration with other providers of FDF invested programs. With its extensive on-the-ground networks, the Hub can promptly identify priority areas and address gaps in current FDF investments, all while avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts. Furthermore, the Hub will harness the capabilities of the Knowledge Broker Network (KBN) to engage rural and First Nations communities in collaboratively designed initiatives and explore opportunities for joint funding in larger projects. Through the KBN, the Hub can also function as a mechanism to identify regional community priorities and relay this information to the FDF. This collaborative approach enhances the precision of initiative targeting, promotes sustainability, and optimises the efficient allocation of resources. In addition, by collaborating with academic institutions, the Hub can identify opportunities for conducting social research, ensuring a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to addressing the diverse challenges faced by the region.

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Improving First Nations Engagement

The Hub is committed to developing and delivering a dedicated First Nations Engagement Strategy. This strategy will be designed in collaboration with First Nations communities, highlighting the shared commitment to partnership, engagement, and knowledge sharing. Development and delivery of the Strategy will be led by First Nations Engagement Officer(s). Their responsibilities will extend beyond the strategy itself.

These will include advising the Hub of First Nations priorities and providing cultural competency training to Hub staff to build their capabilities in First Nations community engagement. Furthermore, the FNEOs will actively build relationships with other agencies and organisations across the region, helping to inform project identification and prioritisation.

In cases where project or grant applications do not align with, or are unsuccessful in securing FDF funding, FNEOs will act as concierges, guiding applicants to other opportunities or community service providers.

Timeframes for developing and implementing the First Nations Engagement Strategy will be determined as part of the people-centred design process, ensuring that it aligns with the needs and aspirations of First Nations communities. Development will align with the Federal Government's Key Principles and Practices for Business on Country.

Increased NRM & Community Involvement - Network Expansion & Management

To align with its broader mission and goals, the Hub plans to expand its network of collaborators. This expanded network will increase the Hub's focus on climate and community resilience, community development, and support. The expanded network will include various organisations, such as NGOs, quasi-NGOs, charities, NFPs, and other community-oriented agencies.

This expansion aims to comprehensively address a broader range of climate and community resilience challenges.

Partnering with diverse organisations can provide the Hub, its partners and stakeholders access to a more comprehensive knowledge base and additional resources and establish valuable partnerships to benefit the region's sustainability and resilience efforts.

This will enhance the Hub's collaborative networks, creating an environment for sharing ideas, launching innovative projects, and initiating community-driven initiatives.

The strength of this diverse network will be harnessed to address the evolving needs of Southern NSW, ultimately fostering a resilient, sustainable, and prosperous future for the region.

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Partner & Collaborator Engagement

Continued effective engagement with partners and collaborators will be essential to fulfilling the Hub's mission and achieving positive regional results. This will become increasingly important as the Hub's network of partners and collaborators expands.

To meet this demand, the Hub will develop a Partner and Collaborator Engagement Strategy to account for a greater number and increasing diversity of organisations. Various engagement methods will be considered, including:

- **Regular Meetings:** The Hub recognises the importance of consistent communication and will continue to hold regular meetings with partner organisations. These meetings serve as platforms for ongoing dialogue, progress updates, and collaborative decision-making. Whether conducted virtually or in person, the format and frequency will be determined based on all involved parties' preferences and logistical considerations.
- **Regular Communications:** The Hub will explore options for maintaining regular and informative communication channels within its network. This may include the creation of network-specific newsletters and other communication tools. These platforms will serve as avenues for disseminating updates, sharing knowledge, and promoting ongoing engagement among partners and collaborators. The specific format and content of these communications will be designed to align with the preferences and needs of the network members.
- **Partner and Collaborator Forums:** The Hub will continue the regular partner and collaborator forums and establish specialised working/advisory groups. These forums will provide a dedicated space for representatives from partner organisations to convene, discuss common objectives, share insights, and coordinate collaborative activities. The forums could be structured to focus on specific themes or projects, allowing for targeted collaboration.
- **Collaboration Workshops:** The Hub will explore the possibility of hosting workshops and brainstorming sessions. These sessions will encourage innovation, foster creative problem-solving, and facilitate joint project planning. The goal is to engage partner organisations actively and promote ideation and participation.

The development of the Partner and Collaborator Engagement Strategy will be a collaborative effort involving active participation from the Hub's partners and collaborators. This process will take place following finalisation of the Hub's 2024-28 strategy, ensuring that the engagement strategy aligns seamlessly with the organisation's overarching goals and objectives.



Collaborative Learning Program

The Hub recognises the rich diversity of skills, practices, and tools within its network of partner and collaborator organisations. Acknowledging the immense potential for collective learning and skill development, the Hub is eager to foster an environment where partners and collaborators can share their knowledge and expertise, helping each other develop their skills and capabilities. This collaborative approach aims to harness the network's collective wisdom and expertise, capitalising on its members' unique strengths. The Hub will utilise its engagement strategy to encourage partners and collaborators to work together in identifying opportunities for collective learning and skill enhancement. Some potential collaborative initiatives may involve:

- **Communities of Practice and Learning (CoPs):** CoPs are groups where partners and collaborators, driven by shared interests or challenges, convene to engage in in-depth discussions, exchange insights, and collaboratively nurture their expertise. These groups provide a dedicated space for focused knowledge-sharing and problem-solving.
- **Skill Exchange Programs:** Skill exchange programs pair partner organisations based on complementary skills or areas of expertise. This initiative offers organisations an invaluable opportunity to glean knowledge, exchange best practices, and draw from real-world experiences shared by their peers.
- **Peer Mentorship Circles:** Peer mentorship circles are formed by partners with diverse skill sets, enabling them to mentor and coach each other within their respective areas of expertise. This approach underscores a peer-to-peer model for continuous learning and skill enhancement.
- **Co-Developed Training Modules:** Partner organisations work together to design and deliver training programs. This encourages active participation in the training process, with organisations crafting curricula jointly facilitating collective training sessions.
- **Cross-Sector Workshops:** Cross-sector workshops serve as forums that unite partners and collaborators from disparate fields and disciplines. These workshops foster the exchange of ideas and practices, offering organisations opportunities to explore innovative approaches emerging from other sectors.
- **Skill Mapping and Needs Assessment:** Skill mapping and needs assessment involve partners and collaborators autonomously evaluating their skillsets and pinpointing areas where skill refinement is desired. This data-driven method informs precisely targeted upskilling initiatives.
- **Resource and Tool Sharing:** Resource and tool sharing encompasses sharing resources, tools, templates, and knowledge among partners and collaborators. This initiative serves as a conduit for the widespread dissemination of best practice guides, toolkits, and training materials within the network.

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Evolution of the Knowledge Broker Network

The Hub will work with partners, collaborators and stakeholders to undertake a comprehensive review of the structure and function of the Knowledge Broker Network (KBN) to ensure its alignment with the 2024-28 Strategy. This will leverage insights gained over the past two years months and incorporate valuable input from stakeholders and staff, ensuring the KBN is well-positioned to support the Hub's increased focus on climate resilience and FDF programs and grants. The review will investigate several proposed changes to the KBN, including:

- **Drawing on insights from the past 18 months** and incorporating valuable input from stakeholders and staff, this review aims to position the KBN effectively to support the Hub's increased emphasis on climate resilience and FDF programs and grants. Several proposed improvements to the KBN will be explored, including:
- **Transitioning Knowledge Brokers from part-time to full-time positions:** This change will significantly strengthen the human resources of the KBN, allowing Knowledge Brokers to allocate more time to establishing networks and engaging with community members. This adjustment aligns seamlessly with the Hub's heightened focus in this critical area.
- **Revising the locations and operating areas of Knowledge Brokers and First Nations Engagement Officers:** The objective is to expand the reach of the KBN and enhance the Hub's representation and engagement capabilities across the region. The locations and operating areas will be determined through extensive consultation with partners, collaborators, and stakeholders.
- **Investing in the capabilities, knowledge, and skills of KBN members:** This effort aims to empower KBN members to serve local communities, First Nations stakeholders, and farmers more effectively. Strategies may include organisational capability assessments, tailored capability development programs, and role descriptions closely aligned with the capabilities needed to execute the 2024-28 Strategy effectively.
- **Enhancing end-user support through further development and integration of the Hub's Concierge Model:** The Hub will continue refining the Concierge Model to assist stakeholders in identifying and addressing issues and opportunities related to drought and climate resilience.
- **Supporting on-farm adoption and impact:** The Hub has recruited three Adoption Officers to facilitate the adoption of Future Drought Fund tools and resilience innovations at the on-farm and community levels. Strategically positioned across the region, these officers will act as concierges for priorities identified through the people-centred design process, leveraging various tools such as DRSAT, My Climate View, GrowAg, and AgTechfinder as appropriate.

Under the Hub's Concierge Model Knowledge Brokers will actively engage with local stakeholders to provide guidance on individually identified issues. They will also direct stakeholders to pertinent information and services offered by partners and collaborators across the Region.

The review of the KBN will take place in parallel with the development of the Hub's 2024-28 strategy and will contribute to and benefit from its development.



Continuation & Expansion of People-Centred Design

People-Centred Design will remain central to the Hub's philosophy and further embedded across all its operations. As it extends its operations and develops its strategy, the Hub anticipates expanding the people-centred design process and related activities. Recognising that this expansion may require additional elements, such as establishing a project prioritisation process, the Hub will thoroughly assess its approach. This will be undertaken in several steps:

- **Comprehensive Process Review:** The Hub will conduct a comprehensive review of its existing people-centred design process, examining its strengths, weaknesses, and areas for enhancement.
- **Process Improvement:** Based on the outcomes of the review, the Hub will identify process improvements necessary to support the delivery of the 2024-28 strategy. These improvements will be aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of the people-centred design process.
- **Tactics and Tools Assessment:** The Hub will systematically review the tactics and tools used in the people-centred design process, with the intent to evolve and refresh existing tools or identify opportunities for the creation of new ones.
- **Training and Support Opportunities:** Recognising the significance of capacity development, the Hub will identify opportunities for training and support. This encompasses providing requisite resources and guidance to the people-centred design team and stakeholders, ensuring they possess the skills and knowledge necessary for effective participation.

Recognising the potential benefits of extending its people-centred design philosophy to the industries and communities it serves, the Hub will actively contribute its expertise in this area to the collaborative learning process outlined earlier.



Applied Research, Development & Extension

Effective communication and collaboration between the Hub and regional research institutions are critical in addressing Southern NSW's challenges.

These relationships offer a rich source of knowledge, expertise, and resources that can significantly benefit the region when leveraged for common objectives. These proposed mechanisms could enhance collaboration and enable universities and the Hub to work together more cohesively.

This collaboration would leverage their collective knowledge and resources to drive positive change and innovation in Southern NSW, reflecting the Hub's commitment to achieving its mission and delivering tangible benefits to the region through robust partnerships and collaborations.

However, due to the region's unique context and specific requirements, a collaborative development process will be necessary to determine the most appropriate approach. This process will involve active engagement with all stakeholders, including research institutions, to collectively shape strategies to foster innovation, sustainability, and resilience throughout Southern NSW.

Hub staff, partners and stakeholders have made several suggestions to strengthen these connections and promote knowledge sharing:

- **University Liaison:** Establishing a University Liaison function could enhance collaboration between the Hub and its university partners. This function, which could either be recruited or incorporated into other roles, would act as an essential conduit for effective communication and alignment of objectives between both entities. Key activities would include facilitating regular meetings to promote mutual understanding and shared goals. The function would also identify common research interests and collaborative opportunities, organising joint planning sessions to boost interdisciplinary research efforts. Furthermore, this function would oversee a comprehensive database of ongoing research activities, aiding in knowledge exchange and resource sharing.
- **Hub Research Committee:** Introducing a Research Committee comprising representatives from both the Hub and university partners could enhance research coordination and collaboration. Rather than primarily overseeing project progress, this committee would focus on identifying opportunities to apply existing research or to conduct new research in line with shared priorities and objectives. The committee would facilitate discussions on research goals and ethical considerations, ensuring a cohesive and well-aligned research strategy. It would also offer valuable insights into the strategic direction of research, aligning efforts with regional needs.

SOUTHERN
INNOVATION
HUB
KEY
STRATEGIES



Applied Research, Development & Extension CONT.

- **Partner and Collaborator Engagement:** A shared Partner and Collaborator Engagement function could streamline partner and collaborator relationships. This function, which could either be recruited or incorporated into other roles, would be central in managing relationships between the Hub and its partners, stakeholders, and collaborators. The officer would actively coordinate joint engagement activities and initiatives, including partner and collaborator meetings, workshops, and events. By facilitating these interactions, the officer would promote collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders. Effective and consistent communication would be a top priority for the officer, promoting transparency and mutual understanding among all parties involved. Additionally, opportunities for resource sharing and collaboration would be actively identified and pursued to maximise the impact of joint efforts. The officer would actively support the development of joint funding proposals and closely monitor the progress of collaborative projects.

Investment Development

Over the past 18 months of operation, the Hub has identified a significant unmet demand for a coordinator like itself in the Southern NSW Region. During this period, the level of investment and co-investment attracted by the Hub has exceeded initial expectations, underscoring the value of its work. As the Hub's operations expand and the role of the Knowledge Broker Network evolves, increased demand for the Hub's services is anticipated. Given these developments, the Hub recognises the need to enhance its capability and capacity in investment management to handle the potential influx of co-investment into the region effectively. The Hub will review its investment management processes and functions to address this. This review aims to ensure that the Hub's resources are efficiently allocated to meet the evolving needs of its partners, stakeholders, and the communities it serves.

Communication & Engagement

The Hub recognises the importance of aligning its existing Communication and Engagement Plan with the changes outlined in the Hub's 2024-28 Strategy. This alignment will be essential to communicate the evolving goals and objectives of the Hub effectively. With the implementation of more projects, the Hub anticipates a growing pipeline of communication and engagement opportunities. These opportunities encompass conducting workshops, sharing informative case studies, and creating legacy training and extension tools. These materials support practice change and serve as valuable resources to bolster communication and raise awareness.

The update of the Hub's Communication Strategy will run concurrently with the development of the Hub Strategy 2024-28. This synchronised approach leverages similar consultative mechanisms, such as surveys and workshops, to ensure the Communication Strategy aligns seamlessly with the Hub's overarching goals and objectives.





Risk Management

A comprehensive Risk Management Plan was developed for the Hub. This plan identifies the key risks that could impact the Hub's operations and reputation and outlines a series of proactive measures to assess, mitigate or manage these risks (Appendix 3). The Hub will undertake a detailed review of the Risk Management Plan to ensure it aligns with the 2024-2028 Strategy:

- **Initial Assessment:** The first step involves a complete review of the existing Risk Management Plan in the context of the 2024-2028 Strategy, to identify any gaps or areas requiring updates.
- **Stakeholder Consultation:** Stakeholder input and insights will be sought, encompassing departments within the Hub, partner organisations, and subject-matter experts in risk management.
- **Risk Re-evaluation:** Based on the feedback received and the goals outlined in the 2024-2028 Strategy, existing risks will be re-evaluated, and new ones may be identified.
- **Strategy Alignment:** Subsequently, the Risk Management Plan will be revised to include updated risk assessments, mitigation strategies, and procedures.
- **Approval and Implementation:** The updated Risk Management Plan will go through a rigorous approval process, involving both internal governance bodies and, where applicable, external authorities. Once approved, the plan will be implemented across the organisation.
- **Periodic Review:** Lastly, the Risk Management Plan will undergo periodic reviews to ensure its ongoing relevance and effectiveness, with adjustments made as necessary.



Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) is critical to ensuring the effectiveness of Hub programs and activities and generating essential outputs and outcomes data for FDF Annual MEL Reporting. The current MEL plan employed by the Hub combines elements from the FDF MEL Framework with the Hub's unique, stakeholder-informed methods. It places a strong emphasis on people-centred design, ensuring that data collection is both practical and culturally appropriate. This approach maximises learning for stakeholders and participants and provides valuable information for continuous improvement and adaptive management.

Given the potential changes in the FDF and Hub's operations, outputs, and outcomes, as indicated in the Productivity Commission's Interim Report, it may be necessary to update the existing MEL Framework and Plan to align with new directives and objectives. These updates could encompass new metrics for efficiency and effectiveness, revised evaluation methodologies, or additional stakeholder input requirements. In anticipation of these changes, the Hub has outlined a process for updating its current MEL Plan to ensure it meets its goals and remains responsive to evolving needs and circumstances.

The Hub will employ a process that combines the MEL Plan/reporting framework provided by the FDF with Hub-specific and unique approaches. This process will incorporate input from Hub stakeholders. The MEL Plan will expand the program logic to illustrate how the Hub engages with partners and regional organisations, ultimately leading to outcomes for individuals, enterprises, and the broader region. This 'logical framework/impact pathway' will also serve as a guide for monitoring and evaluation approaches, assessing the effectiveness of these expected pathways in practice.

Establishing a clear connection between Hub funding, support, activities, those conducted by partners and deliverers, and the on-ground impacts of these efforts will be a crucial aspect of this process. Reporting guides will be implemented to ensure the Hub's influence or enabling process is reported alongside partner activities and impacts. Narratives and case studies will be utilised to depict the 'program logic' in action, providing insights into what is effective and what changes may be necessary.

In addition to capturing gains in understanding, skills, and motivation from activities, a structured process will be in place to support partners and deliverers in following up with activity participants several months after their engagement. This follow-up aims to understand the actions taken, changes implemented, and any barriers encountered. The Hub's online monitoring and evaluation data management system will be adjusted to facilitate partners in capturing and reporting data across all Hub projects and programs.

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Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning CONT.

ACTIVITY	CONSIDERATIONS
Review Existing MEL Plan	Assess the current plan's efficacy in capturing data, people-centred design elements, and alignment with Hub-specific goals.
Engage with DAFF	Confirm scope and metrics for MEL according to updated DAFF guidelines to account for changes in the Hub's operations.
Stakeholder Input & People-Centred Design	Consult partners and stakeholders to update the MEL Plan and to ensure data collection is practical, effective, and culturally appropriate.
Update Program Logic & Impact Pathway	Define how Hub will interact with regional organisations and partners to achieve outcomes. Incorporate this into MEL metrics and methodologies.
Identify and Link Metrics/KPIs	Establish a clear linkage between Hub's support and the on-ground impacts. Determine KPIs that align with this focus.
Develop Reporting Guides	Prepare guidelines to capture both Hub's enabling role and the direct activities and impacts carried out by partners.
Incorporate Narratives & Case Studies	Use these to explain the 'program logic' in action and to learn more about what is working and what changes may be necessary.
Implement Follow-up Processes	Put mechanisms in place for following up with participants to assess the long-term impact and barriers encountered.
Modify Online Data Management System	Update the system to align with new metrics/KPIs and make it easier for partners to submit data.
Pilot Test	Test the updated MEL plan on a small scale to validate its efficacy before full-scale implementation.
Stakeholder Input & people-centred design	Liaise with partners and stakeholders to determine the updated MEL Plan's effectiveness and practicality and confirm data collection is practical, effective, and culturally appropriate.
Review & Finalise	Assess the test results, make necessary adjustments, and finalise the updated MEL Plan.



Budget

Journey of SNSW Hub Funding

The Southern New South Wales Drought Resilience Adoption & Innovation Hub commenced in June of 2021. The Hubs were allocated \$8m each to execute on the agreed Activity Work Plan.

Future Drought Fund rolls out first Hub program covering eight (8) Regions across Australia. SNSW Hub is established.

Future Drought Fund contract variation to include adoption officers.

Hub collaborated throughout Round One to attract a further **\$15.2M** in cash investment. Total Hub pipeline of cash **\$28.27M**.

ROUND ONE CONTRACT | \$8M
16 JUNE 2021

ADOPTION OFFICERS | \$125M
6 APRIL 2022

HUB ATTRACTS INVESTMENT | \$15.2M
31 AUGUST 2023

2021

2023

4 APRIL 2022
AG INNOVATION HUB | \$2.5M

Ag Innovation Hub Funding released and integrated into SNSW Hub.

5 JUNE 2022
HUB COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS | \$433K

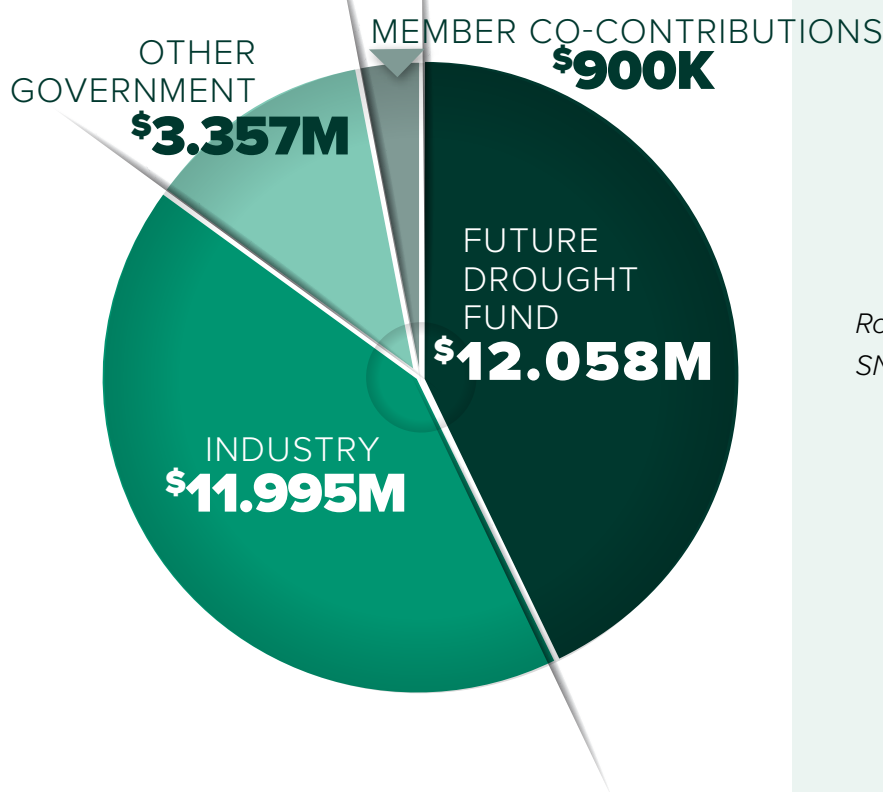
Managing Rangelands for Drought Resilience + Drought management for health & longevity of perennial horticulture plants.

Since inception the Hub has progressed through the start-up phase and gained significant momentum in the latter stages of the funding period. Through collaboration and people centre design the Hub has attracted an additional \$19.4m in funding in excess of the original allocations. This brings the Hub's total cash invested to \$28.27m. Building on the initial FDF Hub investment by 310%.



Budget CONT.

Cash invested with the Hub has been sourced from the FDF, Industry, Other government programs and partner co-contributions.



Round One
SNSW Hub Funding

Request for Round 2 Funding

The SNSW Hub 2024/25-2028/29, as envisaged by stakeholders, requires a total cash investment of \$25m over 4 years, in order to continue to leverage off the momentum gained in drought resilience and to expand further into the area of climate resilience. The Hub intends to deliver on requests to increase visibility & engagement, and to hone focus in on 5 key identified areas of impact. The cash investment will be derived from the FDF as well as industry and partners and there will be up to \$25m in co-contributions of either cash or in-kind.

The funding model for 2024/25-2028/29 developed to support this prospectus sits at around \$25mil. The proposed breakdown of minimum investment is as follows:

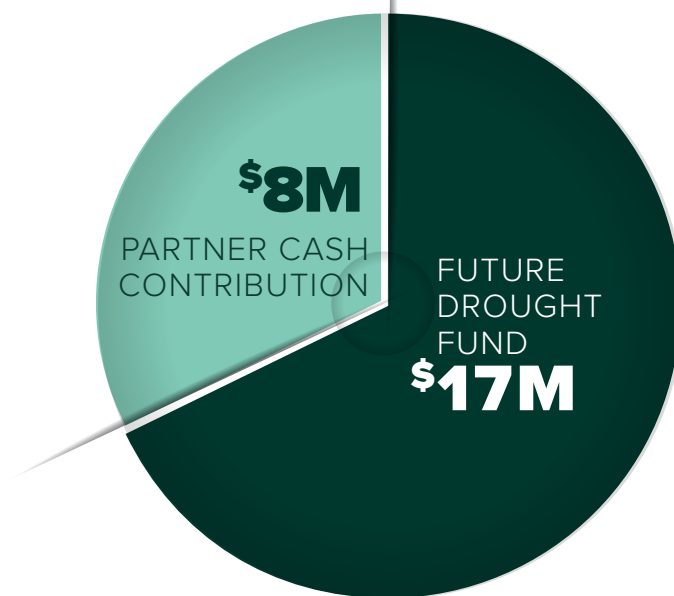
- A minimum of \$17m Future Drought Fund allocation at \$4.25m p.a.
- Up to \$8m in cash co-contributions from hub collaboration partners.

It is noted that the initial investment concluding June 2024 was \$9.125m FDF investment (\$8m + \$1.125m in additional services contracted) covered a contracted period of 3.04 Years. Annualised, this represents \$3.001m FDF funding p.a. The Hub is seeking a 42% increase in funds from \$3m p.a to \$4.25m p.a.



Budget CONT.

The SNSW Hub anticipates, based on its track record for collaboration and attracting investment, that it will continue to attract industry investment, in excess of the \$8m anticipated. This is simply a starting point for the Round 2 Model to support the current level of activity along side the additional expectations of government and industry.



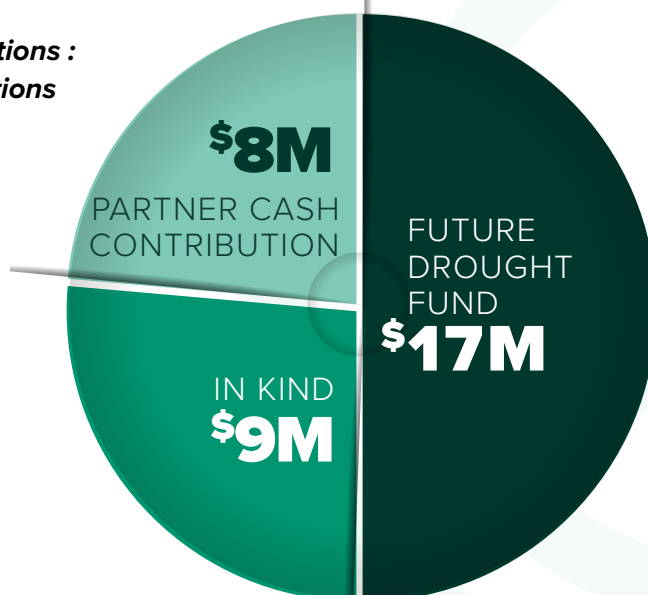
Round Two
SNSW Hub Funding

In-Kind

SNSW Hub will be seeking in-kind contributions in proportion to Round 1. This is dependent on who the key members are within the collaboration agreement and what each member can 'bring to the table' by way of hard/soft infrastructure, time commitments, network, and expertise. An estimate of the anticipated minimum in-kind breakdown is as follows:

- \$9m partner in-kind contributions + \$8m partner cash contributions = \$17 million FDF request

**Resulting in
a 1:1 ratio between
PARTNER contributions :
FDF cash contributions**

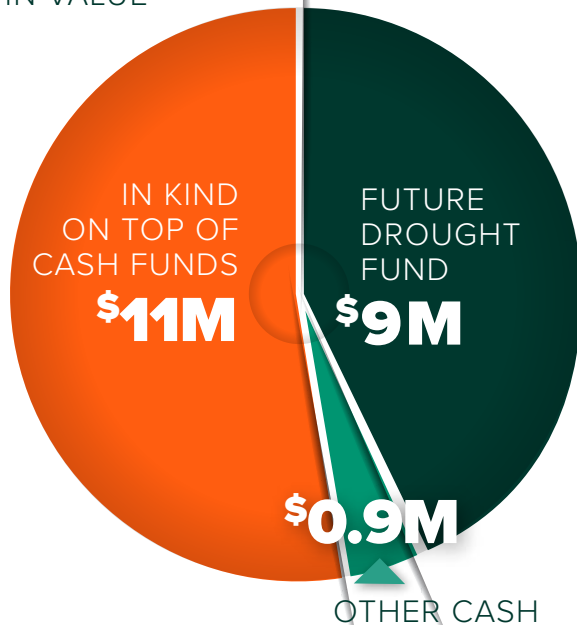


Round Two
SNSW Hub Funding

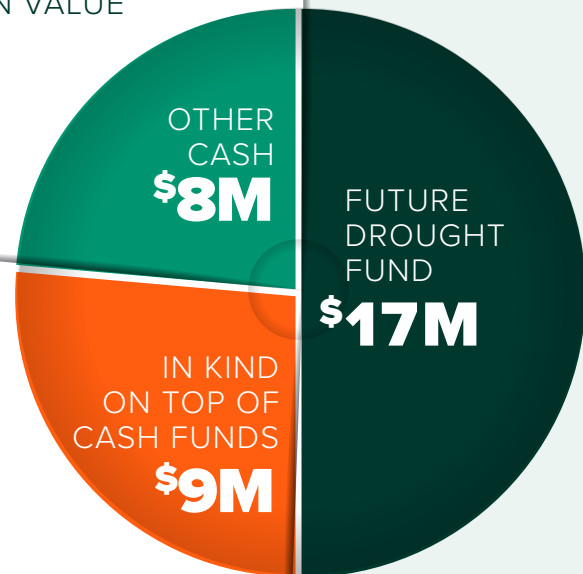


Budget CONT.

ROUND ONE
\$21.02M
IN VALUE



ROUND TWO
MINIMUM
\$34.0M
IN VALUE



Increments to Funding

The core reasons for seeking an increment in funding for Round 2 are as follows:

- A **more targeted and focused** approach, honing in on identified **Areas of Impact** where the greatest impact can be made across the SNSW region.
- Expanded remit into **climate resilience**.
- **Response to Productivity Commission** findings to perform at a higher level in some activities including: an increased focus on **enhancing communication**, increasing stakeholder/farmer/primary **producer engagement**, increasing **hub visibility**.
- Hubs took some time to shift from a **start-up phase** into a **more mature operation**, spending is reflective of these phases. The costs to **continue to perform and deliver** with the **momentum** the Hub now has, is reflected in the requested funds.
- The initial investment of \$8m was an estimate of the costs to deliver. **A truer reflection of the cost** to deliver Hub activities is **now known** through **practical experience**.
- Other practical matters in the nature of operating an organisation include; rising **inflation, competition for recruitment** in an under-resourced labour market; operating across a **broad geographic footprint** generating travel costs and consuming labour time in travel etc. Attracting quality personnel to enhance our reach and engagement, means offering **competitive salaries** and having our people out on the road meeting 'face to face' more often.

*SNSW Hub
FDF Cash Investments
& Accompanying In-Kind
Contributions*



Budget CONT.

A Start-up that now has Momentum

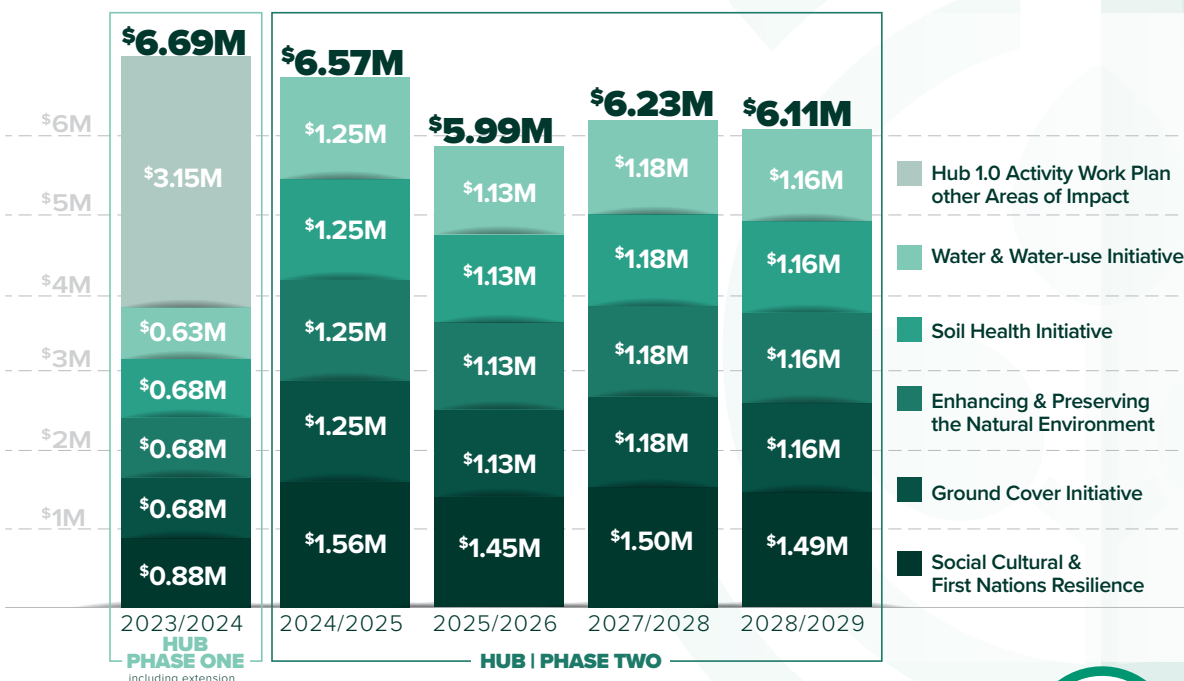
In its initial phase the Hub sought to deliver the most impactful program possible within the bounds of the Funds allocated. Activity Work Plans were developed on this basis and funding was allocated with the best knowledge of how Hubs would operate and deliver. Now having put these activity plans into practice, we have the working knowledge on how to best perform and how best to have an impact. Per the proposed model, some functions will remain, some activities are no longer required, additional impact areas have been refined and other activities will require further enhancement per the productivity commission findings.

Given that the Hubs are a new concept; designed to foster increased and enhanced collaboration, research, extension and adoption; practical experience has now been gained in generating these outcomes. A truer reflection of the cost to deliver is now known. The revised investment reflects the true cost of the Hub being able to effect the intended outcomes. The Hub has since gained understanding and momentum and presents this prospectus as a way to fully deliver and enhance the Hubs purpose and impact.

Key Areas of Impact

With the experience now gained in delivering objectives, the key areas where the Hub is able to make the most impact have been identified for the Southern NSW Hub precinct.

The areas in which the Hub can have the greatest impact have been defined. The spread of investment across these areas for the following 4 years is provided below. The final year of Round 1 is also provided as a contrast against the Round 2 revised Model.





Budget CONT.

Other Practical Factors Impacting Funding Needs

Regional Footprint

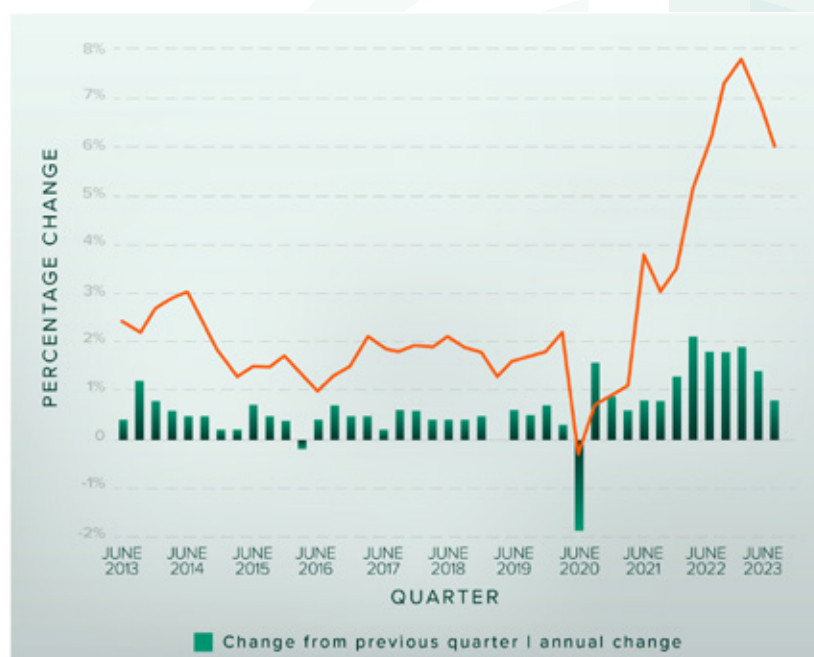
To **increase and enhance our reach** and have more **'boots on the ground'**, especially in **outlying areas of NSW**, requires additional time allocation for key staff members and knowledge brokers. In order to respond adequately to the productivity commission findings and enhance; engagement, Hub visibility and producer collaboration; increases to Full Time Equivalent staff members have been allowed for.

Workforce recruitment and competition

In general, the current **labour force in Australia is under resourced**. Attracting talent capable of delivering to the high standards expected of the Hub requires **more attractive salaries** to be offered. It is challenging to **compete** against other organisations that offer permanent long-term roles contrasted against the Hub with its **finite time frame**. In order for candidates **to release the security** of their current roles and attract them to the Hub, this requires the promise of increases to their current remuneration, to compensate for accepting an employment contract with a specific end date. For some **candidates**, they will also be **stretched to adjust** from the traditional method of operation within the Agriculture Industry to that of the Hubs new model of increased collaboration and increased producer engagement. This requires **incentive to enact change**.

Inflation

The cost of living has risen considerably in recent years and remuneration is yet to follow. Base-line wages have increased in general in recent years and are expected to continue to rise annually in the coming years. The impact of major increases in inflation in conjunction with a continuation of high interest rates, contrasted against minor increments to salaries has meant that citizens quality of life has effectively diminished. In order to enhance and sustain a desired quality of life, employees are shifting roles more frequently into roles that attract higher salaries. (Less loyalty being experienced in the labour market due to a desired quality of life in these times of soaring inflation.) On **inception** of the Hub in **June of 2021, annual inflation sat close to 1%**, recent reflections in **June 2023** sight inflation at **6% per annum**, having almost reached the height of 8% during the Funding period.



All groups CPI,
Australia,
quarterly & annual
movement (%)



Budget CONT.

Enterprise Bargaining Agreement

Base level salaries and wages will receive guaranteed annual increments on completion of the current negotiations between, Charles Sturt University, its employees and Employee Unions. The SNSW Hub resides within Charles Sturt University and its remuneration policies therefore apply to the SNSW Hub.

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APPENDIX 1: CURRENT HUB COLLABORATIONS

The Hub has developed an extensive regional network of more than 40 collaborating organisations, including Research and Development Corporations, Cooperative Research Centres, Local Government Organisations, and Landcare and Natural Resource Management groups.

AgriFutures Australian Eggs
Australian Holistic Management Cooperative
Australian Meat Processor Corporation
Australian Pork
Australian Wool Innovation Limited
Bureau of Meteorology Cotton RDC
CSIRO
Country Women's Association of NSW
Dairy Australia
Department of Regional NSW
Duxton Capital
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
Forest & Wood
Grain Orana Alliance
Grains Research & Development Corporation
Growing at Goulburn
Hort Innovation Australia
Landcare Australia
Mallee Sustainable Farming
Meat & Livestock Australia
National Farmers Federation
NSW Farmers
NSW Wine Industry Association
One Basin CRC
Orange City Council
Pork Australia
Regional Development Australia Riverina
Rural Financial Counselling Service – NSW Southern Region
Southern Australia Livestock Research Council
Sunrice/Ricegrowers
The Mulloon Institute for Environment, Farming and Society
University of Wollongong
Western Murray Land Improvement Group
Wine Australia

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APPENDIX 2: CURRENT LOCATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE BROKERS

The Knowledge Broker Network (KBN) is a distinctive feature of the Southern NSW Hub, consisting of a Chief Knowledge Broker, a First Nations Engagement Officer and 20 part-time Knowledge Brokers strategically positioned within partner organisations across the region.

ROLE	HOST ORGANISATION	LOCATION
Chief Knowledge Broker	SNSW Hub	Albury
First Nations Engagement Officer	SNSW Hub	Wagga Wagga
Knowledge Broker	FarmLink	Wagga Wagga
Knowledge Broker	Australian National University	Canberra
Knowledge Broker	Central West Farming Systems (CWFS)	Condobolin
Knowledge Broker	Holbrook Landcare (HLN)	Holbrook
Knowledge Broker	Irrigation Farmers Network (IFN)	Kerang
Knowledge Broker	Irrigation, Research & Extension Committee (IREC)	Griffith
Knowledge Broker	Riverine Plains (RP)	Mulwala
Knowledge Broker	Southern Growers (SG)	Finley
Regional Extension Manager	Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA)	Wagga Wagga
Knowledge Broker	Local Landcare Services - South East	Goulburn
Knowledge Broker	Local Landcare Services - Riverina	Wagga Wagga
Knowledge Broker	Local Landcare Services - Central West	Dubbo
Knowledge Broker	Local Landcare Services - Central Tablelands	Mudgee
Knowledge Broker	Local Landcare Services - Western	Buronga
Knowledge Broker	Local Landcare Services - Murray	Deniliquin
Knowledge Broker	Monaro Farming Systems	Bombala
Knowledge Broker	Tablelands Farming Systems	Goulburn
Knowledge Broker	Charles Sturt University	Albury
Knowledge Broker	Western Murray Land Improvement Group	Barham
Knowledge Broker	NSW Wine Association	Mudgee

APPENDIX 3: RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

RISK	IMPACT	RISK TREATMENT STRATEGIES	CONSEQUENCE	LIKELIHOOD	RATING
Timeline and budgets are not achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDEA&C objectives not met Planned programs may not be delivered Reputational impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 monthly reporting Annual work plan Board of Governance oversight of key workplans Detailed project plans (including budget monitoring). Monitoring by Operations/Finance Staff. 	Moderate	Possible	Medium
Consortium partner(s) leave the Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reputational damage to Hub and partnerships. Reduce effectiveness of the program or program delivery (time and budget) Loss of financial and in-kind contribution and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal structure Collaborative approach and leadership Continual stakeholder / consortium engagement Internal / external communication strategy High number of partnerships to mitigate loss of one partner Director and Partnerships Manager work to understand needs of partners and regularly engage with partners 	High	Possible	Medium
Hub activities not aligned with community and industry expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative community, stakeholder sentiment Reputational impact Potential impact on government funding Impact on consortium partnerships Unrealistic expectations that Hub's will 'drought proof' region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing communication and stakeholder engagement plan Evaluation activities with stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - well planned, managed and communicated - potential realignment of priorities (to match with community sentiment) Embedding co-design principles in everything we do. 	Moderate	Unlikely	Low
Natural disasters (such as flooding/ bushfire), biosecurity incursion or pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on farmers and the broader community Inability to hold face to face events Uncertainty/risks about planning events when future is uncertain Flow on effect to ability to facilitate extension, adoption and co-design Delays in project delivery, Illness to workers and visitors, increased caring responsibilities Disruption to work activities, loss of productivity Underdelivery on in-kind commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covid-safe plan implemented, social distancing Follow health dept. instructions Use video conf where possible Implement approaches that deliver enhanced online engagement and service delivery. Postponement, rescheduling of events and activities Diversify the sources of farmer and community engagement 	High	Possible	Medium
Hub focus becomes disparate with expanded focus on climate resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of coherence in programs/piecemeal approach Reduced focus on drought Reputational impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on activities that build resilience to various climate risks Build on existing drought resilience projects in place Clearly identify producer and community priorities 	Moderate	Possible	Medium
Inability to engage with primary producers, communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDEA&C objectives not met. Engagement fatigue leads to lack of community, industry participation. Only able to engage those who are already active adopters of new practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of clear: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communications strategy - Extension, Adoption and Commercialisation strategy Leverage contact bases with partners with gras roots networks 	Moderate	Possible	Medium
Hub Director or Chief Knowledge Broker resign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of leadership, knowledge and capability Impact on timeline and reporting requirements Lack of continuity Reputational impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform DAFF immediately (open communication) Seek approval for recruitment and temporary appointment immediately Stakeholder (internal & external) communication strategy Up to date information management system Collaborative approach and leadership 	High	Possible	Medium

APPENDIX 3: RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Social and Psychological impacts on workers and visitors due to drought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons at risk of self-harm Lack of attendance at events Decision paralysis Aggressive/emotional/stressed persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness and Mental health first aid training provided Counselling services available Support programs offered Fostering of supportive, open culture within Hub, emphasising the importance of self care and seeking help. 	Major	Rare	Medium
Cultural risks to participants or researchers	A breach of cultural safety may affect future trust and relationships with outsiders of the community. A breach of cultural safety may lead to mistrust and negative relationships with outsiders of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in discussions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and knowledge brokers regarding cultural safety. Provide cultural awareness training to Hub staff and Knowledge Brokers 	Moderate	Unlikely	Low
Legislative workplace requirements - WHS, Human resources, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injury to workers Prosecution and fines Reputational damage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University Policies and procedures WHS management system Department of People and Culture advice and expertise from the University 	Moderate	Possible	Medium
Access to data / cyber security issues/Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> privacy Hub contact lists, Member data info etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reputational damage Breach of partnership agreements Disruption to program activities and delivery Lack of capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University policies, procedures, security measures Hub located on campus Training to increase capability and awareness 	Moderate	Possible	Medium
Fraud risk / misappropriation of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reputational damage Breach of partnership agreements Disruption to program activities and delivery Lack of capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial management system and policies Auditing requirements (external) Internal auditing and monitoring procedures Whistleblower policies Centralised management of funds 	Moderate	Unlikely	Low
Environmental issues (Flood/Storm/Drought/Extreme Heat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damage to property Evacuation of workers and visitors Health effects of workers and visitors Disruption to events and program delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency plans developed and activated Designated and trained personnel Emergency equipment provided, tested and serviced Worksite induction procedures 	Moderate	Unlikely	Low

	CONSEQUENCE				
	MINOR	MODERATE	HIGH	MAJOR	CRITICAL
HIGHLY LIKELY	Medium	High	High	Severe	Severe
LIKELY	Low	Medium	High	High	Severe
POSSIBLE	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Severe
UNLIKELY	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
RARE	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High