# Tasmanian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub

**Snapshot video transcript**

**June 2022**

**Introduction**

The Tasmanian 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]

Dr Kathy Evans:

The Hub here in Tasmania is different to other areas and it's to do with the interactions between people, land, water and our climate. It can be pouring rain on one side of the island and dry as a bone on the other. The Hub is very much around bringing different types of knowledge together so farmers learn from each other. That's one way, but importantly, we need to bring expertise into those discussions when it's needed so that when we're doing our learning, it's evidence-based.

Rae Young:

We're on the farm here at Lewisham, in the midlands of Tasmania, and we grow mostly Merino sheep here. So our aim is to produce large Merino sheep so we can have wool and meat as our options, so just to hedge our bets. It's always interesting for us to embrace research and we get to know what's happening. And the research is not just in pastures, but it's also in the environment.

Dr Rowan Smith:

We're trialling different machinery to sew an autumn and winter forage mix. So we're looking at sewing a grass mix, a brassica mix and then a multi species mix, if you like. What we're trying to, I guess, evaluate is different ways of establishing those and then use that as a feed for stock during winter. As you can see, even though we've had a little bit of rain, we're still working with very little soil moisture.

Dr Rowan Smith:

We're looking for ways in which we can make pastures more resilient. Obviously there is a productivity goal at the end of the day. In low rainfall environments, though, there's got to be a level of persistence of whatever that production system is. So we're looking to try and extend that sweet spot in productivity for much longer.

Dr Rowan Smith:

I think the importance of the Hub is that they are getting feedback from their stakeholders, whether that be livestock producers or vineyard owners here in Tasmania. Getting what they think are the important issues and then get snippets of information that might be relevant to them and their region and provide support in those producers being able to adopt any sort of innovation on farm.

Dr Kathy Evans:

So diversification in farming enterprises, it offers different types of income streams for farmers. And the expansion of the irrigation schemes is really helping with that diversification. Because suddenly when you've got the water, it gives you those options on what types you can grow. We have unprecedented expansion of our irrigation schemes. And that's a great thing, that is part of drought resilience, being able to add water in the dry conditions.

James Walsh:

We're part of the Macquarie Settlement Pipeline that delivers water into this region, which is a high surety of water at a reasonable cost. And so what I've done is attached the highest value crop that we can grow on the property to that water. We're also very out of area for the traditional wine growing regions of Tasmania, so a lot of people are watching to see how we go and whether we can produce good quality grapes.

Rob Bayles:

The water that comes out of the pipeline scheme, there's raspberry and strawberry canes. There's three dairy farms. There's a vineyard. It's just given everyone the opportunity to diversify into other crops. A lot are just growing more sheep and cattle canning, like traditional crops, but it's given other people opportunity to expand into different industries. Well, it's just made it sustainable in this area. It's given all the partners an opportunity to grow.

James Walsh:

I guess the extremes aren't as great here. But still, we have gone through exceedingly dry times in the past and we'll have to survive those in the future. And water helps take away that risk of those dry times. It doesn't mitigate, it doesn't drought-proof, but it gives you more options.

Dr Kathy Evans:

It's not just add water. Poor irrigation practices, too, can have a damaging effect on our soils. It can affect our water quality and it can also just have a general negative environmental effect. There's enormous satisfaction when you work with groups on the ground and you can see... You might have gone back and done some of the science in the lab, but when you can see a grower have a conversation and they've integrated that knowledge into their own thinking, but they're expressing it in a different way. And they're actually articulating back to you how that they've changed and what it's meant to them. And I think that's enormously satisfying. So Hub is about bringing the different groups together. It's the know-what of the experts and it's the knowhow of the farmers. And that's where the magic happens.

[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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