# Southern New South Wales Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub

**Snapshot video transcript**

**June 2022**

**Introduction**

The Southern New South Wales Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub is one of 8 hubs across Australia. Short snapshot videos for each hub were featured in the 2022 Future Drought Fund Science to Practice Forum on 7-8 June 2022.

**Transcript**

[Video begins]

Rob Lindon:

Drought is a fact of farming in this day and age. It's something we have to be organised for, prepared for and ready to jump when it does happen.

Colin Geddes:

People are wanting to seek out more information and upskill themselves for their own businesses. And we're really trying to facilitate that. And the hub is going to be a critical link in that process.

Cindy Cassidy:

I'm Cindy Cassidy, Director of the Southern New South Wales Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub.

Cindy Cassidy:

I'm not a person from the department, I'm a person from Southern New South Wales. My family are farmers. I live and breathe the lifestyle that is Regional New South Wales. In reality, drought is such a feature of our agricultural and regional communities, that a conversation about drought or the impacts of drought is never very far away. I actually think the real opportunity is how we create diversity in our regional communities and in our small towns. So how we buffer our small towns in the same way that our farmers have become adept at buffering themselves.

Cindy Cassidy:

One of the key functions that our hub has is bringing our research community and our farmers, community members and other agribusinesses together to say, "Actually, what's the value we all bring? And how do we respect the learnings and the understandings that each of the players in the system have to create a better outcome?"

Prof Chris Blanchard:

We live in the community. So the people that we're doing research for are our friends and families. So we are always talking at the pub or at the coffee shops with our friends and families about what they're doing and how it might impact on their farming businesses, for example. By thinking about drought and innovation all the time, we can be better prepared for what's thrown at us in the future. We've got a big team of postgraduate students and we've got both the best people from around the world, as well as our local stars as well.

Scientist:

They're probably looking for it.

Prof Chris Blanchard:

It's quite a big shift.

Scientist:

Yeah.

Prof Chris Blanchard:

And a big part of what we do is about practice change. So there's no point us coming up with our own bright ideas and trying to impose them on the farming community. We spend a lot of time listening to farmers, listening to the whole supply chain to understand what their pain points are and trying to solve them. And that way, if we do make a breakthrough in those areas, those breakthroughs are welcomed with open arms.

Cindy Cassidy:

The researchers are able to actually undertake activities that have got real on the ground meaning, and people who are deeply interested in the outcomes of that. And there's nothing more satisfying than knowing what you're doing is going to be used and valued. It is almost lab to paddock, but I would actually think of it more of a circle than a straight line. So it is, how do we bring all of those people together in a collective?

Alison Southwell:

So the Southern New South Wales Innovation Hub is very much built on a hub and spoke type model where yes, the hub is in Wagga Wagga, but the Farming Systems Group Alliance is really important in being the spokes and being the conduit out into the regions.

Colin Geddes:

Absolutely, trust has to be earned. That's part of how I see that the role of organisations that are linking the farmers to the hub is that we hopefully have the trust of our members and they trust us when we bring knowledge back from the hub, that they fully trust us to be able to apply it in their own businesses.

Rob Lindon:

The last drought was a very prolonged one. And if it taught us anything, it's that being organised in advance is the only way to go. Knowing what your plan's going to be when it happens is crucial to the overall outcome.

Alison Southwell:

I guess I've seen both sides. I've worked in science and I am a farmer. The Southern New South Wales Innovation Hub is a real unique opportunity in that it's bringing all parties to the fore together, to talk about drought resilience and build a common understanding and clear communication pathways across organisations. And that's something that particularly Farming Systems Groups, we haven't really had that clear connectivity with the organisations before. And it's something we're really looking forward to developing.

Cindy Cassidy:

Starting an organisation from a blank sheet of paper takes time. At the beginning, there was a degree of caution. Let's call it. And as time has gone on, and we've been able to make some progress, we're seeing people become more and more interested in how they can be involved. So there's been a lot of behind the scenes work that we've had to do. And I would say that what I've experienced with our people is enormous patience and enormous good will. We're ready to take the next step now, so it's very, very exciting.

[Video ends]

**Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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