



2022–2023

# Producer Adoption Outcomes Report



Care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication. However, MLA cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information or opinions contained in the publication. You should make your own enquiries before making decisions concerning your interests. MLA accepts no liability for any losses incurred if you rely solely on this publication and excludes all liability as a result of reliance by any person on such information or advice.

Apart from any use permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, all rights are expressly reserved. Requests for further authorisation should be directed to the Content Manager, PO Box 1961, North Sydney, NSW 2059 or [info@mla.com.au](mailto:info@mla.com.au)

© Meat & Livestock Australia 2023

ABN 39 081 678 364. Published in September 2023.

MLA acknowledges the matching funds provided by the Australian Government to support the research and development detailed in this publication.

# Contents

- 1** Welcome
- 2** 2022–23 highlights
- 4** Producer adoption strategy
- 6** Profitable Grazing Systems
- 10** Producer Demonstration Sites
- 13** EDGE network
- 16** BredWell FedWell
- 18** BeefUp
- 20** MeatUp
- 22** Livestock advisor network
- 25** Digital adoption programs
- 28** Integrated research and development and customised adoption initiatives
- 35** Global adoption review project
- 36** Adoption program service providers
- 37** MLA contacts



# Welcome

I am proud to present you with the annual *MLA Producer Adoption Outcomes Report*. The report outlines the breadth of extension activities and adoption projects MLA delivered across 2022–23, and the on-farm benefits producers receive from their involvement in the program.

During 2022–23 MLA delivered \$59 million in annual net benefits to producers involved in MLA adoption activities. The continual improvements in monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes in MLA adoption projects allow MLA to better demonstrate the impact these projects have on-farm for producers. Increased extension activities and monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes in MLA research projects have increased the opportunities for producers to engage with the latest research findings.

MLA's adoption programs are centred around how producers can maintain or increase their profitability in a changing climatic and economic environment, and as such place a greater emphasis on improving productivity.

MLA provides extension services which allow producers and service providers to improve their business, pasture and livestock management skills. Extension packages aim to up skill users with the latest research

outcomes, technology or best practice management. This publication outlines the opportunities which members of the red meat sector have engaged in during 2022–23 and the benefits which have been delivered through this involvement.

MLA has continued to increase its adoption service offering by piloting new and revised MLA products this year. These products have included the Southern Rangelands Grazing Fundamentals EDGE workshop, BredWell FedWell (sheep and beef) and WormBoss with pilots across South Australia, Victoria, NSW, and the NT. Please keep an eye out for these workshops, as well as MLA's Carbon EDGE workshops, throughout 2023 and 2024.

Thank you to the 13,757 red meat producers who got involved, our 110 service providers and MLA's adoption team. We look forward to delivering more opportunities for producers to increase their production and profitability in the coming 12 months.

**Sally Leigo**  
Program Manager – Producer Adoption



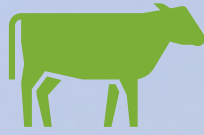




# 2022–23 highlights



**>9.3M**  
sheep influenced by practice change programs



**>8.7M**  
cattle influenced by practice change programs



**536,179**  
goats influenced by practice change programs



**>157.5M**  
hectares of Australian agricultural land influenced by MLA adoption programs



**85%**  
average value rating of events across MLA adoption program



**76%**  
of attendees indicated intent to change practices as a result of MLA adoption programs



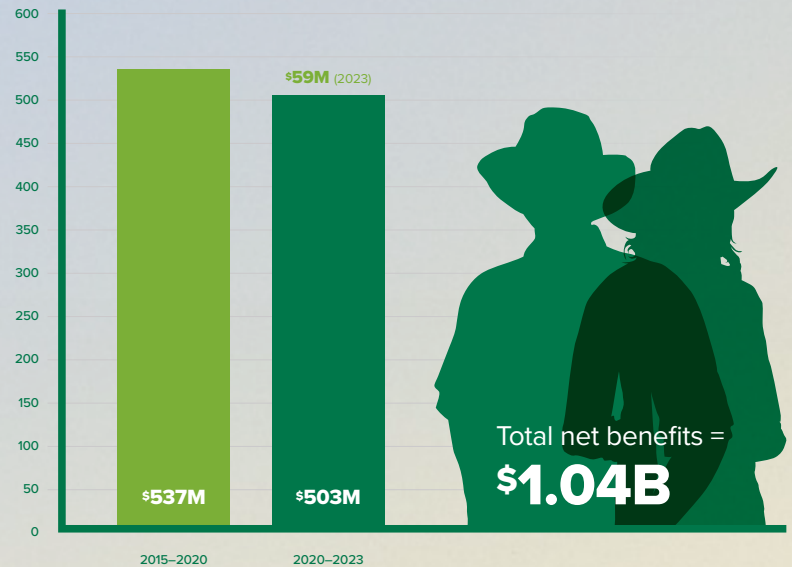
**13,757**  
producers engaged



**2,801**  
advisors engaged

## Total benefits\* delivered to producers via MLA adoption programs

MLA adoption programs have delivered \$1.04 billion\* in total net benefits to participating producers who adopted a new practice between 2015–2023. In 2022–23 this was \$59 million in annual net benefits to participating producers.



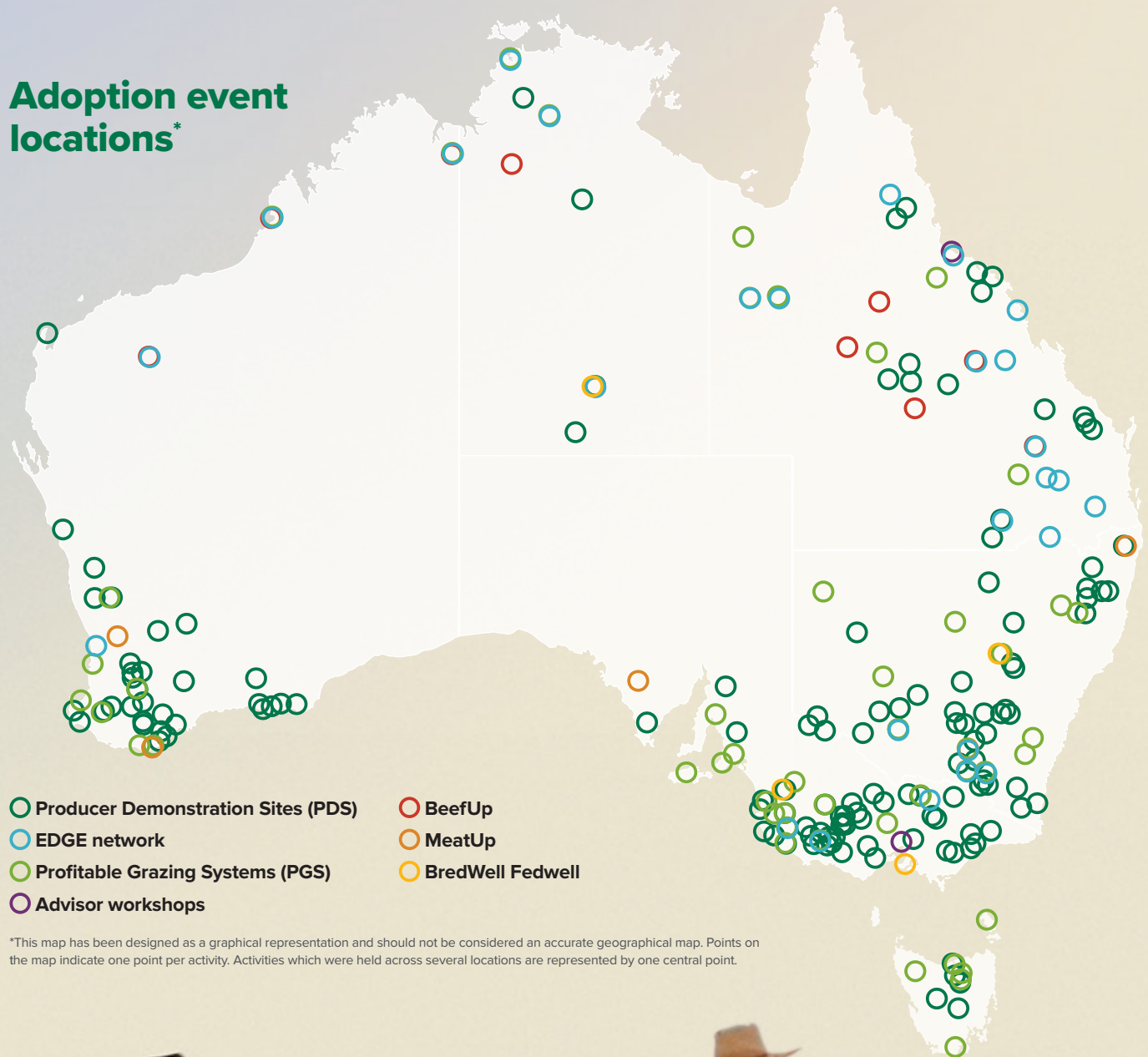
\*Calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.

The economic benefits of participating in MLA adoption programs are presented in this report as a range for each individual program. This range is based on the average benefits producers received during 2022–23 across varying on-farm productivity changes.

These numbers are based on case studies, modelling and estimates from comparable practice changes made in similar circumstances in previous years. The benefit an individual producer receives depends on the type of practice change implemented, on-farm conditions such as soils or climate, breed and genetics, and the scale at which the change is implemented.

Keep this in mind when reviewing the figures in this report and if you have any questions, please contact [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au)

## Adoption event locations\*



\*This map has been designed as a graphical representation and should not be considered an accurate geographical map. Points on the map indicate one point per activity. Activities which were held across several locations are represented by one central point.







# Producer adoption strategy

**The MLA adoption pathway is made up of three stepping stones: awareness activities, short-term training programs and long-term practice change activities. Underpinning the pathway is the upskilling and capacity building of livestock advisors to ensure delivery and uptake of change activities.**

**Awareness activities** inform producers about the latest research and development (R&D) relating to livestock production and are delivered as field days, forums, webinars, newsletters, articles and podcasts.

**Short-term training programs** are designed to increase the knowledge and skills of producers around the latest livestock production practices by engaging them in training activities like workshops or online learning modules. Generally, these are one-to-three day events.

**Long-term practice change activities** involve producers learning from each other under the guidance of a consultant or advisory coach. These activities involve producers implementing the latest livestock production practices into their businesses. Generally, these activities take between six months to three years to complete.

Underpinning MLA's adoption pathway are livestock advisors who often provide guidance and advice to producers implementing a change in their business. Livestock advisors are defined as anyone who provides advice to red meat producers as a core part of their role. This includes veterinarians, private consultants, agronomists, livestock agents, sales representatives, public extension officers and anyone else providing advice or support to livestock producers. To increase adoption outcomes MLA delivers programs to advisors to increase their knowledge of the latest (R&D) findings and to allow for professional development opportunities and networking.

The MLA adoption strategy includes programs and activities which lead to an increase in the adoption of R&D. These include implementing new initiatives and enhancing existing programs.

The MLA adoption strategy has four key pillars:

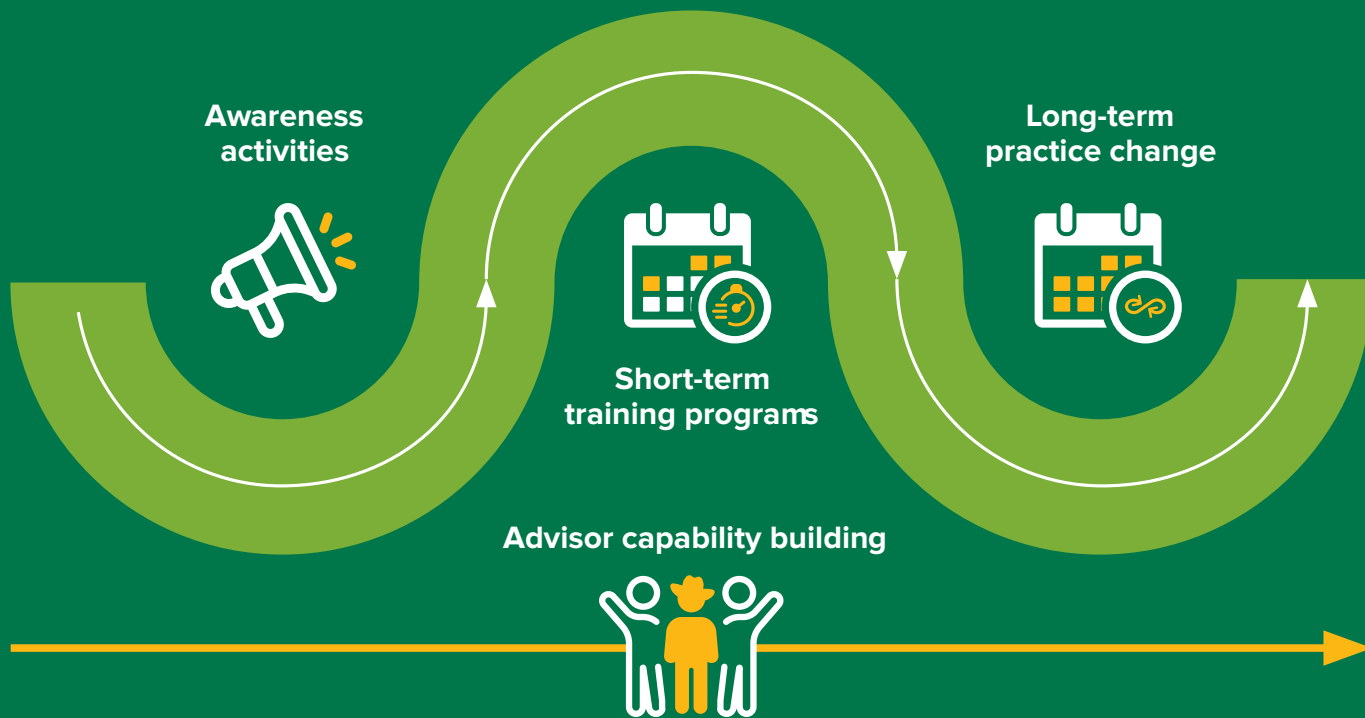
- awareness and short-term training programs
- long-term practice change
- capability building
- program approach to research, development and adoption (RD&A).

The MLA adoption strategy will continually evolve to deliver improved industry outcomes through the following key areas:

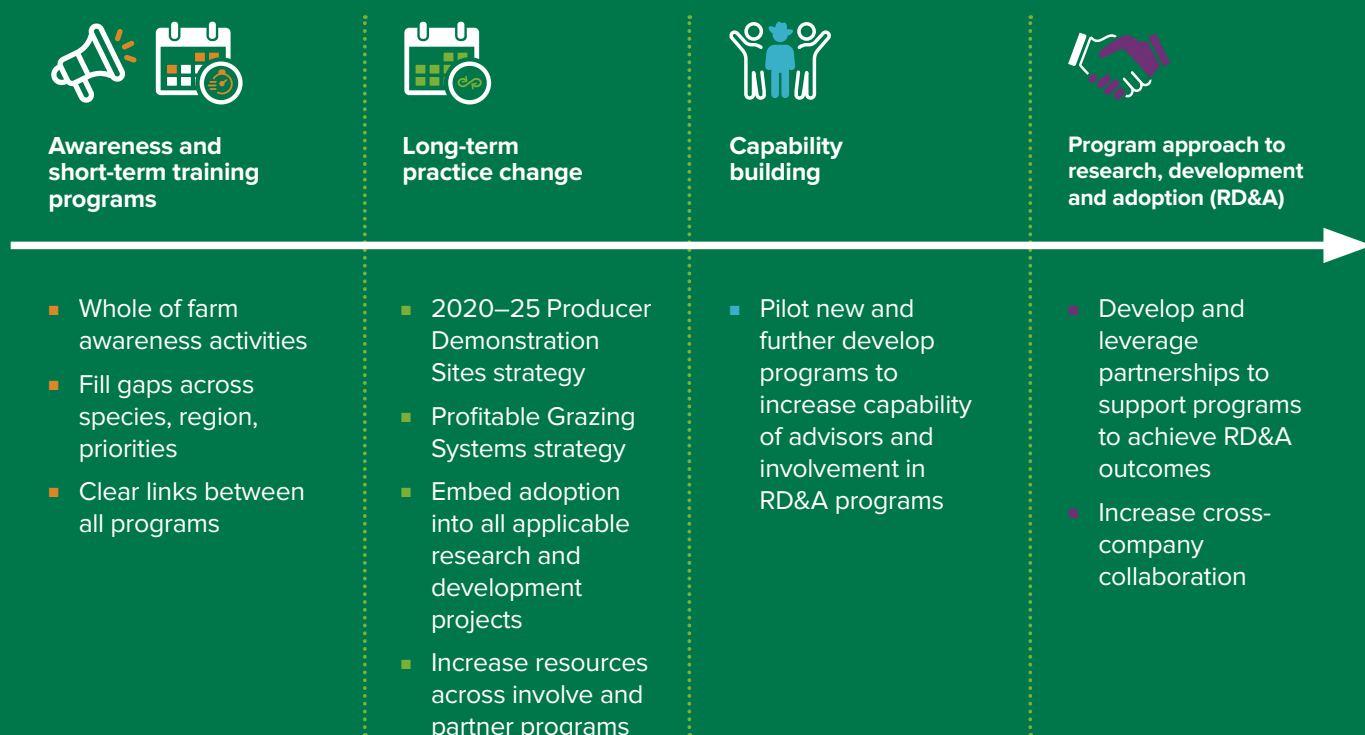
- ensuring all applied on-farm R&D has a pathway to adoption built into the project, or a robust mechanism to ensure adoption outcomes are achieved
- investing more resources into growing and developing programs based on long-term (>12 months) supported and experiential learning for producers
- working collaboratively across the company to develop and implement RD&A programs of work, which result in greater focus on the areas that will have the maximum impact for industry
- partnering with industry stakeholders across the red meat supply chain to deliver greater adoption outcomes
- encouraging participation of the advisory network in MLA adoption programs and building the capability of existing and new advisors
- expanding the methods to reach producers to raise awareness and provide training including eLearning modules, short videos and marketing campaigns
- using consistent methods to monitor and evaluate impact and the success of RD&A programs.



## Adoption pathway



## Strategic framework





# Profitable Grazing Systems

**Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS)** is a group-based training program which uses supported learning packages (SLPs) to deliver training and coaching over several months to improve producer skills and knowledge. Through PGS, participants have the opportunity to develop and practice skills with small groups of like-minded producers to help them improve business performance. Each SLP aligns to at least one of the following curriculums: people, business, reproduction and genetics, value chain and feedbase.



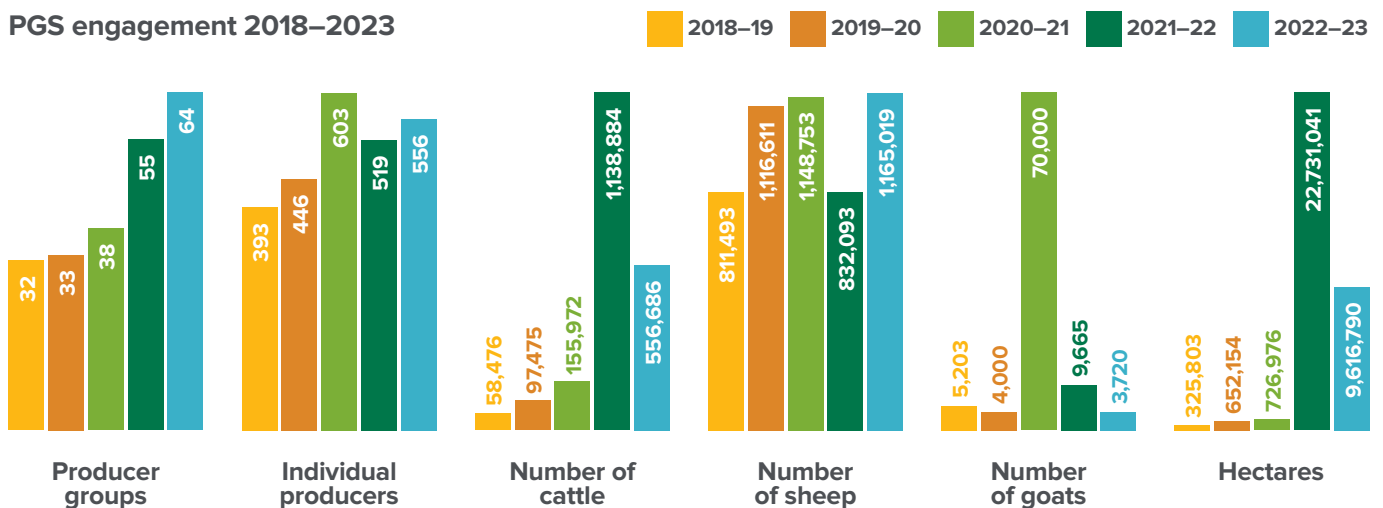
In 2022–23 the PGS program saw continued growth in engagement and return on investment to producers. This was largely driven by the increased delivery of PGS SLPs throughout northern Australia and the introduction of MLA's southern SLP, Grass to Dollars.

PGS will deliver \$269.2 million\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of SLPs attended between 2015–2022. MLA's investment in PGS since 2015 delivered \$15 million in annual net benefits to producers in 2022–23.

On average, northern beef producers participating in a PGS SLP can expect an additional net benefit of \$6/km<sup>2</sup> annually. On average, southern producers participating in an PGS SLP can expect an additional net benefit of \$22/ha annually.

\*Calculated as net present value of adoption benefits to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.

## PGS engagement 2018–2023



## Interested in becoming a PGS coach?

The PGS mentoring program is designed to upskill new coaches and improve the confidence of service providers to deliver supported learning packages (SLPs) and make a measurable difference to participants' businesses. In 2022–23, twelve new deliverers took part in the mentorship program. All have gone on to establish their own PGS groups. Additionally, 40 livestock advisors were engaged in capability building events and/or participated in a PGS train-the-trainer activity.

PGS is seeking coaches who can work with producers using existing SLPs or packages they have developed themselves. PGS deliverers come from a range of backgrounds, tapping into their coaching and advisory skills to deliver supported learning packages to small groups of producers.

**To find out more about becoming a PGS coach, email [pgs@mla.com.au](mailto:pgs@mla.com.au)**





## PGS supported learning packages include:

- **Phosphorus for Profit:** Assists northern producers in managing and diagnosing phosphorus deficiencies in their cattle herds. Provides practical solutions for effective supplementation to improve cattle health and profitability.
- **PayDirt North:** The northern adaptation of the existing PayDirt program, tailored to help producers in the north value-add to soil testing results and determine where they will get the most bang for their fertiliser buck.
- **NEW Renovation Rescue:** Aids producers in transforming run down perennial pastures through the application of grazing, weed manipulation and improved soil conditions.
- **NEW Sowing for Success:** Helps producers determine where to invest their pasture dollars to successfully establish a perennial pasture.
- **Heifers for Profit:** Develops skills and confidence in managing heifer nutrition to improve animal welfare, increase future reproductive success, optimise stocking rates and increase whole farm profitability.
- **Getting Goats to Market:** Builds the knowledge and skills of goatmeat producers, allowing them to effectively and efficiently grow and select goats to generate a profit. Producers develop a simple, customised production plan for their goatmeat enterprise to assist with planning and decision making.
- **NEW Grass to Dollars:** Assists producers in assessing pastures grown across southern Australia, condition scoring livestock, managing pasture grazing and optimising pasture utilisation.
- **Lead with Certainty:** Participants develop a better understanding of themselves and their teams, while learning more effective ways of creating a positive team culture through planning, goal setting and communication.
- **PayDirt:** Value-adds to soil testing results, helping producers determine how to get the most bang for their fertiliser buck.
- **Meat the Market:** With a whole of supply chain focus, this package trains producers in improving lamb processing compliance and optimising eating quality.
- **Building Better Breeders:** Covers the A–Z of beef breeding in southern and temperate production zones and provides advice on using electronic identification (eID).
- **Lifting Lamb Survival:** Gives producers greater control over lambing and reproduction outcomes.
- **Pasture Principles:** Producers undertake this package for a 12–month pasture production cycle to learn a set of guiding principles to manage pastures confidently.
- **Satellite-Assisted Forage Budgeting:** Upskills producers to use satellite imagery to develop grazing budgets on a large scale.
- **Grazing Matcher™:** Designed to improve the productivity, profitability and resilience of red meat producers by enabling them to better match grazing pressure, fertiliser application, animal requirements and market demands.
- **Benchmarking for Profit and Production:** Helps producers identify and connect their business goals to benchmarking performance and use comparative analysis data in to identify future goals, current strengths and weaknesses.
- **NEW LevelUp:** Designed to coach producers through how to take the family farm and turn it into the family business, covering topics of strategy, governance, investment and the road to succession.
- **Business Essentials:** Developed to upskill producers in the fundamentals of managing the business side of a livestock enterprise.
- **Dollar Making Decisions:** Producers learn the skills to take a disciplined and rational approach to capital allocation on-farm.
- **Dry Time Ready:** Designed to help producers develop a drought management strategy focused on production and resource allocation.
- **Managing a Diverse Feedbase:** This package provides producers with the skills to manage a mixed farming feedbase to meet their livestock production goals.
- **Improving Tactical Decision Making:** Designed to help develop grazing management programs which address feedbase productivity and resource sustainability in a southern rangelands environment.

## Supporting learning packages in development include:

- **Improved Beef Market Compliance:** Designed to drive profitability by enhancing producer understanding around beef processing compliance frameworks. Producers will also learn about MSA requirements and how to use feedback platforms to make decisions based on carcase data.
- **Northern Australia Climate Program:** Designed to establish a fundamental understanding of the key climate drivers and processes which influence the timing and quality of the wet season in Northern Australia. The package explores how this information and tools can be implemented to improve decisions in the business.

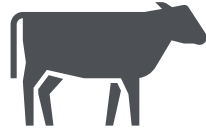
**i** To find out what packages are offered in your state or to make a request for a package near you, email [pgs@mla.com.au](mailto:pgs@mla.com.au)



# PGS 2022–23 highlights



**1.2M**  
sheep influenced  
by the PGS program



**556,686**  
cattle influenced by  
the PGS program



**3,720**  
goats influenced by  
the PGS program

**64**  
ACTIVE  
GROUPS

**30** COMPLETED  
GROUPS

**556** ACTIVE  
PRODUCERS



**40**

active coaches  
in 2022–23

**Avg \$22/ha**  
of additional net  
benefit annually  
for participating  
southern  
producers

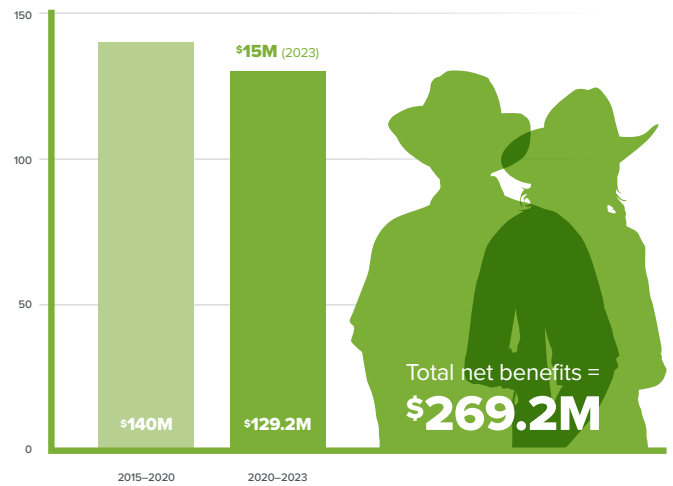
**Avg \$6/km<sup>2</sup>**  
of additional net  
benefit annually  
for participating  
northern producers



**88%**

of participants  
intended to change  
current practice

## Total benefits\* delivered to producers via PGS



\*Calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.



**9.6M**  
hectares of Australian  
agricultural land impacted  
by the PGS program

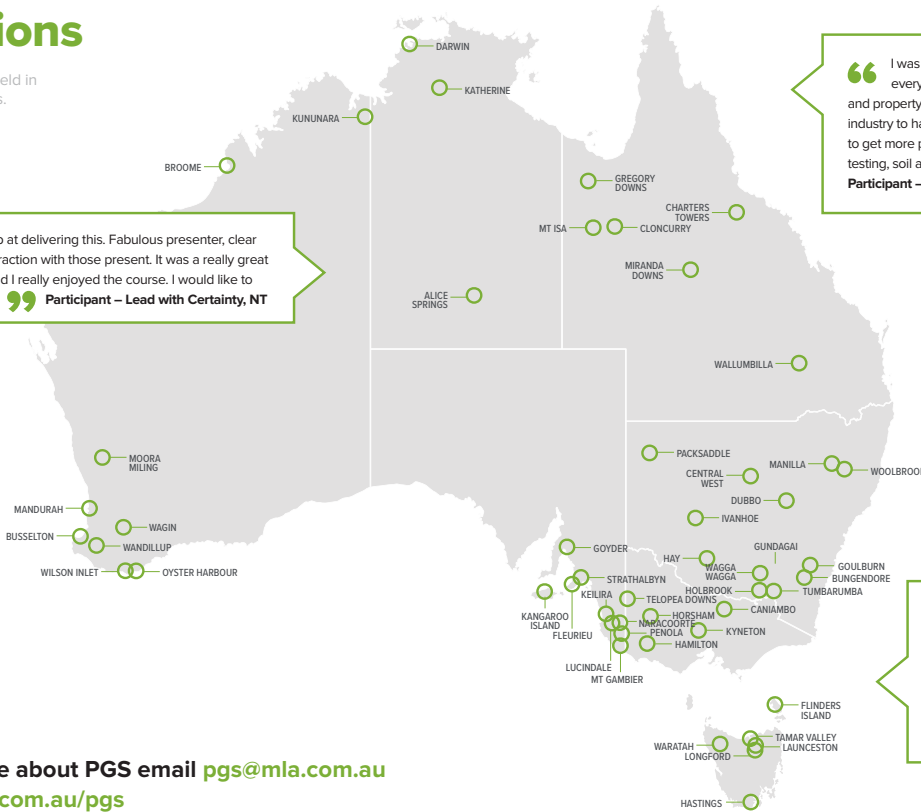
## PGS locations

A PGS course may have been held in the same location multiple times.

“ Tammy did a wonderful job at delivering this. Fabulous presenter, clear communication, great interaction with those present. It was a really great day of education and activities, and I really enjoyed the course. I would like to continue developing in this area. ” **Participant – Lead with Certainty, NT**

“ I was thrilled to be part of this course, everything was very well presented and property-specific. It is great for the industry to have these types of courses, and to get more participants involved in soil testing, soil and nutrients knowledge. ” **Participant – PayDirt North, QLD**

“ Thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from the course. Would like to come along again for a refresher. ” **Participant – Pasture Principles, TAS**



**i** To find out more about PGS email [pgs@mla.com.au](mailto:pgs@mla.com.au) or visit the [mla.com.au/pgs](http://mla.com.au/pgs)





# Producers hit PayDirt with soil management

PayDirt deliverer Peter Spies recently completed the first program in Queensland's Maranoa region.

## Producers in Queensland's Brigalow Belt have a new tool to combat soil infertility, with MLA's PayDirt program delving into the fertility requirements of pastures.

Soil fertility in this region has run down since the country was first cleared 40–60 years ago. Although this initial clearing led to significant nutrient releases, continuous grazing since then has depleted soil organic carbon. This means substantial fertility loss, particularly phosphorus and nitrogen.

The first PayDirt North course – part of the Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS) program – was recently run in the Maranoa region by contracted coaches Peter Spies and Jill Alexander.

"Traditionally, producers have seen fertilising pasture as largely uneconomical – but with increasing land prices, producers are possibly better off doing more with what land they have, and addressing fertility," Peter said.

### Input decisions

Through PayDirt, producers identify what soils are worthwhile fertilising, then look at their existing pastures to decide if fertilising is a worthwhile investment.

"They need to have a good base of what are termed '3P' grasses: perennial, palatable and productive," Peter said.

"It doesn't have to be a large body of feed, but there needs to be plenty of tussock cover which can respond to rainfall and fertiliser."

The next step is to assess soil fertility with sampling. Through the program, producers learn how to read and interpret the soil test results to recognise which nutrients are most limiting.

"We then combine these assessments into a decision matrix to make the best decision on what paddock is going to give them the best bang for their buck, and identify possible strategies to address nutrient deficiencies," Peter said.

### Hands-on learning

PayDirt involves three half-day group learning sessions over three months, and access to individual coaching to develop property-specific plans.

Participants usually take one of two approaches:

- straight fertilisation of existing improved grass pastures
- a systems-based approach, whereby pastures may have been, or will be, oversown with legumes.

"Identifying and addressing limiting nutrients, combined with sound grazing management – and possibly incorporating legume species such as desmanthus and stylos in areas receiving reliable rainfall – is

likely to result in more beef per hectare, through increased pasture growth and quality," Peter said.

"This biomass improves soil biology, resulting in improved soil health, sequestering more carbon, holding more moisture, increasing cation exchange and resulting in soil stability, drought resilience and the retention of valuable topsoil."

Peter appreciates that for many beef producers, soil testing and fertilising is a shift in management.

"I've seen results from improved pasture, sown on existing cropping land, as well as fertiliser placed deep in the soil. Over 14 months, an additional 174kg (218%) of beef was produced from this pasture versus conventional buffel pasture (254kg/ha of beef compared with 80kg/ha). Organic carbon increased by 27%.

"There's different thought on fertiliser, particularly in regenerative agriculture, but improvements can be achieved through both synthetic and non-synthetic approaches, via the plant sacrificing up to 40% of its sugars through roots feeding microbes.

"PayDirt seeks to educate producers about nutrients, soil health and building pasture quality and quantity, rather than the nutrient source."



# Producer Demonstration Sites

**MLA's Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) program aims to increase the rate of adoption of key management practices and technologies which improve business profitability, productivity and sustainability. PDS projects supports livestock producers working in peer-to-peer groups (known as core producers) to pursue new skills, knowledge and management practices applicable to their own commercial livestock production systems.**



Additional activities are held to engage a wider producer audience (known as observer producers) and share the learnings with the regional producer community. The key outcome of a PDS is adoption of the demonstrated management practices, resulting in improved business performance.

Levy-funded and co-contributor PDS projects are called for annually, following consultation with the research advisory councils – Southern Australia Livestock Research Council (SALRC), North Australia Beef Research Council (NABRC) and Western Australia Livestock Research Council (WALRC). Producer priorities are identified through this process, which formulate the terms of reference for the levy-funded PDS call. A producer panel is engaged to review PDS project applications to ensure they address producers' priorities and will deliver impact to their region. Co-contributor projects are required to align with MLA and industry strategic frameworks, including the *MLA Strategic Plan 2025* and *Red Meat 2030*.

To access the PDS search tool visit [mla.com.au/pds-search](https://mla.com.au/pds-search)

## Producer Demonstration Site framework

### Levy

**Producer driven projects to address regional PDS priorities set by the Regional Research Advisory Councils (RACs)/Regional Committees**

**Funding: up to \$30,000/year** for the life of the project.  
100% funded by producer levies.

These projects feature:

- 10 core producers and three sites preferred
- flexibility for extensive regions and other projects
- two-to-six year projects
- maximise observer producer involvement
- key involvement from the RACs
- projects must meet RAC priorities
- projects undergo producer panel review.

### Co-contributor

**Producer group driven projects aligned with industry priorities and targets**

**Funding: up to \$60,000/year** for the life of the project.  
Funded by a combination of producer levies and participant cash contribution matched by the MLA Donor Company (MDC).

These projects feature:

- 10 core producers and three sites preferred
- flexibility for extensive regions and other projects
- two-to-six year projects
- maximise observer producer involvement
- projects must meet industry priorities (e.g. *Red Meat 2030*).

Following the 2022 PDS call for producer-led projects, MLA supported funding for 11 levy projects, three co-contributor and one integrated R&D PDS. Four additional Integrated R&D PDS projects were contracted during 2022–23 associated with research projects.

PDS has delivered \$215.1 million\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of projects completed between 2015–2022. MLA's investment in PDS since 2015 has delivered \$13.1 million in annual net benefits to producers in 2022–23.

On average, and depending on the area of practice change, producers can expect an additional net benefit of between \$1.77 to \$4.69/ha annually as a result of their participation in the program.

\*Calculated as net present value of adoption benefits to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.

**i** Want to find out about PDS activities in your region? Sign up to the PDS mailing list to receive quarterly updates on active PDS projects and key information on the annual PDS project call at [mla.com.au/pds](https://mla.com.au/pds)

**i** Check out the PDS website, search tool and resources for producers and facilitators at [mla.com.au/pds](https://mla.com.au/pds)



# PDS 2022–23 highlights

**4.3M**  
sheep influenced by the PDS program

**373,547**  
cattle influenced by the PDS program

**77**  
PDS FACILITATORS ENGAGED

**99**  
ACTIVE PDS PROJECTS

**19** NEW PDS PROJECTS  
**442** ACTIVE PDS SITES

**55%**  
of observer producers have adopted new practices after PDS participation

**\$1.77–\$4.69/ha**  
average additional net benefit per producer involved annually

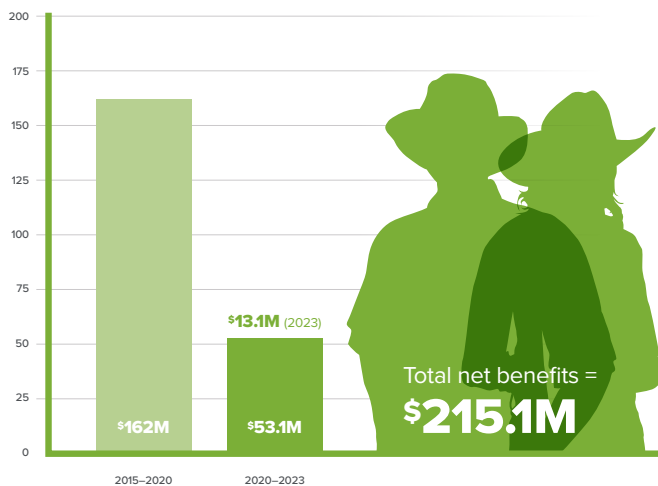
**8,763**  
observer producers

**994**  
core producers



**76%**  
of core producers have adopted new practices after PDS participation

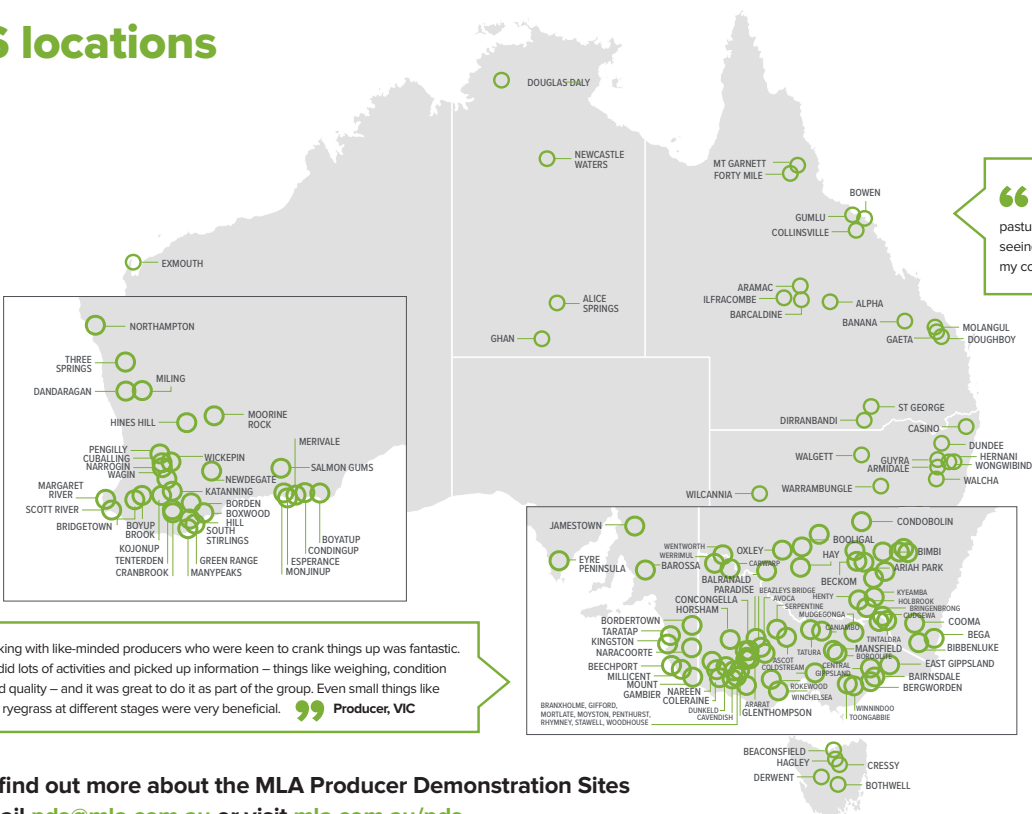
## Total benefits\* delivered to producers via PDS



\*Calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.

**9.5M**  
hectares of Australian agricultural land influenced by the PDS program

## PDS locations



“ Before we did the PDS there was limited information on fertilising pasture for northern producers, so after seeing the results it has really boosted my confidence. ” **Producer, QLD**

“ We are now carrying an extra 600 ewes so in rough figures this amounts to \$60,000 extra profit for lambs produced. This would vary from year to year. Labor costs are reduced so further savings there but it's hard to put a figure on. ” **Producer, VIC**

“ Working with like-minded producers who were keen to crank things up was fantastic. We did lots of activities and picked up information – things like weighing, condition scoring, feed quality – and it was great to do it as part of the group. Even small things like feed testing ryegrass at different stages were very beneficial. ” **Producer, VIC**

**i** To find out more about the MLA Producer Demonstration Sites email [pds@mla.com.au](mailto:pds@mla.com.au) or visit [mla.com.au/pds](http://mla.com.au/pds)



Darcy Bateman and his Hereford-cross heifers with their first calf at foot by an Angus bull.

## Robust herd benefits from new insights

**Darcy Bateman and his father Chris have a tried and tested approach which achieves strong fertility and productivity outcomes in their south-east SA mixed enterprise – but they're open to new ideas.**

Their involvement in a local Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) looking at reproductive health and management practices for beef heifers, informed some potentially profitable tweaks to their breeding strategy.

### PDS a timely refresher

Darcy, who recently returned home after almost a decade studying and working as a project manager in the construction industry, was keen to join the PDS to brush up on his skills.

He said hearing from other producers about their different management styles and production systems was valuable.

“We also had access to a range of presenters who spoke about economic modelling of different herd compositions and reproductive and metabolic diseases,” Darcy said.

For example, veterinarian Sean McGrath facilitated animal health testing to investigate possible contributors to some animal health issues in their herd. Blood tests taken from heifers with lower condition scores revealed markers pointing to kidney damage resulting from plant toxicity.

“We gave the heifers a drench and improved their nutrition – we moved them to a paddock with more food on offer which was of better quality,” Darcy said.

### Breeding strategy

The Batemans run a self-replacing herd of Hereford/Simmental-cross and Angus/Black Simmental cows. They use Angus bulls in the top 30% for the Calving Ease estimated breeding value (EBV) over heifers, while Hereford and Simmental bulls are used over mature breeders.

Their established crossbreeding approach to derive hybrid vigour (heterosis) has yielded strong results, with progeny exhibiting greater size, growth rates and fertility than their parents.

“It’s interesting to see bull EBVs translate into our bullock carcass data – our Simmental-cross bullocks consistently achieve higher Eye Muscle Area (EMA) values, while our Hereford-cross and Black Simmental/Angus bullocks achieve better marbling scores,” Darcy said.

The Batemans grow bullocks out to target 340kg dressed weight to meet Grasslands/Pasturefed Cattle Assurance System specifications at 18–21 months. One of their bullocks recently won reserve grand champion carcass at the annual Southern Grassfed Carcass Classic at Lucindale.

### Stringent standards

The Batemans wean in December.

Heifer weaners are generally run on perennial pastures and receive supplementation (such as ryegrass/clover hay) through autumn until after mating.

Heifers are joined at 14–15 months, and the Batemans’ management has resulted in a long-term average pregnancy tested in calf (PTIC) rate of 85%.

“We pay stringent attention to any structural or temperament issues and meticulously cull heifers after preg-testing if they don’t meet required standards,” Darcy said.

### Trialling new management

Previously, they used a six-week joining. However, Darcy aims to adjust his joining schedule – moving to a split joining of four weeks, with a one to two-week

break followed by another three-week joining – resulting in two calving periods.

“Our mob sizes vary a bit at joining, but bulls are generally run at approximately 3–4% in cows and 2.5–3% in heifers. The ratio will remain unchanged at this stage.

“We trialled this in 2022 in a different mob sold as PTIC every year and found that 65% of retained heifers from the second joining had calved within the first week of the due date.

“Providing we get a favourable preg-scanning result, we’ll retain as many heifers in the first calving cycle as possible to tighten up the spread in calf phenotypes as they’re marketed,” Darcy said.

### Rethinking EBVs

Throughout the PDS, Darcy has followed a ‘monitor mob’ of heifers, from weaning age to turning off their second calf. Body condition score (BCS) and weight were recorded during different periods to determine what relationship exists between BCS and conception rates.

“It’s been interesting reviewing scanning results and identifying their relationship to BCS and percentage of mature cow weight at joining,” Darcy said.

The PDS learnings have seen Darcy branch out from initially prioritising Calving Ease and Scrotal Size EBVs when considering fertility in bulls. He now also considers Days to Calving – rather than lower birth weights – to ensure calves’ eventual size at maturity is not compromised.

He’s also drawing on the data generated by the PDS to investigate the heritability of conception rates, particularly out of leaner-type bulls.





# EDGEnetwork

MLA's **EDGEnetwork** (EDGE) gives producers the opportunity to develop skills to improve their livestock enterprises through one-to-three day workshops. These practical learning opportunities encourage producers to expand their current expertise through group learning and hands-on activities, applying the concepts to their own business as they go. Producers work in small groups that enable them to receive personalised training. The **EDGE** workshops have been developed by industry specialists and tested by producers Australia-wide to ensure their quality and relevance.



There are six courses currently available with two new courses available in 2023–24. The courses currently available are:

- **Business EDGE:** A two-day financial and business management training workshop for cattle, sheep and goat producers which aims to enhance participant knowledge and skills in financial and business management.
- **Business EDGE Young Guns:** A two-day workshop for up-and-coming cattle, sheep and goat producers who are ready to build their business skills and confidence to manage a modern agricultural enterprise.
- **Breeding EDGE:** A three-day workshop designed to help beef producers evaluate how their breeding program is currently performing and to consider opportunities for improvement.
- **Nutrition EDGE:** A three-day workshop providing a comprehensive look at ruminant nutrition to assist cattle, sheep and goat producers to better match pasture and feed options to their livestock needs.
- **Grazing Fundamentals EDGE:** A one-day workshop to give cattle, sheep and goat producers a broad understanding of the environment in which they operate and the core principles behind successfully maintaining grazing land condition and long-term productivity.
- **Grazing Land Management EDGE:** Building on Grazing Fundamentals, a three-day workshop for cattle, sheep and goat producers to develop a thorough understanding of the grazing land environment in which they operate and the strategies they can apply to manage grazing, land condition and feedbase production.

New courses:

- **Grazing Fundamentals (southern rangelands) EDGE:** In partnership with the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board, Grazing Fundamentals has been adapted for the southern rangelands. The course provides a regional perspective on grazing strategies and ruminant nutrition for beef and sheep producers. This program is supported through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.
- **Carbon EDGE:** (piloting in 2023, launching early 2024). A two-day workshop for red meat producers, providing participants with an understanding of carbon in agricultural systems and an action plan based on the opportunities for greenhouse emissions reduction and storage activities within a productive livestock grazing business.

EDGE has delivered \$468.4 million\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of workshops attended between 2015–2022. This includes \$72.6 million\* of total net benefits identified for 2022. MLA's investment in EDGE since 2015 has delivered \$26.5 million in annual net benefits to producers in 2022–23.

On average, and depending on the area of practice change, northern beef producers participating in an EDGE workshop can expect an additional net benefit of between \$8–\$89/km<sup>2</sup> annually. On average, southern producers participating in an EDGE workshop can expect an additional net benefit of \$6.33/ha annually.

\*Calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.



Breeding EDGE – Katherine, NT.



Grazing Fundamentals EDGE – Cloncurry, Queensland.



EDGE Network deliverers.



# EDGE 2022–23 highlights

**213,129**  
sheep influenced by the EDGE network

**>2.2M**  
cattle influenced by the EDGE network

**91,200**  
goats influenced by the EDGE network

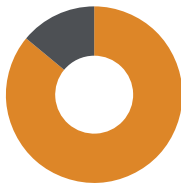
**713**  
PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED

**43** WORKSHOPS DELIVERED  
**91%** VALUE RATING

**82%**  
knowledge and skills acquisition increased

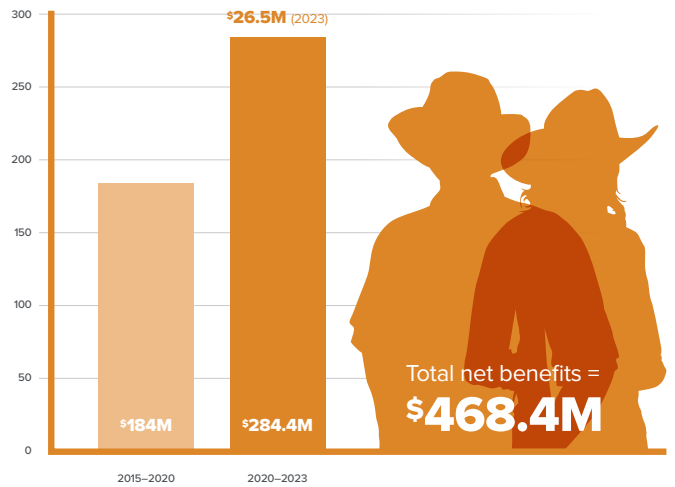
**\$6.33/ha**  
of additional net benefit annually for participating southern producers

**\$8–89/km<sup>2</sup>**  
of additional net benefit annually for participating northern producers involved annually



**86%**  
of producers planned to make changes following workshops

## Total benefits\* delivered to producers via EDGE



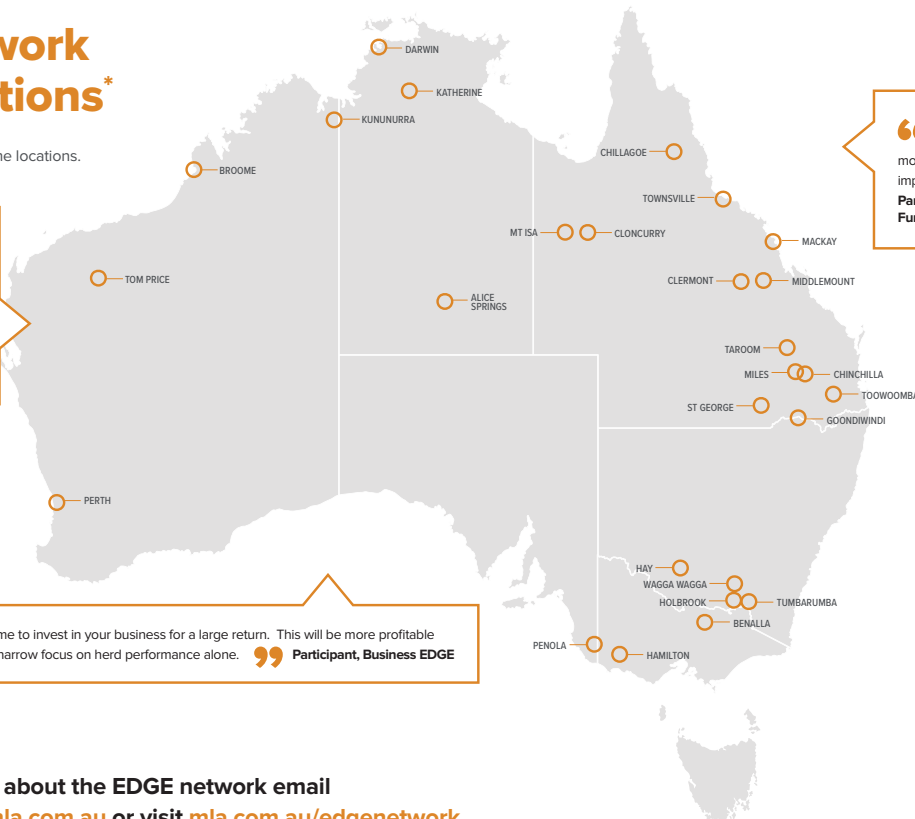
\*Calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.

**49M**  
hectares of Australian agricultural land influenced by EDGE workshops

## EDGE network event locations\*

Multiple events were held in some locations.

“ I found the development of the breeder management plan gave me confidence in what I know and what I have learnt. ”  
**Participant – Breeding EDGE**



“ Implementing practices of this workshop will see a more profitable long-term improvement of the property. ”  
**Participant – Grazing Fundamentals EDGE**

“ It's a short amount of time to invest in your business for a large return. This will be more profitable than continuing with a narrow focus on herd performance alone. ”  
**Participant, Business EDGE**

**i** To find out more about the EDGE network email [edgenetwork@mla.com.au](mailto:edgenetwork@mla.com.au) or visit [mla.com.au/edgenetwork](http://mla.com.au/edgenetwork)





# Business EDGE unlocks better decisions

**Victorian producer and accountant Margaret Amor used a Business EDGE workshop to hone management decisions in the west Gippsland sheep and beef enterprise she runs with her husband, Cameron McDonald.**

In the year since she completed a Business EDGE workshop facilitated by Paul Blackshaw, Margaret Amor has seen first-hand the value from teaching producers the importance of accountancy and financial management in boosting profit.

Margaret has the role of administration and finance manager within the family business. She said when it comes to managing and making decisions, the role is equally as important as what happens out in the paddock.

## Giving it a go

Margaret is no stranger to the balance sheet – with qualifications and 30 years' experience in accountancy – but she signed up for Business EDGE as she hoped its focus on agricultural business would provide some worthwhile insights.

"Agricultural-based finance is not an area I see covered very often so after reading through the course details and spotting some areas I was interested in hearing about, I decided to see what I could gain from attending," Margaret said.

"I've always seen good business management as essential to not only improving our profitability but to creating a business which will last in the generations to come."

## Successful succession

In 2007, Margaret undertook the business' first succession plan when her husband dissolved the farm's partnered ownership with his parents.

Now, 15 years on, Margaret is putting her focus towards a new succession plan to ensure their business can continue to be productive and profitable should their children chose to one day take over.

"While our kids are only 14 and 16 years

old, Cameron and I are both older parents so it's always been important to us that we are maintaining a good balance sheet and making good financial decisions," Margaret said.

"I really saw the Business EDGE workshop as an opportunity to fine-tune all those areas I was already covering."

## Purchasing considerations

During the Business EDGE workshop, Margaret took the opportunity to ask questions about some spending decisions she and Cameron were considering.

"At the time, we were going through the process of purchasing additional land, so it was beneficial to be able to discuss the components of evaluating cost, ideal land size and location with regards to our profit, loss and balance sheet," Margaret said.

"Paul was able to provide information and templates to calculate and evaluate the cost and benefit of purchasing more property.

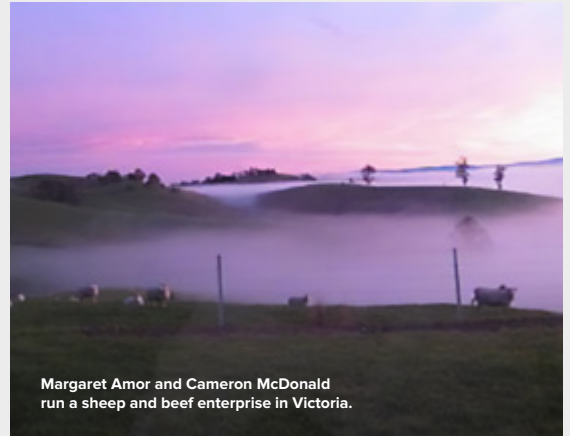
"We ended up purchasing 61.9ha of additional land which was finalised at the beginning of May this year and made the decision to sell 39.6ha of land located further away from the homestead."

## Valuable tools

Margaret also says the workshop provided her with:

- information on how to best evaluate and prioritise projects
- an understanding of needs versus wants and costs versus benefits
- confidence when approaching the bank with reporting data to renegotiate finance.

While Margaret fully understands the importance of her role of accountant



Margaret Amor and Cameron McDonald run a sheep and beef enterprise in Victoria.

in their business, she acknowledges it's something many producers are still coming to terms with.

"For producers like my husband who are very involved and knowledgeable in the hands-on jobs around the farm, the jobs done via the computer can seem both unfamiliar and without as much benefit to production.

"While my husband didn't attend with me, I found Business EDGE was helpful for producers like him in showing them the value of understanding and investing time into the data in your profit, loss and balance sheets.

"It's great to have knowledge on how to effectively monitor your areas of profit and loss, and it's even better to have knowledge on how to use this information to support your business decisions."

## Profit and efficiency

When it comes to financial business management, Margaret believes having the skill and knowledge to analyse and understand balance sheets not only helps increase profit but keeps the working environment efficient.

"Putting time into reviewing your annual cash flow and looking at your numbers before making on-farm decisions is so beneficial in reducing the risk of financial strain due to poor investments or missed opportunities," she said.

"What you do on the computer links directly back to the work you do in the paddock. If you invest more time in the first, then the second is going to run a lot smoother."



# BredWell FedWell

**BredWell FedWell (BFW) is a practical, one-day introductory workshop on how productivity and profitability can be improved through good breeding and feeding over the livestock production cycle, with a specific focus on profit drivers.**



Breeding and feeding to maximise profit

Producers can use the outcomes of the workshop to develop a genetics and nutrition regime suited to their environment and markets to boost profitability.

### BFW review and redevelopment

On the back of a decade of success, the BFW workshops have been redeveloped to reflect evolving best practice genetics and nutrition management. Following review by an expert panel, the northern beef, southern beef and sheep workshops were successfully piloted in three locations across Australia.

### Workshop structure

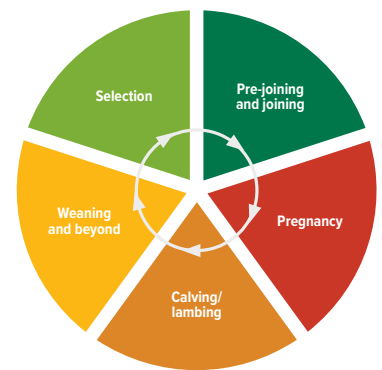
The workshops are structured around the breeding and feeding production cycle which covers pre-joining and joining, pregnancy, calving/lambing, weaning and beyond, and selection. Each 'wedge' in the cycle represents a major decision point in a producer's commercial enterprise, where consideration of both breeding (genetics) and feeding (nutrition) is required.

Workshops are hosted on-farm and aimed to improve the knowledge and skills of producers so they can:

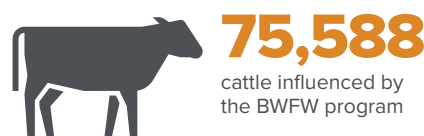
- develop a customised breeding plan for their livestock enterprise aligned to their profit drivers
- identify sires and select animals which help them meet their objectives
- Feed animals well to achieve their objectives and maximise their genetic investment.

### Delivery of workshops

The workshops are designed for a range of sheep production systems, as well as northern and southern beef. They are rolled out nationally via a network of trained and accredited deliverers.



## BFW 2022–23 highlights



## BFW locations\*



“ Is it worth using EBVs for our cattle? Today tells me it is. ” Participant – NT

**i** Find out more about attending or hosting a BFW workshop at [mla.com.au/bredwellfedwell](http://mla.com.au/bredwellfedwell)





## Could you be our next host?

**BredWell FedWell (BFWF) is a practical, one-day introductory workshop on how productivity and profitability can be improved through good breeding and feeding.**

On the back of a decade of success, MLA redeveloped the BFWF workshops to reflect evolving best practice genetics and nutrition management. The revised program developed through the review process has been refined after piloting and is being rolled out nationally via a network of trained and approved deliverers.

Producers can use the outcomes of the workshop to develop a genetics and nutrition regime suited to their environment and markets to boost profitability.

BFWF workshops are informative, interactive and individualised with on-farm activities aimed to improve the knowledge and skills of producers so they can:

- develop a customised breeding plan for their livestock enterprise aligned to their profit drivers
- identify sires and select animals that help them meet their objectives
- feed animals well to achieve their objectives and maximise their genetic investment.

So far, BFWF has delivered \$17.2 million in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of workshops delivered between 2015–2021.

Participants can expect an average annual net benefit of \$2.48/ewe joined for sheep producers, and \$2.98/cow mated for beef producers.

### Host a BFWF workshop on your property

In 2017, Nicole Hayes and her husband Ben attended the MLA Ambassadors for the Red Meat Industry program in Alice Springs where they were handed a brochure on workshops for producers managing southern cattle.

The pair were looking for tools to help make their bull selection easier and

improve their knowledge of their bulls' estimated breeding values (EBVs), so they were keen to get involved.

"I saw the BFWF workshop and in 2019 I put my hand up to host the northern cattle version; however, due to COVID, it was put on hold," Nicole said.

"It wasn't until the workshops were reintroduced that MLA contacted us to ask if we were still interested to which we gave an energetic 'yes!'"

After reading through the guidelines and communicating with the deliverer, Nicole and Ben got to work on selecting six similar bulls and providing their EBVs data to the deliverer.

"There were other tasks involved such as setting up portable yards close to homestead, providing seating, food and toilets and promoting the event through social media," Nicole said.

According to Nicole, the learning outcome of the experience outweighed the odd jobs they were required to do as hosts.

"It was especially helpful to be able to simply focus on what the deliverer was saying instead of also considering how it would apply back home," she said.

"Having our own selection of bulls in our own environment also allowed us to really take out the physical attributes and focus on their EBV which is something we plan to use during upcoming bull sales to help our decision-making process."

Nicole said she and Ben also learnt that their breeding objective didn't actually align with their herd goals.

"While we did breed year-round, we didn't have a perfect understanding of when feed requirements were higher in females and which seasons were most beneficial when moving cattle around.



Nicole and Ben Hayes put their hands up to host an MLA BredWell FedWell workshop and encourage other producers to do the same.

"Hosting the workshop really allowed us to get a better understanding of our young females' needs and how to set them up for success."

According to Nicole, having a workshop which caters to your livestock and environment was definitely a perk and allowed them to make the most of the important information the BFWF deliverer was supplying.

"If no one in your area is hosting, then I recommend putting your hand up – not only will you learn something, but it's a great opportunity to connect with producers in your area."

### Host requirements

Workshops typically run from 8:30am to 4:30pm with morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea included.

Key tasks requested by the host include preparation of sires in appropriate pens, providing breeding values for these sires, and ensuring appropriate facilities, equipment and catering is available for the day.

Hosts are welcome to provide an overview of their property and business should they wish to do so – they may also be engaged in conversation by the deliverer during the workshop to illustrate key points.



# BeefUp

**BeefUp Forums are an opportunity for northern Australian beef producers to:**

- hear about the latest red meat research, development and adoption programs
- interact with expert speakers including leading producers, advisors and researchers
- access tools and insights tailored to the needs and interests of producers in the local area
- identify the next steps they can take to drive profitability and productivity on-farm.



BeefUp has delivered \$48.5 million\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of forums delivered between 2015–2022. MLA’s investment in BeefUp since 2015 has delivered \$2.4 million in annual net benefits to producers in 2022–23.

On average, and depending on the area of practice change, this means producers can expect an annual benefit of between \$0.50 and \$0.72/head when implementing new tools or practices as a result of their attendance.

\*Calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.



At BeefUp Taroom, Queensland, attendees learned about pasture dieback research and legumes and their role in sustainable beef production amongst other topics.



At BeefUp Tom Price, WA, attendees visited Rio Tinto’s irrigated pasture/crop sites.



At BeefUp Broome, WA, Désirée Jackson performed a rumen dissection to show attendees the importance of weaner nutrition.



At BeefUp Blackall, Queensland, attendees looked at animals in the ring as part of a discussion on breeding and genetics.



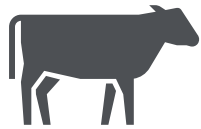
At BeefUp Kidman Springs, NT, the event included a paddock tour to show attendees the station’s grazing land management trials.



At BeefUp Clermont, Queensland, attendees were taken through the benefits of utilising the Australian Feedbase Monitor tool (free for MLA members with a linked Livestock Production Assurance account) by Cibo Labs’ Phil Tickle.



## BeefUp 2022–23 highlights



**4.8M**  
cattle influenced by  
the BeefUp program

**326**  
PRODUCERS  
ENGAGED

**9**  
FORUMS  
DELIVERED

**537**  
PRODUCERS  
ENGAGED



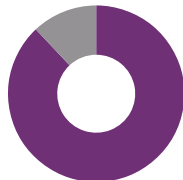
**63%**  
of producers  
planned to make  
changes



**87%**  
value rating



**\$0.50–  
\$0.72/head**  
average annual net benefit  
for attending producers

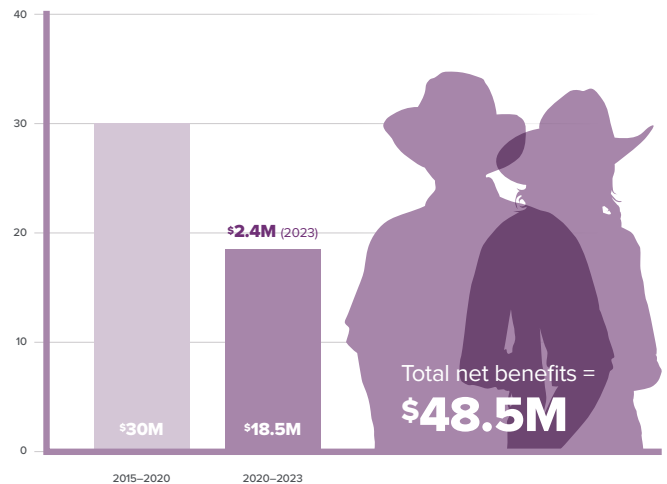


**88%**  
of producers said  
their knowledge  
and skills increased



**67M**  
hectares of Australian  
agricultural land  
influenced by BeefUp

### Total benefits\* delivered to producers via Beefup



\*Calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.

## BeefUp event locations

“ After today, I’m wanting to become more involved as a young person in industry. ”  
Participant – WA

KUNUNURRA  
BROOME  
KIDMAN SPRINGS

“ Following the day’s discussions, I’ll be seeking further information on carbon, weed control options, GPS tags and the PGS program. ”  
Participant – QLD

“ I found value in the panel sessions and open discussions. ”  
Participant – WA

HUGHENDEN  
WINTON  
CLERMONT  
BLACKALL  
TAROOM

“ Fantastic day, so much information. ”  
Participant – QLD

**i** To find out more about BeefUp email [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au) or visit [mla.com.au/beefup](http://mla.com.au/beefup)



# MeatUp

**MeatUp Forums are MLA's flagship awareness events for Southern Australia and deliver the latest information in red meat research, development and adoption (RD&A). MeatUp Forums are individually developed with input by red meat producers via regional producer working groups.**



MeatUp Forums have been delivered since 2021. On average, 71% of attendees indicated they plan to make a practice change following attendance of MeatUp Forums. The value of attending events was scored on average as 8.8/10.

Held predominantly throughout southern Australia, these forums introduce producers to the outcomes of MLA R&D projects and the next steps to drive profitability and productivity on-farm.

MeatUp has delivered \$10.7 million\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of forums delivered in 2021 and 2022.

On average, this means producers can expect an annual return of between \$0.61 and \$11.72/hd as a result of implementing new tools or practices learnt from their attendance.

\*Calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.



At MeatUp Casino, NSW, MLA's Cameron Allen talked through what matters with profitability and sustainability when it comes to top performing producers.



At MeatUp Wagga Wagga, NSW, MLA's Margeret Jewell, guided attendees through carbon neutral 2030's (CN30) focus and direction.



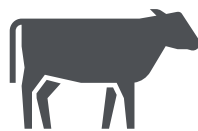
At MeatUp Albany, WA, WAMMCO International Supply Development Manager Rob Davidson, Professor David Pethick, Murdoch University, and Rafael Ramirez, The Meat Specialist.



## MeatUp 2022–23 highlights



**938,549**  
sheep influenced by the MeatUp program



**119,816**  
cattle influenced by the MeatUp program

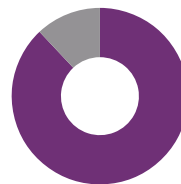


**6,594**  
goats influenced by the MeatUp program

**483**  
PRODUCERS ENGAGED



**5**  
FORUMS DELIVERED



**88%**  
value rating

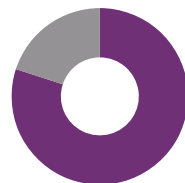
Total benefits<sup>1</sup> delivered to producers via MeatUp since 2021



<sup>1</sup>Calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.



**\$0.61–\$11.72/head**  
average annual net benefit per producer involved



**80%**  
of producers said their knowledge and skills increased

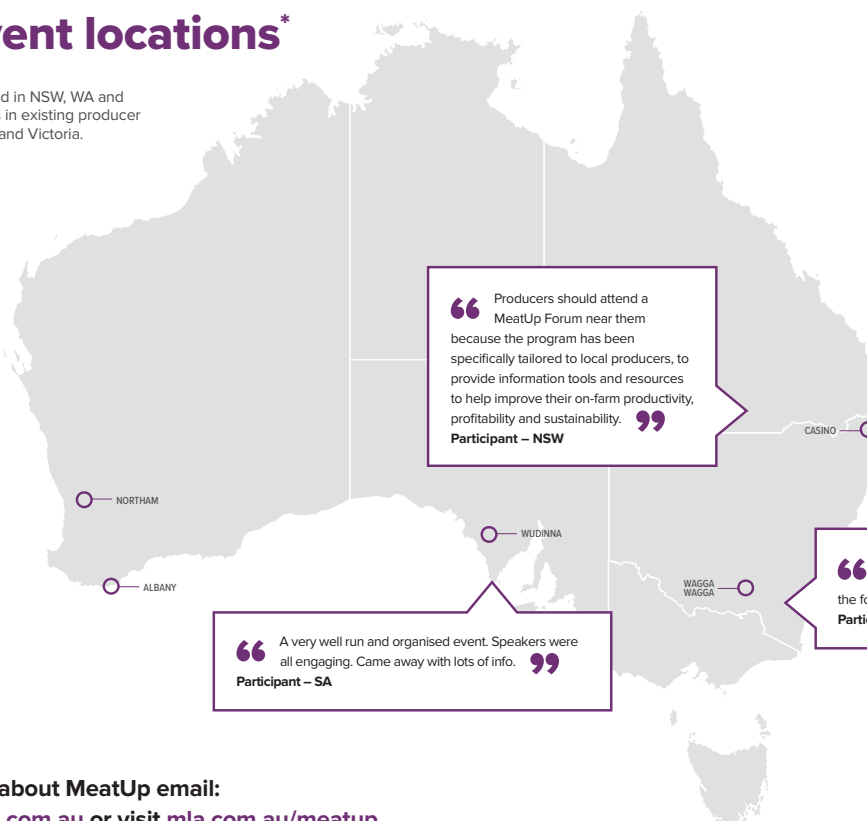
**61%**  
of producers planned to make changes following attendance



**2.3M**  
hectares of Australian agricultural land influenced by MeatUp

## MeatUp event locations\*

MeatUp forums have been initiated in NSW, WA and SA. MLA supports and participates in existing producer awareness programs in Tasmania and Victoria.



“ Producers should attend a MeatUp Forum near them because the program has been specifically tailored to local producers, to provide information tools and resources to help improve their on-farm productivity, profitability and sustainability. ”  
Participant – NSW

“ A very well run and organised event. Speakers were all engaging. Came away with lots of info. ”  
Participant – SA

“ Enjoyed hearing from producers about their experiences and practices, the forum exceeded expectations. ”  
Participant – NSW

**i** To find out more about MeatUp email: [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au) or visit [mla.com.au/meatup](http://mla.com.au/meatup)



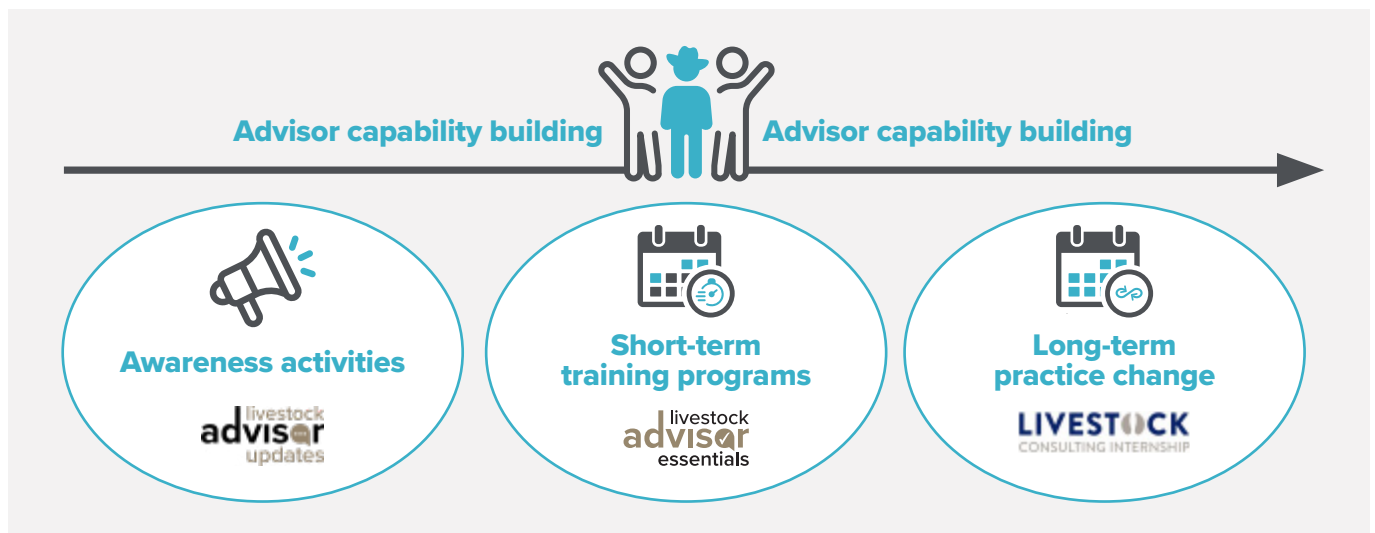
# Livestock advisor capability building

**Building the capability of livestock advisors is a core component of MLA’s adoption strategy. Livestock advisors play a critical role in exposing producers to new practices, products and technologies and supporting them to implement these into their businesses.**

Livestock advisors are defined as someone who provides producers with advice as a core part of their role, including private consultants, public extension officers, stock agents, agronomists and veterinarians. Upskilling livestock advisors provides MLA with another avenue to ensure producers can implement the latest research findings, new technologies and best practices on-farm.

The Livestock Advisor Network consists of multiple programs funded through MLA to engage and upskill people providing advice to red meat producers. Australian livestock advisors work with an average of 20–50 producers each per year. As such, an investment into capability building within this cohort results in a multiplying impact.

The Livestock Advisor Network engages advisors from across the country to upskill them on regionally relevant topics through the flagship Livestock Advisor Updates and associated webinars, the short-term training program Livestock Advisor Essentials, and long-term practice change program Livestock Consulting Internship.



**i** The quarterly eNewsletter *The Advisor* provides information on the latest news and events for livestock advisors across the country. Sign up at [mla.com.au/enews](http://mla.com.au/enews)

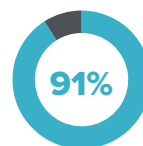
## Livestock Advisor Updates

These updates are regionally relevant, one-day technical workshops held in northern, southern and western Australia. The workshops provide opportunities for livestock advisors, leading producers and professional extension consultants to learn about the latest red meat R&D, gain skills, tools and knowledge to increase their offerings to clients and network with their peers.

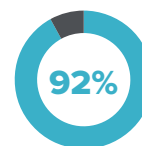


**2** WORKSHOPS DELIVERED

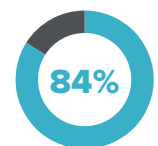
**96** ADVISORS ENGAGED



satisfaction rating



value rating



will advise practice change

“The information on carbon in farming was excellent as I now feel I have a better base knowledge to get more involved in conversations surrounding it”. **Participant – Melbourne, VIC**



**i** To find out more about Livestock Advisor Updates, contact [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au) or visit [mla.com.au/advisor-updates](http://mla.com.au/advisor-updates)



## Livestock Advisor Essentials

Livestock Advisor Essentials is a nationally-delivered professional development program designed for early career professionals involved in the livestock industry. The program is delivered over the course of six months via three face-to-face workshops. It is delivered in one Australian region per year with content altered to suit regionally-relevant production systems. The north Australian program was delivered during 2023.

### livestock advisor essentials

The program is designed to teach livestock business fundamentals, develop knowledge, skills and confidence and connect participants with other livestock advisors.

The workshops have been developed by industry specialists. Five focus areas across three workshops are currently on offer:

- **Optimising pasture production:** Participants gain knowledge and confidence in the key aspects of feedbase management to equip them to better support their producer clients.
- **Building blocks of business:** Participants build confidence and skills in financial literacy, critical thinking and the ability to do simple cost-benefit analysis to support decision making.
- **Fundamentals of reproduction and genetics:** Participants gain knowledge in the key principles of reproduction and genetics relevant for livestock businesses and how advisors can support through important decisions.
- **Meating the market:** Participants learn how to analyse customer feedback and assist their clients to identify and discuss possible on-farm solutions to compliance issues.
- **Influence and Impact:** Participants learn the fundamentals of human engagement, plus processes and frameworks for sustained influence.

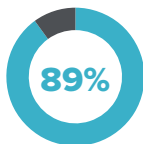
### During 2022–23

1 WORKSHOP  
DELIVERED

10 ADVISORS  
ENGAGED



satisfaction  
rating



value  
rating



confidently  
use advice

“Fantastic workshop, I learnt a lot and the content was brilliant”. **Participant – Townsville, QLD**



**i** To find out more about Livestock Advisor Essentials email [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au) or visit [mla.com.au/advisor-essentials](http://mla.com.au/advisor-essentials)



As a 2022 Livestock Advisor Updates bursary recipient, Vicki Mayne's aim is to help other producers and advisors throughout central and south-west Queensland improve the use and knowledge of weather and climate forecasts through engagement and training.

## Livestock Consulting Internship

The Livestock Consulting Internship is designed to provide participants with the industry

**LIVESTOCK**  
CONSULTING INTERNSHIP

experience, foundational skills and knowledge they need to accelerate their livestock consulting careers. This program provides valuable personal development support, practical skills and access to industry networks while the participants navigate the first few years of their consulting careers.

Over the two-year program, participants also conduct an industry research project, giving them a real-world understanding of the implementation of R&D and how information is used to create extension and adoption materials.

Since launching in 2017, 39 consultants have graduated from the program – 95% of these graduates have remained in the red meat industry, with 83% of them pursuing a career as a livestock consultant. Each graduate consultant works with an average of 50 individual clients, leads an average of seven producer groups and impacts approximately 385 businesses per year. Of the 39 consultant roles filled since the launch of the program, 80% of these were an additional headcount to their employers' businesses.

The fourth instalment of the program was kicked off in July 2022 with an intake of 10 new participants from consulting and pastoral businesses across Australia. During the two-year program, interns will be upskilled in technical and interpersonal areas, including MLA's Carbon Neutral 2030 (CN30) and Northern Breeder Business (NB2) initiatives. Current participants will graduate from the program in 2024.

# Lightbulb moment sheds light on career opportunity

**Participating in MLA’s Livestock Advisor Essentials program opened the door to a new career opportunity for one young livestock advisor.**

Tanisha Shields is passionate about Australia’s pastoral industries and in her new internship as a livestock advisor with agricultural consulting firm Agrista, she is getting plenty of opportunities to apply her newly honed business analysis skills.

Tanisha grew up on a sheep and wheat property south of Narrandera in the Riverina, NSW, and while studying her four-year agricultural science degree, through Charles Sturt University, she completed a 12-week internship with Local Land Services (LLS) at Hay.

“My internship triggered a passion for the pastoral zone and rangeland environments,” Tanisha said.

After completing her degree, Tanisha took part in a livestock trainee position with Elders at Yass, NSW, and Toowoomba, Queensland, before heading back to the rangelands. She spent the next three-and-a-half years in an agricultural extension role with LLS, based in Balranald. It was while she was working in this position that Tanisha first heard about the Livestock Advisor Essentials program.

“I heard about the program through MLA’s e-newsletters,” she said. “It looked like a great opportunity to cover off on some technical content while building

a network — working remotely I was always looking for opportunities to develop my professional connections.”

The pilot brought together 17 advisors from across south-eastern Australia, with different advisory roles, experience and backgrounds. In addition to the theory covered during the workshops, the participants now have an established group on which to call when they need support, or even just a sounding board.

According to Tanisha, in this way, the Livestock Advisor Essentials program ticked both boxes; building her knowledge and skills, and creating new contacts.

“The program bridged the gap between the heavy science and theory at university and gave us the tools implement that theory in a practical way with producers,” she said.

Tanisha found value in each of the modules, but it was John Francis’ business fundamentals session that really peaked her interest.

“Although we touched on business principles at university, my roles with Elders and LLS were more production focused and John’s session reignited my interest in agricultural economics and performance analysis.”



Livestock Advisor Essentials participant and consultant Tanisha Shields of Agrista

Tanisha remained in contact with John to get more support on how to apply what she had learnt to her own situation.

“It is similar to our interactions with producers,” she said. “We can be exposed to information and opportunities, but the responsibility lies within us to follow up and take further action.”

Tanisha has certainly grasped her newfound opportunities and taken action, recently signing up as a deliverer for MLA’s Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS), Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) and EDGE network programs.

Following the core program Tanisha as was successful in gaining a position in the mentor program, which was offered on a competitive basis to 10 of the program graduates.

“My mentor opened my eyes to the opportunities existing outside my current role and gave me the confidence to move away from a secure and safe role in the public sector and into the private space — something I would never have thought possible before the program.”

For Tanisha, the mentoring program was a really important component of the overall experience and important for implementation.

“Although the mentoring program isn’t intended to be about transferring information, it helped you wash out some of the ideas from the workshops we attended,” she said.



Tanisha shares her knowledge and experience as a former attendee of the Livestock Advisors Essentials program, now as a mentor and consultant.





# Digital adoption programs

## Webinars

### FutureBeef



FutureBeef is a collaborative program between MLA and the governments of Queensland, NT and WA, working together for a profitable and sustainable northern beef industry. FutureBeef webinars share the latest practical tools, scientific insights and relevant, timely advice.

Some of the topics covered in the series throughout 2022–23 included:

- the potential for soil carbon sequestration in northern Australia – what’s known
- demystifying carbon projects – soil carbon
- demystifying carbon projects – human-induced regeneration method
- restock, replant and repair – what’s next in North Queensland’s flood recovery assistance?
- understanding methane supplements.



**i** All webinars are available at [youtube.com/FutureBeefAu](https://youtube.com/FutureBeefAu)

### ParaBoss



ParaBoss is the national resource for sheep, goat, and cattle parasite control in Australia, providing information on parasites through its suite of products – WormBoss, FlyBoss, LiceBoss and TickBoss. It is a jointly owned venture between MLA, Australian Wool Innovation and University of New England who throughout 2022–23 worked with Animal Health Australia as a project delivery partner.

The ParaBoss webinar series was designed to complement and extend information provided through the web platform [paraboss.com.au](https://paraboss.com.au)

Some of the topics covered in the webinar series throughout 2022–23 included:

- effective management and control of lice
- It’s Fly Time – seasonal flystrike update
- spring parasite update – tips to gain an upper hand on this season’s parasite party
- gaining the upper hand on sheep blowflies – this season and into the future
- integrated parasite management in cattle – keeping parasites and chemical resistance at bay
- summer worm management in cattle, sheep, and goats
- why dung beetles should be on your radar
- preventing theileriosis in cattle herds
- next level healthy goats
- the latest management for lice and how to use the ParaBoss tools to help you manage lice.

### During 2022–23

**1,862** registrations

**10** webinars | **412** attendees



**i** All webinars are available at [paraboss.com.au/videos-and-podcasts/#webinars](https://paraboss.com.au/videos-and-podcasts/#webinars)



# Online resources

## The toolbox



This online learning platform facilitates the delivery of capability building packages for red meat producers and livestock advisors. Users can work through training packages at their own pace and pick and choose the content that is suitable for their production system.

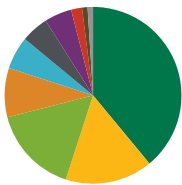
Available to use anytime and anywhere, it provides practical opportunities for knowledge and skills-building across a range of topics.

In 2022–23, four new packages were added to 'The toolbox' across two topics:

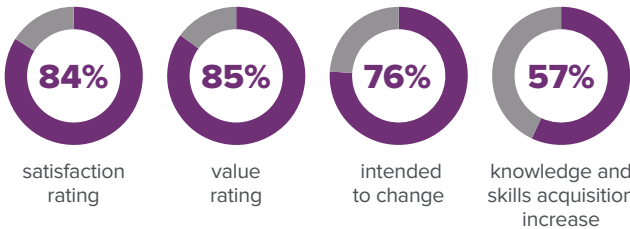
- Northern beef management
  - » Vaccination for northern cattle
- Sustainability and environment
  - » Carbon 101
  - » Measuring your own emissions
  - » Carbon sense.

## During 2022–23

# 4 new training packages



# 1,882 users



**i** Visit The toolbox today at [elearning.mla.com.au](http://elearning.mla.com.au) to start exploring new resources.

## Grazing land management hub

Producers have access to a new hub of grazing land management resources on MLA's website.

The grazing land management hub launched in March 2023 and brings together a range of information, tools and activities into a one-stop-shop.

The hub contains resources and training opportunities to help red meat producers measure available pasture against animal demand, explore improved pasture options, and identify and manage weeds for grazing businesses across Australia.

As well as online information and tools, the hub also helps producers understand how they can access training and try out the new practices at home through one of MLA's longer-term programs with other producers.

**i** Visit the grazing land management hub at [mla.com.au/grazing](http://mla.com.au/grazing)







## ParaBoss



The products available on the ParaBoss website are a source of detailed information and include regional programs developed to improve on-farm management of worms, blowflies, lice and ticks.

In February 2023 a one-day WormBoss workshop was piloted in Canowindra NSW, with the intention for this to be rolled out further in the second half of 2023. The workshop covered best practice management and the development of an annual management plan for staying on top of internal parasites.

The redeveloped ParaBoss website was launched in October 2022 to improve ease of use for producers and advisors.

During 2022–23, producer communication and training have been core activities to engage producers including:

- *Boss Bulletin*
- ParaBoss webinar series
- ParaBoss Facebook page
- ParaBoss Sheep Certificate Management Course.

In 2022–23 there were 100 graduates of the ParaBoss Sheep Parasite Management Certificate facilitated by UNE. Graduates are listed on the ParaBoss website as an accredited ParaBoss advisor (for sheep).

**i** Visit Paraboss at [paraboss.com.au](https://paraboss.com.au)

## Genetics hub

MLA's genetics hub is a one-stop-shop for commercial producers looking to boost their productivity through genetic tools. It contains a suite of practical, simple-to-understand videos on how breeding values can assist in sire purchasing decisions.

The genetics hub website has been visited more than 7,000 times for sheep information and more than 6,500 times for cattle information.

Videos on the hub have been updated to reflect changes in the Australian Sheep Breeding Value reproduction traits, selection index changes, as well as Sheep Genetics and BREEDPLAN website and search functions.

Producer case studies also feature on the genetics hub, to share the journey of using breeding values to accelerate livestock performance. Three new producer case studies have been added this year – Nick Gay (Heulen Pastoral, merino and first-cross sheep), Tom and Marie Copley (Copley Pastoral, tropically-adapted beef cattle) and Chris Main (Pinchgut Creek Pastoral, temperate beef cattle).

The genetics hub will be updated with new videos and resources as more genetic tools become available.

**i** Find out more at [genetics.mla.com.au](https://genetics.mla.com.au)







# Integrated R&D and customised adoption initiatives

Investments into adoption and extension continue to increase through their incorporation into on-farm research and development projects. These integrated programs have been created with the intention of fast-tracking the adoption of research outcomes, as well as utilising or adding to the existing suite of MLA adoption products. Some of these programs are outlined below.

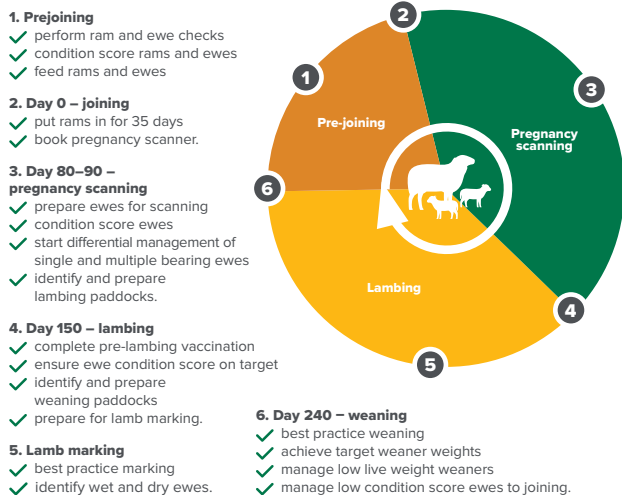
## Sheep Reproduction Strategic Partnership



The Sheep Reproduction Strategic Partnership (SRSP) is a sheep industry initiative managed by MLA. It seeks to profitably and sustainably increase lamb production by increasing weaning rates and decreasing mortality.

An objective of SRSP is to increase the adoption of proven management practices which have been developed through key research projects over the years.

This will be achieved by focusing on each of the key stages of the sheep reproduction cycle:



The SRSP provides producers with practical solutions for their businesses to enable improvements in flock reproductive performance at each stage of the reproductive cycle. One of the key projects underway as part of SRSP is the Towards 90 (T90) project, which uses 10 purpose-built learning modules to aid producers to adopt sheep reproductive best-practices with the aim of achieving 90%+ lamb survival across single and twin-bearing ewes in their flock.

A quarterly webinar series and monthly newsletter is available to sheep producers and industry representatives through the SRSP RD&A initiative to share the latest research and development on sheep reproduction.

**i** To find out more visit [mla.com.au/srsp](http://mla.com.au/srsp)

## Rangelands Living Skin

The Rangelands Living Skin project is investigating the regeneration of the NSW rangelands to support livestock production now and into the future. It brings together producers, researchers and advisors to identify practical, cost-effective solutions to deliver benefits for soil, plants, animals and people – the living skin of the rangelands.

The project is currently demonstrating and validating rangeland management innovations designed to enhance the environmental and economic sustainability of grazing businesses in the rangelands. Activities are underway to investigate management practices designed to increase carrying capacity, pasture species composition, ground cover and soil carbon. Ongoing data collection throughout the life of the project will create an evidence base which can be used by rangeland producers and industry stakeholders in their decision-making going forward.

Replicated trials have been established on the properties of four core producers across western NSW. Trials have been designed to include combinations of mechanical soil disturbance, herd disturbance using livestock, introducing seed, applying bio-stimulants and applying biochar to increase pasture production and landscape function. These properties will act as demonstration sites for the region. Observational research sites have also been established on these properties to assess how landscape position, groundcover variables and grazing management influences soil function and organic carbon levels. Ultimately, this information will be collated to inform natural capital metrics and measurement methodologies specific to the southern rangelands.

The project has engaged 30 producers, who collectively manage more than 960,000ha.

Through trials, demonstrations and significant skills and knowledge building activities, the project aims to influence management practices within the producer network to increase their productivity, sustainability and profitability. This project runs until 2024.

**i** To stay up-to-date on this project and register your interest in opportunities to become involved, email [luke.beange@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:luke.beange@dpi.nsw.gov.au)



# Water ponding rehydrates rangelands

**As part of the Rangelands Living Skin project, a group of NSW producers are running trials of low-cost, scalable practices which offer possible solutions to increase farm income and landscape function.**

Gus and Kelly Whyte are trialling water ponding as one strategy to repair and rehydrate their rangelands station near Wentworth.

Water ponding is a mechanical intervention, appropriate on fairly gentle slopes, to slow the flow of water across the landscape and encourage water infiltration into the soil. This approach is used to reclaim scalded country and rehydrate rangeland landscapes.

The Whytes were keen to rehydrate a large scaled area on their property.

They accessed a Local Land Services (LLS) grant for \$10,000 to undertake the water ponding project.

The Whytes contributed \$5,000 and LLS provided the surveyor, and directed and oversaw the contractor who constructed banks.

“Water ponding needs a fair bit of planning to make sure the banks are going in the right spot,” Gus said.

“Producers should do water ponding projects in conjunction with and under the instruction of someone who knows what they are doing.”

The whole water ponding project covers 300ha. In February 2022, the Whytes and LLS selected two sites within this area to monitor.

Between February and June, a grader was used to construct more than 60 U-shaped earth banks, measuring 500mm high at their peak and 2m across at the bottom. Construction paused in April–May due to large rain events as constructing water ponds is much easier and long-lasting when done with dry soil.

The Whytes and collaborating scientists will monitor the water ponding works for three years, to map changes in soil, pasture, production and biodiversity. It will be compared with a control site (not ponded) and reference site (a paddock in good condition as it receives good water flow already).

The expectation is for the ponding trial areas to regenerate and, in time, look more like the reference site.

## Influencing landscape

So far, Gus has observed the ponds have retained a lot of water.

A year after construction began, the ponds are already influencing the landscape.

“There’s certainly an increased growth of saltbushes and other perennials in places where there were previously no plants,” Gus said.

The Whytes are also looking forward to the scientific studies with project



Gus and Kelly Whyte, Wentworth NSW.

partners to understand other types of soil and landscape change – such as soil carbon, water infiltration and microbiology – to better understand and explain the value of landscape and soil stewardship practices.

Senior Land Services Officer Paul Theakston said the Western LLS Rangeland Rehabilitation Program is also keen to see how this water ponding will reinstate natural surface water flows.

“Gus and Kelly’s project area originally would have acted like a ‘sponge’ with shallow ponds (called gilgais) absorbing water into the soil and excess water being slowly released as low-energy flows,” Paul said.

“Projects such as water ponding, water-spreading banks and diversion banks reinstate these natural water flows and landscape function.”

He hopes to see erosion and claypan rehabilitation projects on many properties in the rangelands.



The Whytes are running a water ponding trial as part of the Rangelands Living Skin project.





## Bullseye 2 Livestock Productivity

This project is a customised, group-based learning project delivered in the southern rangelands of WA to support producers improve livestock productivity while maintaining or increasing landscape condition. Extensive areas, a highly variable climate, wild animal grazing pressures and increasing predation risk have created significant challenges for WA pastoralists, with many transitioning from sheep to cattle production over the past 10 years.

The project involves two producer groups, based in the Murchison and Goldfields regions and has engaged 20 pastoral businesses, covering 4.5 million hectares. Groups meet virtually and in-person to build skills and knowledge that can be implemented on-station with the support of a group facilitator and technical experts in pastoral production systems. The project focuses on using best practice management strategies to increase livestock productivity, such as more-efficient mustering, reducing mortality and increasing turnover rate. Practices to achieve this include feed budgeting, livestock condition scoring, weaning protocols, animal health practices and sound record keeping to inform management interventions.

**i** This project will run until 2027 and is led by the Southern Rangelands Pastoral Alliance. To find out more about the project or express interest in getting involved, email [info@srpa.org.au](mailto:info@srpa.org.au)



## BeefLinks

## BeefLinks

BeefLinks is a four-year research partnership with the University of Western Australia. It aims to drive an integrated and complementary R&D program for the north-south value chain of WA to achieve profitable, consistent and sustainable beef yields matched to consumer expectations.

The project brings together producers, researchers, businesses and state agencies to develop a greater understanding of opportunities to enhance productivity and value along the red meat supply chain.

The program aims to deliver \$72 million in net benefits to producers through increased production of saleable and higher value beef, increased weaning rates and cohesive landscape management for productivity and environmental outcomes.

The program will deliver information to support increased productivity. This includes through a better understanding of critical control points across the supply chain, identifying best practice, practical strategies for managing and moving cattle, and through demonstrations, training opportunities and engaging with people and organisations across WA. Current projects concentrate on defining the diet of northern grazing cattle to manage transition practices, mapping opportunities to maximise productivity under centre pivots, backgrounding and better preparation of cattle into feedlot operations and interrogation of producer insights for adoption outcomes. Project outcomes are being communicated through dedicated producer groups and field days, such as the 'Hammersley Station' field day.

**i** To find out more visit [mla.com.au/beeflinks](http://mla.com.au/beeflinks)

## The potential of biomineral fertilisers to increase soil carbon sequestration

This project is an integrated R&D Producer Demonstration Site project based in south west WA. It aims to explore the use of biomineral fertilisers as an alternative to conventional fertiliser products in grazing systems. Biomineral fertilisers are a granular mineral fertiliser product coated in micro-organisms. These products claim to increase plant nutrient uptake and increase the rate of soil carbon sequestration.

This project involves a replicated trial and three demonstration sites where biomineral fertilisers and conventional fertilisers will be applied in commercial settings at recommended rates according to soil test results. Soil carbon, pasture production and animal production measurements will subsequently be taken. A replicated plot trial is also included with biomineral and conventional fertilisers applied at equivalent nutrient rates, in order to identify the action of the biological component of biomineral fertilisers. Ultimately, this project will assess the ability and cost efficiency of biomineral fertilisers to sequester soil carbon at a rate that is greater than conventional fertilisers, without reducing productivity. The 2023 financial year incorporated the first growing season of the trial, where treatments were established and significant baseline measurements taken alongside the first year's pasture and animal performance measures.

**i** This project will run until 2025 and is led by Pedaga Investments with support from the Future Food Network. To find out more about the project or express interest in getting involved, email [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au)

## Maximising potential stocking rate through pasture management techniques

The aim of this project is to increase the potential stocking rate in the mixed farming areas of southern WA. This will be accomplished by improving and managing pastures during the autumn and winter seasons.

The project will span five years and encompass six key areas, with four core producer groups established in each area. Over a two-year period, these groups will collaborate to improve stocking rates by implementing introduced pasture management techniques. The areas covered by the project are:

1. Great Southern Wheatbelt – groups established in 2023
2. West Midlands/Northern – groups established in 2024
3. Great Southern High Rainfall – groups established in 2024
4. South-west – groups established in 2025
5. South-east – groups established in 2025
6. Wheatbelt – groups established in 2026.

By the end of the project in July 2028, the overall outcome is to improve the resilience and productivity of Southern WA pasture systems through the understanding and accelerated adoption of best practices.

**i** To find out more, email [getinvolved@mfa.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mfa.com.au)

## Improving production on sandy soils

Building on previous research in the grains industry, the 'Improved grazing production on non-wetting sands' project is investigating opportunities to improve feedbase and livestock productivity on sandy soils by addressing soil chemical, physical and biological constraints.

Three replicated demonstration sites have been established on grazing properties in the Coorong district of SA. Treatments at these sites include various tillage practices combined with applications of compost, clay, manure and fertiliser.

Six associate producers are closely involved in the project. Annual field days and workshops give producers a chance to understand different interventions implemented under local commercial conditions to facilitate adoption in the region.

The project has been designed to give producers an opportunity to review the effectiveness of different treatments and practices to improve production on sandy soils by measuring plant growth, dry matter production and livestock carrying capacity. It will also test the cost effectiveness of the treatments on sites across the project area. With one year of growing season data available, insights from the project show a combination of deep ripping and manure has provided the greatest response, with an additional 3.7t of dry matter produced per hectare. Findings to date indicate the most beneficial amelioration methods and subsequent production outcomes vary between locations and conditions, so an understanding of the local environment is important when considering project results and amelioration strategies. This project runs until 2026.

**i** If you are an SA producer and would like to join a local event, email [getinvolved@mfa.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mfa.com.au)



## Red Meat and Wool Growth Program

SA's Red Meat and Wool Growth Program contributed to improving productivity, profitability and enhancing market access for the red meat sector. It provided support to industry for recovery and restocking through engagement of commercial sheep and cattle producers in an extension/adoption-focused program.

The program has focused on enhancing productivity, labour efficiency and data-based decision making through:

- strengthening strategic skills development (particularly in the area of building business profit and resilience)
- promoting the benefits of and facilitating opportunities to adopt technology into livestock enterprises to enhance productivity, labour efficiency and data-based decision making.

The program has improved capacity and driven practice change specific to the needs of the individual livestock businesses. This has contributed to increased profitability, productivity and resilience in the sector through delivery of a successful extension/adoption program to livestock producers and their advisors.

Since the program was launched in June 2020, 1,789 participants – including 1,294 producers and 367 service providers – were directly engaged in program events/activities. These producers influence 2,418,154 head of sheep and 130,703 head of cattle on 5,362ha in 12 regions of South Australia.

**i** To get involved visit [pir.sa.gov.au/redmeatandwool](http://pir.sa.gov.au/redmeatandwool)





## Innovative sheep and beef networks

This project aims to design and deliver a range of innovative approaches to engage beef and sheep networks across Victoria to support the adoption of technologies and improved management practices, resulting in increased productivity and business performance.

During the 2022–23 delivery period, the project completed 100 activities. These included 35 awareness events, 33 workshops to enhance skills and knowledge, and 32 meetings/focus groups with stakeholders. Highlights include a foot-and-mouth disease awareness campaign and associated biosecurity, supporting the Victorian flood relief and recovery response, and the BestWool/ BestLamb and BetterBeef Networks Regional Roadshow.

These activities have engaged, 2,300 producers and 335 advisors over the past year.

The project is due to finish in late 2024.

**i** To find out more, email [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au)

## SheepLinks

### FEED365 all year livestock forage systems

MLA and the WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) have established a collaborative program of work known as SheepLinks. SheepLinks aims to build resilience and productivity throughout the WA sheepmeat supply chain. Within this broader program of work, the 'FEED365 all year livestock forage systems' project focuses on re-designing the feedbase system to provide forage for livestock year-round, overcoming the challenges of seasonal feed gaps and increasing climate variability in Mediterranean environments.

The project involves a significant research component hosted at the Katanning Research Facility, where 87 cultivars from 64 pasture species are being evaluated in small plot trials and a subset of 24 species are being evaluated in replicated grazing trials. Integrated adoption activities are being conducted alongside the primary research site, with six grower groups hosting on-farm commercial trial sites.

With only two years of production data currently available, recommendations on alternate forage systems cannot yet be made. Producer research sites have been established through engagement with six grower groups to increase the degree of commercial testing and further demonstrate project findings to producers in a local context. These sites are in the Wagin, Dandaragan, Esperance, Mount Barker, South Sterling, Wialki, Bakers Hill, Mandurah and Harvey regions and include various pasture species and mixes. Treatments at the commercial sites include perennial subtropical grasses, legumes and edible shrub species. Preliminary research insights show forage oats produce the most significant biomass during the growing season, with kikuyu and tedera produce the out of season biomass. The project will combine various production and quality measurements to undertake bioeconomic modelling of observed results in order to assess pasture system options.

**i** This project will continue until 2026. To find out more about the project or express interest in getting involved, please contact Senior Research Scientist Daniel Real at [daniel.real@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:daniel.real@dpird.wa.gov.au)

The FEED365 project is evaluating different fodder options for livestock in Mediterranean environments.



### Carcase feedback for improved on-farm productivity

The 'Carcase feedback for improved on-farm productivity' project sits within the broader SheepLinks program. The installation of a Dual-Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) unit by the Western Australian Meat Marketing Cooperative (WAMMCO) will provide WA lamb producers with objective carcase feedback on lean meat yield, following processing. Combined with eating quality data this information can be used to tailor on farm management practices to better meet market specifications.

The project team has adapted the existing MLA Profitable Grazing Systems Meat the Market package to assist 30 WA sheepmeat businesses to better utilise objective carcase feedback in order to improve lamb processing compliance and optimise carcase value.

Throughout the project, local processors and advisors will be supported to implement and increase their understanding of objective carcase feedback. One of three producer groups has entered this project, undertaking training, analysing carcase feedback and receiving group mentoring and support to implement on-farm strategies that address carcase feedback.

**i** This project will continue until 2026. To find out more about the project or express interest in getting involved, please contact Research Scientist Claire Payne at [claire.payne@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:claire.payne@dpird.wa.gov.au)

## Supporting sheep producers transition to non-mulesed sheep

This MLA-funded Producer Demonstration Site supports sheep breeders to use existing tools and management strategies available to transition to a non-mulesed flock. The project has four groups and 10 producer demonstration sites spread across south-west, northeast and central-west Victoria and southern NSW.

Project activities include discussion groups and on-farm demonstrations to allow producers to identify management changes to move towards ceasing mulesing across their flocks. Groups meet on-farm to improve knowledge and skills, discuss seasonal issues and use a range of industry tools to develop and implement their plans. There are also annual field days for each group.

Some management practices being demonstrated and monitored so far include:

- effect of different tail docking methods on tail wool cover/crutching ease
- evaluating progeny of sires with traits for breech-strike resistance i.e. low vs high Breech Wrinkle Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs)
- trialling a small mob of non-mulesed sheep compared to mulesed sheep
- investigating causes of and options to reduce dag
- when and where to breech score – in the cradle or standing up.

Learnings from this PDS has been shared at producer field days, webinars, media releases, and industry conferences.

**i** For more information about the program or to explore the possibility of joining a discussion group in your region, email [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au)

## Enhancing technology adoption across the Angus genetic improvement pipeline

This project will further enhance the world-leading rates of genetic improvement achieved in Angus influenced cattle, contributing to the National Livestock Genetic Consortium's mission to double the rate of annual genetic gain in the beef value chain by 2022. This is a five-year program, running from 2018 to 2023.

Highlights from 2022–23 included:

- the annual rate of genetic improvement realised was \$6.60 per cow mated, representing an 16% increase in the rate of genetic improvement in the three years since the project began
- 11 educational events, with 1,432 attendees (299 face-to-face and 1,133 online)
- average usefulness rating was 8.5/10
- average likeliness to adopt new practices was 8.8/10
- 30% increase in views with the Angus Education Centre
- 17% growth in engagement with Angus Australia's social media.

As the final activity for this project, a quantitative survey of stakeholders across the beef value chain will be conducted to measure practice and attitude change as a result from this education and extension investment.

**i** To find out more email Angus Australia Extension Manager Jake Phillips at [jake.phillips@angusaustralia.com.au](mailto:jake.phillips@angusaustralia.com.au) or MLA Project Manager – Genetics Adoption, Sarita Guy, at [sguy@mla.com.au](mailto:sguy@mla.com.au)

## Genetic insights survey

The genetics insights survey was conducted to provide up-to-date insights into the use of genetic tools and breeding practices in the Australian beef and sheep industry.

A representative sample of the industry in terms of location, breed type and production systems was surveyed through telephone interviews and online surveys. There were 525 beef and 585 sheep commercial producers surveyed.

### Increased use of genetic tools

There was a significant increase in adoption of Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) and Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) by commercial producers:

- the use of EBVs by commercial beef producers increased between 2016–2023 from 18% to 59%
  - » use was higher by temperate-only beef producers compared to tropically-adapted producers (60 vs 51%).
- the use of ASBVs by commercial sheep producers increased between 2016–2023 from 14% to 55%.

Commercial producers who use ASBVs were significantly more likely to say that they think their financial health is improving compared to commercial producers who do not use ASBVs (61% vs 41%).

Use of genetic tools also increased in the stud sector (111 sheep and 114 beef seedstock producers):

- The use of EBVs by seedstock beef producers increased between 2016–2023 from 32% to 56%
- The use of ASBVs by seedstock sheep producers increased between 2016–2023 from 18% to 55%.

### Future approaches to adoption

These survey results demonstrate the current activities to promote the awareness, understanding and use of EBVs and ASBVs have been effective in increasing the adoption of genetic tools. This justifies the continuation of existing activities. Additional areas of focus include:

- Activities that build producer relationships with other producers (peer-to-peer learning), stock agents, livestock advisors and vets
- Increasing brand recognition of Sheep Genetics and BREEDPLAN
- Demonstrating the benefit of using genetics
- Encouraging participation and increasing accessibility of formal training.

**i** To find out more email MLA Project Manager – Genetics Adoption, Sarita Guy, at [sguy@mla.com.au](mailto:sguy@mla.com.au)





## Northern Breeding Business (NB2)

Northern Breeding Business (NB2) is a producer-led RD&A program which aims to address calf loss in northern breeding herds, low profitability of many northern beef enterprises and low adoption of proven management practices and technologies relevant to breeding operations.



The program is creating a business-focused culture throughout the north Australian beef industry. At the heart of NB2 is a network of beef producer groups, supported by experienced facilitators and experts, who work together to better understand and improve their businesses.

Producers set directions for their business based on evidence from their data, and work alongside others to exchange ideas and learn from a broad industry network.

NB2 takes a whole-of-enterprise approach, incorporating four pillars of focus: herd, feedbase, business, and the overarching adoption pillar – ‘Pathway to Practice’. This adoption pillar is collectively delivered by state agencies, advisors and organisations across northern Australia.

There are currently 48 producers participating in the NB2 program across six groups, representing more than 400,000 breeders under management across more than 12 million hectares of the northern rangelands.

Group members have been working to understand their individual herd, feedbase and business performance and have been using those results to learn from one another and discuss where opportunities for improvement might lie. These conversations are beginning to inform group decisions around what learning and development activities they should focus on together, for example nutrition training and carbon opportunities.

**i** To find out more, visit [mla.com.au/nb2](https://mla.com.au/nb2)

## Increasing adoption of phosphorus supplementation in northern Australia

The benefits of Phosphorus (P) supplementation for breeding herds in northern Australia are well researched and widely known, with P being essential for livestock growth, fertility and milk production.

However, across northern Australia only a portion of cattle grazing on P deficient pastures are being managed with Phosphorus supplementation. This is due in part to perceived difficulties in implementing wet season Phosphorus supplementation on extensive properties.

This project is working with producers to test for, identify and analyse Phosphorus deficiencies in northern beef businesses, implementing appropriate supplementation strategies within each enterprise.

This includes some trials to validate and demonstrate an Easy P supplementation program to overcome difficulties of supplying and distributing supplements to stock during the wet season.

Early results from the project have indicated that providing bulk Phosphorus to stock at the beginning of the wet season in addition to usual supplements in the dry – a key strategy of the Easy P method – is as effective as more traditional and labour-intensive methods of providing supplementation.

The project involves producer demonstration sites across northern WA, Queensland and the NT where different supplementation strategies are being tested within commercial systems. Objective information is being collected to conduct cost–benefit analyses, informing the adoption of P supplementation and methods of delivering the supplement to stock. The aim of this project is to increase the adoption of P supplementation across the northern beef industry by delivering new information, peer-to-peer learning and demonstrations.

**i** To find out more, email [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au) or visit [MLA's phosphorus hub for other practical tips and tools: mla.com.au/phosphorus](https://mmla.com.au/phosphorus)

## Managing welfare and production at weaning

With increasing emphasis placed on animal welfare by community and consumers, there has been interest from northern beef producers to explore the role and application of pain relief in commercial breeder operations.

Through demonstration sites, this project aimed to improve the knowledge, awareness and skills of producers in performing best practice aseptic techniques and administering pain relief for animal husbandry procedures such as castration and dehorning.

The project, which was completed during the first half of 2023, took place across commercial demonstration and research sites in the NT and WA.

The study involved objective animal wellbeing assessments, using behavioural and physiological parameters to understand the benefits of using pain relief products. Measurements taken following the administration of pain relief include weight gain, mortality and animal behaviour such as vocalisation and movement. Demonstration and assessment of the impacts of treatments were complemented by training for producers in undertaking animal husbandry practices.

The project demonstrated the importance of good husbandry at the time of weaning, including low stress handling, nutrition, cleanliness of yards and equipment, disease management and pain mitigation.

The results from this project have contributed to the revision of *A guide to best practice in beef cattle - Branding, castration and dehorning* and new resources on weaner management and pain mitigation in northern cattle enterprises.

**i** To find out more, email [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au)

## Back to Business – evaluation

In early 2020 MLA developed the Back to Business (B2B) program to aid in bushfire recovery for affected producers. During 2022–23 an impact assessment was conducted to determine the triple bottom line impact of the levy investment.

The program consisted of four areas: one-on-one consultancy, webinars/podcasts, event sponsorship and the MLA website.

Between January and December 2020, 132 producers and 35 consultants participated in the B2B program. Of the producers interviewed, 82% had implemented or intended to implement their B2B action plan. Overall, B2B was widely acknowledged by stakeholders as a worthwhile program which delivered triple bottom line benefits to industry. The review found the B2B program increased the capacity and capability of producers to not only recover from the impacts of the bushfire, but also to manage and improve their businesses into the future. While the program was developed at very short notice, the concept of B2B was soundly based and fit for purpose. Producers and other stakeholders were very appreciative of MLA making the program available.

The average net benefit for those producers who received an economic benefit due to their participation was \$6.21 per hectare across 52,284 hectares. The economic benefits to producers were based on four outcomes:

- a reduction in time required to fully recover to pre-fire production levels
- an increase in long term business profit above pre-fire levels
- a saving in consultant fees where the producer would have engaged with a consultant anyway if B2B had not been available
- receiving grant funding which would not otherwise have been received without B2B.

The largest issue identified with the program was the undersubscription of producers. Findings from the assessment suggested this could have been due to a lack of awareness of the program due to limited marketing outside MLA channels, the emotional state of producers following the bushfires and the impact of COVID-19 on producers' willingness to engage. Recommendations were provided to increase the promotion and marketing of the program by better linking in with other organisations offering disaster relief, extending the length of time the program is offered for, and increasing training for people in the industry dealing with people suffering the effects of trauma.

The evaluation made 34 recommendations, based on the assumption that MLA intends to deploy the B2B program, or something similar, again in the future. These recommendations are being reviewed and will be implemented in any future natural disaster recovery program MLA provides to levy payers.



## Forewarned is Forearmed – climate coaching for on-farm decision making

This was the final phase of the five-year Forewarned is Forearmed (FWFA) project. It focused on the extension of the project outputs to industry, and more specifically, to service providers in the dairy, red meat, grains, wine and sugar industries in southern Australia.

The target audience were advisors based in southern Australia, who will deliver workshops to producers to drive adoption of the five new Bureau of Meteorology forecasting tools for extreme weather events. The project's desired outcome was advisors who are well-equipped with appropriate resources to support the training of producers to use the tools, which will decrease the impacts extreme weather events have on farm production and on business profitability.

The main objectives of the FWFA extension project were to build an extension product and to train advisors from the five industries to deliver workshops to producers, to encourage use of the FWFA tools to improve risk management beyond the life of the FWFA project.

The FWFA extension project activity was divided into three phases: phase 1 – program development, phase 2 – delivery of pilot workshops and phase 3 – train-the-trainer workshop for deliverers.

Ten pilot deliverers were trained to use the FWFA tools and to deliver workshops to producers in phase 2. Five face-to-face pilot workshops were delivered to 32 producers from different industries across southern Australia, 37 advisors completed the train-the-trainer process in phase 3, representing the red meat, dairy, grain, wine, sugar and cotton industries.

**i** To access the Forewarned is Forearmed extension product or learn more, visit MLA's Creative Commons site at [mla.com.au/cc](https://mla.com.au/cc)



# With thanks to our 2022–23 service providers

A Sutton and L J Sutton	Desiree Jackson Livestock Management	NQ Dry Tropics Ltd
Accioly Livestock Industry Services	EcoRich Grazing	Nutrien Ag Solutions
Achieve Ag Solutions Pty Ltd	Elders Rural Services Australia Limited	Paddock Plants
Acre Economics	Environmental Accounting Services	Pedaga Investments
Aggregate Consulting Pty Ltd	ETG Holdings Pty Ltd	Perennial Pasture Systems Inc
AgPro Management	Facey Group Inc	Peter Russell Spies
Agrarian Management	Far South Coast Dairy Development	Pinion Advisory
Agricultural Business Research Institute	Farmacist Pty Ltd	Precision Agriculture Pty Ltd
Agridome Consultancy	Fitzroy Basin Association Inc	Precision Pastures Pty Ltd
Agriprove Pty Ltd	For Flocks Sake Pty Ltd	Primary Industries and Resources SA
Agrista Pty Ltd	GI & A L Collins	Range IQ Pty Ltd
AgStar Projects Pty Ltd	Gillamii Centre	Ron Hacker Rangeland Consulting
Angus Society of Australia	Gippsland Agricultural Group	Rumenate Livestock Services
Animal Health Australia	Glenrac Incorporated	Rural Industries Skill
ASHEEP	Greenham Tasmania	Sally Martin Consulting
Associated Advertising & Promotions	GSM Press Pty Ltd	Schuster Consulting Group Pty Ltd
Australian Wool Innovation	Holbrook Landcare Group	Sheepmatters Pty Ltd
Bahr Ag Pty Ltd	Inspiring Excellence Pty Ltd	Sound Images Pty Ltd
Barossa Improved Grazing Group Inc	J.M MacDonald and R.N MacDonald	South Australia Arid Lands Landscape Board
Beattie Consulting Services Pty Ltd	J.T. Agri-Source Pty Ltd	South Coast Beef Producers Association
Beef Enterprise Advisory Services	Laundry Lane Productions Pty Ltd	Southern Cross University
Bureau of Meteorology	Leucaena Network Association Inc	Southern DIRT Incorporated
Bush AgriBusiness Pty Limited	Lisa Warn Ag Consulting Pty Ltd	Southern Farming Systems
Carnamah Investment Trust	Local Land Services	Southern Rangelands Pastoral
Central West Farming Systems	Lower Blackwood Land Conservation	Stirlings to Coast Farmers
Charles Sturt University	Macdoch Foundation Limited	T Prance Rural Consulting
CJ & JE Mirams	MacKillop Farm Management Group	Talking Livestock
ConnectAg	Meridian Agriculture Pty Ltd	Tammy Kruckow Coaching
Coorong District Council	MerinoLink Limited	The Derwent Catchment Project Inc
David Brown	Merredin and Districts Farm Improvement Group	Thrive Agri Services
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (Queensland)	Miracle Dog Pty Ltd	University of Adelaide
Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (Victoria)	Monaro Farming Systems CMC Inc	University of Melbourne
Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (NT)	Moore Catchment Council Inc	University of New England
Department of Primary Industries (NSW)	Murdoch University	University of Southern Queensland
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (WA)	Nextgen Agri Limited	University of Western Australia
Department of Regional NSW	Nicon Rural Services Pty Ltd	Upper North Farming Systems
Desert Uplands Committee	Niteco Pty Ltd	Upriver (NT) Pty Ltd
	Norco Rural Stores	Vanguard Business Services Pty Ltd
	Northern BreedAssist	West Midlands Group





# Contacts

To find out more about MLA's adoption programs or to get involved contact [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au)

To learn more about MLA's Producer Demonstration Sites contact [PDS@mla.com.au](mailto:PDS@mla.com.au)

To learn more about MLA's Profitable Grazing Systems contact [PGS@mla.com.au](mailto:PGS@mla.com.au)

To learn more about MLA's EDGE network contact [edge@mla.com.au](mailto:edge@mla.com.au)

To learn more about MLA's eLearning platform contact [elearning@mla.com.au](mailto:elearning@mla.com.au)

For all other enquiries contact [info@mla.com.au](mailto:info@mla.com.au)





**Meat & Livestock Australia**

Level 1, 40 Mount Street  
North Sydney NSW 2060

Phone: 02 9463 9333

Fax: 02 9463 9393

[mla.com.au](http://mla.com.au)

**MLA's *Adoption Outcomes Report 2022–23***  
is available online at [mla.com.au/adoption-report](http://mla.com.au/adoption-report)