

Farm Water Management Project

ORID insights from Project steering committee

What did you see the project do?

- Challenged team capabilities: The project pushed team members to deepen their understanding of landholder needs, business acumen, and profitability discussions.
- Enhanced extension skills: Improved communication styles, messaging, and delivery methods, especially due to landholder engagement challenges.
- Revealed delivery limitations: Highlighted the need for flexible, two-way engagement rather than one-way workshops; teams adapted over time.
- Marketing impact: Centralized marketing efforts significantly boosted engagement and shifted dynamics positively.
- Regional differences: Some areas (e.g., West Hume) had smoother engagement due to alignment with local landholder needs, unlike others (e.g., Corowa).
- Knowledge exchange: Strong collaboration and learning between project officers and staff, including new partnerships with unfamiliar organizations.
- Professional growth: Staff, especially Rob, gained expertise in farm water management, with early signs of landholder implementation and proactive engagement.

How did delivering the project make you feel?

- Mixed emotions: Excitement about funding and purpose, but also anxiety and uncertainty about delivery methods.
- Support and growth: Strong support from leadership (e.g., Paul) helped build internal capacity and relationships.
- Frustration with constraints: Staff felt restricted by rigid formats (e.g., long workshops), which didn't align with landholder needs or time availability.
- Satisfaction and hope: Seeing knowledge applied was rewarding; optimism remains despite challenges like weather.
- Reflections on grant design: Recognition that overly specific grant criteria limited



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flexibility; future applications should allow broader, more adaptive approaches.

- Evolving understanding: Acknowledgement that delivery methods and understanding have matured significantly since the project's inception

What new insights do you have from the project?

- Need for adaptability: Working with landholders requires flexible, responsive approaches due to changing conditions and commitments.
- Audience understanding: Success depends on knowing the audience well; geographic and cultural differences affect how information is received.
- Early engagement: Involving stakeholders early in planning leads to better inclusion and relevance.
- Time and relevance: Effective engagement often means integrating topics of interest and delivering information in multiple formats and times.
- Legacy and accessibility: Ensuring information remains accessible and useful beyond the project's life is crucial.

What is the next steps from this project?

- Monitoring and evidence: Proposals include long-term monitoring of water quality and quantity to support future agricultural decisions and drought preparedness.
- Farm advisor role: Integrating project learnings into a dedicated, independent farm advisor role to support landholders.
- Sustained engagement: Emphasis on maintaining capacity for 1:1 support aligned with landholder timelines and needs.
- Supplier education: Developing advanced training for rural suppliers to ensure they provide accurate, helpful advice on infrastructure like pipes and fittings.

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