



SOUTHERN NSW Innovation Hub

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE,
LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES

February 18, 2025

New report shows full impact of the Southern NSW Innovation Hub

Southern NSW Innovation Hub has released new data showcasing an impressive track record of supporting farmers and communities with world-class knowledge, tools and practices to enhance drought preparedness and resilience over the past three years.

The [Southern NSW Innovation Hub Impact Report](#) was launched today at premier agrifood innovation event evoke^{AG} being held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Speaking from the event, Hub Director Cindy Cassidy said the report outlines the organisation's key achievements over the past three years, including investment in 13 on-ground projects worth \$19.1 million in cash and \$12.8 million in in-kind contributions.

"Since our inception in 2021, investment growth by Southern NSW Innovation Hub has been phenomenal. We've grown the total investment in drought and climate resilience through the Hub from \$19.8 million to \$58.8 million in 2024 – that's nearly a three-fold increase," Ms Cassidy said.

"In 2023 we conducted REMPLAN analysis and found that the flow-on effect of these investments could lead to an additional \$127.5 million of economic output across the southern NSW region, triggering increases in employment including 103 jobs and \$24.1 million in wages and salaries, plus \$50.3 million in value-added economic activity."

Southern NSW Innovation Hub Chair and Executive Chairman of Bega Cheese Limited, Barry Irvin AM, said since day one the organisation has operated with a focus on collaboration and innovation, which he believes sets it apart.

"What will actually help Australia prepare for the inevitability of drought and climate variability is genuine collaboration and innovation. The Hub continues to leverage this to develop and drive the adoption of innovative initiatives and to improve support systems for its stakeholders," Mr Irvin said.

"Throughout the Impact Report it is clear to see that the Hub is committed to effective and structured collaboration with its partners that prioritises supporting the region while minimising overlap and maximising reach. Moving forward that will remain a priority."

The Hub's economic strength matches its impact at the grassroots level through a suite of programs and initiatives across its region which stretches from Broken Hill to Cobar in the west, joins the Macquarie catchment northern boundary near Quambone, and reaches south down to the Victorian border.



SOUTHERN NSW Innovation Hub

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE,
LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES

The Hub's Chief Knowledge Broker Dale Stringer said First Nations engagement, with a focus on networking and consultations, is a standout achievement and outlined in the Impact Report.

"In 2023 and 2024, our First Nations Engagement Officer led activities which involved at least 200 participants across 20 different First Nations organisations and groups," he said.

"The First Nations Engagement Officer also routinely provided comprehensive cultural competency training to the Hub team and its network, including to all the Knowledge Brokers, which has been outstanding and extremely important to us as an organisation."

In 2024, Southern NSW Innovation Hub launched the hugely successful Early Insights for More Resilient Communities Dashboard which allows regional NSW communities to visualise their social, environment and economic resilience.

"Our online dashboard has been so successful that there is appetite to expand it to a national footprint," Mr Stringer said.

Other transformative drought and climate resilience projects delivered to communities and farmers in the region by the Hub include:

- Making soil science accessible to land managers and farmers by hosting Regional Soils Coordinators as part of a \$6.26 million commitment from the Natural Heritage Trust's Climate-Smart Agriculture Program.
- Establishing the four-year \$6.2 million Drought Resilient Mixed Farming System Trials project at Charles Sturt University and seven sites across southern NSW.
- Delivering the \$3.8 million GRDC RiskWi\$e program over the whole of NSW, which includes 12 demonstration sites and 10 partner organisations.
- \$1.5 million to help farmers reduce the impact of drought by implementing farm water management plans.
- \$1 million for Drought Adoption Officers, in partnership with Southern Queensland Northern NSW (SQNNSW) Hub and NSW Local Land Services, to provide guidance to landholders to boost their drought resilience.
- The Managing Rangelands for Drought Resilience project uses satellite technology to trigger on-farm decisions in NSW Rangeland, which was the subject of recent [media coverage](#)

Cindy Cassidy said acknowledgement last year that the Hub is a national biosecurity leader was a testament to its ability to bring partners together to identify and develop truly impactful projects that enhance drought resilience and agricultural innovation.



SOUTHERN NSW Innovation Hub

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE,
LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES

“We were delighted that the Southern NSW Innovation Hub was named the winner of the community category at the 2024 Australian Biosecurity Awards for a unique project with the potential to enhance biosecurity management systems and strategies across the country,” she said.

“This new report captures the tangible outcomes and strategic progress of the Hub, demonstrating its effectiveness as a facilitator of change and its alignment with broader drought resilience planning efforts. We know we are making a difference to our communities, and we will keep working hard to keep delivering.”

You can read the Impact Report [here](#)

For more information on evoke^{AG} 2025, please visit evokeag.com/evokeag-2025/

- ENDS -

Media contact: For interviews with Southern NSW Hub Director, Cindy Cassidy, or Chief Knowledge Broker Dale Stringer, please contact Seftons Media Director, Shaun Devitt on 0400 906 451

About Southern NSW Innovation Hub

Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub connects farmers and rural communities with practical, modern solutions to adapt to a changing climate. As part of a national network, we collaborate with trusted organisations, experts, researchers, and community groups to drive sustainable change, with the long-term goal of improved drought resilience.

Southern NSW Innovation Hub is one of eight Hubs established nationally through funding from the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund. Southern NSW Innovation Hub works closely with its partners to create a skilled, flexible network that is able to identify and solve the challenges and harness opportunities posed by a changing climate. Southern NSW Innovation Hub partners include Charles Sturt University (Hub lead), Australian National University, NSW Local Land Services (LLS), NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Rural Aid, University of Canberra, and the Farming Systems Groups Alliance.

Visit <https://www.csu.edu.au/research/southern-nsw-drought-resilience-hub/home> for more information.