# Tropical North Queensland Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub

**Snapshot video transcript**

**June 2022**

**Introduction**

The Tropical North Queensland 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]

Prof. Ian Atkinson:

Drought. No one likes drought. Drought's awful. It reduces production, causes great financial hardship. But, in an innovation context, it's the time where you want to be doing things differently.

Martin Holzwart:

We wait till the drought comes along, and then we spend a lot of our energy working out how we're going to get through it. And by then usually it's too late, and we end up making reactive decisions. If we can discuss these things now, when there's a little less pressure and we've probably got a little bit more time, people are probably financially a lot better position to adopt some different stuff.

Dr David Phelps:

If we've learned anything from all of Australia's history, it's that there will be another drought just around the corner.

Dr David Phelps:

So I'm the director of the Tropical North Queensland Drought and Innovation Hub. And one of the key things that we're really looking to do is create more opportunities for our agricultural industries and their communities, to innovate, to become more resilient in the drought space and to have better pre-preparedness, ready for the next drought.

Martin Holzwart:

To be able to have something like the hub actively operating in a community like Charters Towers, I think it will be great for the industry and for the community. A good place for like-minded producers to get together and tease out some ideas. And hopefully, yeah, work out a few different ones, in a few different ways of dealing with some of these tougher seasons that we've been seemingly getting a lot more often lately.

Eiren Smith:

There's a network from across the country, using local people to implement strategies. So it's really exciting to see how that's all going to happen. And, yeah, getting everyone on board is a really good thing.

Daniel Christie:

It's really there to bring people together and start those conversations around the research that's been done, the sort of solutions that are available and trying to get them more understood, more out there, but also receive feedback.

Dr David Phelps:

So we're running Forums, Field Days and most importantly, we're attending already organised industry events, whether that be in the grazing industry, in horticulture, or other agricultural industries and within their communities.

Dr David Phelps:

So that we can listen and learn about what the real local issues are and then really engage in a conversation around what are the local solutions? What are some of the things that you mightn't have even thought of before, that things like technology or other innovations could bring to the table to actually help?

Prof. Ian Atkinson:

So research in AgTech ranges from very high technology, through to people who can package and manufacture things, to people that can put all these things together to make a solution. And then we need a whole lot of people on the ground, who can communicate with producers, get their knowledge, feed it back into that solution.

Chris Poole:

I think a grazing business in Northern Australia, you always have to be thinking ahead and also keeping that worst case scenario in the back of your mind. What happens if it doesn't rain? Having those options in place and being able to make decisions early is very important.

Eiren Smith:

Yeah. Tech is definitely crucial with modern farming. I've seen the benefits that taking notice of research can have within your business. We can actually have some input into where funding is going to go and getting it into the right areas and getting scientists and producers in a room talking to each other, so that we're not reinventing the wheel.

Dr David Phelps:

It'll be absolutely crucial that what we learn in the TNQ hub is shared across all of the hubs across Australia. Things that are learned out of Tasmania will have application in South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland. So collaboration and sharing, right across all of the hubs, is fundamental to success overall for our agricultural industries, right across Australia.

Daniel Christie:

We as much want to learn from other areas and what other hubs in other regions are doing as well. But I think, what we do up here, as I said, we definitely think there's things that are common. We want to share what we've learned and the practices, but also we want to receive what others have done and learnt as well.

Eiren Smith:

We're dealing with climate variability every day. That's just how we live. And a drought resilient future to me is just being as well prepared as we possibly can, having the infrastructure in place, so that we can react early.

Dr David Phelps:

As we get better and better established over time, we'll be there to help farmers, graziers and their communities really identify the key issues around drought resilience and preparedness.

Martin Holzwart:

Another drought is... Yeah, there's not really anything surer, so.

Prof. Ian Atkinson:

We need more people. We need people to adopt. We need people to want to get involved and participate. And if we get enough people and enough energy, we're going to make Australia's primary production systems a lot more reliable. We can turn drought from a dreaded disaster to something that we can manage, overcome and just make part of the primary production system.

[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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