

OUR IMPACT 2024

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

Putting drought resilience into practice on-farm

Embedded in NSW Local Land Services, Drought Adoption Officers work directly with farmers across NSW to help them build drought-resilient businesses and effectively use drought preparedness tools.

BACKGROUND

NSW Local Land Services (LLS) has eight local Drought Adoption Officers working across NSW to support landholders to uptake Future Drought Fund tools and drought resilience innovations at a localised, on-farm, community level.

The Drought Adoption Officer program is funded by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund through the Southern NSW Innovation Hub and Southern Queensland Northern NSW (SQNNSW) Hub.

The Drought Adoption Officers are on the ground, embedded in communities across regional NSW working to provide advice and guidance to farmers and landholders to boost their drought resilience and preparedness. They do this through demonstrating tools and strategies, and partnering with local organisations to respond to the unique needs of their region's landholders.

All the parts of the jigsaw fit together to deliver for farmers and landholders. By embedding the Adoption Officers directly into NSW LLS, we've been able to make sure we're leveraging existing networks to reach even more people.

GARY RODDA
DIRECTOR | STATEWIDE PROGRAMS | NSW LLS

STAY IN TOUCH



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OUR ROLE

The Future Drought Fund recognised that having people on-ground available to support adoption and extension was a critical part of building drought resilience across Australia. When the opportunity arose to establish the Drought Adoption Officer program, the Southern NSW Innovation Hub and the SQNNSW Hub worked together to create a consistent model for the whole of NSW that leveraged the unique skills and position of their joint partner organisation NSW LLS.

Underpinned by a partnership built on a strong governance model, the Drought Adoption Officer program in NSW was embedded within NSW LLS as a unique delivery model that works effectively for landholders and farmers. It also avoids overlap and duplication and has contributed to a multiplier effect in adoption and extension through the LLS' existing network.

In reflecting on the partnership with Southern NSW Innovation Hub Gary Rodda, Director, Statewide Programs, NSW LLS said, "We recognise that agencies and organisations need to come together to understand what problems are facing our communities, producers and landholders – then we can collectively put our resources together and find alignment between our strengths to deliver outcomes.

"Coming together under the Hub governance model allows us to focus on what it is we're trying to achieve. The Hub has brought us all into the same tent – NSW government departments, universities, farming systems groups and more – and that drives good outcomes for farmers, regions and communities, as well as for the funding provider."

Gary said, "This governance structure also means we have trust across organisations and once priorities have been agreed on and contracts are in place, the Hub steps back and lets us deliver.



Drought Adoption Officers March 2024

OUTCOMES

Nyssa Belton-Liddy, Project Manager, Drought Adoption Officer program, NSW LLS said, “Drought Adoption Officers provide farmers with advice about drought resilience and preparedness, as well as drought awareness at local events such as field days and workshops. They also deliver state-wide drought preparedness activities such as webinars and roadshow events.”

Gary Rodda added that what’s great about the program is that **“The Adoption Officers are there with the community the whole way through, not just in dry times, and they carry on relationships that build and grow. Being part of their communities across NSW also means they hear what is really going on and can respond to what they need.”**

Drought Adoption Officers achievements January to June 2024:

- 123 farmers engaged
- 35 farms visited
- 52 events attended
- > 1,300 attendees reached
- 18 partnerships and collaborations
- 14 tools and topics discussed
- 5 Future Drought Fund programs promoted

One of the Drought Adoption Officers is Bonnie Mitchell who works across the Central West region supporting landholders to adopt tools and drought resilience innovations – and she loves it.

“The best thing about my job is the variety of work I do. Every day I’m meeting people who are doing really interesting work in agriculture. They are impressive, progressive people who are setting up their farms to be more resilient.”

Bonnie said, “As a Drought Adoption Officer, I’m in a unique position in that I can leverage the extensive LLS internal and external network to help farmers with accessing agronomic services, financial counselling or even mental health support.”

ON-FARM CHANGE

One farmer based near Forbes was helped by Bonnie to use the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Drought and Supplementary Feed Calculator app for sheep and cattle to make better decisions about how to use his on-hand hay and silage to effectively feed his cows through calving and understand whether he had enough.

Another recent example of on-farm adoption is a landholder from a property near Belmore Creek who heard about stock confinement areas through a Holbrook Landcare ‘managing pastures against acidity’ workshop and got help from his local Adoption Officer to design a cattle confinement area on his property that’s now being built.

The positive impact of the NSW Drought Adoption Officer program has built up over time and reflects how well- engaged with communities, regions and organisations each of the eight Officers are. Since the program started, farmers and landholders have come to rely on and trust the Adoption Officers working through NSW LLS and the ongoing availability of the resource has been critical to the program’s success.



The NSW Drought Adoption Officer program is funded by the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund until December 2024 through the Southern NSW Innovation Hub and SQNNSW Hub

