



May 10, 2024

Regional resilience planners seek industry and community input

The Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub is calling for input from industry and the community to develop its portfolio of project priorities for the next four years. We invite interested individuals and organisations to nominate to join with partners and design Hub activities for the 2024–2028 period.

Hub Director Cindy Cassidy says she is keen to attract a range of interests, expertise and experience.

“Ideally we would like to have representatives from across agriculture, community groups, environmental organisations and traditional owners participating in these teams, to really maximise the diversity of input,” she says.

“It’s about deciding together what we do for the southern NSW region and the more experience and skill we can bring along on this process, the better.”

With our partners and communities, the hub has identified six Impact Areas where it will seek to create programs that deliver new knowledge, tools and practices to enhance drought resilience for southern NSW farm businesses, communities and the environment.

These six key Impact Areas are:

1. Social and Cultural Resilience.
Fostering economic and social wellbeing in both rural communities.
2. First Nations Community Resilience
Fostering the cultural, economic and social resilience of Aboriginal people in the face of climate change.
3. Enhancing and Preserving the Natural Environment.
Advancing efforts to ensure sustainable, drought resilient ecosystems.
4. Ground and Canopy Cover.
Optimising land productivity and promoting effective ground and canopy cover management practices to prevent soil erosion, improve water retention, and enhance ecosystem health.
5. Soil Health.
Prioritising soil health and fertility to enhance agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability.
6. Water and Water Use.
Promoting responsible water resource management for a sustainable water supply and ecosystem health.

Any individual or organisation with an interest in these areas is welcome to participate in one or more of the Impact Areas. All of the Impact Area design teams will explicitly consider First Nations perspectives and impacts on First Nations communities.

The design teams for each Impact Area will receive practical facilitation through online workshops to identify needs, knowledge gaps and potential projects. Important to the Hub is to ensure the activities identified and designed for First Nations communities is done in way that is culturally appropriate. The process for this Impact Area will run



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slightly differently and will be designed together with the Hub's First Nations Engagement Officer through the Hub's interim Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

Each team will prioritise the most important activities expected to have an impact in the next four years and these will be developed into detailed project proposals.

"The Future Drought Fund (FDF) will announce its Investment Strategy for the next four years in mid-May and our funding will be aligned with those objectives," Ms Cassidy says.

"We are preparing the detail in readiness for this so that we can 'hit the ground running'. We have had extensive consultation with the FDF on our 2024-2028 Prospectus strategies and we are confident projects within our six key Impact Areas are aligned."

The Hub will seek to secure investment for the final portfolio of project proposals via competitive and other fundings sources, including Future Drought Fund programs. The Hub has a strong track record in this area, having secured an additional \$20.7 million in cash investment (along with \$12.3 million of in-kind contributions) since inception for a range of projects delivering on-the-ground impact for southern NSW.

To put up your hand to help design the activities for the 2024–2028 Hub Investment Plan, email your name, organisation (if applicable) and Impact Area/s to southernnswhub@csu.edu.au by Friday, 24th May 2024.

About the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub

Led by Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, the Southern NSW Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub was established in 2021 through the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) Future Drought Fund. The hub is a consortium of seven regional partners including primary producers, industry and community groups, researchers, entrepreneurs, education institutions, resource management practitioners and government agencies.

The hub has supported numerous projects to advance drought resilient farms, communities and landscapes across Southern NSW, helping to attract more than \$20 million in funding for the region.

On-ground activities have included research and education on the benefits of containment feeding to protect pasture coverage and soil health, to advice on more efficient irrigation practices for horticulturists, to the development of a First Nations yarning circle and community garden in Tumut.

More information on the hub's structure, objectives and past projects can be viewed online. (<https://research.csu.edu.au/engage-with-us/research-impact/southern-nsw-drought-resilience-hub>)

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