



# final report

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## **More Beef From Pastures state coordination – Western Australia**

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## **Abstract**

More Beef from Pastures (MBfP) is MLA's flagship majority market extension program for Australia's southern beef producers. The goal of MBfP is to achieve a sustainable (economic and environmental) increase in the production of kilograms of beef per hectare through optimal management of the feedbase.

The initial phase of MBfP ran from 2004 through to 2009 creating awareness of the MBfP program and the MBfP producer manual and tools. State coordination of Phase II was undertaken in Western Australia from 2010 to 2013 by the Western Australian Department of Food and Agriculture and then Glen Brayshaw of Planfarm from 2014 to December 2016.

During the last three years of MBfP delivery in Western Australia, there has been an adjustment away from government delivery to primarily the utilisation of the private sector. This required a significant investment of time by the state coordinator in both coordination and the education of potential deliverers. Success can be measured against the KPIs that have been delivered. Overall, 2,879 participants have participated MBfP events with a satisfaction score of 8.2 and a value score of 7.9. Pre and Post skills audits have measured an increase in skills and knowledge from 47% pre workshop to 76% post workshop.

## Executive summary

This final report provides detail of the achievements for the delivery of More Beef from Pastures (MBfP) phase II for the period February 2014 to November 2016 for Western Australia

More Beef from Pastures is MLA's flagship majority market extension program for Australia's southern beef producers. The goal of MBfP is to achieve a sustainable (economic and environmental) increase in the production of kilograms of beef per hectare through optimal management of the feedbase. Glen Brayshaw of Planfarm has been managing the state coordinator role for Western Australia.

The defining feature of Phase II of the MBfP program was the requirement for producers to move beyond awareness of the program and program material to a point where it can be demonstrated that, as a result of participating in a MBfP activity, they have either:

1. Quantifiably increased their knowledge, skills or confidence AND/OR
2. Implemented a practice change on farm that has resulted in an economic benefit

During the last three years of MBfP delivery in Western Australia, there has been an adjustment away from government delivery to primarily the utilisation of the private sector. This was driven by DAFWA with a change in policy to not be involved in extension.

There has been a large investment of time by the state coordinator in the education of potential delivers such that they may meet MBfP requirements. Delivery has been provided with the assistance of the state coordinator through producer groups, private consultants, university researchers and veterinarians. The transition to private delivers has been well received and good momentum generated during the latter stages of the contract period.

Over the three year contract period, 51 events have been delivered through MBfP in Western Australia. Overall, 2,879 producers have participated in MBfP events, exceeding the participation KPI for the contracted period. This has led to a satisfaction score of 8.2 and a value score of 7.9. Pre and post skills audits have measured an increase in skills and knowledge from 47% pre-workshop to 76% post workshop.

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## 1 Background

More Beef from Pastures (MBfP) has been a robust platform based on a framework of proven, relatively static managerial principles, designed to build improved producer confidence and elicit effective practice change. The fundamental focus of the program are the key drivers of beef enterprise profitability, productivity and sustainability. These remain the most significant constraints to industry-wide improvement and represent the most obvious opportunity for gain.

Since inception of the program in 2004, program delivery of MBfP has highlighted significant opportunities for:

- Further increasing the levels and permanency of skills and enterprise performance;
- Improving rigour around the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of such changes; and,
- Enhancing the mechanisms through which new research, development and extension (RD&E) ideas are collated from industry.

Furthermore, the emergence of significant changes in the RD&E operating environment, and new and/or new iterations of major strategic plans, has provided the impetus for a centralised, innovative and versatile framework for southern beef development and extension. In meeting this opportunity, MBfP Phase II has continued to engage specific market segments across the spectrum of awareness, participatory learning and practice change activities. The key imperatives that MBfP has sought to address include:

1. Address the heightened needs of the red meat industry to remain competitive and sustainable in the face of a changing physical, financial and social environment;
2. Account for the variable and segmented nature of public and private sector RD&E resourcing and capability across the country;
3. Robustly align with, and extend applicable components of, the National Beef RD&E Strategy; and,
4. Be positioned as the preeminent southern beef communication and extension framework that enables the harvesting of new, and evaluation and attribution of existing, R&D ideas and investments

## 2 Project objectives

This project defined the roles, responsibilities and deliverables for the MBfP state coordinator (SC) position. The SC provided the local/regional input into the design of MBfP activities and facilitated the engagement of deliverers and producers through their own schedule of local extension and communication events.

Working with the national coordinator, the state coordinator was responsible for delivery of an annual State Business Plan to achieve the awareness, engagement and practice change targets. Additionally, the state coordinator delivered the defined monitoring and evaluation data specified in the State Business Plan. Working as part of a national team lead by MBfP program national coordinator, the following was delivered under this agreement:

## 2.1 State business plan

State Business Plan was:

- Delivered using the standard MLA template provided
- Included specific KPIs for the state and form the basis of the key deliverables of the agreement.
- Include an annual operating plan of activities in line with appropriate state key performance indicators and activities targeting specified producer segments and across delivery resources (public and/or private) appropriate for A, B & C tiers of activities.
- Present a clear process for identifying and engaging a delivery network within the state.
- Outline the state communication plan for the program
- The state business plan was delivered a revised on an annual basis during the programs delivery.

## 2.2 State business plan implementation

- Included implementation of the business plan activities, directing resources, training and engaging a team of public and private sector delivers/facilitators as appropriate across respective program activities.
- Completed with the “Principles for engaging with private delivery organisations” to guide the deployment of resources for program delivery
- Was the key point of contact and coordinator for engaging the state based network of program producer advocates.
- Maintained a database of participants and provide this information to the national coordinator and MLA monthly.
- Attended regular phone meetings with the national coordinator and MLA.
- Attended up to two state SC face to face meetings per year
- Provided milestone reports promptly and to an acceptable standard to MLA.
- Sourced relevant articles for MLA publications and the e-newsletter coordinated by the national coordinator
- Coordinated and integrated activities with other existing state based networks; and
- Comply with MLA standard processes for event promotion and use the program brand in accordance with the MLA style guidelines.

## 2.3 Monitoring and evaluation

All specified monitoring and evaluation processes were executed as per agreed processes, with all data collated and provide monthly if possible (to enable quarterly analysis) to the national coordinator and MLA. Quarterly reports of analysed data were be provided to the state coordinators by MLA.

The standard MBfP monitoring and evaluation processes included:

**Category A: Measuring awareness, satisfaction, value and intention to change**

At least 65% participant were to provide feedback sheets completed in accordance with the MBfP Monitoring and Evaluation Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), using the standard MBfP template were to be collected for all category A activities and entered into the supplied excel spreadsheet.

### **Category B: Measuring shifts in knowledge, skills and confidence (KSC)**

At least 80% participants completed pre and post activity knowledge and skills assessments completed in accordance with SOPs. Full results of the pre and post knowledge and skills assessments were required to be entered into the standard MBfP spreadsheet.

### **Category C: Measuring practice change and program impact**

Practice change as defined by the SOPs will be recorded for 80% of participants in all category C activities. State coordinators to were to ensure shifts in practice change were recorded by deliverers using the standard template provided and mapped against practices within the MBfP manual modules. Results were to be recorded in the standard excel spreadsheet, including names and contact details of participants.

### **Identifying case studies to measure impact**

The state coordinator was also required to assist in identifying and recruiting case studies to enable tracking of profitability and productivity gains as a result of participating in the MBfP program.

## **3 Methodology**

MBfP delivery was structured using campaign-based approaches to timely messages, along with defined learning pathways underpinning extension and communication in MBfP II. Awareness efforts focussed on broad scale communications activities, with the aim of seeding consistent and timely messages – and subsequent activities – into the yearly management calendar.

Learning pathways provide a structured continuum of aligned activities, each being fit-for-purpose and designed to address the requirements of stated KPIs within the state strategy. Importantly, learning pathways do not prescribe extension processes for producers; rather they provided multiple points at which producers may engage with the program either through passive communication activities, or more active extension/industry support activities.

The MBfP KPI targets, provide a three-tier learning pathway – but not necessarily sequential - approach to learning, and include:

- Communication-based awareness level activities - category A imperative;
- Products and services to increase producer knowledge, attitude, skills and aspirations (KASA) – category B imperative; and,
- Participatory learning to elicit effective practice change – category C imperative.

Robust, centralised and standardised M&E has been key focus the program. A monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) framework was developed to progressively collect M&E information against MBfP's program logic design. The system support periodic complete or partial evaluations and informed program partners and coordinators of achievements against KPIs. All evaluations have been timed to fit into MLA's (and program partners') planned reporting cycles.

A key feature of the MER framework was the capacity to demonstrate collaborative attribution, that is the ability to measure and assess the impact, outcome and outputs of the MBfP program against all stakeholder investments and resources.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Performance against KPI's

#### 4.1.1 Participation KPI

The following level of participation for each KPI has been recorded in Western Australia for the contracted period.

	Participation-KPI	Participation	% Achieved
Category A KPI	892	1579	177%
Category B KPI	447	706	158%
Category C KPI	203	247	122%

#### 4.1.2 Evaluation Return Rate

	Return rate- KPI	Actual returns that meet SOP	Return rate
Category A KPI	65%	485	58%
Category B KPI	80%	492	70%
Category C KPI	80%	26	74%

The Evaluation Return rates as broken down between the separate categories indicates that Western Australia has not met the required return rates of the contract period. Early in the contract period mistakes were made, but once identified the state coordinator worked with deliverers to rectify the issue. Throughout the contract period, the rate of evaluation returns has improved and are in line with national results.



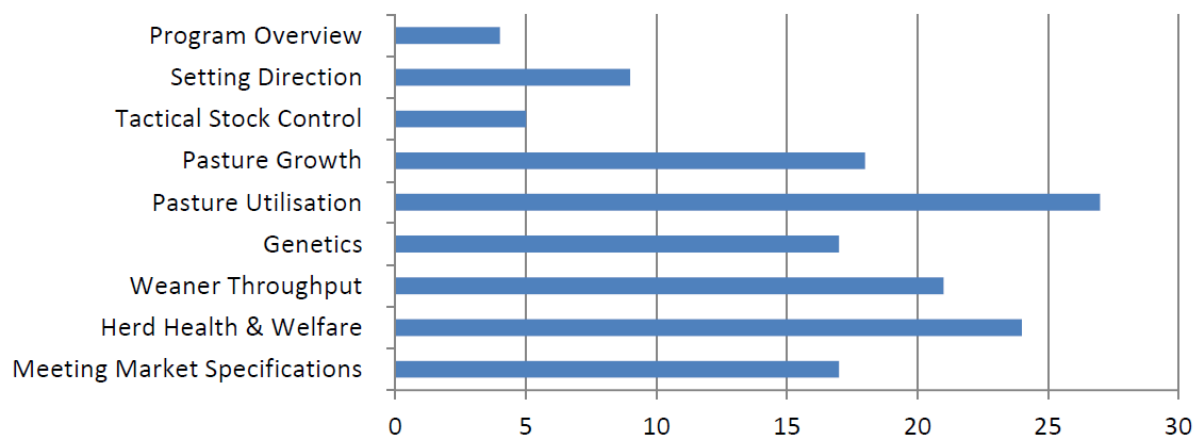
### 4.1.3 Western Australia number of cattle of MBfP Participants

	<100 hd (not incl. in KPI)	100 – 400 hd	401 – 1,600 hd	>1,600 hd
<b>KPI as %</b>		<b>40%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>No. participants</b>	112	213	190	83
<b>% KPI achieved</b>		<b>36%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>14%</b>

The KPI for herd size was not a contracted KPI, but results have been provided throughout the programs delivery period. Target audience was producers with 100hd of breeding cattle or above. Median herd size was 330hd.

### 4.1.4 Frequency of Module Delivery

WA - Frequency of Modules Presented as at November 2016



The above table demonstrates the frequency of delivery in Western Australia for each of the respective modules that make up the MBfP producer manual.

### 4.1.5 MBfP event satisfaction Scores

Average Overall Satisfaction Rating by State by Category Rolling Data  
as at November 2016



Western Australia achieved an event satisfaction result of 8.2 out of 10. This is the lowest of the national results.

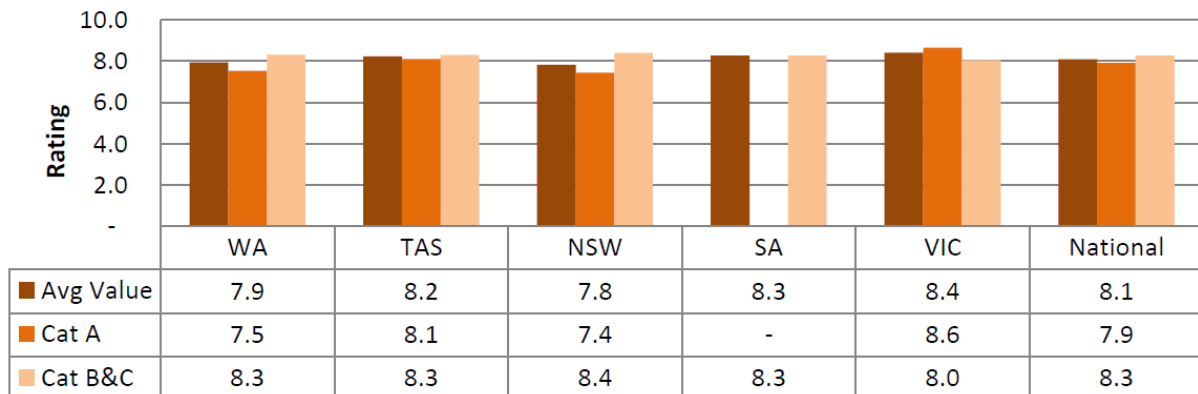
Looking closely at the national data that has been provided, results have varied between a low of 6.2 for a free category A webinar presentation. The presentation was a broad analysis cattle market. The highest ranked event on satisfaction was 9.6 for a category B event, Calforama, a targeted event for short term and long term planning for calving that included a producer contribution of \$50/hd.

This does demonstrate the power of a well planned targeted content and the response of producers.

Higher satisfactions scores look to have been generated at well planned events where content, venue/catering and timeliness have all come together. Events with lower satisfactions scores have had one of the elements not to the satisfaction of the participants. This has been for various reasons, sometimes through inexperience of event planning or through unforeseen circumstances.

#### 4.1.6 MBfP event value rating

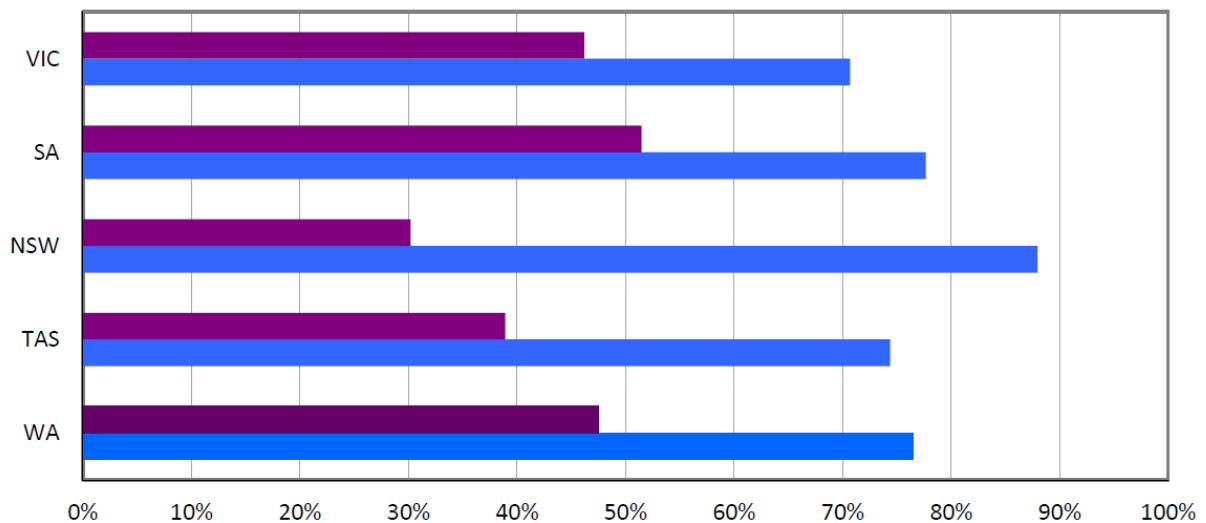
Average Overall Value Rating by State by Category Rolling Data  
as at November 2016



Western Australia achieved an event satisfaction result of 7.9 out of 10. This is consistent with national result of 8.1.

#### 4.1.7 Pre and post workshop skills and knowledge

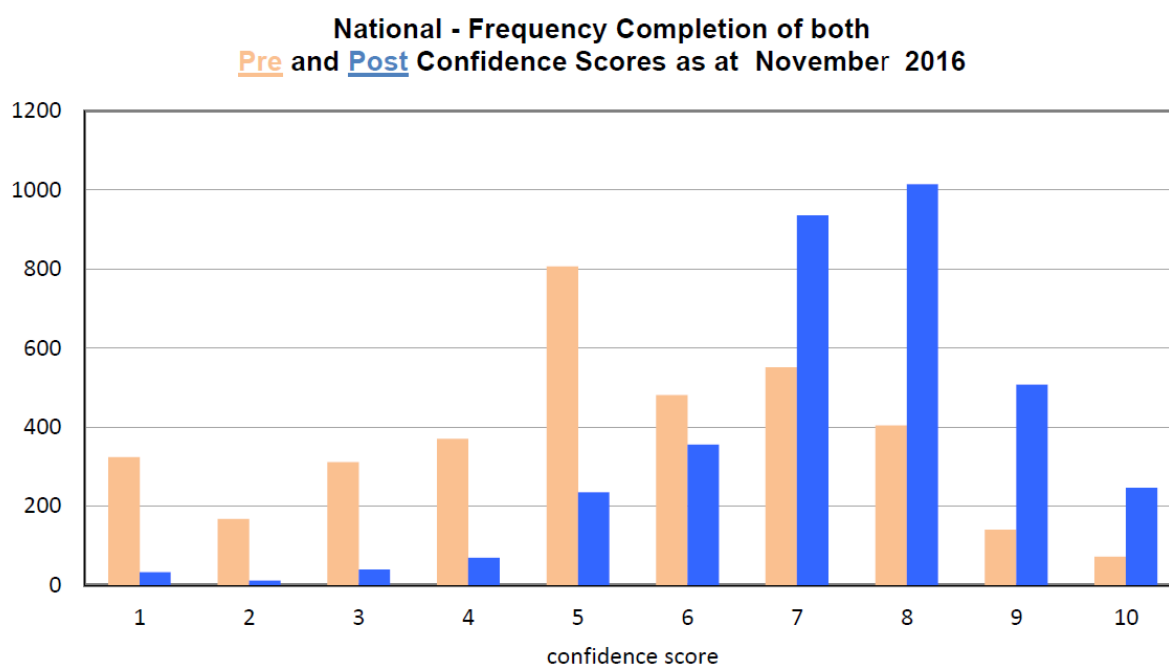
State: Knowledge & Skills - Pre and Post Average % Scores  
as at November 2016



Captured during Category B and C events was measurable changes in skills and knowledge. This was conducted through pre and post workshop surveys, either through paper based surveys or electronically using MS PowerPoint and Turning Point clickers.

Average Pre workshop skills and knowledge results for Western Australia was measured at 48%. Post workshop results were measured at 76%. This demonstrates that MBfP workshops in Western Australia increased producer skills and knowledge.

#### 4.1.8 Pre and post workshop confidence



Confidence of producers was also measured during the pre and post workshop surveys. National results indicated a definite increase in confidence through MBfP workshop delivery.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Completion of KPIs

Western Australia's results when compared against the KPIs are a positive outcome for MBfP and its various stakeholders. Participation exceeded KPIs by 164%, this was due to 2,532 producers having participated MBfP events. This has led to a satisfaction score of 8.2 and a value score of 7.9. Pre and Post skills audits have measured an increase in skills and knowledge from 47% pre-workshop to 76% post workshop.

In exploring the above positive results and the project objective, there are areas of MBfP that have assisted the Western Australian state coordinator to deliver these results.

#### 5.1.1 Private sector engagement for delivery

The Western Australian business plan originally had the objective of private sector engagement in delivery with additional delivery sought through DAFWA given DAFWA's past involvement in MBfP.

At the start of the project delivery period, expression of interest was opened to potential delivery partners. To advertise the availability and requirements for MBfP funding, a jointly hosted webinar with Making More from Sheep was conducted. The webinar covered off on:

- The objectives of MBfP and Making More from Sheep programs

- Roles and responsibilities of host groups/advisors
  - Advertising activities
  - Producer involvement strategies
  - Making it a great activity – the role of learning objectives and activity delivery
  - The application process
  - Evaluation procedures and program requirements
  - Program reporting and invoicing requirements
- Further develop the network of sheep and beef deliverers in the MBfP and Making More from Sheep programs

Initial enquiry into MBfP opportunities was promising. A handful of Small scale category A events were applied and followed through to MBfP events. During the same period, there was no category B or C events applications.

It also became apparent during the early stages of MBfP delivery that DAFWA could not be relied upon for delivery as extension was not seen as the department's role, with resources moved into market development.

This required a significant investment of time by the state coordinator in both coordination and the education of potential deliverers. During the beginning stages of engagement, the state coordinator became heavily involved with event planning and management, with outside deliverers providing content for workshops. This did provide workshop opportunities for WA beef producers, but was a heavy workload for the state coordinator.

Delivery has been provided with the assistance of the state coordinator through producer groups, private consultants, university researchers and veterinarians.

Throughout the contract period, deliverers became more confident on the MBfP requirements and workshop design. This allowed for more efficient delivery across the state with a large amount of the KPI delivery completed in year two and three.

The pool of deliverers who chose to organise workshops in their entirety was small, but continued to grow in numbers over the course of the MBfP's term. The transition process to private deliverers has been well received with good momentum of delivery during the latter stages of MBfP.

### **5.1.2 Event promotion**

Event promotion was a challenging issue for the state coordinator and delivery partners. Various forms of promotion were utilised during the contract period including:

- Paid advertising in print media
- The use of past MBfP participant database
- Using delivery partners own databases
- Producer group members
- And the use of targeted campaigns using MLA's own member database.

Using paid advertising was an expensive item of an events overall budget. The most powerful tool was to utilise the MLA's own member database. This database had to be used sparingly as a targeted tool, to not over-burden producers with MLA emails, but for key

travelling events, the response from new participants was extremely beneficial in generating interest which resulted in new participants measured in KPIs.

Utilising the previous MBfP database was also beneficial as these were producers who were already seeking out beef extension activities for their own business, and were repeat participants.

### **5.1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation**

From the beginning of the contract period, it was strongly emphasised to the state coordinators the importance of M&E for MBfP and its associated KPIs. This was also provided through the Information Memorandum for all delivery partners and reiterated through the application process of events.

Early returns for Western Australia were below the targeted KPI, but through sustained communication and the use of technology such as the Turning Point clickers, returns improved throughout the contract period.

The results for returns were improved to 58% of category A, 70% category B and 74% category C. Although slightly below the contracted KPIs, these are in line with the national results.

The use of technology at category B events was the largest catalyst in improving the returns of evaluation sheets. By using the clickers at the beginning and end of workshops, participants could see their improvement in skills, knowledge and confidence throughout the sessions, and bringing out the paper based sheets for final feedback was not an onerous task for participants. The use of the clickers was heavily encouraged by the state coordinator during M&E.

## **5.2 Challenges to delivery of MBfP**

In all extension models, there are challenges to overcome. Below are some of the observed challenges that future delivery of extension in Western Australia may observe or should consider in the states business plan:

### **5.2.1 Geographical size of Western Australia**

The geographical size of Western Australia adds some unique challenges of managing the MBfP program. These include:

- Meeting and promoting to deliverers in areas outside of state coordinator's areas of influence.
- Trying to have balanced delivery across many areas can lead to only reaching some areas once.
- Allocation of travel costs in the budget can lead to delivery in some areas not being economical.
- Occupational Health and Safety concerns of workshop delivery and travel to the next workshop.

Into the future, the use of technology such as webinars will have advantages in overcoming distances, but physical workshops will continue to be delivered for the more in depth category B and C events.

The state coordinator suggests that an additional travel allowance outside of the 50% funding model may assist in the delivery of MBfP to a larger area into the future.

## 6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the delivery of MBfP in Western Australia between February 2014 at December 2016 has been successful in meeting contracted KPIs, and in transitioning for a majority of extension delivery of MBfP event to the private delivery.

Beef producers have had the opportunity to attend across the vast area of Western Australia. The state coordinator is pleased at being involved with the delivering of extension events to 2,532 participants. Monitoring and evaluation has demonstrated objective measurements of satisfaction score of 8.2 and a value score of 7.9. Pre and Post skills audits have measured an increase in skills and knowledge from 47% pre workshop to 76% post workshop.

MBfP has a good brand in Western Australia, and although the brand is due to conclude at the end of the contract period, the new replacement extension program has a good foundation to build upon.

## 7 Appendix

### 7.1 Appendix 1: Deliverer guidelines

## Guidelines for MBfP Program Delivery

### Introduction

The More Beef from Pastures (MBfP) program aims to build on the activities and awareness created during previous phases of the program and continue to strive towards achieving the primary objective of More Beef from Pastures:

***To achieve a sustainable (economic and environmental) increase in kilograms of beef produced per hectare through optimal management of the feedbase.***

The defining feature of the new phase of the MBfP program is the requirement for producers to move beyond awareness of the program and program material, to a point where it can be demonstrated that as a result of participating in a MBfP activity they have either:

1. Quantifiably increased their knowledge, skills or confidence; AND/OR
2. Implemented a practice change on farm that has resulted in an economic benefit.

As a result of these requirements, each state has been allocated clear Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), against which the State Coordinators will be measured, for engaging producers to achieve specific outcomes in three different categories (levels) of activities.

The three categories of MBfP activities, including the producer engagement are defined in the table below:

**Table 6 Activity category definitions and KPIs for MBfP activities**

Activity Category	Definition
<b>Category A: Awareness</b>	Maintaining broad industry awareness of the MBfP program, the MBfP manual, and the MBfP producer tools.
<b>Category B: KASA change Knowledge Attitudes Skills Aspirations</b>	Category B activities are about building producer knowledge, skills and confidence.  KASA change is defined as a measurable increase in Knowledge, a positive change in Attitude, an increase in Skills or a change in producers Aspirations.
<b>Category C: Practice Change</b>	Category C activities are about supporting adoption and increasing the uptake of practice change among producers to achieve quantifiable increases in on farm productivity.

### **Delivery opportunities for service providers**

There are opportunities to deliver extension activities within the MBfP program and we invite expressions of interest from service providers with a capacity to deliver activities to Western Australian beef producers over the next 18 months.

The MBfP program may fund or co-fund the delivery of activities which meet the program objectives and industry issues outlined in the Western Australian MBfP business plan. Potential activities will be assessed against the objectives and key issues in the business plan to justify MBfP funding and support.

Note that the delivery budget will be allocated strategically to best achieve the program goals and provide support to activities which are closely linked to modules included in the More Beef from Pastures Manual. As such, funding is not available to subsidise existing activities, but rather to support the delivery of activities which address issues relevant to the Western Australian More Beef from Pastures program.

The three activity categories form a continuum from activities which create public good (Category A), to activities that have both public and private (industry) good (Category B), to activities which create mostly private producer good (Category C). As a result of this, as we move from Category A type activities (which are generally provided to producers free of charge) towards Category C activities, a user pays model will be adopted. The delivery of Category C activities will be funded predominantly by the producers participating in these activities, however support will be provided by MBfP to promote the activities, assist with



establishing the groups, and enable the monitoring and evaluation framework to be implemented.

### **Category A delivery opportunities, funding and requirements**

Category A activities are targeted at larger audiences (>30 participants) and may involve MBfP providing funding or co-funding to support the delivery of a field day, forum, seminar or farm walk targeted at increasing awareness of specific issues identified in the business plan and the MBfP resources available to assist producers with managing this issue.

The requirements to receive funding or co-funding from MBfP for Category A events include:

1. MBfP templates to be used during the day, incorporating the MBfP logo;
2. The MBfP monitoring and evaluation framework is implemented by the event deliverers and information is captured in regard to the number of participants, participant contact details, enterprise type and scale, participant satisfaction, and the future training needs of participants. Completed feedback forms must be captured from at least 65% of the attendees;
3. Opportunities for participation in Category B and Category C MBfP activities are identified and promoted; and
4. The MBfP logo and brand is used on all promotion and media.

### **Category B delivery opportunities, funding and requirements**

Category B activities are targeted at medium sized audiences generally with between 10-20 participants. These may include workshops or training events where in depth information is presented, with the objective of building producer knowledge, skills, and confidence. Category B activities are to involve active group engagement.

Category B activities must involve a significant user pays approach and deliverer's should seek an appropriate contribution from participating producers to assist with the costs associated with running the activity. The MBfP contribution for Category B type activities may fund up to 50% of the cost of delivering the activity, however additional funds will need to be sourced (e.g. sponsorship, collaborative delivery, participant fee).

A defining feature of Category B activities is the requirement to objectively measure the change in producer knowledge and skills as a result of participating in the activity. The additional requirements (over and above the Category A requirements) to receive MBfP funding for Category B activities include the following:

1. Participants undertake a pre and post workshop survey to objectively measure the change in knowledge and skills as a result of attending the activity; and
2. Opportunities for participation in Category C MBfP activities are identified and promoted.

### **Category C delivery opportunities, funding and requirements**

Category C activities are targeted at small groups of 8-10 producers and typically involve a series of events during which the adoption of practice change is supported. The adoption of

practice change requires the hurdles associated with adoption to be overcome and this is best achieved when a deliverer and the producer can work together, over time, to implement beneficial on farm practice change.

Category C activities are for the benefit of the 8-10 producers taking part in the activity, and as a result, are to be predominantly funded by the participating producers.

Well-structured and well executed Category C activities have the potential to both generate income streams for the deliverers involved, while also delivering significant value to participating producers by working closely with them to achieve productive practice change and overcome implementation challenges that they may face.

The additional requirements to receive MBfP funding and support for Category C activities (over and above the requirements detailed for Category A activities) include the following:

1. Participants are required to complete a pre and post activity survey (as per Category B), as well as document and record what practice changes they have implemented as a result of participating in the series of Category C activities; and
2. As part of the evaluation process, MLA may follow up via phone calls to Category C event participants to confirm that the documented practice changes have been implemented and in some situations, MLA may conduct case studies on these producers to quantify the economic benefit generated from the implemented practice change.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

Continuous monitoring and evaluation is an integral and valuable aspect of the MBfP program. Monitoring and evaluation will enable the measurement of KASA change and practice change and will enable MBfP activities to be continually improved to meet producer needs and requirements.

Implementation of the MBfP monitoring and evaluation framework by the deliverer is an essential component for any activities to gain MBfP funding. Timely delivery of participation records and feedback data to the State Coordinator is essential. Templates will be provided to capture participant feedback and these forms must be fully completed by a minimum of 65% of participants at category A activities and 80% of participants at category B and C activities funded or co-funded by MBfP