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



Trusted advice helping livestock producers build drought resilience

As climate variability increases across southern NSW, livestock producers are facing more complex decisions about drought preparedness, grazing management and business risk.

ADAPTING TO INCREASING CLIMATE VARIABILITY

After 31 years with the NSW Department of Primary Industries, Phil established Graham Advisory in 2017 and continues to work with livestock producers and industry professionals across southern Australia.

Over that time, he has seen a clear shift in seasonal conditions. *"The challenge isn't new, but the frequency and volatility of it has increased,"* Phil said.

Rainfall patterns are becoming more variable, even between neighbouring properties, making it more difficult for producers to rely on traditional seasonal expectations and increasing the need for flexible decision-making.

As conditions become less predictable, access to trusted information and support is becoming increasingly important.

BACKGROUND

For respected livestock advisor Phil Graham, one of the most valuable resources available to producers is access to trusted, experienced people who can help them navigate uncertainty. Through the Hub-supported Drought Adoption Officer program, producers can access practical support, local knowledge and evidence-based information when they need it most..

TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO PREPAREDNESS

A key outcome Phil has observed through drought-focused extension programs is the growing adoption of stock confinement feeding areas.

While confinement feeding has been available for many years, more producers now have the confidence to use it as part of their drought management toolkit.

"Stock confinement areas give producers a known back-up they can activate," Phil said. *"It gives them flexibility and time."*

Confinement areas help protect groundcover and pasture condition during dry periods while reducing pressure on the rest of the farm. They also give producers more time to assess their options and respond strategically as conditions change.

"It takes one issue off the table," Phil said. *"Once groundcover is protected, farmers have more time to think through their options."*

Through Hub-supported initiatives, producers have been able to access practical information, see local examples and receive ongoing support that builds confidence in these approaches.

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THE VALUE OF TRUSTED LOCAL EXPERTISE

Phil believes one of the strongest contributions of the Drought Adoption Officer program is providing producers with a trusted and independent sounding board during difficult periods.

"When things go pear-shaped, producers get under pressure," he said. *"That makes it really hard to make effective decisions."*

Having someone available to discuss options, challenge assumptions and provide practical advice can significantly improve decision-making during dry times.

Because Drought Adoption Officers work across large regions, they also bring insights from a wide range of farming systems and seasonal conditions.

"They're seeing what lots of people are doing across a big area," Phil said. *"They can bring ideas to the table that you might not have thought about."*

This role is becoming increasingly important as producers navigate a growing volume of information.

"There's more information available than ever before, but not all of it is useful," Phil said. *"What people actually need is a small amount of good-quality information they can trust."*

Having an experienced, knowledgeable person there is incredibly valuable. A person you trust who can act as a sounding board.

PHIL GRAHAM
LIVESTOCK ADVISOR | SOUTHERN NSW

When producers are under pressure, having someone you can talk things through with makes a real difference. That's when good decisions get made.

PHIL GRAHAM
LIVESTOCK ADVISOR
SOUTHERN NSW

BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH BETTER DECISIONS

For Phil, drought resilience is closely linked to the ability of farm businesses to make timely, informed decisions.

"The most resilient farm businesses are usually the most profitable ones," he said. *"They've got more buffer and more time on their side when they're making decisions."*

The Future Drought Fund's investment in Drought Adoption Officers, along with practical extension activities, is helping producers strengthen preparedness, improve decision-making and adopt proven management strategies.

The increasing confidence producers have in tools such as stock confinement feeding areas demonstrates growing adaptive capacity across the region. Equally important is the continuity of support provided by experienced local advisors who understand the people, landscapes and production systems they work with.

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Future Drought Fund

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