

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

Communities learning from the past to prepare for the future

Southern NSW Innovation Hub's Preparing with Hindsight Forums facilitated communities coming together to connect about their past experiences of drought and create future change.

BACKGROUND

Southern NSW Innovation Hub's Preparing with Hindsight Forums 2024 were a series of facilitated workshops held in Bega, Deniliquin and Condobolin gathering together community members, organisations and service providers for conversations about how to effectively prepare for and support people during times of drought.

By bringing together key stakeholders in each community, the Forums aimed to emphasise how previous droughts had impacted people and communities, understand what worked well in response and what didn't, and gather recommendations to boost future preparedness.

At the Preparing with Hindsight Forums, each community also had the opportunity to learn about its unique resilience resources and insights as part of the **Hub's Early Insights for More Resilient Communities** project. This collaborative research project is focused on developing tools that allow for the identification of changes in community resilience sooner so support services can tailor solutions where they are needed to assist individuals, groups and communities to work through change.

To be ready for the next drought we need to make sure we don't forget the lessons learned – the water efficiencies, preparedness, trigger points for drought management, and farm business plans.

PARTICIPANT
PREPARING WITH HINDSIGHT FORUM

OUR ROLE

Each Preparing with Hindsight Forum began with a tailored presentation from the University of Canberra that went through community resilience measures for the Local Government Area (LGA). This data is part of the collaborative research project **Early Insights for More Resilient Communities**.

Resilience indicators for each community include:

- **Financial resources**
- **Social resources**
- **Human resources**
- **Natural hazards resources**
- **Infrastructure and services**
- **Ecosystem services**
- **Institutional resources**
- **Exposure to natural hazards**

This then led to an open discussion, facilitated by Cindy Cassidy, Director of the Southern NSW Innovation Hub, which covered the following key questions:

1. *What was your experience in the last drought?*
2. *What happened in your community that worked?*
3. *What happened in your community that didn't work?*
4. *What needs to happen now to be ready for the next drought?*



OUTCOMES

Across each of the Forums common themes emerged when people were asked to reflect on what their experience of the last drought was like, what worked and what didn't in their communities, and what is required to get ready for the next drought. These key themes were:

1. *Impacts on the agriculture sector*
2. *Community & social impacts*
3. *Economic & financial impacts, including on employment & labour*
4. *The environment & sustainability*
5. *Focus on mental health & wellbeing*
6. *Government responsiveness, support & provision of services*
7. *Knowledge, learning & preparation for the future*

Some of the most valuable insights gathered at the Forums were the recommendations for what actions need to be taken now to prepare for future droughts and climate variability.

These ranged from targeted agricultural extension to better small business planning, speeding up government responsiveness to drought, increasing coordination between agencies and departments, and more investment in community development.

The Preparing with Hindsight Forums were a unique opportunity for communities to reflect on their experiences of drought - both bad and good - and simultaneously prepare for the future using the wisdom of the past.

By organising and facilitating the Forums, Southern NSW Innovation Hub brought communities together on the topic of drought resilience, instigating new ideas, actions and proactive preparedness for future climate variability. Plans are underway for further Preparing with Hindsight Forums to be held in Broken Hill and Mudgee in 2024.

*Preparing with Hindsight Forum
Denliquin, NSW*

STAY IN TOUCH



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