

WMLIG Predicting Weather Patterns Online Information Session

COUNCIL NAME

Murray River Council

WEB ADDRESS

<https://www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au/Home>

SIZE

11,865 square kilometres

POPULATION

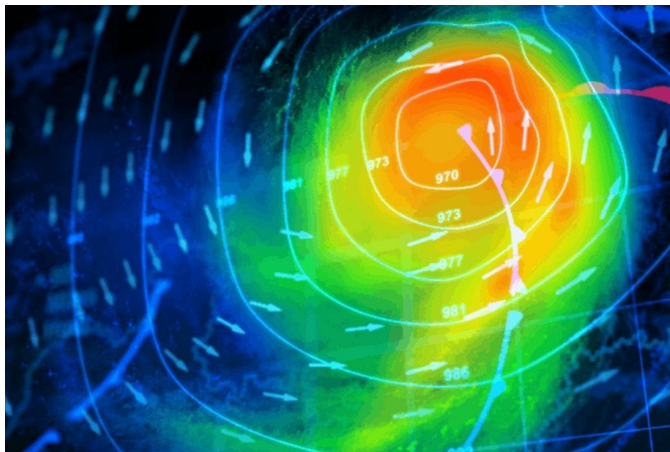
12,000

Overview of the project

This Case study is a summary of a Predicting Weather Patterns Online Information Session funded by Murray River Council's (MRC) Building Our Communities in Advance Project.

Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLIG) hosted an online information session with Luke Shelley from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and Cathy Semmler from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE).

In an area that relies heavily on rain to grow crops and feed for livestock it is important for those in the agricultural industry to understand weather predictions to make informed decisions. An understanding of weather forecasts is imperative for farmer decision making with a considerable amount of financial risk involved. The information session was to provide the community with accurate and expert information on predicting future weather patterns by looking at previous climate trends and how to interpret long and short-term weather predictions.



How the project was carried out

The information session was held online as Covid restrictions unfortunately prevented us from having an in-person event. We had 12 people attend the three-hour session which covered topics such as predicted weather patterns, where people can find the relevant information and how the information should be interpreted.

Luke Shelley from the Bureau of meteorology presented on topics which included climate context, 7-day weather forecasts, seasonal outlooks, and the future – climate services for agriculture. There are many weather factors that contribute to farming such as rain, heat and frost which can affect how and when farmers decisions they are making. He gave an in-depth explanation on how to read the weather predictions on the BOM website, as when it states there is a 90% chance of 5-10mm they mean there is a 90% chance of taking a rain recording, which is 0.2mm.

REFERENCES

NSW Government presentation
'Predicting Weather Patterns – Know, Assess, Respond'.

NSW Government Report, Western Enabling Regional Adaptation.

Cathy Semmler from DPIE presented information around knowing, assessing and responding to climate change in agriculture. She explained how climate change will/ is affecting agriculture and what we need to do to manage this in the agricultural industry and best care for crops and livestock in our climate.

Outcomes now and in the future

Information from Luke gave attendees the most relevant and up to date information on how to read the weather predictions accurately and implement this into their everyday decisions in farming.

Cathy gave information that will ensure farmers are going to make the best decisions not only for their crops and livestock but also for the environment that they are currently farming.

Current opportunity:

WMLIG has signed up to EnergyLocals as part of its due diligence to ensure that there are no unreasonable risks associated with entering into an agreement. If successful, WMLIG will promote EnergyLocals to members and the broader community. Sign-ups will provide an income stream to our group to conduct community capacity activities, such as field days and workshops in the future, which in turn support our members.

Opportunities moving forward:

Moving forward we hope that attendees will have a better understanding how to read the weather information and use to their advantage when making decisions regarding varieties and extent of crops grown, expected irrigation implications regarding supply and pricing in the immediate and short term.

A long term trend perspective was also provided to indicate degree of annual variability expectations for longer term planning purposes.

Benefits and lessons learned

We had 13 people attended the online workshop which is below the average for WMLIG events and the local attendance was disappointing. This is likely because of both poor connectivity issues experienced on rural and remote properties, as well as lack of online experience and therefore enthusiasm by the audience by the audience in the region.

This was the first webinar trialled by WMLIG and reinforced that local people relish in the social interaction aspects of capacity building events, not just the subject matter.

Most of the information session attendees didn't have an understanding of how to interpret weather predictions

More information

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