

OUR **IMPACT** 2026

A series of **case studies** that capture the unique impact of the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub



SOUTHERN NSW
Innovation Hub

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE,
LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES



From conversation to construction: Investment in drought resilience

For Jonathan (Jono) Schulz, drought preparedness has long been part of life at his family's mixed farming property, Huonlea, near Jindera. But like many producers, turning a good idea into a practical on-farm investment required the right advice at the right time.

BACKGROUND

Through ongoing conversations with Drought Adoption Officer Martin Preuss, Jono moved from considering a stock confinement feeding area to designing and building one. The result is infrastructure that changes how feed, water and livestock are managed while helping protect valuable groundcover during dry periods.

TURNING INFORMATION INTO ACTION

Jono Schulz is a fourth-generation farmer at Huonlea and Chair of West Hume Landcare. His family runs a sheep, cattle and cropping enterprise and has a long history of investing in natural resource management.

Jono first met Local Land Services' Drought Adoption Officer Martin Preuss at the Henty Field Days before reconnecting through a Hub workshop. Conversations about livestock nutrition, water supply and confinement feeding continued over several events, helping Jono explore how a confinement feeding area could work on his property.



GOOD ADVICE SUPPORTS CONFIDENT DECISIONS

After attending another event on managing sheep in variable seasons, Jono invited Martin to visit Huonlea and assess potential sites for a confinement feeding area.

"I'd been thinking about it for years and wasn't sure exactly where to put it," Jono said. "I got Martin to come out and do an inspection of the potential sites we'd been considering."

Drawing on his experience, Martin assessed several options and recommended a location that balanced existing infrastructure, access and water availability.

"He said this one is probably the best site because it's next to the wool shed, far enough off the road, but with some infrastructure already there."

While Martin's original design included 12 pens, Jono adapted the layout to better suit his operation, creating 20 smaller pens for managing stud sheep and smaller mobs. The process gave Jono confidence that the investment would deliver long-term value while meeting the needs of his business.

ENSURING ACCESS TO QUALITY WATER FOR LIVESTOCK

By February 2026 ongoing dry conditions meant many of Huonlea's dams were either dry or unsuitable for livestock. The confinement feeding area provided reliable access to quality water while making feeding and sheep management easier during stud ewe joining.

The benefits became apparent almost immediately.

"It worked pretty well having them [the stud ewes] in the pen for joining," he said. "You can feed them every day, and you notice what's going on."

During joining, one ram died unexpectedly. Because the sheep were being monitored closely in the confinement area, the issue was identified quickly and the affected ewes were allocated to another ram. *"If they'd been out in the paddock it might have taken a lot longer to realise."*

The facility has also streamlined feeding operations during dry periods. *"Before [in dry times] we'd be feeding sheep by trailing grain out in the sacrifice paddocks, which meant driving out all over the farm and that takes a lot of time, and wages that need to be paid."*

BUILDING FLEXIBILITY FOR FUTURE DRY SEASONS

Perhaps the greatest benefit has been the additional flexibility the infrastructure provides during challenging seasons. By moving livestock off pastures earlier, Jono can better protect groundcover, reduce grazing pressure and preserve pasture resources.

"The confinement feeding investment we've made is an evolution for us from small sacrifice paddocks into fully set up drought lots," he said.

INVESTING IN RESILIENCE

For Jono, the confinement feeding area represents much more than a new piece of infrastructure. It is a long-term investment in the farm's future.

I'm quite proud of having made the investment and gotten the stock confinement feeding area up and running. It's building some resilience for the farm.

JONO SCHULZ
FARMER | JINDERA

Even in a year when it has not been heavily relied upon, having the system available provides reassurance. *"Even though I didn't really need it much this year, it's nice knowing it's ready for summer and that we can turn it on and off as we need."*



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