

November 17, 2021

Connected and Adaptable People and Places



In a major step forward the Southern NSW Drought Resilience and Innovation Hub Board met in early November to set strategy and approve the Hub's 3-year operational plan.

Meeting face to face for the first time, at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, the Southern NSW Innovation Hub's Board considered the Operational Plan that had been developed over the last four months in consultation with Hub Partners and stakeholders.

Barry Irvin AM (Executive Chairman of Bega Cheese) is the independent chair of the Hub Board and contributes not only extensive business and industry expertise, but also an ethos of bringing individuals and communities together to build a shared future.

"Our Operational Plan is designed to build capacity in adoption and commercialisation within SNSW so that our farmers and communities continue to have access to the skills and resources they need to adapt for the future," Mr Irvin said.

"The future technological, social and environmental opportunities for agriculture and agricultural focused communities in SNSW will be very different from today. We will be supporting our Partners and stakeholders as they bring these opportunities into reality."

The Board's vision for the Hub and SNSW - Connected and Adaptable People and Places, Prepared to Respond to Future Challenges and Capitalise on Opportunities – speaks to the Hub's people-focused, values-based approach to creating a vibrant future for regional and rural SNSW.

The Hub's Board enjoyed dinner with special guest, Member for Riverina, Michael McCormack, an informal opportunity to bring Mr McCormack up to speed with the Hub's formational activities.

As Chair of the Board, Mr Irvin is passionate about the potential impact the Southern NSW Innovation Hub can have right across the region and its communities.

"This board's vision for the future is multigenerational – we are working on something which is much bigger than ourselves and our immediate needs," Mr Irvin said.

“The Hub is in a position to deeply and positively impact agriculture and current and future generations.”

Hub Director Cindy Cassidy reflected on the leadership being shown in the Hub’s board and the milestone of developing and the Operations Plan and Strategic Direction.

“We have a breadth of experience and skill on the board and to be able to bring some great minds and really great thinking to the question of resilience and innovation for the region is tremendous,” Ms Cassidy said.

“We see ourselves as supercharging innovation in Southern NSW, attracting investment into the areas and activities that will help secure a prosperous future for the regions farmers and communities. We want to see RD&E investments being made where they are needed, when they are needed and how they are needed,” she concluded.

As outlined in the Operations Plan, the SNSW Innovation Hub aims to improve community, landscape and agricultural resilience by –

- Creating approaches to engagement, adoption and commercialisation that are modern, relevant and effective in enabling sustained change
- Connecting people and organisations across geography, cultures and farming enterprises to create a skilled, flexible network able to identify and solve the challenges and embrace opportunities facing agriculture and agricultural focused landscapes and communities now and in the future
- Building agricultural and community engagement, extension, adoption and commercialisation capacity in SNSW so that the knowledge and tools required to adapt to current and future conditions are available where and when required
- Supporting people and organisations to adopt appropriate new technologies, resources, ideas and systems in an efficient and sustained way
- Attracting investment into priority projects, activities and programs in SNSW so that adoption of existing knowledge occurs and the new knowledge that is needed is created and adopted

Working with industry and community is a key to the Hub’s direction, with plans for co-design activities including a Partner Forum, development of Advisory Councils and a widespread Knowledge Broker Network.

The Southern NSW Innovation Hub is one of eight nationwide, which received funding from the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund. If you want to stay updated on SNSW Innovation Hub news and activities, simply email southernnswhub@csu.edu.au

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Caption – Members of the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub Board pictured catching up with Member for Riverina Michael McCormack included (l-r) Pascal Perez (University of Wollongong), Barney Hyams (Local Land Services), Barry Irvin (Board Chair), Lorrae van Kerkhoff (Australian National University), Member for Riverina Michael McCormack, Niall Blair (Charles Sturt University), Cindy Cassidy (Hub Director) and Ron Heinrich (Farming Systems Group Alliance).