



## **National Grower Group Network - Workshop Discussions**

The workshop was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February at the Marion Hotel in Adelaide, SA, to conclude the National Landcare Program Smart Farms Capacity Building program project, “Enhance delivery of agricultural research and extension activities”.

Key components of the project were the development of an Extension Capacity Building Strategy and subsequent development and delivery of a pilot extension training program specifically targeting the needs of the grower group network across WA and south-eastern Australia (referred to as the National Grower Group Collaborative). The project concept was supported initially at the 2017 national grower group conference hosted by Grower Group Alliance in Perth.

Representatives of the six grower groups from across WA and south-eastern Australia who were originally engaged in the project attended the workshop, plus a representative from the Riverine Plains group, and representatives from Landcare Australia Limited and the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Diana Fear	EO	Central West Farming Systems
Jeanette Long	Facilitator	Ag Consulting Co
Ang Hammond	Landcare Farming	Landcare Australian Limited
Kelly Angel	EO	Birchip Cropping Group
Leighton Wilksch	Chair	Ag Excellence Alliance (SA)
Mark Stanley	EO	Ag Excellence Alliance (SA)
Kallista Bolton	Stakeholder & Comms	Grower Group Alliance (WA)
Rikki Foss	EO	Grower Group Alliance (WA)
Cam Nicholson	RD&E	Southern Farming Systems
Andrew Bulkeley	EO	FarmLink
Catherine Marriott	CEO	Riverine Plains
Bill Long	Chair	Ag Innovation & Research EP
Simon Goodhand		DAFF

The workshop focused on three discussion topics:

1. Review of the pilot extension capacity building program.
2. Review of the Extension Capacity Building Strategy.
3. The future of the National Grower Group Collective.

Discussions from the workshop are recorded below.

### **1. Review of the pilot extension capacity building program.**

Round 2 Extension training pilot overview (refer to PowerPoint presentation)

Focus on applying to a project:

- 30 participants from WA, SA, NSW
- Days one & two - Extension design and application
- Day 3 - Facilitating Learning

## **2. Review of the Extension Capacity Building Strategy**

### **Strategic Focus: Collaboration**

No silos

- Clear on outcomes
- Collective voice

Action

- Understanding project and direction
- Clear leadership
- Good Communication
- TOR vs MoU
- Yes- sharing
- Key needs and key learnings
- Strong, clear vision

Learn from experience.

Funders

- Identify key funders - be more accountable to grower groups, dialogue.
- Collectively approach and manage funders - communications.
- Raise the tide!
- Funding criteria is not matching practical ability to implement.
- Increase the standard of operations.

Action – Voluntary on-line forum to update

Sharing

- What's working and what's not at the national level?
- Demonstrate extension impact – success stories, programs.

Action – Executive level sharing – Grower Group collective

Collaboration

Strength if act in a consistent way, not get picked off by funders.

Action – Executive level sharing – Grower Group collective

Transactional partnerships

- In-kind calculations to be standardised and realistic.

Action - Cam's spreadsheet – share with all as a first step

National as regional objectives

- Value of Drought Hubs to develop national programs.

Action – engage effectively with regional Drought Hubs

Develop clear plans.

- Extension excellence plan
- GGA approach

Action - Role out nationally

### **Strategic Focus: Capacity Building**

- Develop a vision for the NGGC - goals and actions together – positioning statement, co-design
- Develop an understanding of what we would deliver how we would deliver plus human skills requirement – audit, self-assess, co-design
- Framework design (components) - discuss & author, co-design
  - Accreditation levels – do we want this?
  - Review page 5 to 7 in original concept - by all
  - Audit by each NGGC member of what could be delivered -
  - Co-design of training package options including – Jeanette’s design, GGA /mentoring Group (embedding in A&E in projects), EATS (Jeanette & Bill Long)
- NGGC leadership and succession plan
- Inclusion of additional grower groups?

### **Strategic Focus: Extension development and delivery**

Training program development:

1. Extension design
    - Webinar series – Denise B, NZ RMPP
  2. Facilitation – skills, learning
    - Webinar – Peter Newman, Ruth Nettle
  3. Evaluation – monitoring & evaluation, reporting back
  4. Mentoring
  5. Project application
- Project development
  - Look at WA model
  - Establish a process for developing projects
  - Planning:
    - insights, analysis
    - identify funding sources / opportunities.
    - Develop propositions.
    - Identify if local / regional / national
    - Identify best for partners.

Target audience

- Producers, community, advisors, farming systems groups, Landcare
- Funders?
- Collaborate with key local influencers.

Action - RD& E committees

Examine innovation in extension.

- Leverage broader base of resources & tools
- Integrate extension tools – podcasts, field walks, etc.

Action – Share what farming groups are doing and what’s working.

Develop on-line solutions.

- Develop podcasts that sit adjunct to main events.

## **1. The future of the National Grower Group Collective.**

## **National Body – National Grower Group Collective**

Define the value proposition.

### Scope

- Support to grower groups
- Outreach, extension and adoption excellence
- Influence / advocacy for agricultural RD&E priorities
- Contributing to existing systems, processes / RDC's.

### Model

- Farming systems groups contribute \$5,000 subs per annum
- State body or individual groups on committee - perhaps on a rotational basis?
- Recurring funding top up / where does government invest – gaps (DAFF, State governments)
- Annual budget of \$600K
- CEO / secretariate, support training, annual gathering – requires energy and passion
- Strategic committee made up of grower group representatives.
- Hold national event.
- Link to Drought Hubs

## **National Grower Group Collective (NGGC) - Purpose**

### Influence

- Business case to DAFF and involve state governments
- More links with R&D organisations to maximise E&A.
- Influence RDC's on effective E&A and grower groups are funded to provide this expertise.
- Input into national policy development
- Provide a national voice by farmers in the research cycle (currently too politically driven)
- Sort out 'in kind'
- Develop a transparent costing model for universities, State agencies and CSIRO - need to be accountable.
- Engage and educate our commodity and funding bodies.
- Drive E&A as an integral part of research projects where appropriate.
- Maximise extension investment.

### National Projects

- Collective approach to funding
- Value of a national collective – establish a 'warm' alliance that is positioned for future opportunities developing national projects that need a grass root network.
- Deliver national projects.
- Create more opportunities to do the 'fun stuff' – have professionals manage the higher-level project management.
- Develop better applications for national projects.

### Farmer Focus

- More voice from grower groups on farmer issues.
- To be more efficient to advance agriculture and maximise resource use.
- Champion farmers, demonstrations, opportunity cost for farmers.

### Extension Professional Development

- Be recognised for extension & adoption excellence.
- Develop extension program value proposition.

- Become known for one iconic, valued program.
- Extension excellence program focus on extension & adoption skills / gaps.
- Target scientists - need for extension & facilitation skills to support adoption.

#### Sharing Resources / Exchange Opportunities

- Sharing knowledge of SME's.
- Better understanding between groups of what each group's strength remit is.
- National collaboration – sharing knowledge across all systems.
- Less protection of territory.
- More focus on outcomes to member collective benefit.
- Lobbying upcoming students, provide pathways to placement.
- Talent development
- Job placement – expatriate.
- Share best practice.
- International tours.
- Collective is cross sector.
- Where does Grain Grower Ltd fit? How can their resources be out to benefit.

#### Next steps

- Form a Victorian Alliance – Cam
- Formalise NSW Alliance – Andrew
- GGA to share document – Nikki
- Agree there is value in a NGGGC
  - focus on common value within groups
  - Clarify value proposition:
    - Focus on outreach, extension & adoption
    - Increase extension and advisory skills & capacity
- Develop a stakeholder map – Mark & JL
- Complete the value proposition, scope and value – Andrew & Diana
- Set up Teams space for NGGC – Kalista
- Structure discussion on: how to access funds; who pays what; who contributes?
- Funding opportunities - Mark



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