Western Murray
Land Improvement Group

ANNUAL REVIEW FY21-22

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

David McDonald
Chair, WMLIG

On behalf of the community and members of the Western Murray Land Improvement Group, I would like to thank and compliment the board and staff for their contribution to another successful year.

We have transitioned through Covid and emerged more adaptable and resilient.

Once again our activities and services have broadened, among these are The Tullakool Hemp Project, Re-Connecting Rivers, Regen Ag and The Perricoota Forests Project plus many others. These are all great examples of our leadership in projects which align with the Western Murray Vision.

Staff recruitments have been extensive, including Cam Langley, Jane O'Connor David Wilson, Maggie McDonald, Nick Dillon and Alex Martin, adding a very diverse skill and life experience set to the organization.

On the other side Amy Lolicato, Stacey Brooke, Cam Langley and Kathleen Henery have left to pursue other opportunities. We thank them for their contribution and wish them the best for the future.

I also note that Leona Chan and Katie Thomas have taken extended leave, hopefully we will see them back I the future.

On the board recruiting front we welcome Richard Gibson to the group, good to see a young face from the Moulamein District.

Unfortunately Helen Collins, Bill Ricketts and Nick Warne have had other commitments and have been unable to continue as Board Members. We thank them for their capable and dedicated contribution and wish them the best for the future. Special recognition needs to be extended to Helen for long service as Secretary and Board Member and especially for her sound judgment and values, which always stood out, so again thank you Helen.

The next twelve months presents many challenges and opportunities, which I believe we can look forward to with confidence.

Thank you again to the members, Staff and Board for your on-going support.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Roger Knight
Executive Officer, WMLIG

The Team at Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLIG) had a very productive year and in spite of Covid pandemic adversity, delivered 150 activities with our 23 partners.

During these challenging economic and social impacts, we achieved community support and collaboration for major project development, on-ground monitoring and evaluation, revegetation works, production and distribution of communication products to strengthen the region's advocacy, and education and training delivered via workshops and field days across the region.

A record 1,915 people were engaged in WMLIG activities in the last financial year and the compilation of 45 Case Studies is indicative of the extent and diversity of projects being delivered in the region.

The Board has developed a new three-year Strategic Plan (2021-2024), that is proving to be very insightful and closely tied to a range of other priority investment areas for regional Australia. New strategic project focus areas and their rating against alignment to key partner strategic plans are outlined in the table on page 15 of this report.

The strong alignment of strategic focus areas with the development of potential collaborative partnerships places our region in a good position to meet emerging market opportunities.

Our core purpose outlined in the Strategic Plan is to 'enrich our community through the power of innovative thinking and sharing knowledge'. To do this:

- We empower our community through knowledge exchange, local decision-making and a culture of big sky thinking.
- We enable and encourage collaborations across the natural resource management and agricultural spaces to achieve well rounded and considered outcomes.
- We value integrity. We are a trusted and respected organisation actively contributing to the current and long-term wellbeing of our community and unique environment.

WMLIG strives to 'strike a balance' between the objectives of sustainable and regenerative agriculture, natural resource management and community capacity building.

However, it will be very difficult to achieve a balance of these objectives in the short to medium term as WMLIG has had limited success achieving funding for sustainable agricultural activities that facilitate continued incremental and transformational change.

The community desire to be more empowered to have meaningful inputs to the policies and decisions that impact their lives is also gaining momentum and ever more support is being sought from WMLIG to facilitate this process as the 'independent broker'. As such WMLIG is strengthening its business systems - founded on community co-design principles – to advocate for and implement community participation power levels to the maximum extent possible.

To date, this hasn't necessarily been by design, but rather has grown organically to fulfill community needs.

Moving forward, WMLIG will be proactively seeking collaborative partners that support a democratic and bottom-up approach to further develop landscape 'visions' for assets that the community determines are important to them – these community visions then feed into WMLIG's modus operandi for project development. A good example has been the Koondrook Perricoota Group of Forests Community Vision, Little Forest Vision, and Reconnecting River Country Program community engagement work.

As an intermediary between community and government, WMLIG believes it can achieve more mutually beneficial outcomes, however it will require a devolution of the power and control that commonly results in 'inform' and 'consult' levels of community participation. Many socio-economic reports state that people feel over-consulted and under-listened to.

However, we have found that they relish the opportunity to be empowered and work alongside trusted organisations to achieve desired outcomes. This is at the heart of the Landcare ethos that WMLIG is a member of.

Landcare is a great example of the localism that brings together volunteers, members of the community and scientific knowledge to collectively attempt to address resource degradation and rehabilitation issues to enhance their amenity, that are relevant to their local area and have more successful outcomes.

Thus, the state plays little part in assigning priorities or reaching agreement on the various trade-offs that inevitably accompany actions for enhanced environmental amenity. This has resulted in genuine public 'ownership' of a policy and its implementation.

Jane O'Connor, a marketing and media specialist with WMLIG has provided independent insights into the value proposition of WMLIG as a community based Not for Profit business through the lens of someone who resides from outside the region but has extensive experience in dealing with all levels of government and community relations. WMLIG insights are outlined in Appendix A.

WMLIG currently supports 10 full and part time jobs and works closely with six contractors within a 100km radius of Barham. This collectively provides income to 8.4 full time equivalent positions, which has injected $923K into wages into the local economy in the 2021/22 financial year.

There are many regional challenges and opportunities WMLIG continues to focus on from a solutions-based perspective. This requires even more niche professional and technical role positions to be realised in order to take the organisation to the next advocacy level.

Upon successful completion of the current Strategic Plan (2024), WMLIG estimates it can support 25 full and part time staff in a range of existing, emerging, and innovative career pathways.

WMLIG completed a range of foundational projects in the financial year including completed scoping papers to readily position the community to take advantage of strategic opportunities. These projects show great alignment to local, regional, State and Federal Government Plans for improved economic, environmental, social, and cultural outcomes, including increased self-reliance and capacity-building.

Examples include:

- Community Energy Hub Scoping Document
- Community Foundation and Water Bank
- Edward-Wakool Land Stewardship Incentive Program
- Agri-innovation Precinct
- Organic Waste Circular Economy Pilot – Biomass to Bioenergy
- Industrial Hemp Prefeasibility Study
- Community Food Hub

WMLIG thank our members for their ongoing support and to our employees and Board that have worked with us and injected so much energy, passion, expertise and experience into our organisation and community. To those employees who have worked with us in the last year and have moved on to an exciting new phase in their life, I'm sure they will continue to contribute positively to our communities now and in the future.

ABOUT US

Western Murray Land Improvement Group, is a not-for-profit Landcare group and registered charity based in Barham, NSW, located beside the Murray River and operating across diverse bushland, agricultural, and floodplain landscapes. We were established in 2003 by a group of local farmers who recognised the importance of sustainable agriculture practices with a focus on local Landcare and management systems.

Today, we have 8 staff members, a committee of 9 members, and have held events and activities for 1,185 community members in the local area. As a Landcare group we promote sustainable agriculture and responsible Natural Resource Management. We respond to community needs, recognising the unique challenges that our community of local landholders and farmers face.

We represent the region as part of Murray Landcare in the New South Wales Murray Catchment. Our Landcare Coordinators are currently delivering the 2019-2023 Landcare NSW Program. The program aims to empower community to take action on issues and deliver outcomes across both locally and regionally.

Our area of operation covers approximately 750,000 ha within the Murray River Council Local Government Area. We support 13 local Landcare, producer and indigenous groups through a range of projects and mentoring services. We are one of the largest groups in the area, having built expansive networks with community, industry and external stakeholders. We have a proud record of delivering applied research, development and extension projects to our community.

Our Vision:

To enrich our community through the power of innovative thinking and sharing knowledge.

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

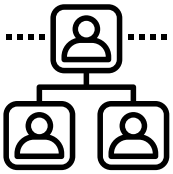
Annual turnover

$1.016m

Retained earnings

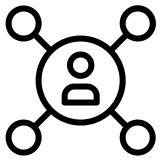
$137k

Staff employed



10 (7.1 FTE)

Local contractors



6 (1.2 FTE)

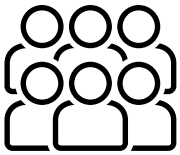
Active projects

28

Events & activities

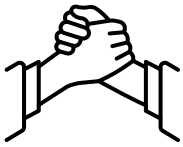
150

Activity participants



1.915

Groups & clusters supported



13

Funding applications approved

10

Funding partners

14

Revegetation area

9ha

Number of plants

1564

OUR BOARD

Our board is made up of 10 volunteer community members with broad skill sets. Our board members represent the geographical expanse of our organisation and have well connected networks that represent the diversity of local community needs. Our board oversees the strategic direction of our organisation.

David McDonald
Chairperson

Katrina Myers
Vice chariperson

Kate Redfearn
Treasurer & Public Officer

Laura Kaylock
Secretary

Neil Maddy
Board Member

Faye Ashwin
Board Member

Rick Ellis
Board Member

Ian McConnell
Board Member

Richard Gibson
Board Member

Nick Warne
Board Member

OUR TEAM

As of June 30, Western Murray Land Improvement Group employed a team of 13 staff at different times, totaling 7.1 full time equivalents (FTE). The team come from diverse backgrounds and have a broad range of skills spanning agriculture, natural resource management, community capacity building, administration, bookkeeping, marketing and communications and more. We pride ourselves on fostering a supportive, social, and collaborate culture.

Roger Knight
Executive Officer & Local Landcare Coordinator

Leigh Fletcher
Environmental Project Officer

Kate Redfearn
Accounts

Maggie McDonald
Environmental Project Officer

Nick Dillon
Local Landcare Coordinator

David Wilson
Project Officer

Katie Powell
Project Assistant

Leona McConnell
Marketing and Communications Officer

Jane O'Connor
Strategic Media Advisor

Cam Langley
Marketing and Communications Officer

Kath Kolden
Community Support Officer

Amy Lolicato
Local Landcare Coordinator

Stacey Brooke
Local Landcare Coordinator

Staff who contributed to FY21-22

OUR COMMUNITY & ENGAGMENT

Our community

Our community are at the heart of everything we do. We aim to deliver projects and activities that will enhance their capacity, improve wellbeing, and build resilience across the agriculture and Natural Resource Management areas.

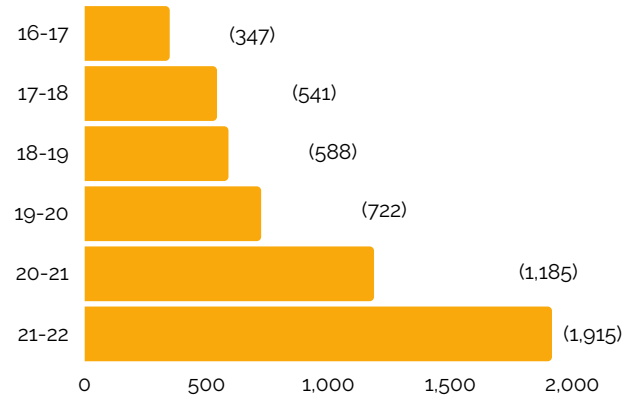
In order to determine areas of interest, we conduct regular surveys to determine community needs and interests. This allows us to streamline our efforts in obtaining funding and develop a program that will have the most impact for our community.

We currently have 500 contacts within our database and 750 contacts across our social media platforms.

In 2022-23 we will be revamping our membership strategy and offering, making being a member of Western Murray Land Improvement Group more valuable moving into the future.

Community engagement

In 2021-22 we held 150 activities which involved 1,915 participants. As the graph below indicates, our participation levels have seen huge growth in the past six years increasing from 347 people engaged in 2016-147 to 1,915 this year.



Activity participation levels in 2016-2021

We keep our community informed with regular communications via our mailing lists, newsletters, advertising in local papers, local radio, maildrops, and keeping our website updated with upcoming events and projects.

SUPPORTED GROUPS & PROJECT CLUSTERS

As well as supporting and providing opportunities to our local farmers we also support several local Landcare, community, and other not-for-profit groups.

Our support ranges from assisting with grant applications, partnering on capacity building workshops, administration, and governance support.

Incorporated groups we supported in 2021-2022 include

- Central Murray Best Wool Best Lamb
- Barham Landcare
- Edward Wakool Angling Association
- Murrakool Land for Wildlife
- Joint Indigenous Group
- Barham Angling Club
- Koondrook Perricoota Alliance
- Wakool Mens Shed

Projects clusters include:

- Producers group
- Industrial hemp group
- Biochar cluster
- Eagle creek
- Bullockhide Creek Landholder Cluster
- Yarrein Creek Landholder Cluster

If you are part of a local community group and are interested in partnering or need support setting up your group, please get in touch with us.

OUR PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

This year our team worked on 32 projects. Our projects and activities are split into three categories, natural resource management, agriculture, and community. We aim to strike a balance between these areas of focus, ensuring that our community gets the maximum impact of a balanced program.

32

Natural Resource Management

Activities and projects that relate to the protection and improvement of environmental assets such as soils, water, vegetation, and biodiversity.

Agriculture

Activities and projects that relate sustainable approach to integrated land management and building resilience in farming systems, productivity improvement, and best management practices.

Community

Activities and projects relating to community capacity building, social networking and wellbeing.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2021-2024

Our vision

To enrich our community through the power of innovative thinking and sharing knowledge.

Our values

Integrity

Trust

Respect

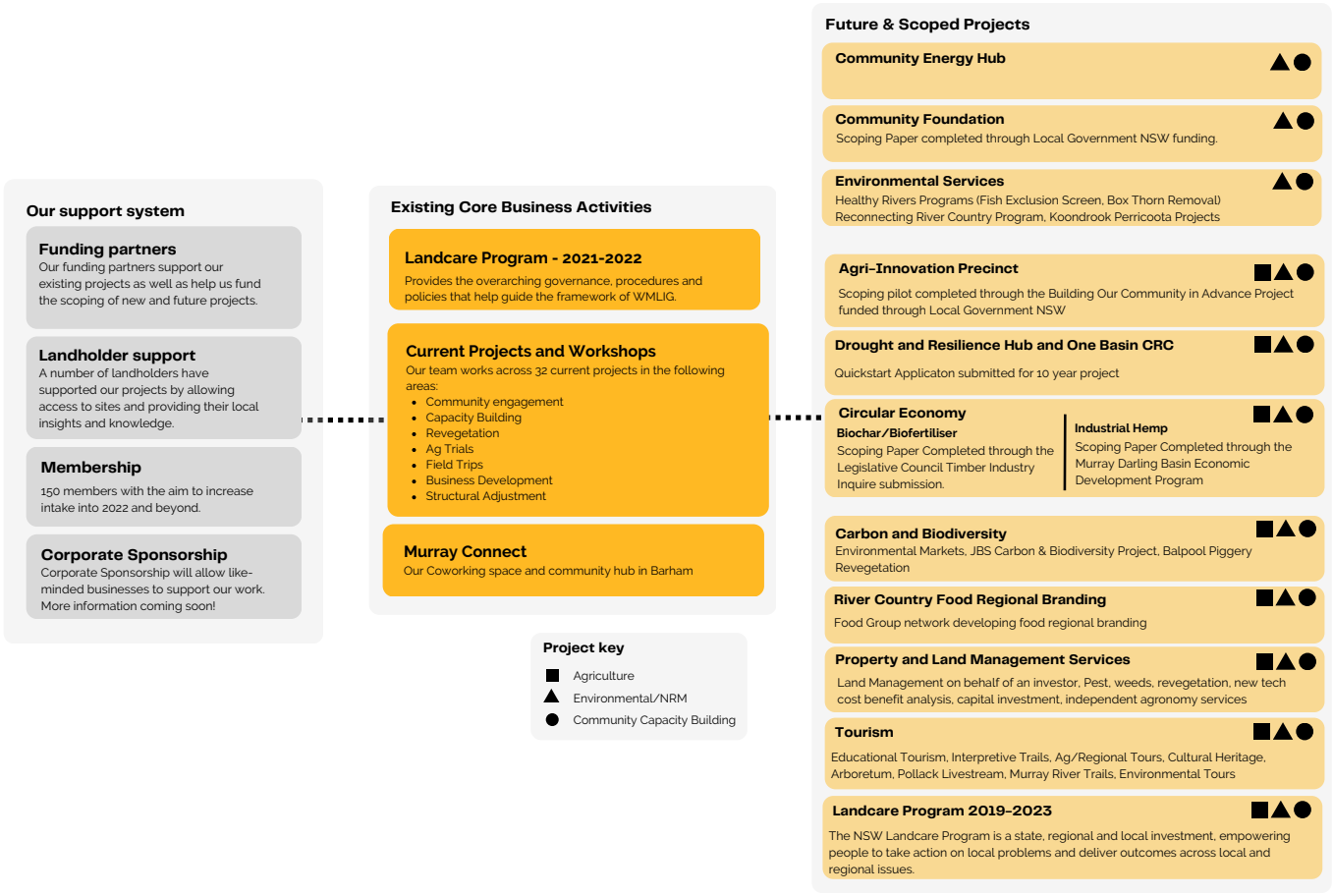
Empowerment

Collaboration

Our objectives

1. Ensuring good governance and the economic viability of the organisation
2. Delivering effective NRM, environmental and agricultural programs that build resilience for our future
3. Building trusted and respectful relationships
4. Demonstrating innovation and best practice
5. Creating a platform for the exchange of transformational ideas and capacity building
6. Empowering our community through facilitating collaboration and exploring opportunities
7. Celebrating and sharing our stories and experiences
8. Communicating our local agricultural and NRM priorities to policy and decision makers

STRATEGIC PLAN INFOGRAPHIC



STRATEGIC PROJECT PRIORITY ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Project	Community feedback need via engagement	Existing WMLIG / local working / focus group	Degree to which it achieves triple bottom line outcomes	Alignment to MRC 2022-2032 Strat Plan	Alignment to RAMJO Plans	Alignment to Murray LLS Strat / Plan	Alignment to NSW Plans / Programs / budget	Alignment to Federal Govt / agency plans	Peak Group / Industry R & D focus / investment area	Support drought resilience & adaptation	Project planning Phase stage	Funding Likelihood	Level of Current Investment	Speed of implementation	Current skills / resources	Synergies with other WMLIG strategy areas	Potential profitability / Employment	Ease of implementation	Alignment to WMLIG values and objectives	Total Score (By EO)	Priority No.
Land Stewardship	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	5	5	5	2	4	4	3	5	5	5	3	4	81	1
Biomass to Bioenergy	5	5	5	5	5	2	5	5	4	5	2	4	3	2	3	4	4	3	4	75	2
Industrial Hemp	5	5	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	4	2	3	5	2	3	4	3	2	3	61	5
Bio-fertiliser production	5	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	3	4	1	1	1	4	3	4	5	4	4	61	5
Agri- Precinct	4	2	5	5	4	0	5	4	3	5	2	3	3	1	3	5	3	1	4	63	4
Environmental Engineering	2	5	4	3	2	3	5	4	5	1	1	5	1	3	5	2	5	5	4	65	3
Fee 4 Service Agronomist	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	1	4	1	3	1	5	5	4	4	60	6
Place based Capital	3	2	3	4	1	1	3	2	1	5	2	2	2	3	3	5	3	2	3	50	10
Land mgt services	1	0	4	3	2	5	4	4	4	5	0	2	1	1	3	5	3	1	3	51	9
Community Energy Hub	3	1	3	5	5	2	5	5	4	4	2	4	2	1	1	3	2	1	3	56	7
Interactive/ talking tours	3	1	4	5	3	3	4	4	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	5	2	2	3	52	8
Farm 2 Plate Agrisystem	5	5	2	5	4	3	3	3	3	4	2	3	1	3	4	5	2	2	4	59	4

0	1	2	3	4	5
Not referenced / No	Weak / difficult / slow / unknown	Weak – Medium / known	Medium	Medium - Strong	Strong / easy / fast / yes
Project Ideation Phase No previous investment (<$0)	Concept with community support / group established Current Investment (<$5k)	Prefeasibility / Scoping Document complete Current Investment ($5 to $25k)	Technical Steering Committee Developed / Feasibility / Business Case Current Investment ($25 to $50k)	Design Phase Current Investment ($50k to $100k)	Build & Operate Current Investment (>$100k)

INDEPENDANT REVIEW AND INSIGHT INTO WMLIG VALUE TO COMMUNITY

THE POWER TO CONVENE, CONNECT AND CODESIGN

In 2022 and beyond, what does WMLIG want to be known for – both internally and externally – and how do we bring that about?

- To continually seek to demonstrate and grow the national importance and needs of a region that generates significant wealth from its land-based food and fibre industries and sits in the midst of the Murray River system.
- To strengthen the region's ability to be best practice land and river custodians to meet the increasing impacts of climate change, while addressing the economic, social, cultural and environmental needs of a heavily impacted community.
- To build on strong community resilience; harness and further grow the region's resilience to utilise and build on skills and knowledge; retain a greater share of the nationally significant wealth it creates and; to have an acknowledged, independent voice in the policies and decisions that will impact it.

As WMLIG celebrates 20 years of a successful track record of convening a diverse, widespread and adversely impacted community we are in a powerful position to strategically seize the opportunities that present themselves and steer the organisation forward.

By focusing on the power to convene, connect and co-design - with a parallel strategic approach to engaging in the type of transformational and outcomes-driven projects that employ the best practice use of resources – WMLIG can continue to grow and deliver at a manageable pace.

As climate change impacts dramatically increase the outcomes for communities - and will continue to strongly inform policies and priorities at all levels of government - WMLIG is uniquely poised to deploy its power of innovative leadership in order to engage the most contemporary representative, skilled and diverse stakeholders to communicate or implement the projects that meet their stated needs.

The core aim is to operate in this changed national environment with a solutions-based and transformational change approach that keeps pace with the extreme effects of competition for all categories of resources, coupled with the growing impacts of climate change, and general national and international economic challenges.

By recognising the opportunities, this direction requires the continual strengthening of co-designed community outcomes that connect and empower a major agricultural region - a key contributor to Australia's food and fibre output, both domestically and on the export market - and connecting it to a nationally significant and recognised, richly bio-diverse environmental zone that is an integral component of one of the nation's crucial river systems.

We can convene the best and most experienced land and river custodians from all community sectors.

WMLIG has a major opportunity going forward to capitalise on the depth of shareable knowledge that has continuously demonstrated that food and fibre producers have actively innovated in an ongoing evolution to address crucial land stewardship issues while increasing productivity, and valuing, protecting and repairing the environment.

By adopting a regenerative and holistic approach, we aim to improve the region's amenity from the ground up and by recognising the importance of connecting the economic, environmental, social and cultural outcomes, to further develop community resilience.

The regional community has consistently voiced a strong preference that its diverse land use has such an ongoing focus, and that it is prepared to embrace the addressing of these multiple needs for sustainable outcomes and growth into the future.

This independent, transparent and respectful approach is increasingly important if a numerically small population base of less than 12,000 is to be afforded the voice that demonstrates its level of important economic contribution.

Our current area of operation and membership base spans 7,500 square kilometres within the Murray River Council local government footprint and incorporates small to medium townships, a strong business community, highly productive agricultural land, diverse bushland, nationally significant icon sites, floodplain landscapes, culturally significant locations and seasonal tourism traffic.

This is coupled with limited employment opportunities; ongoing and increasing recognition of the effects of climate change; directly subject to the impacts of the Murray Darling Basin Plan; poor telecommunications access; isolation from major economic centres; and limited government and social services.

In light of the above, we will continue to strive to ensure our diverse community is fully and independently represented in not only addressing these major direct impact areas but is equally poised to work with all stakeholders to capitalise on the emerging opportunities.

Our project focus will continue to include the goal of best practice farming that builds on and increases the uptake of regenerative and sustainable farming practices to address major national and on-ground issues such as soil enhancement and improved plant health; carbon sequestration; 'Teal Carbon' initiatives; fit for purpose pastures that protect against extreme events such as drought and turn currently unproductive areas into productive land; the adoption of sustainable practices and the development and use of alternative sources of energy; and development of greater funding self-sufficiency.

It is crucial that we keep abreast of emerging new agricultural and environmental products and technologies and run on the ground trials; conduct extensive work in the field of bio-char to energy projects that address the growing need for alternative energy and self-reliance; trial crops that have commercial and processing industry potential; and work towards the creation of an Agri-Innovation Precinct where products and technologies can be demonstrated on the ground and steered towards the creation of new local industries and employment opportunities.

Environmental rehabilitation projects with First Nations representatives and other key stakeholders are ongoing in the Icon site Koondrook-Perricoota group of forests footprint; as well as aiming to create biolinks that aggregate landholdings and manage support actions that complement food and fibre production and primary producer outcomes.

The pursuit of novel biodiversity improvement income streams will act as an economic buffer against drought and commodity price cycles and assist producers with structural changes associated with the water reform process.

The region has and will continue to be subject to both chronic events – slow moving impacts with a long-term and ongoing effect such as droughts, the Covid Pandemic and government policies – and episodic events – unpredictable and sudden disasters such as floods, fire, heatwaves and infra-structure failures, that are predicted to become more severe as a result of climate change impacts.

The community has already been and is continuing to be impacted by major chronic challenges such as the Millennium Drought; the Murray Darling Basin Plan and associated water reform process; the creation of Red Gum National Parks (and associated loss of timber industry jobs); and farm consolidation.

These impacts have demonstrably affected not only the community's wellbeing and liveability, but also its ability to effectively continue to provide ongoing services, retain skilled workers and volunteers, recover and implement ways to develop and grow.

At the same time, revenues - particularly in many rural and regional areas – are continuing to stagnate, along with business investment, which stood at around a 5% share of nominal GDP in 2021, from a high of 18% in 2019 (source: Australian Bureau of Statistics).

Key findings from community workshops conducted to date demonstrate that the community is fully aware of the need to adapt to change, including the new residents who have chosen to live in the region and who can access a healthy environment that grows the best, safest food and fibre and to embrace community pride in its ability to come together.

To bring this about requires ongoing work to ensure a connected, dynamic, and resilient community that is supported by transformational leadership.

Underpinning the forward strategic plan is the ongoing creation of a more diverse monetising model that broadens our ability to remain financially viable; carry out the prioritised transformational and solutions-based projects based on community and regional needs; and reduce reliance on funding with imposed conditions.

CASE STUDIES

GRANT SIMMS INDUSTRY TOUR

Cover crops are plants or a diverse mixture of plants that are grown to help supress weeds, manage soil erosion, soil fertility, soil quality, water, disease, wildlife, and biodiversity. They can be used as a rotation in a cropping pasture system and can provide biomass that can be grazed with very little input.
Bare soil can be easily damaged and washed away by rain, when rain hits the bare soil, it results in a surface crust and when soil is washed down a slope it can be caught in silt traps, however the richest part of the soil is the fine particles and organic matter are usually not caught in the silt traps.
Biofertilizer can make plant nutrients more available to plant and influence the production of plant hormones. They can reduce the need for traditional fertilizers which is a great alternative as the price of fertiliser is making in unaffordable for many.

Traditional fertilisers are becoming less affordable which means many people are looking for alternative and ways they can save money by doing more themselves.
People are becoming more aware of the importance of preserving their topsoil which contains a large amount of the beneficial soil biology and a way to do this is to use cover crops to keep the topsoil intact.

WMLIG had about 50 people attend a field day at Grant Sims multi-enterprise farm where he gave attendees a tour of his biofertilizer manufacturing facility, explained how it works and why he decided to start making his own. He also went through the different cover crop seed mixes they put together and when and where they should be used.

Grant has a wealth of knowledge about biofertilizer and cover crops and was more than happy to share this with our attendees and made everything simple and easy to understand.
There are benefits to livestock and crops when using cover crops this includes:

- Well planned annual cover crops can provide highly nutritious available forage when perennial grass pastures are either unproductive, poor in quality or in need of a rest. This delivers and great benefit to animal health and production.
- Enhances soil biology and improves soil structure.
- Increases infiltration.
- Reduces erosion.
- Assists in supressing weeds.
- Increases nutrient cycling and wildlife propagation.
- Used in a rotation in a cropping or pasture system, cover crops can provide huge amounts of biomass that can be grazed with very little input.
- Cover crops are low risk and low input for maximum production above and below ground - they make the most of out of season rain and improve liveweight while also improving soil health.

How cover crops are developed:

- The highest quality seed is sourced and inoculated with worm juice and other microbes to enhance germination and quorum sensing between each species.
- By using a diversity of root architecture and root exudates the multispecies are able to explore larger areas of soil making them more water and nutrient efficient. Each root system has its own unique ability to unlock and solubilise different minerals and nutrients.
- Seeds in the well-designed mixes, the plants will collaborate through the quorum sensing and fungal associations to share and release these minerals and nutrients in the soil, in turn providing greater nutrient density to the animals that graze it. This results in all round gains and gives the earth a greater chance of sequestering and building soil carbon at depth.

Bare soil can be easily damaged and washed away by rain, when rain hits the bare soil, the impact results in a surface crust.
When soil is washed down a slope it can be caught in silt traps, however the richest part of the soil is the fine particles and organic matter which will be likely lost. By keeping the soil covered by plants, the plants absorb the force of the raindrops and slow down the flow of the water on the paddock.

A patchy cover crop will protect your soil almost as well as a bulky cover crop, but a bulky crop is more difficult to manage than a less bulky crop.
To benefit from a cover crop it is not necessary to use water and fertiliser to produce a bulky crop.

Providing ground cover, helping to build soil biodiversity and organic matter will contribute to improving nutrient availability, water holding capacity and weed suppression which are all crucial components in a sustainable agricultural system.

All attendees found the information that was presented in the workshop relevant, engaging, and informative and 9 out of 10 were going to make changes to because of the information they received. Including:

- Apply liquid fertiliser, grow cover crops and spread gypsum for calcium.
- Leave more cover on the ground and try some cover crops.
- Manage ground cover better and make own fertiliser.

SHEEP EID WORKSHOP

The introduction of electronic identification (EID) of sheep in Australia has been the subject of much discussion over many years. While there is no doubt that EID has a benefit from a biosecurity and animal traceability perspective, the cost and utility of the technology from a producer's perspective is far less clear.

Unlike the cattle industry, EID is not mandatory in the sheep industry, it is not regulated in any state other than Victoria. While EID is not mandatory for sheep producers in NSW, Victorian Department of Agriculture/Primary Industries regulated the use of sheep EID mandating it to be used and reported on through National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) from March 2018. As per the new regulation, Sheep producers in Victoria must transfer and notify the NLIS database of stock movement.

On Wednesday, 27th of April 2022, Western Murray Land Improvement Group in partnership with Central Murray BestWool BestLamb engaged Nathan Scott from Achieve Ag Solutions to deliver a presentation on Sheep EID at the Ettershank property in Cobramunga. Nathan has a background in prime lamb production and has a passion for working with clients to improve productivity and profitability on farm.

Nathan outlined the importance of EID from not only a biosecurity and animal traceability perspective, but as a practical on farm improvement through improved data quality and collection, time and labour savings and improved management of stock. For example, EID allows individual stock management opposed to mob-based management, meaning that you are able to identify your most productive animals within a mob and are able to cull your poor performers.

Nathan showed a range of EID equipment including products from Gallagher, Allflex and Tru-Test, outlining the price differences, the capability, ergonomics, weight, strength and readability of equipment.

While there are many benefits of using EID you must have a clear understanding of the needs and suitability of EID to your enterprise. It is about knowing your needs and understanding the various equipment components, including hardware, software and data management. Nathan explained "Anything can be recorded, but the more data collected, the harder it is to manage, so it's essential producers understand what data they need to collect for their enterprise, and then match the right EID system to suit".

Nathan concluded the day with a practical demonstration of the Gallagher tag reader, auto-draft, weigh scales and data collectors.

Only record data that will add value to your enterprise.

Always keep data collection tasks as simple as possible.

There is no point collecting data unless you are going to use it.

The more data you collect, the harder it is to manage.

DRONES WORKSHOP

Drones can be used in many aspects of farming such as checking water, feed, stock, and crops. They can be used to see comparisons between paddocks over the weeks, years, or months.

Fiona Lake is renowned in the drone industry and has won an array of awards and published multiple books. Fiona's business mainly now mainly includes running workshops and speaking at events that are mainly drone related as well as on the ground and aerial photography with drones.

More and more farmers and people working in agriculture are investing in drones or are thinking about investing in a drone but do not have the safety knowledge or skills to use them effectively in their work.

It is not as simple as just buying a drone and flying it, so it is important that you know the laws and rules around having a drone in the air.

Drone can be an expensive investment so having the skills to use it to its full potential is necessary to get the most out of it.

On Tuesday 2nd of March 2022, we held a Drone Workshop with Fiona Lake at the Murray Connect offices in Barham.

She covered a range of topics including:

- general drone operation.
- tips for advanced pilots.
- practical drone use in agriculture.
- simple uses to an introduction to sophisticated tasks such as mapping and precision spraying.
- profitable small business use.

We had 10 attendees come along to learn the ins and outs of to use a drone and how they can utilise them in their own business.

All attendees found the information that was presented in the workshop relevant, engaging, and informative and 8 out of 10 were going to make changes to because of the information they received.

Those who didn't yet have a drone would investigate purchasing a drone and those who already have a drone were keen to put their skills into practice.

DUNG BEETLE WORKSHOP

Dung beetles play a critical role in the grazing ecosystem. WMLIG had Russ Barrow from Dung Beetle Ecosystem Engineers (DBEE) come along and present information about the advantages of Dung Beetles in agriculture and how people can start their own Dung Beetle Nursery and release them into the wild.

By harnessing the power of the dung beetle farmers can save money and reduce their carbon footprint.

Russ explained how dung beetles are beneficial to farm including improving the flow of water, nutrients, and carbon into the root zone of the pasture which in turn improves the productivity. By burying the dung, the beetles prevent the build-up of flies, improving animal health, productivity and lifestyle conditions for graziers and surrounding conditions.

Other advantages include improved soil health, reduced water run-off, reduce livestock parasites, sequester carbon, and reduce emissions, improve pastures, and reduce bushfly and buffalo fly populations. The dung of affected animals is packed full of worm eggs and the larvae that hatch from the eggs are then consumed with the pasture by the livestock who are soon infected. As the dung beetles consume the dung, they kill the worm eggs and make the dung less favourable to the growth of worm larvae, giving producers natural parasite control.

The species that are best suited to our specific area are the Bubas bison and the Euoniticellus intermedius.

Attendees found the information and presenters to be engaging and informative, giving the workshop on overall rating of 9.5 out of 10. From the workshop 100 per cent of attendees were likely tom make changes to their business including:

- Increase and diversify dung beetle species on farm.
- Use the beetles to improve the soils for better outcomes.
- Investigate the feasibility of using dung beetle on farm.

FARM EXPANSION WORKSHOP

John Francis from Agrista presented an informative and engaging workshop covering perceptions of value, scale and the difference it makes, leveraging debt to create wealth and how to be a low-cost borrower. Participants were also provided with useful spreadsheet tools to aid in assessing expansion opportunities.

It was identified the need for a workshop of this kind could provide valuable knowledge to our local farmers in an area of agribusiness that otherwise typically does not receive un-biased professional opinion.

The workshop covered:

- How to apply business management and investment principles to a farm purchasing decision.
- When is a good time to expand?
- How does leveraging create wealth?
- How much to pay for additional land for a bank loan?
- What does your financier require?
- Scale advantages and risk
- Leasing success factors including communication and tenure.
- Case studies and scenarios.

John has worked in various aspects of agriculture, he started off studying agricultural economics degree at university, worked as a jackaroo, completed am agricultural science degree all before working for a farm management consultancy where he learnt the value of integrating the of science and a knowledge if production systems with financial management system.

The evening covered:

1. When to expand

2. How does leveraging create wealth

3. Scale advantages and risk

4. What does your financier require?

SOILS WITH DAVID HARDWICK

David Hardwick has worked in community development and then horticulture before completing a dairy traineeship on an organic dairy in NSW. Since then, he has had a wide-ranging career working in management and technical roles including Landcare extension, Agronomy, Soils, Agribusiness, Biofertilizer R&D and manufacturing, Helped run a regional farmers market business and worked on a rural cooperative and social enterprise projects.

All of which have led him to where he is today at Land, Soil, Food where he teaches soils, regenerative agriculture, farm planning and agroecology. David aims to empower farmers with knowledge and skills that are going to make a difference.

Soil, Land, Food delivers high quality innovative extension projects, workshops and courses in soils, regenerative and organic agriculture, agroecology, composting, biofertilizer and landscape management.

An important part of farming is understanding your soil biology so you can treat it and crop effectively. Many farmers don't know that they can do their own soil testing and make the best decisions for how to treat their soil to get the best returns

.

We invited David Hardwick an agroecologist with over 20yrs experience in rural landscapes, farming, and food systems to take a workshop to teach some local landholders the benefits of soil testing, cover crops and PH testing your soil.

All attendees found the information that was presented in the workshop relevant, engaging, and informative and 9.3 out of 10 were going to make changes to because of the information they received. Including:

- Do PH balance and soil infiltration testing.
- Increased ground cover, soil tests and aerating.
- Soil assessments and improvements.
- Leave more ground cover

LAMB MARKING BEST PRACTICE

Geoff Duddy from Sheep Solutions ran a workshop on Lamb Marking best practice and gave a practical demonstration. Geoff has spent over 20 years servicing regional, state, and national sheep and wool producers, specialising in sheep meat production, new and introduced sheep breeds, pasture and grain-based finishing systems and marketing.

Lamb marking and mulesing practice has changing and developing all the time, it is important that producers are kept up to date with the current best practice.

Lambs should be marked between two and 12 weeks of age with the youngest lamb being at least 24 hours old. If lambing extends for more than six weeks, you could consider having two mulesing/marking sessions.

There has been an influx of young farmers returning to the area and family farms over the past few years, lamb marking best practice has changed over this time, so it is important to keep them informed of the current best practice. It is also important to keep the older generation up to date with the legislation and best practice as it can be easy for them to get stuck in their old ways.

Around 40 local farmers and experts attended the workshop held at 'Glenbar' in Mallan. The workshop which was organised by Central Murray Best Wool Best Lamb (CMBWBL) in partnership with Western Murray Land Improvement Group consisted of informative presentations by livestock expert Geoff Duddy and CMBWBL's Rick Ellis.

Geoff spoke on the importance of ewe and lambing nutrition before, during and after lambing as well as the pros and cons of separating singles and twins or keeping them together.

Rick Ellis then covered the topic of lamb marking and mulesing best practice, the do's and don'ts and pros and cons of lamb marking rings that included a practical demonstration on how to apply the rings.

There was a great response to the day with 50% of attendees completing the survey and rating the day a 9/10 on average.

Those who didn't yet have a drone would investigate purchasing a drone and those who already have a drone were keen to put their skills into practice.

INDUSTRIAL HEMP

The Hemp Cluster Group which was formed in June 2021 on the back of local interest in Hemp and agreed to a set action items to progress an opportunity to develop hemp industry with Murray River LGA. The group provides the impetus for Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLIG) and individual landholders to strategically develop a staged approach to creating the industry that will provide economic, social, and environmental benefits for the region.

Establish the benefits of Hemp production - bring together simple clear information that provides the return on investment for a commercial scale value add process and manufacturing, with the intent to build local infrastructure and build community resilience.

- Identify uses and benefits of Hemp in cropping rotation.
- Collate information on potential of biochar as a seed dressing input during planting

Establish a series of field trials with Hemp cluster group to demonstrate plant effectiveness in this region. Implement trial plots in collaboration with experienced local businesses and specialised Hemp consultants.

Investigate business case for local Hemp production and manufacturing

- Collate information on production, processing, and marketing.

Establish partnerships throughout the value chain e.g., local community, investors and business partners including R&D partners.

Establish a Hemp Industry Stakeholders list
Identify potential synergies between Hemp production and Biochar use on farm.

Future Opportunities:

- Business Case for Hemp Processing and Manufacturing
- Maintain Industrial Hemp Cluster Group
- Collaboration with the Hemp Building Company and Australian Battery Solar and Energy Solutions
- AgriFutures Trials
- Proof of Concept Trials for 2022/23
- Hemp CRC

SHEEP HANDLER WORKSHOP

We held a Sheep Handler workshop where 4 manufacturers showcase their equipment for the local community as we have a large population of sheep farmers in our area.

A lot of farmers in our area are moving toward sheep farming as it is getting harder and more expensive to grow crops. Farmers are looking for ways to make physical work easier on their workers and themselves.

We had presenters from TePari, Clipex, Gallagher and Hecton demonstrate their machine for a group of about 40 farmers, so they were able to see how they operate.

Attendees were able to see how the operate, ask questions, and get a price on the equipment they were showcasing. There were handlers available for every budget.

The handlers help the owners by taking pressure off them physically but by also making jobs like ear tagging, weighing, drenching, vaccinating, and splitting them into groups when needed. Those who didn't yet have a drone would investigate purchasing a drone and those who already have a drone were keen to put their skills into practice.

We had presenters from TePari, Clipex, Gallagher and Hecton demonstrate their machine for a group of about 40 farmers, so they were able to see how they operate.

- The workshop had an average rating of 9/10 from the surveys that were completed.
- Attendees feedback said that all the information that was presented on the day was 'very relevant' and agreed that the presenters were engaging and informative.

Industry Partners:

WOMEN OF WATER WORKSHOP

In an area where the topic of water can be a highly contentious subject, it can at times be a challenge for women in the community to ask questions and learn more about water and how it impacts our community. With busy working lives and sometimes families to support, networking socially with other women can also at times be something that gets put on the backburner.

On Thursday 18th November 2021, WMLIG hosted 'Women of Water' at the Wakool Services Club. The event was presented by Murray Irrigation Limited Water Policy Manager Michael Pisasale and Southern Riverina Irrigators Executive Officer Sophie Baldwin. The event was informal and gave all attendees the opportunity to ask questions and gain a base level of understanding of water policy in our community.

17 attendees came to the event- ranging from newcomers to our area through to women who have followed water policy for decades. The event provided a safe space for questions to be asked and networking to occur between likeminded women in our community.
The group had more questions than time permitted to be answered as we all know there is rarely an easy answer in the water space. A follow up event was discussed and favoured by the group and will likely occur in the near future.

DESIGNER GENES WORKSHOP

Sheep breeding enterprises should establish breeding objectives and goals and implement selection processes to achieve those outcomes. Within your enterprise you will be buying animals for different tasks, it is very worthwhile having a genetic plan for each of these different tasks, such as buying rams for mating ewe lambs, as terminals or to breed replacements.

Mark Ferguson the co-founder of neXtgen Agri is renowned in the sheep industry. neXtgen Agri focuses on converting the complexities of genetic science into understandable logical and intuitive decisions.

Genetic gain is an ever-improving objective. It is not about breeding the perfect sheep, it is about breeding your perfect sheep to achieve the outcomes that you have identified in your breeding plans.

It is not as simple as visually identifying the traits that you want such as the conformation or shape of the animal. It is about understanding genetic measurements to assess the relative worth of the animal to your enterprise; and using breeding values that are calculated from the animal's performance and the performance of its relatives.

On Monday, 14th of March, Central Murray BestWool BestLamb and Western Murray Land Improvement Group collaborated to deliver a Designer Genes Workshop presented by Mark Ferguson from neXtgen Agri at Moulamein's Jeraly Woolshed.

The workshop was designed so that attendees think about the outcomes that they would like to see on farm and to make educated decisions when buying rams or ewes. By having a balanced genetic plan and incorporating the four key aspects will assist the producer by making genetic gains.

The Jeraly Woolshed welcomed 45 attendees to this workshop. All attendees found the information relevant and engaging. The workshop was rated 8.3 out of 10, with 93 per cent of attendees were more likely to make on-farm changes following the presentation. Including using Australian Sheep Breeding Value's (ASBV's) for better ram and ewe selection, identifying traits that you want, being more accountable for the changes that you want to see, and genetic gain is about making good decisions on a consistent basis.

Things that make you money

Things that save you money

Things that save you time

Things that delight your customer

BIOCHAR CLUSTER GROUP

Biochar is a form of solid residual black carbon derived from the thermo-chemical decomposition of renewable biomass feedstock such as wood, crop residues, manures or leaves, heated in a closed container at relatively lower temperature (<700 degrees C) under oxygen limited condition and specifically prepared for soil amelioration and Carbon (C) sequestration.

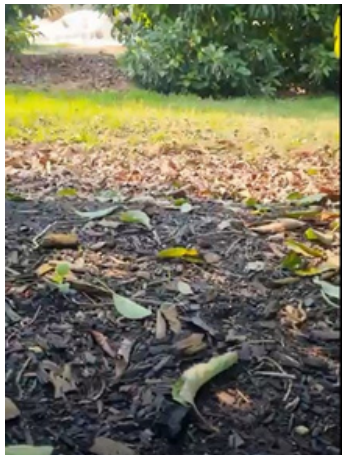
Biochar can be added to soil as a soil conditioner, and as a livestock feed additive improving feed conversion efficiency, production and reducing methane emissions. The nutrient retention capacity of biochar leads to reduction in fertiliser use, so it indirectly results in reduced environmental costs associated with the production of chemical fertilisers and energy for supply and distribution and land application.

An initial trial will be used as a stepping-stone to further explore options for organic waste conversion to biochar in the region, and it is envisioned that a consortia of industry, researchers, government and community groups will join the established biochar cluster group for technical consultation and knowledge sharing and to further scope a range of use options in the future.

This can result in a range of benefits and opportunities by:

- Supporting a regionally-based innovation solution to a waste problem that generates products and inputs that can be used for the benefit of agriculture, food and fibre manufacturing, and contribute to regional economic growth and climate change goals. Every regional community generates waste products and needs innovative solutions to improve resource use efficiency and reduce reliance on external farm inputs.
- Delivering the capacity for community, government and industries to respond to emerging climate, water and related changes in business and planning decisions.
- Assist producers here and in other regions to use waste organics such as biofertilisers to improve soil health and water holding potential, reduce dependence on imported chemicals, and help the community become more self-reliant.
- Provide an opportunity for primary producers to value-add waste organic products (e.g. rice straw and wood waste) via a new value-add income stream providing a buffer against commodity price cycles and climate related issues such as drought.
- Conduct land remediation and rehabilitation, sustainable and profitable regenerative agriculture, rural and regional employment, including substantial multiplier effects in upstream (biomass supply etc) and downstream (markets) industries for businesses in the new carbon economy.
- Opportunities for Indigenous employment as part of land management solutions also present themselves.



MAKING THE MOST OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE INFORMATION

On the 9th of September, Luke Shelley from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) presented 'Making the Most of Weather and Climate Information.'

The presentation included how to understand and interpret weather forecasting and climate data, which is imperative for farmer decision making associated with risk management and planning, for example when ordering irrigation water, sowing and fertiliser application. Or, for long term planning. for example, annual, perennial crop and pasture selection.

By understanding the data will lead to informed decision-making, which will lead to improved resilience in mixed farming systems.

The presentation provided an overview of BOM's intelligence and insights that work across a range of time scales (past, present and future) and tools that can be accessed which is summarised below:

- Climate Context: An overview of Climate Guides that provide a snapshot of a regions' climate from 1959 – 2018 and compares two 30 year periods for NRM regions. See Australian Regional Weather and Climate Guides (bom.gov.au),
- Seven day weather forecasts: Forecasts every 6km across Australia, for next 7 days with a range of weather variables (rainfall, temperature, wind, frost etc.).See MetEye (bom.gov.au),
- Seasonal / climate outlooks: Next week, next month to next three-month climate outlooks including monthly climate and water outlook video (www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks), and quarterly webinars. See BOM Webinars.

Climate services for agriculture (Overview—Summary - Climate Outlooks (bom.gov.au) that provides an overview of historical, current and future climate variables.

The BOM presentation was followed up by a presentation from NSW DPIE which is
summarised in the Case Study, NSW DPIE Predicting Weather Patterns Online Information Session

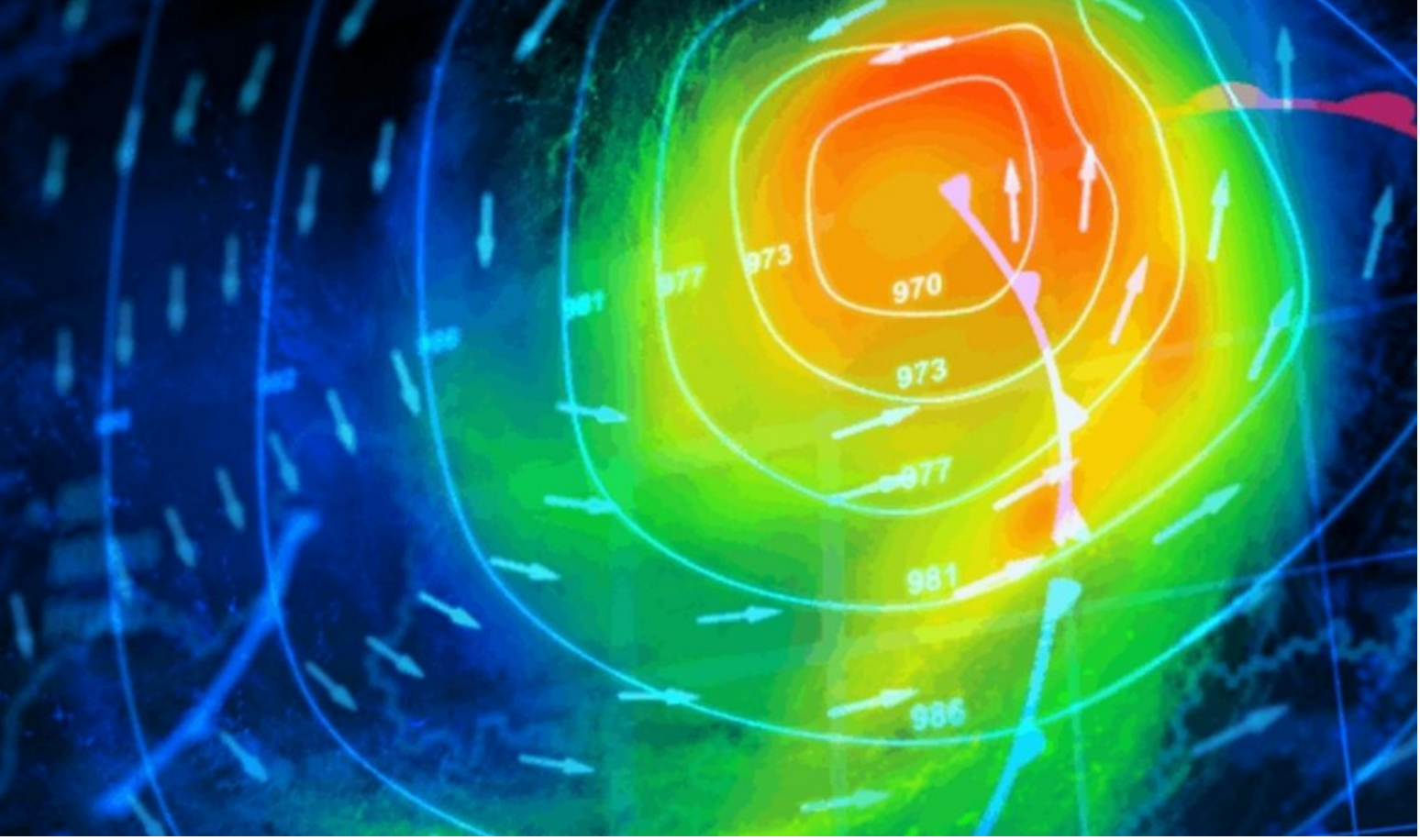
In the last 30 years in the Murray:

- Annual rainfall has been relatively stable
- Rainfall has decreased in the autumn and spring months
- Winter rainfall has been reliable, summer has been unreliable
- Dry years have occurred nine times and wet years have occurred 11 times
- The autumn break usually occurs by the first week of May around Tumbarumba and Albury, and not until late May to early June around Deniliquin and across much of the west
- Spring frosts have been more common and have been occurring later
- Temperatures have increased, along with more consecutive days above 38 ˚C

Current opportunity:
WMLIG will provide case study information and relevent document links to resources that the BOM and NSW DPIE provide to the local community on WMLIG's mail out subribtion (490 people) and the regional community as part of the Murray Landcare Collective. The broader NSW community will have access to the information via the NSW Landcare Gateway (60,000 volunteers and staff), and the case study information will be available for MRC to consider including in the council newsletter, 'Murray Matters'.
Future Opportunities:
It is anticipated that the community will use the resources available from the BOM to make informed decisions for business planning purposes.
Internet connectivity is a major issue in the local region and impacts on the ability of businesses to access timely weather data information. Connectivity also has implications for future applications of smart farming technology. MRC have captured the need for improved connectivity in the latest draft 10-year Community Strategic Plan.

This was the first webinar trialled by WMLIG and reinforced that local people prefer the face to face social interaction aspects of capacity building events.

From a BOM content perspective, many attendees didn't know that the BOM 7-day forecast was based on a data grid collecting data every six kilometres across Australia, nor did they have an understanding of how to interpret rainfall forecasts. For instance, when the BOM state forecasts state that there is possible rainfall of 10-15mm, this means there is a medium chance (50%) of at least 10mm and and low chance (25%) of at least 15mm. Regarding chance of rain, if BOM indicates that there is a 100% chance of any rain, there is a 100% chance of at least 0.2mm rain being recorded in the 24-hourperiod.
People tended to think there was a 100% chance of 5-10mm rain. This lack of understanding was fed back to the BOM as an improvement opportunity for their communication products.



PREDICTING WEATHER PATTERNS

This Case Study is a summary of a presentation titled 'Making the most of weather and climate information' by Luke Shelley, Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) on 9th Sept. 2022, hosted by Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLIG). The presentation was supported by Murray River Council's (MRC) Building Our Communities in Advance project via funding from Local Government NSW. This project builds upon the purpose and vision of MRC's Adverse Event Plan resilience principles of community capacity building.

This project focused on building the capacity of the community via continuous learning.
Accurate weather forecasting and the ability to interpret climate data is imperative for farmer decision making associated with short term risk management and planning (e.g. irrigation water ordering, sowing and fertiliser application), and long term planning (e.g. annual, perennial crop and pasture selection). This was also backed up NSW DPI Workshops conducted in the Riverina Murray (see Western Enabling Regional Adaptation report) that concluded that better use of data in decision-making was required to build resilience in mixed farming systems.

The BOM presentation provided an overview of BOM's intelligence and insights that work across a range of time scales (past, present and future) and tools that can be accessed which is summarised below:

- Climate Context: An overview of Climate Guides that provide a snapshot of a regions' climate from 1959 – 2018 and compares two 30 year periods for NRM regions. See Australian Regional Weather and Climate Guides (bom.gov.au),

- ·Seven day weather forecasts: Forecasts every 6km across Australia, for next 7 days with a range of weather variables (rainfall, temperature, wind, frost etc.).See MetEye (bom.gov.au),
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- ·Seasonal / climate outlooks: Next week, next month to next three-month climate outlooks including monthly climate and water outlook video (www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks), and quarterly webinars. See BOM Webinars.
-
- Climate services for agriculture (Overview—Summary - Climate Outlooks (bom.gov.au) that provides an overview of historical, current and future climate variables.

The information session was held online as Covid restrictions unfortunately prevented us from holding an in-person event. 12 people attended the three-hour session.

Luke Shelleyfrom the Bureau of Meteorology presentation was titled 'Making the most of weather and climate information' which was followed by a survey.

The BOM presentation was followed up by a presentation from NSW DPIE whichis summarised in the Case Study, NSW DPIE Predicting Weather Patterns OnlineInformation Session

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- ·Rainfall has decrease din the autumn and spring months
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Future Opportunities:
It is anticipated that the community will use the resources available from the BOM to make informed decisions for business planning purposes.
Internet connectivity is a major issue in the local region and impacts on the ability of businesses to access timely weather data information. Connectivity also has implications for future applications of smart farming technology. MRC have captured the need for improved connectivity in the latest draft 10-year Community Strategic Plan.

13 people attended the online workshop which is well below average for WMLIG events which was disappointing. This is likely a consequence of both poor connectivity as well as a lack of experience and enthusiasm by our target audience using online platforms. This was the first webinar trialled by WMLIG and reinforced that local people prefer the face to face social interaction aspects of capacity building events, not just thesubject matter.
From a BOM content perspective, many attendees didn't know that the BOM 7-day forecast was based on a data grid collecting data every six kilometres acoss Australia, nor did they have an understanding

MURRAY CONNECT

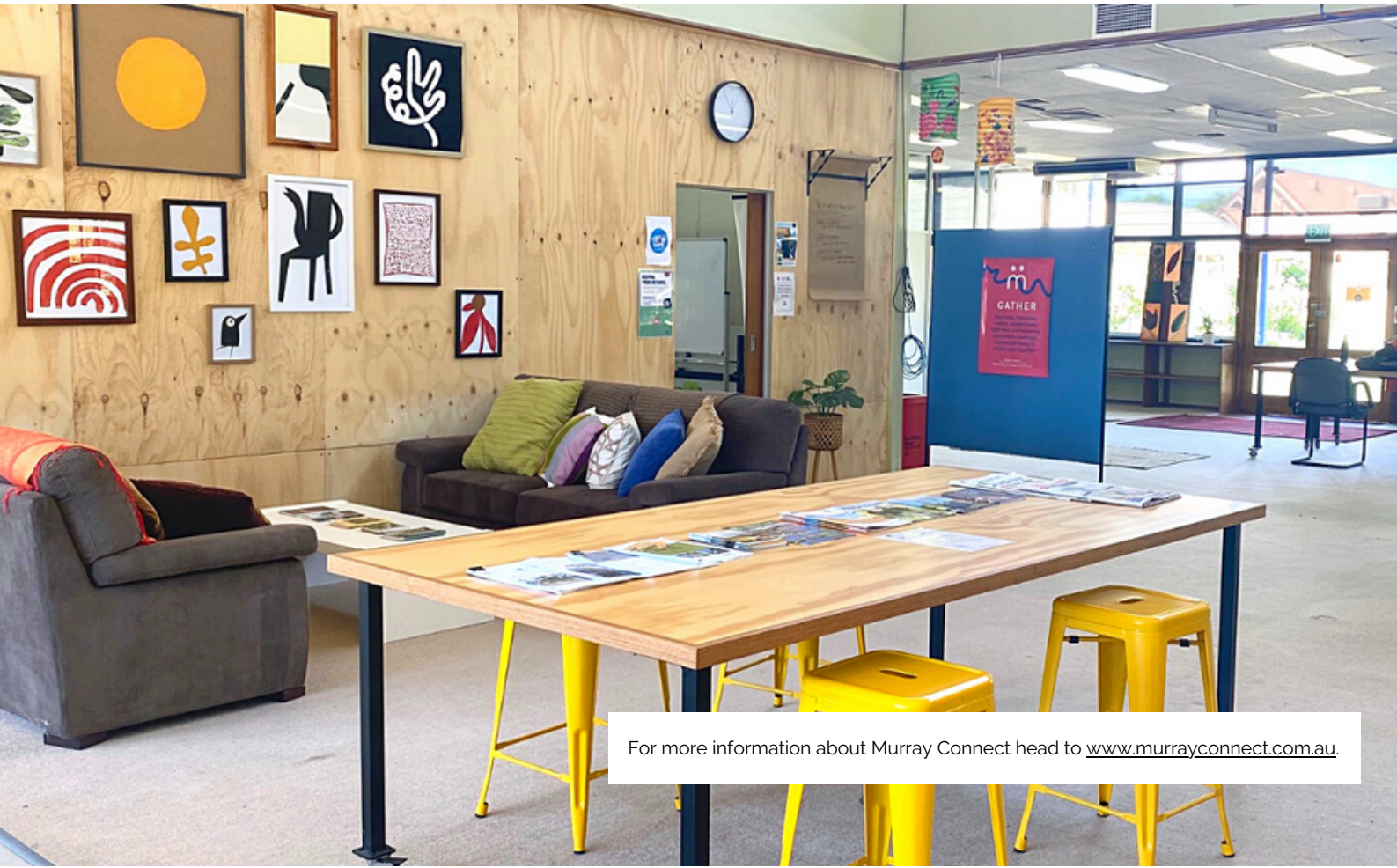
Murray Connect is a project and vision of Western Murray Land Improvement Group. It is not only our workspace but also a community hub funded by the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) Tackling Tough Times Together program. The space welcomes individuals, students, groups, and businesses. Murray Connect exists to support its community by providing a productive, versatile, and accessible space.

Funding from FRRR has allowed WMLIG to employ a Community Support Officer, who provides the local community with administrative guidance, IT help, grant writing support, job application advice, and research assistance.

Some services that are provided at Murray Connect include:

- Hot desk hire
- Meeting room hire
- Private office hire
- Information support
- Reliable Wi-Fi
- Printing & copying services
- Funding application support
- Video conferencing
- Community events

In 2020-21 the Murray Connect spaces have been booked 86 times. Our space that is most demand is our Meeting Room. The Meeting Room has been used to host many community groups, government agencies and other organisations.



For more information about Murray Connect head to www.murrayconnect.com.au.

FUTURE PROJECTS

We're always looking to the future! Some projects that our team will be scoping out in 2021-22 and beyond include:

Community-owned Energy Retail Hub

Investigating the viability to facilitate energy retailing, helping the community be more self sufficient and a prepared in the case of fire, flood or other adverse event.

Development of a regional brand

Utilising the 'River Country'' geographic indicator to develop and grow a regional produce brand for the Murray River region. Further opportunities include a food trading platform, distribution and marketing ecosystem,

Community Foundation and Community Water Bank

Scoping out the viability of a community foundation as a portal for donations to deliver local projects and leverage dollar-for-dollar funding. Potential to accept bequests and donations from individuals and businesses that want to support the community that have supported them,

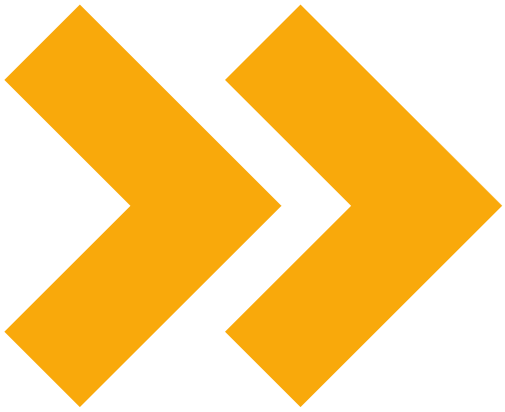
Regen Farmers Mutual environmental goods and services market

Running a pilot program for Regen Farmers Mutual, an Australian farmer-owned mutual that establishes opportunities to take advantage of land stewardship ethical investment carbon and biodiversity offset and incentives,

Development of an Agri-Innovation Precinct

Further scoping into a precinct that would serve as incubator for new ideas, products and industries, helping to identify viable commercial opportunities.

Further scoping work to be completed looking at value adding opportunities for market sectors experiencing high growth such as plant proteins and fortified and functional products have been identified as key opportunities by CSIRO (2019).



Stay up to date with our projects by visiting www.westernmurraylig.org/current-projects or subscribe to our newsletter

Industrial Hemp

The Hemp Cluster Group which was formed in June 2021 on the back of local interest in Hemp and agreed to a set action items to progress an opportunity to develop hemp industry with Murray River LGA. The group provides the impetus for Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLIG) and individual landholders to strategically develop a staged approach to creating the industry that will provide economic, social, and environmental benefits for the region.

Establish the benefits of Hemp production - bring together simple clear information that provides the return on investment for a commercial scale value add process and manufacturing, with the intent to build local infrastructure and build community resilience.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks to all our funding partners for 2021-2022 which include:

- Department of Agriculture, Water Resources and Environment
- Department of Planning and Environment NSW
- Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
- Local Government NSW
- Murray Irrigation Limited
- Murray Local Land Services
- Murray Darling Basin Authority
- Murray River Council
- NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust
- NSW Forestry Corp
- NSW Landcare Program
- NSW Roads and Maritime Services
- Charles Sturt University
- Barham High School

Along with the support provided by our project partners, WMLIG would also like to acknowledge the support services provided by Local Land Services, NSW Landcare Program and Murray Landcare Collective with particular thanks to the regional roles of the Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator (Sandy Dellwo) and Regional Landcare Co-ordinator (Paula Sheehan) that assist with facilitating partnerships connecting Landcare networks and groups and assisting with projects and funding.

Organisations that we worked with this year
Bureau of meteorology
Ruralco
Aither
Rich River Rural
Gallagher
Clipex
JBS
Hecton Products
Te Pari

THANK YOU!

To our members and local community. We thank you for your continued support. We look forward to continuing to offer a valuable contribution to our community.

As a charity and not-for-profit organisation, the support and generosity of our community enables us to continue working toward our vision and in turn deliver positive outcomes back into our community.

You can support us by:

Becoming a member
Telling your family or friends about us
Attending our events
Signing up to our mailing list
Making a donation

To find out more about what we do call or visit

03 5453 1577

www.westernmurraylig.org

Western Murray Land Improvement Group