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SQNNSW Innovation Hub Newsletter #20

Understanding the issues

Our Dr Raelene Ward, First Nations Knowledge Broker for Engagement, has been meeting and yarning lately. At Stanthorpe, Dr Ward met with Aboriginal Elder Maria De Vries to better understand issues and concerns for First Nations people of the Granite Belt community and explore ideas for potential research projects relevant to their community. A second meeting took place at UniSQ College of Wine Tourism with Stanthorpe Node Manager Wim Linström and Dr Mike Olsen, an enthusiastic botanist discussing opportunities for First Nations research to determine viability and growth areas and identify subspecies of specific plants for commercialisation. The last trip for the week was a highlight and definitely an eventful one driving to St George community in the Balonne region. Hub Manager Leia Grimsey accompanied Dr Ward traveling via Moonie Crossroads, hearing the stories and navigating all forms of artwork in conversations with well-regarded locals. The duo also had the chance to meet with new adoption officer Ally Southern (pictured), hosted by Hub Node Partner Southern Queensland Landscapes, in St George.



New face at Lismore Node

The Lismore Node has a new Manager, Luca Peters. Luca holds a Masters in International Land and Water Management from Wageningen University, and brings a

wealth of international experience in agriculture, water management and irrigation to the Hub. Before moving to Australia, he worked in a small-scale solar irrigation project in Burkina Faso. Throughout his professional career he has collaborated with farmers, ministries, multilateral organisations, NGOs, knowledge institutes and the private sector in more than 11 countries in Africa, Europe and Asia. You [can email Luca](#), to find out more about the Lismore Node.



evokeAG – ideas generator

Knowledge Broker Amanda Scott and Armidale Node Manager Lu Hogan were excited to represent the SQNNSW Innovation Hub at the 2023 evoke^{AG} conference in Adelaide.

Amanda said it was the event to be at, if you worked in ag. “The crowd and speakers were a mix of farmers, entrepreneurs, corporates, investors universities and government. It was great to have so much diversity in the room to provide different viewpoints on innovation and agtech.”

Amanda said some of the key areas of interest were innovations for workforce inclusiveness and recruitment in agriculture, and making sure the “tech fits the farmer”.

Lu said the highlight for her was meeting the various founders in Start Up Alley and learning about the technology they were developing.

One of the panel speakers at the event was Next Gen Council member [Jacob Birch](#), who generated much interest in his ongoing push for the opportunities related to native grains for both agriculture and communities. And UniSQ’s School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Professor Craig Baillie, also presented on the importance of [mobilising commercial outcomes](#). The Hub is supporting Professor Baillie’s work to boost resilience to seasonal variations through agtech.



Supporting Stanthorpe growers

The Stanthorpe Node supported the Granite Belt Growers at a special event on February 21, to help growers understand the assistance available after a devastating hailstorm in the region. The Hub’s support included ensuring wellbeing experts were available, to complement the other services on hand, including from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. *Image courtesy Granite Belt Growers Association*



Catch up with the Regional Soil Coordinator

The Hub's Regional Soil Coordinator, Cameron Leckie, is often out and about at relevant events across the Hub region. Today and tomorrow (Tuesday and Wednesday), Cameron is at the [GRDC update](#) in Goondiwindi, and he will be in Armidale in early March, to carry out Soil Gap Analysis interviews with UNE, Landcare and other stakeholders. Later in March he will be in Tasmania for a national Regional Soil Coordinator community of practice event. And remember, if you can't spot Cameron in person, you can [follow him on Twitter](#).



Vermicast trial

Cameron has been involved in a Stanthorpe Node project, exploring the potential for vermicast to improve soils and yields on the Granite Belt. You can read a [general factsheet here](#), or check out this [curated video playlist](#) on our YouTube channel.

Coming up



Industry roundtable

Longreach, March 23

Listen to industry and service providers as they share a snapshot of what 2023 looks like for them - their current projects & programs.

[TICKETS](#)



Resilient Livestock Systems

Glen Innes, Armidale, Walcha

March 27-29

Free workshops! Livestock production is complex and seasonal variations make it even more so. Join us at Glen Innes, Armidale or Walcha to ensure you are on the front foot!

[RSVP TODAY](#)



Farming Family Reboot

Armidale NSW, April 18-20

Do you want to reboot your farming family? EOIs are open for places in the 2023 events. This is a free, three-day event with catering and accommodation included.

[READ MORE](#)

Quick bites from your Hub stakeholders

Investigating barley fungal resistance

A new project, led by the University of Southern Queensland, is set to equip Australian barley growers with novel biological and genetic tools to aid in their fight against a fungal disease that has caused \$177M in yield losses each year for the Australian barley industry. [Read more.](#)

Business planning important for farm success

Horticultural growers participating in the Farm Business Resilience Program (FBRP) are benefiting from identifying gaps in their current management systems and developing plans for continuous improvement. Read more [from Growcom.](#)

Microscopic organisms and horticulture yields

Scientists are investigating whether root systems packed with certain combinations of tiny living things – or microbiomes – result in a more productive plant with the aim of developing new products to increase yield. Read more from [Hort Innovation.](#)

Renewable energy & landholders

QFF has been working on the development of a toolkit to support landholders navigate, respond to and negotiate with energy industry representatives about accessing land for renewable energy projects. [Read more.](#)

Profitable Rangelands Landscapes

The Rangelands Living Skin project is a four-year project linking farming families, scientists and other collaborators to evaluate cost-effective practices that focus on regenerating the NSW rangelands to support production now and into the future. Read more [from RCS.](#)

Breeding disease resistant peanuts

Shona Wood from the University of Southern Queensland is breeding net-blotch resistant peanuts – a disease which is decimating crops around the world. [Read more.](#)

Soil carbon storage

The Australian Government is investing \$9.3 million in soil technology that could help Australian farmers increase soil carbon in cropping systems, improve soil health and resilience, and diversify farm income. [Read more.](#)

Opportunities for you

Training*Fee-free agriculture courses*

TAFE is now offering fee-free courses, including agricultural technology, livestock production, digital agronomy, and agribusiness management, among many others. [Read more.](#)

National Mentoring Program

Via the Future Drought Fund, round two of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation's mentoring program is now open. Apply before April 3 to be part of a program that will help you accelerate personal and professional development. [Details here.](#)

Commercialisation

Drought Resilience Commercialisation Initiative

This Future Drought Fund initiative will work with creators to get drought resilience innovations closer to market and closer to Australian farmers, in order to help them adapt to a changing climate. Delivery partner tenders close March 10, 2023. [Read more](#).



The Australian Government's Future Drought Fund (FDF) is seeking eligible applicants to conduct long-term trials of innovative farming practices that build drought resilience. The [Long-term Trials of Drought Resilient Farming Practices Grants program](#), has grants of up to \$8 million (GST exclusive, per application) available for projects to be delivered in the activity period (2023 to 2028). **Applications close on 15 March 2023 at 9pm (AEDT)**. Still have questions? Watch the [recorded webinar](#).



New additions to the Climate Service for Agriculture (CSA) platform will give more farmers and agricultural businesses a clearer picture of climate trends likely to impact them. Watch the video or

[read more here.](#)

Events calendar

*This calendar includes events from the Hub, its Members and Partners and Supporters, and events supported by the Australian Government. Please contact organisers for more information. Events in **bold** are organised or supported by the SQNNNSW Innovation Hub, or include a Hub speaker.*

March

- 3 – [Farm Business Resilience Planning](#), Growcom, Silkwood Q
- 7 – [Plant ID workshop](#), NSW LLS, Bedgerabong NSW
- 7 – [Organic soil health seminar](#), Australian Organic, Lismore NSW
- 7-8 – [ABARES Outlook](#), Canberra ACT
- 15 – [Farm business resilience](#), SQ Landscapes, Bymount Q
- 16 – [Farm business resilience](#), SQ Landscapes, Dunkeld Q
- 16 – [Soils alive](#) (2 of 4), GLENRAC, Glen Innes NSW
- 17 – [Healthy pastures, healthy habitats](#), HLW, Yandina Q
- 20-21 – [Business EDGE Young Guns](#), MLA, Roma Q
- 22 – [Building a resilient pasture feedbase](#), GLENRAC, Glen Innes NSW
- 24 – [Beef basics information session](#), NSW LLS, Taree NSW
- 27 – [Resilient livestock systems workshop](#), Armidale Node, Glen Innes NSW**
- 28 – [Resilient livestock systems workshop](#), Armidale Node, Armidale NSW**
- 28 – [Grazing fundamentals EDGE](#), MLA, Taroom Q
- 29 – [Resilient livestock systems workshop](#), Armidale Node, Walcha NSW**
- 31 – [Grazing management for horse owners](#), NSW LLS, Calala NSW

April

- 4 – [Digging deeper](#) (#2 option 1), GLENRAC, Glen Innes NSW
- 6 – [Digging deeper](#) (#2 option 2), GLENRAC, Glen Innes NSW
- 17 – [Soils alive](#) (#3 of 4), GLENRAC, Glen Innes NSW
- 18-20 – [Farming Family Reboot](#), Armidale Node & Rural Aid, Armidale NSW**

May

- 5 – **Business growth in challenging times (#1 of 2), Gwydir Shire Council, Bingara NSW**
- 6 – **Business growth in challenging times (#1 of 2), Gwydir Shire Council, Wialda NSW**
- 9 – [Digging deeper](#) (#3 option 1), GLENRAC, Glen Innes NSW
- 10 – [Hort apps & hacks](#), Growcom, Aratula Q
- 11 – [Hort apps & hacks](#), Growcom, Stanthorpe Q
- 11 – [Digging deeper](#) (#3 option 2), GLENRAC, Glen Innes NSW
- 12 – [Hort apps & hacks](#), Growcom, Gatton Q

June

- 2 – Business growth in challenging times (#2 of 2), Gwydir Shire Council, Bingara NSW**
- 3 – Business growth in challenging times (#2 of 2), Gwydir Shire Council, Wialda NSW**

5-7 – [Hort Connections](#), Adelaide SA

6-8 – [Science to Practice](#), online/various locations

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*The SQNNNSW Innovation Hub receives funding from the
Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.*

