



2020–21

**PRODUCER ADOPTION  
OUTCOMES REPORT**



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## PROGRAM MANAGER'S WELCOME

Welcome to our second *Producer Adoption Outcomes Report*. What a year it has been for producers, with some good falls of rain across most of the country and great prices for livestock. Many producers across Australia are reaching out for advice as they rebuild and grow their businesses post drought, bushfires and floods. Many of the livestock advisors in the MLA network have been reporting increased numbers of producers participating in learning and training activities. It was great to see over 8,000 producers investing in themselves this year through participation in adoption activities to grow their businesses.

The MLA producer adoption program delivers and oversees many face-to-face engagement activities. The impact of COVID-19 restrictions meant several of MLA's adoption activities were postponed in the first half of the year. The second half saw a large effort from MLA service providers to get back out in front of producers and deliver in-person events.

In 2020–21, MLA was pleased to deliver new adoption products including MeatUp forums in southern Australia and the eLearning platform 'The toolbox' online. In collaboration with the communications team, MLA delivered several seasonally targeted campaigns with several online resource hubs. The first of these was the soil testing campaign, with a dedicated soils hub on the MLA website.

This report is designed to outline the range of benefits that producers receive from participating in MLA adoption activities. MLA is committed to reporting annually on the benefits producers gain from participating in adoption programs. I'm pleased to report that of the adoption programs funded between 2015-21, participating red meat producers will receive an additional \$803M net benefits for their businesses by 2045. This is an increase from the \$484M that we reported last year, following the recent completion of a program impact assessment. This assessment has shown the net benefit to 2045 as well as annual impact. For producers participating in programs in 2021-22, their annual net benefit is calculated to be \$52.6m for the 2021-22 year.



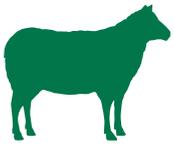
Whether you are a red meat producer, livestock advisor or an industry stakeholder, please get involved, so that we can continue to increase the productivity and profitability of the red meat industry.

**Sally Leigo**

Program Manager – Producer Adoption

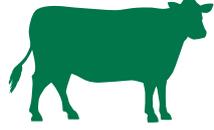


# 2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS



**>4M**

sheep impacted by practice change programs



**>4.4M**

cattle impacted by practice change programs



**86,000**

goats impacted by practice change programs



**>72.9M**

hectares of Australian agricultural land impacted by MLA adoption programs



average satisfaction rate across MLA adoption programs



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

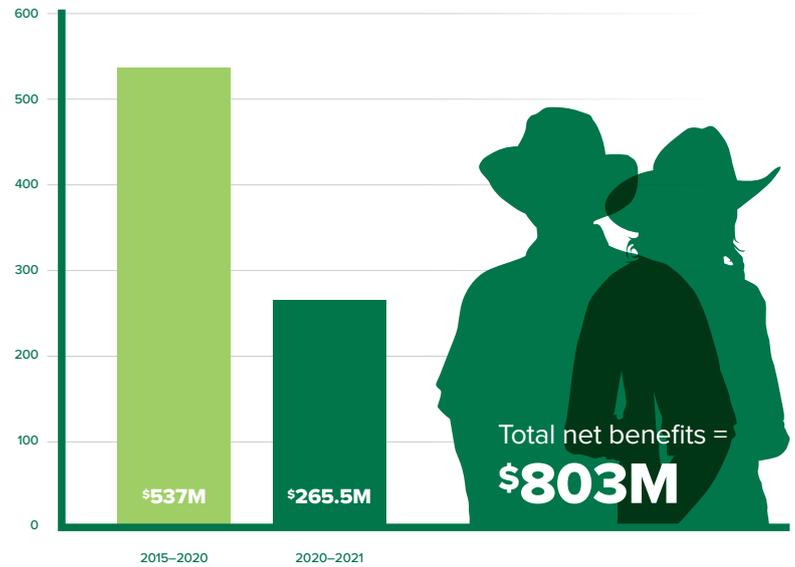


**8,258**

producers engaged

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

MLA adoption programs have delivered \$802.8M\* in total net benefits to participating producers who adopted a new practice between 2015-2021. In 2021-22 this will be equivalent to \$52.6M in annual net benefits to participating producers.

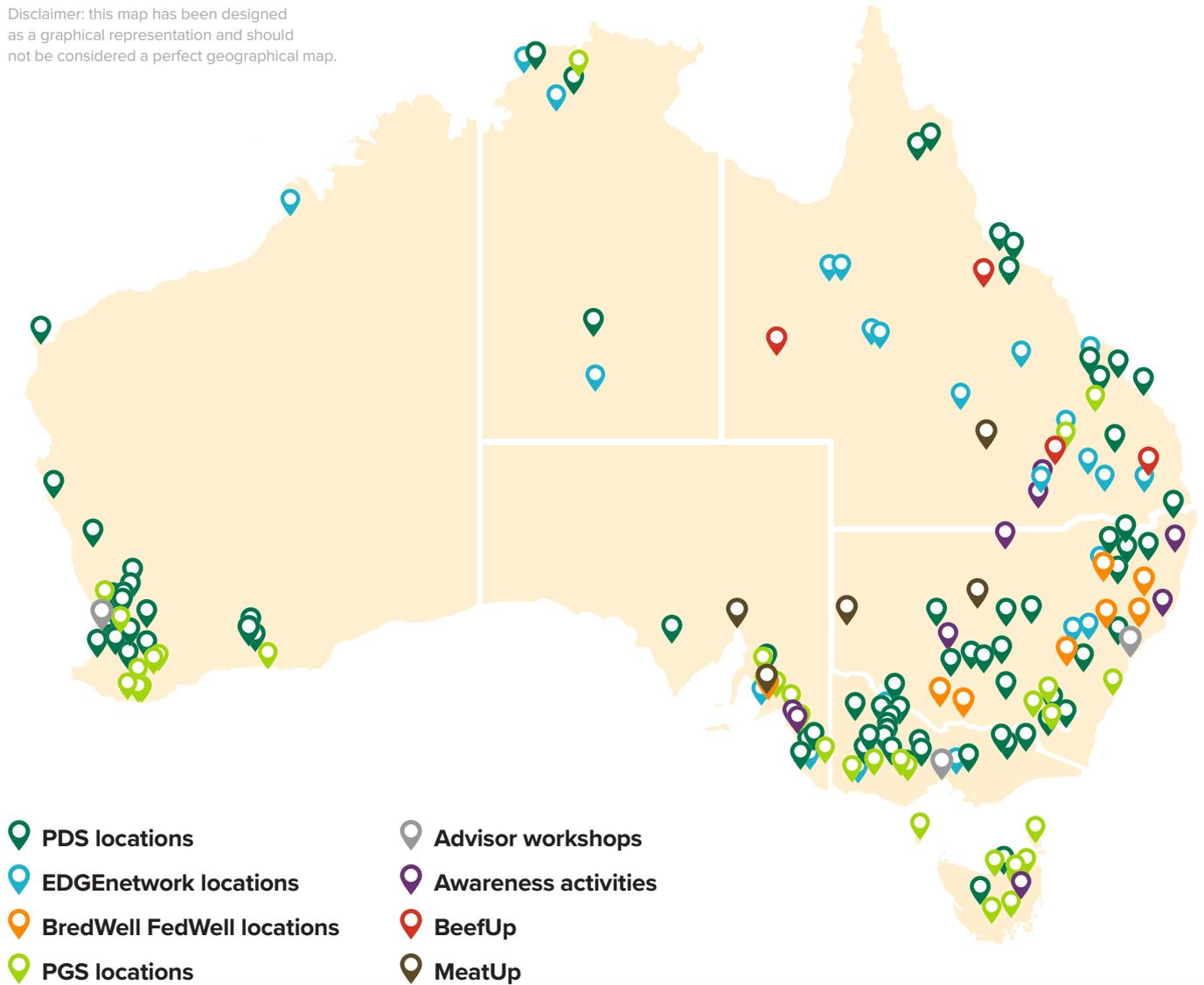


\*calculated as net present value of adoption to 2045, discounted at 5% annually.



## 2020–21 adoption activity locations

Disclaimer: this map has been designed as a graphical representation and should not be considered a perfect geographical map.



# 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. In parallel, an additional area of focus revolves around building the capacity of livestock advisors.

Awareness activities are focused on informing producers of the latest R&D relating to livestock production and can be delivered as field days, forums, webinars, newsletters, articles or podcasts.

Short-term training program activities allow producers to increase their knowledge and skills of the latest livestock production practices by participating in training activities like workshops or online learning modules.

Long-term practice change activities involves producers learning from other producers with guidance from consultants in implementing the latest livestock production practices into their businesses.

The MLA adoption program will be looking for opportunities in the future to increase the adoption products offered in the short-term training programs and long-term practice change categories.

Further adoption activities are designed specifically for livestock advisors to increase their knowledge of the latest research and development findings and to allow for professional development opportunities and networking. Livestock advisors include veterinarians, consultants, agronomists, livestock agents, sales representatives, extension officers and anyone else providing advice or support to livestock producers.

The MLA adoption strategy details programs and activities that lead to an increase in the adoption of R&D. These include the implementation of new initiatives and the enhancement of existing programs.

The adoption strategy has been broken down into four key pillars:

1. awareness and short-term training programs
2. long-term practice change
3. capability building
4. program approach to research, development and adoption.





|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strategic framework</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole of farm awareness activities</li> <li>• Fill gaps across species, region, priorities</li> <li>• Clear links between all programs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2020-25 Producer Demonstration Sites strategy</li> <li>• Profitable Grazing Systems strategy</li> <li>• Embed adoption into all applicable research and development projects</li> <li>• Increase resources across involve and partner programs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot new and develop further programs to increase capability of advisors and involvement in research, development and adoption programs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and leverage partnerships to support programs to achieve research, development and adoption outcomes</li> <li>• Increase cross-company collaboration</li> </ul> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

With this increased focus and investment, the adoption strategy will continually evolve to deliver improved industry outcomes through the following key areas:

- ensuring all applied on-farm R&D has the 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 that are 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
- 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 e-modules, short videos and marketing campaigns
- utilising consistent methods to monitor and evaluate impact and the success of RD&A programs.



Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS) is a group-based delivery program that uses supported learning packages (SLPs) to deliver training and coaching over several months and up to a year to improve producer skills and knowledge. The aim is to achieve practice change in areas of farm production and management covered by the SLP. Each SLP aligns to the curriculum areas of people, business, reproduction and genetics, value chain and feedbase.

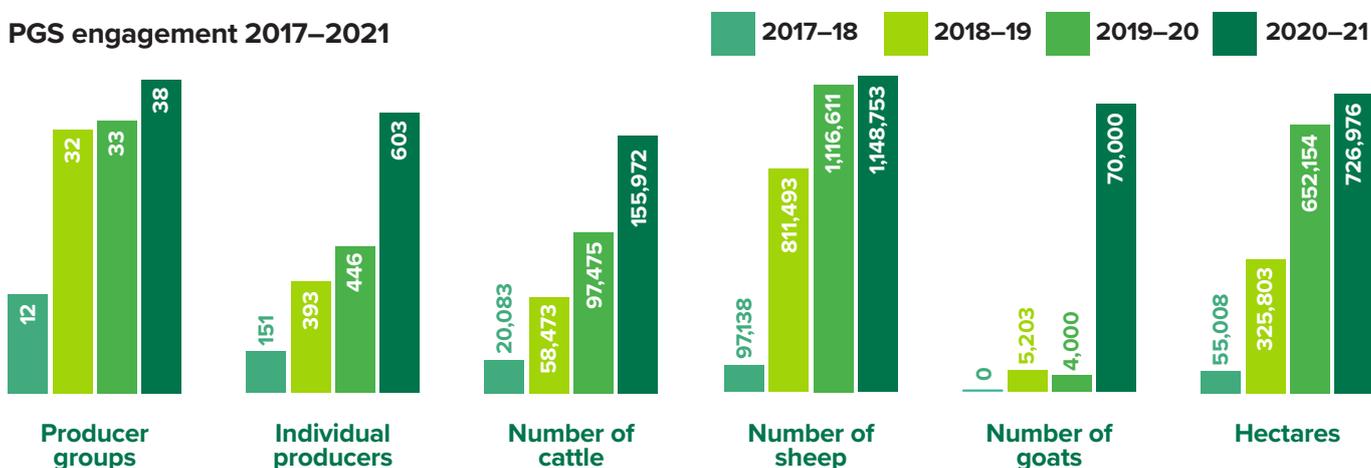
In 2020–21, MLA continued to roll out the PGS mentoring program to new service providers. The mentoring program is designed to upskill new coaches and improve the confidence of service providers to deliver SLPs and make a measurable difference to participants' businesses. In 2020–21, seven new deliverers took part in the mentorship program. Just over 70% of these mentees (now successful PGS coaches) have gone on to establish their own PGS groups.

PGS has delivered \$225.4M\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of SLPs delivered between 2015–2021. In 2021–22 this will be equivalent to \$14.4M in annual net benefits to participating producers. On average, this means producers can expect an additional net benefit of \$18/ha annually as a result of their participation in the program.

Interestingly, the majority of the hectares impacted by practice change, as a result of PGS participation, related to feedbase improvements.



### PGS engagement 2017–2021



PGS offers ready-to-go training packages, including:

- PayDirt.** This package value-adds to soil testing results, helping producers determine how to get the most bang for their fertiliser buck.
- Dollar Making Decisions.** This package provides producers with the skills to take a disciplined and rational approach to capital allocation on-farm.
- Dry Time Ready.** This package helps producers develop a drought management strategy focused on production and resource allocation.
- Business Essentials.** Participants will be upskilled in the fundamentals of managing the business side of a livestock enterprise.
- Meat the Market.** With a whole of supply chain focus, this package trains producers in improving lamb processing compliance and optimising meat eating quality.
- Building Better Breeders.** This package covers the A-Z of beef breeding in southern and temperate production zones and provides advice on the utilisation of electronic identification (eID).
- Lifting Lamb Survival.** This package 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.** This package upskills producers in utilising satellite imagery to develop grazing budgets on a large scale.
- Heifers for Profit.** This package develops skills and confidence in managing heifer nutrition to improve animal welfare, increase future reproductive success, optimise stocking rates and increase whole farm profitability.
- Managing a Diverse Feedbase.** This package provides producers with the skills to manage a mixed farming feedbase to meet their livestock production goals.
- Grazing Matcher™.** This package aims 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.** This package helps producers identify and connect their business goals to benchmarking performance and to utilise comparative analysis data in identifying future goals, current strengths and weaknesses.

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



## PACKAGES ADDED IN 2021

Four new packages were added in 2020–21, including:

- **PayDirt North.** This package is the northern adaptation of the existing PayDirt program, tailored to helping producers in the north value-add to soil testing results and determine where they will get the most bang for their fertiliser buck.
- **Getting Goats to Market.** This package 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.
- **Gra\$\$ to Dollars.** This package 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.

## PACKAGES COMING IN 2022

New packages to be offered in 2022 include:

- **Phosphorus Package.** Once launched, this package will assist northern producers in managing and diagnosing phosphorus deficiencies in their cattle herds. It will also provide practical solutions for effective supplementation to improve cattle health and profitability.
- **Renovation Rescue.** This package will aid producers in transforming run-down perennial pastures through the application of grazing, weed manipulation and improved soil conditions.
- **Sowing for Success.** This package will help producers determine where to invest their pasture dollars to successfully establish a perennial pasture.

To find out what packages are being offered in your state or to make a request, contact your PGS State Coordinator listed on the MLA website or email [pgs@mla.com.au](mailto:pgs@mla.com.au).

Deliverers and producer coaches can develop their own training packages to suit targeted producer needs that align with the PGS curriculum.

# DURING 2020–21



**1,148,753**  
sheep impacted by the PGS program



**155,972**  
cattle impacted by the PGS program



**70,000**  
goats impacted by the PGS program

**38**  
ACTIVE GROUPS

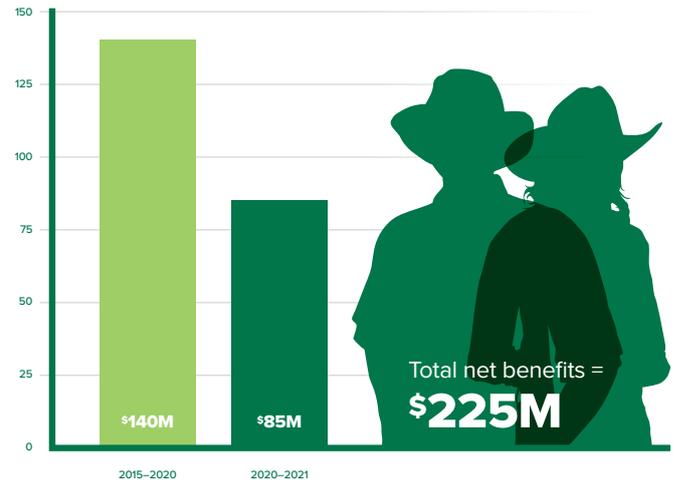
**14** COMPLETED GROUPS

**603** ACTIVE PRODUCERS

**\$18/ha**  
average additional net benefit per producer involved annually



## Total benefits\* delivered to producers via PGS



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



**726,976**  
hectares of Australian agricultural land impacted by the PGS program

## PGS locations



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

## PGS CASE STUDY – Turning pasture into profit



Tasmanian beef producer Rob McCreath.

From dairy farming in Scotland to running beef herds in Queensland and Tasmania, Rob McCreath had to start from scratch to refine his pasture management – but thanks to MLA's Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS) training packages, he was able to perfect his grazing management for long-term gains.

Rob runs a beef cattle enterprise on 220ha at 'Monana' near Deloraine in Tasmania's north. Previously, 'Monana' had been a blue gum plantation but the property now supports Rob's herd of 300–400 Angus and Shorthorn cattle, including 150 breeders.

### Making a change

The pasture at 'Monana' is a far cry from that of Queensland and Scotland, where Rob has previously run cattle, so learning how to best manage the pastures on the property was at the top of Rob's to-do list when he first set up his enterprise near Deloraine.

MLA's PGS 'Pasture Principles' training package soon became the obvious solution for Rob's desire to learn more about grazing management in the region after an advertisement in the local newspaper drew his attention to the program.

"We got involved in the Pasture Principles Program because we needed to learn how to manage this sort of grass," Rob said.

"We came from Queensland where we had tropical grasses and the management here is very different, it's much more intensive.

"In a way we are starting from scratch – a long time ago we were dairy farmers in Scotland, so we had managed these sorts of pastures, but things have moved along a lot since then, so we wanted to learn about the latest techniques."

### Taking the plunge into PGS

Along with a small group of other like-minded producers in the region, Rob took part in the training program. It was held over the course of 12 months to provide producers with the tools and knowledge they needed to manage pastures confidently regardless of the situation, season or system.

Rotational grazing was a particular focus of the program and a skill that Rob found has helped him set up his enterprise for success for years to come.

"When we came here, it was a new farm – so we had to do a lot of fencing and put in water points, water pipelines and troughs," Rob said.

"Learning about rotational grazing techniques was a big help in how we set up the infrastructure."

Feed budgeting was another useful strategy Rob implemented on 'Monana' to improve his herd management as a result of participating in the Pasture Principles program.

"I think I was surprised it was possible to be so precise with feed budgeting to be able to measure how much grass you've got, and to measure and plan ahead for what growth rate you expect in the months coming up," Rob said.

"You can be quite precise on how much feed you've got available and on how much feed you give to the animals."

### Learning for a lifetime

Looking back, Rob said the program was invaluable for improving his grazing management on-farm and encourages other producers to take part in future PGS programs run by MLA as a way of learning how to maximise profits on-farm.

"I would say to other producers just get involved – it's a great way of learning new techniques," Rob said.

"You're never too old to learn."



MLA's Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) program aims to increase the rate of adoption of key management practices and technologies that improve business profitability, productivity and sustainability. This is achieved through supporting livestock producers working in peer-to-peer groups to pursue new skills, knowledge and management practices applicable to their own commercial livestock production systems.

The demonstration sites are commercial enterprises that directly engage core producers. Additionally, activities are held to engage a wider observer producer audience and share the learnings among 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 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 PDS call. A producer panel is engaged to review applications of PDS projects to ensure they address producers' priorities and will deliver impact to their region.

In 2020–21, MLA received 26 levy and seven co-contributor applications for PDS project ideas. Thirteen of these went on to become funded and active projects.

Over the past 12 months, MLA has worked to communicate

more frequently about the diverse range of PDS projects that are active nationally. This helps to ensure producers and stakeholders remain informed about PDS activities in their region and across the country. New communications include a bi-monthly email designed to update recipients on the 64 active PDS projects and contact details to get involved. MLA has also developed a new online database of all active and completed PDS projects, due to be released in December 2021. This database will allow people to search for PDS projects by topic and/or region and has been developed to encourage producers nationwide to participate in the program.

PDS has delivered \$168.8M\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of completed projects between 2015-2021. In 2021-22 this will be equivalent to \$10.8M in annual net benefits to participating producers.

On average, this means producers can expect an additional net benefit of \$6/ha annually as a result of their participation in the program.

**If you are interested in receiving regular updates about the PDS program, sign up at [m1a.com.au/pds](https://m1a.com.au/pds)**

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

### Producer Demonstration Site framework

| Stream                       | Levy PDS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Co-contributor PDS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Integrated R&D PDS                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Requirements</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 core producers and three sites preferred</li> <li>Flexibility for extensive regions and other projects (e.g. genetics)</li> <li>Two- to six-year projects</li> <li>Maximise outside producer involvement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 core producers and three sites preferred</li> <li>Flexibility for extensive regions and other projects (e.g. genetics)</li> <li>Two- to six-year projects</li> <li>Maximise outside producer involvement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 core producers and three sites preferred</li> <li>Validating research in commercial production systems</li> <li>Constructed to suit the project timeline</li> </ul> |
| <b>Available budget</b>      | \$25,000/year – can be split to suit the project method                                                                                                                                                                                                       | \$50,000/year – can be split to suit the project method                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Funded from within research                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Priorities and review</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional priorities set by Research Advisory Councils</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must align with industry priorities/targets</li> <li>Reviewed by MLA</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research aligned with council/industry priorities</li> <li>Developed with MLA</li> </ul>                                                                               |



# DURING 2020–21

 **1,798,060**  
sheep impacted by the PDS program

 **296,956**  
cattle impacted by the PDS program

 **7,308**  
observer producers engaged

**346**  
ACTIVE PDS SITES

**13**  
NEW PDS PROJECTS

**64**  
ACTIVE PDS PROJECTS

**631**  
CORE PRODUCERS ENGAGED

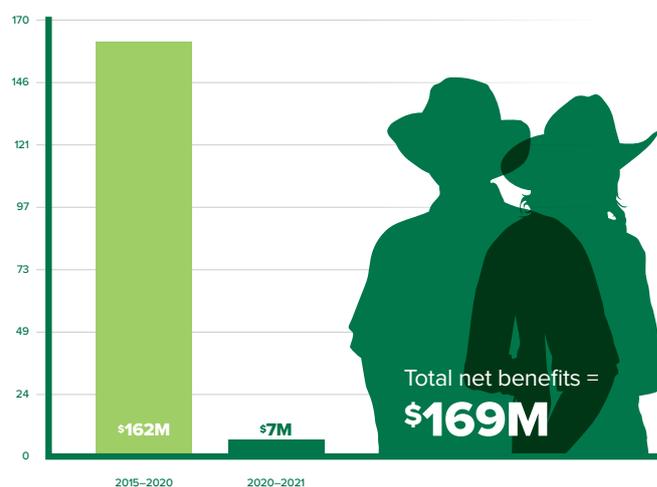
**\$6/ha**  
average additional net benefit per producer involved annually



of producers who have completed a PDS project in 2020–21 have indicated they have adopted new practices as a direct result of taking part

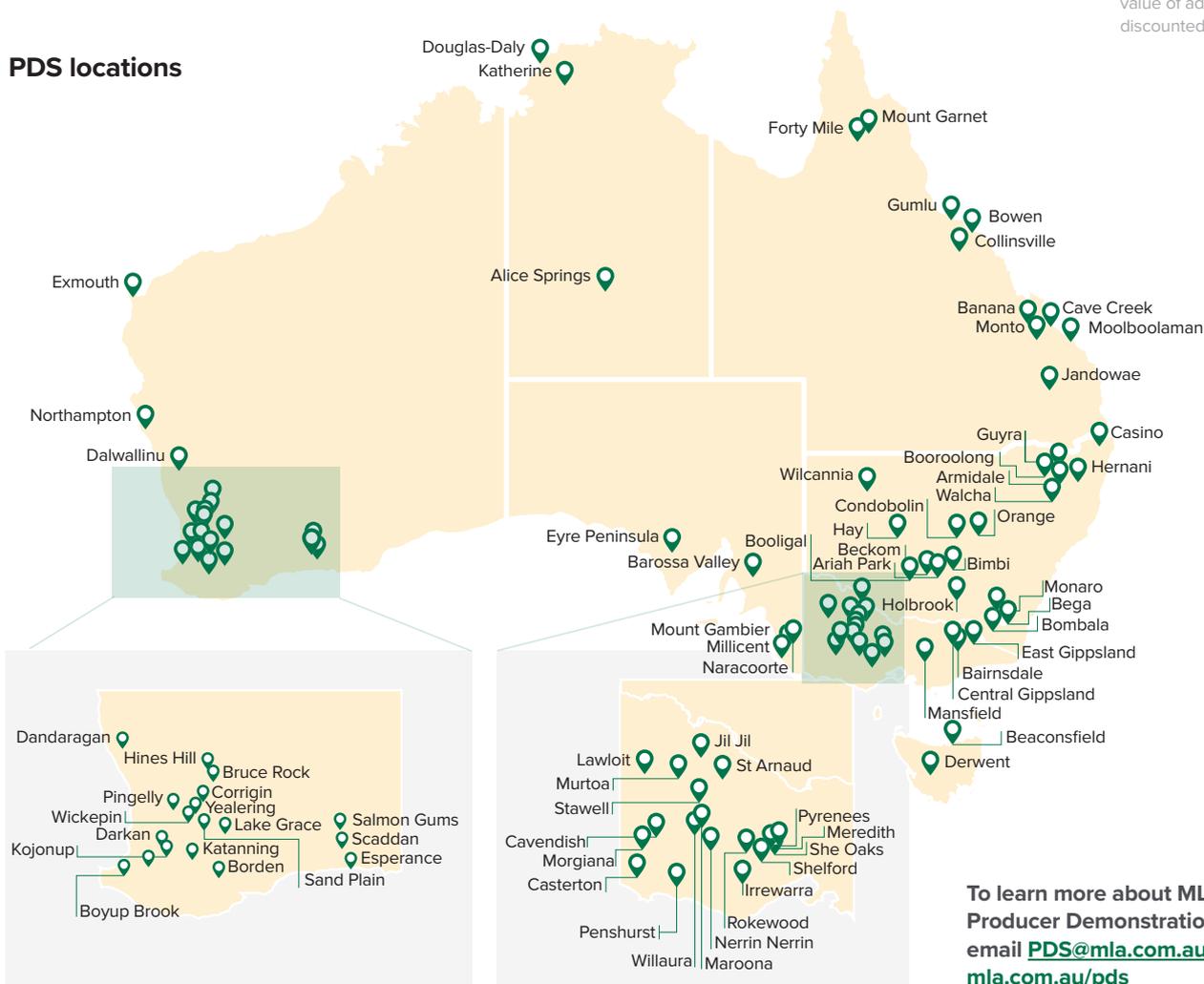
 **7,605,224**  
hectares of Australian agricultural land impacted by PDS programs

## Total benefits\* delivered to producers via PDS



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

## PDS locations



To learn more about 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)

## PDS CASE STUDY – AI the key to halving calf mortality



WA beef producers Ryan and Elisha Willing with Daughter Isla and Son Harrison.

After three years in MLA's Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) program, WA beef producers Ryan and Alicia Willing have lowered calf mortality rates by 50% and dramatically boosted productivity within their 350 head Angus breeding herd.

### Fixing high mortality rates

Based on a 1,000ha property 140 kilometres east of Esperance, WA, it was the Willings' desire to boost livestock productivity within their beef cattle enterprise that first led them to enrol in a PDS project being hosted in their local area.

"I wanted to be involved with this PDS program because I was having higher than average mortality rates in my heifers and their calves in their first calving season," Ryan said.

"I also wanted to increase the number of heifers pregnant again in their second mating."

### Testing and trialling

Commencing in 2017, the project partnered producers from Esperance-based grower group ASHEEP with Swans Veterinary Services to trial the use of fixed-time artificial insemination (AI) within commercial heifer programs as a means of improving heifer productivity.

The trials were conducted over a period of three years, with final results of the project indicating the use of AI within breeding herds involved resulted in significant improvements in overall productivity.

### Driving productivity

For the Willings, integrating AI within their operation resulted in marked improvements in the mortality rates of their herd.

"In our three years that we participated in the PDS program, we were able to reduce heifer mortality to zero and dramatically reduce our calving troubles, which led to a 50% reduction in calf mortality rates," Ryan said.

A reduction in mortality and dystocia rates was likely observed due to the use of AI sires with calving ease Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs).

"We also weaned a far heavier weaner and dramatically increased our rebreeding rates in that trial group as well."

As a result, the Willings found that AI was an efficient solution to the high mortality rates they had seen on-farm.

"We're very surprised how easy it was to integrate fixed time AI – and the biggest surprise of all was, of course, the profit difference," Ryan said.

"Being involved in this PDS program was well worth it, mostly to prove to ourselves that integrating fixed time AI in our heifers was worth doing."

### PDS: value for all

Project facilitator Enoch Bergman was similarly pleased with the results achieved by the Willings and other producers involved in the PDS as a result of using AI within their breeding herds.

"This PDS has been great not only for the producers that were involved and for ASHEEP, but more importantly I think this could improve the financial and welfare outcomes for animals across Australia," Enoch said.

"My advice to any producer or producer group out there is that if you're doing something you're passionate about that you believe is affecting your profitability and you think you can help others, get involved in the PDS program."

MLA's EDGENetwork (EDGE) offers practical learning opportunities through one- to three-day workshops



to help producers develop skills necessary to improve their livestock enterprises.

This educational and informative format encourages producers to expand their current expertise and learn new skills, be motivated by other producers and access the latest information. Producers gain the best of group and individual learning by working in small groups that enable them to receive personalised service.

The EDGENetwork workshops have been developed by industry specialists and tested by producers Australia-wide to guarantee their quality and relevance. There are six courses currently available:

- **Business EDGE.** A two-day financial and business management training workshop for cattle, sheep and goat producers. The aim is to enhance producer knowledge and skills in basic financial and business management to improve business efficiency and profitability.
- **Business EDGE Young Guns.** A two-day workshop for up-and-coming cattle, sheep and goat producers who are ready to build their skills and confidence to manage a modern agricultural business.
- **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 that gives 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.** A three-day workshop for cattle, sheep and goat producers to develop a thorough understanding of the grazing land environment in which they operate.

EDGE has delivered \$337.9M\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of workshops attended between 2015-2021. In 2021-22 this will be equivalent to \$23.5M in annual net benefits to participating producers.

On average, northern beef producers participating in an EDGE workshop can expect an additional net benefit of \$44/km<sup>2</sup> annually. On average, southern producers participating in an EDGE workshop can expect an additional net benefit of \$6.28/ha annually.

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



# DURING 2020–21



**420,592**  
sheep impacted by the EDGENetwork



**3,553,711**  
cattle impacted by the EDGENetwork

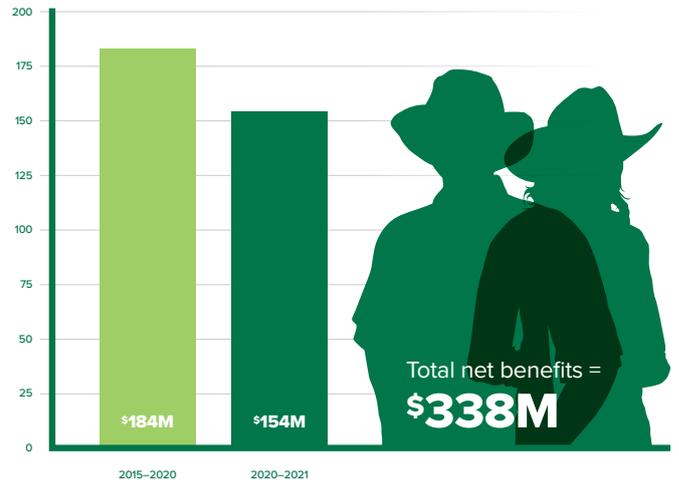


**12,400**  
goats impacted by the EDGENetwork

**\$6.28/ha**  
additional net benefit annually, for participating southern producers



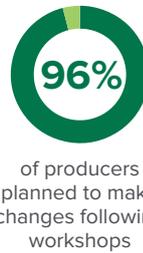
## Total benefits\* delivered to producers via EDGE



**\$44/km<sup>2</sup>**  
additional net benefit annually, for participating northern beef producers

**470** PRODUCERS ENGAGED

**35** WORKSHOPS DELIVERED

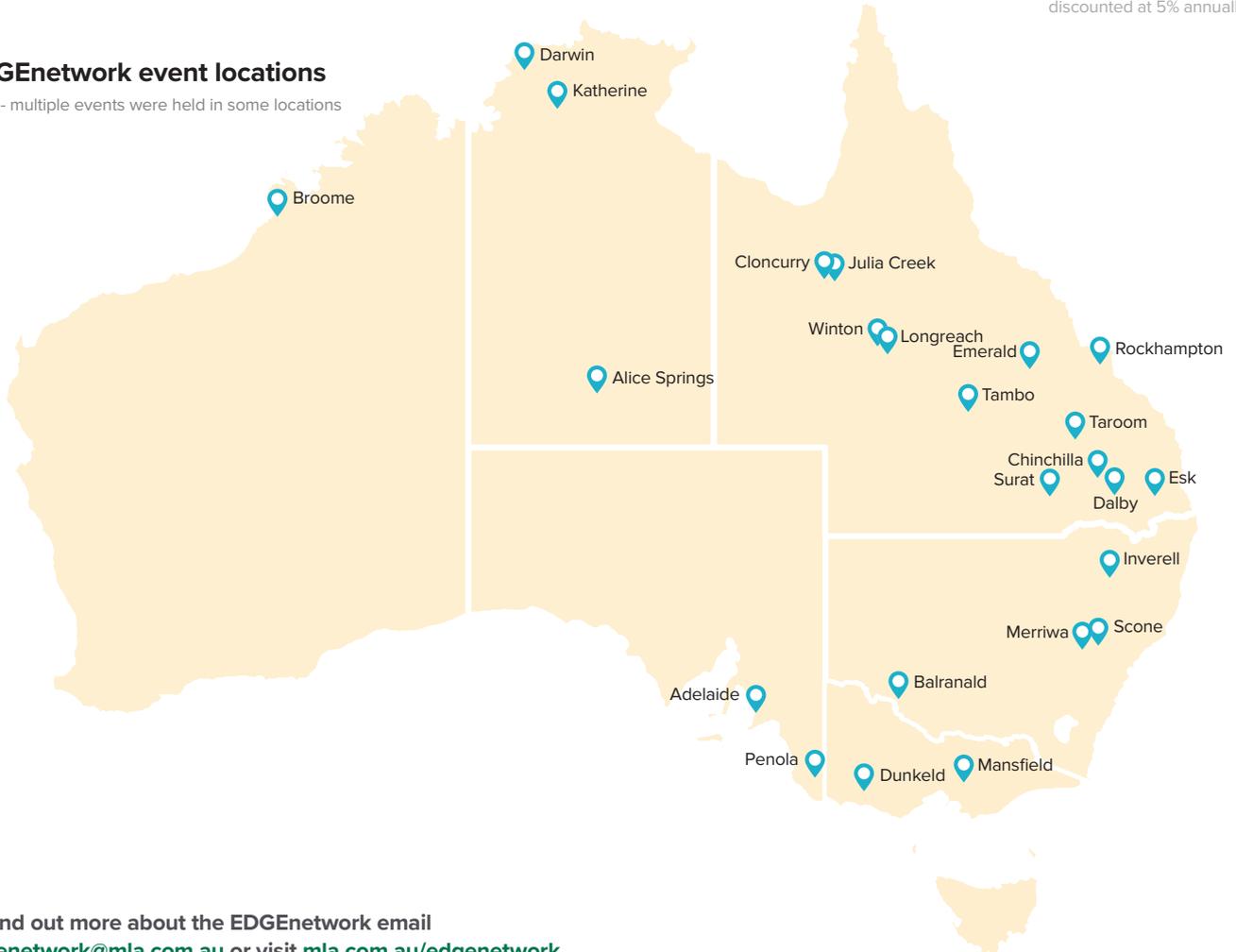


**50,556,433**  
hectares of Australian agricultural land impacted by EDGENetwork

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

## EDGENetwork event locations

Note - multiple events were held in some locations



To find out more about the EDGENetwork email [edgenetwork@mia.com.au](mailto:edgenetwork@mia.com.au) or visit [mia.com.au/edgenetwork](http://mia.com.au/edgenetwork)

## EDGE CASE STUDY – An eye for detail underpins profitability



WA beef producers Mike De Long and Anne Marie Huey.

Operating an extensive beef enterprise in the remote west Kimberley region of WA is not without its challenges, but Anne Marie Huey and her partner Mike De Long are making incremental changes to improve their bottom line.

Anne Marie and Mike run 'Dampier Downs Station', a 265,000ha cattle property geared to the live export market.

Anne Marie credits participating in MLA's Business EDGE course with helping her to improve her business skills to drive the profitability of the business.

Business EDGE is a two-day financial and business management training workshop for producers who want to improve the efficiency and profitability of their business.

"Mike and I are really focused on the cattle side of our business and I also have a strong background in natural resource management, but we needed to strengthen our business management skills," Anne Marie said.

"By attending MLA's course we were able to better focus on the profit drivers of our station and make changes to maximise our bottom line."

### Transport costs

The first thing Anne Marie did after attending the Business EDGE course in Broome was to reorganise their financial statements to drill down and work out where the money was going in and out.

"Through this process I realised that a few days spent realigning a small section of our main trucking road would enable us to send an extra trailer of sale cattle out at a time.

"While this had always been on the to-do list, the business analysis highlighted how a small outlay now will save time and money in the future."

### Objective decisions

Anne Marie also came away with an understanding of the importance of calculating the real operating costs of their business.

"I realised I needed to allocate myself and Mike a wage in order to work out the true profitability of the business," she said.

"This is something we've never done but will focus on going forward so we can have an objective view of the business and make informed decisions rather than going on gut feelings."

### New opportunities

As Anne Marie started to focus on the business side of their beef enterprise, she saw the opportunity to develop an off-farm income.

"I spent days sorting our financial statements, the reports from our bookkeeping program and the templates we'd received from the course into a format that made sense to our business.

"I thought to myself, I'm sure there are a lot of businesses that either don't have the time or skills to do this.

"So, I'm in the process of launching my own business to help small to medium-sized livestock enterprises that need admin and office support but don't have enough scale to justify a full-time employee."

### Lessons learned

- Have well-organised, easily accessible financial information.
- Objectively analyse financial data and work out where the money is really going (as opposed to where you think it is going).
- Understand what's really driving the profit in the business – this allows you to focus your efforts on strategies that will return the greatest benefit.

BeefUp Forums provide an opportunity for northern Australian beef producers to learn something new, stay up-to-date with the latest on-farm research and technologies and meet others working in the red meat industry.

BeefUp Forums were reintroduced in March 2021 after the program was temporarily paused in 2019–20.

At BeefUp Forums producers can:

- hear about the latest red meat research, development and adoption programs with a whole-farm and value chain focus
- 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 \$35.2M\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of forums delivered between 2015-2021. In 2021-22 this will be equivalent to \$2.1M in annual net benefits to participating producers.



On average, this means producers can expect an annual return of \$2/hd as a result of their attendance.

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

### BeefUp event locations



## DURING 2020–21

**4** EVENTS



**233,693**  
cattle impacted by BeefUp



**232**  
producers engaged



**85%**  
SATISFACTION RATING



**86%**  
VALUE RATING



**96%**  
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACQUISITION INCREASE

**\$2** per head average annual net benefit per producer involved

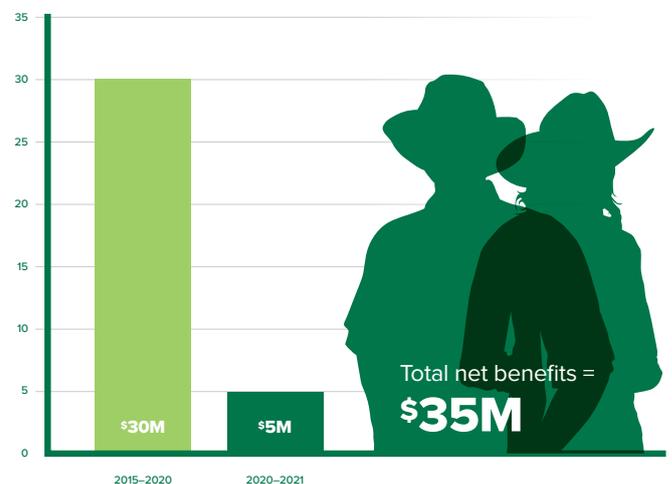


**69%**  
of producers planned to make changes following attendance



**6,230,249**  
hectares of Australian agricultural land impacted by BeefUp

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



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

Launched in March 2021, MeatUp Forums are an opportunity for beef, sheep and goat producers to learn something new, stay up-to-date with the latest on-farm research and technologies and meet others working in the red meat industry.



Each forum is designed by producers from the local region through producer working groups to ensure topics, content and presenters are regionally relevant. MeatUp Forums demonstrate the value of implementing new practices or technologies on-farm. They also create awareness around other MLA activities, programs and projects that producers can get involved in to enable them to further build knowledge and skills.

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

MeatUp has delivered \$2.5M\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of forums delivered in FY2020-21.

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



Port Augusta MeatUp.

**“[MeatUp] is an opportunity to reassess and realign our business and say ‘are we heading in the right direction? Let’s get some good information and make some good decisions!’”**

– Producer Gus Whyte, Broken Hill MeatUp

## DURING 2020–21



**395,236**

sheep impacted by MeatUp



**118,911**

cattle impacted by MeatUp



**3,890**

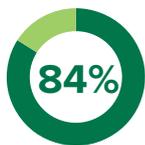
goats impacted by MeatUp

**5** EVENTS

**166** PRODUCERS ENGAGED



**SATISFACTION RATING**



**VALUE RATING**



**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACQUISITION INCREASE**

**\$1.43/hd**

average annual net benefit per producer involved



of producers planned to make changes following attendance



**7,368,367**

hectares of Australian agricultural land impacted by MeatUp

**MeatUp event locations**



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)

BredWell FedWell (BFWF) is a practical, one-day workshop highlighting the key production benefits of superior genetics and feed management for improved reproductive performance and livestock productivity.

The workshop is designed to help producers analyse and plan a genetics and nutrition regime suited to their environment and markets to boost profitability.

Workshops focus on:

- improving understanding of how to use Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) and Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) to improve enterprise profitability
- how to develop a breeding objective for your sheep or cattle enterprise
- the impact of better management of breeder nutrition on reproductive performance and profitability
- skills in developing simple energy budgets for the breeder flock or herd
- practical sessions including condition scoring, feed budgeting and ram and/or bull selection.

During 2020, after a 10-year delivery period, MLA initiated a review of the program. Over its successful delivery period, BFWF has been modified to deliver separate modules to cater for sheep, maternals/ewe lambs, pastoral sheep, southern beef and northern beef enterprises.

## DURING 2020–21



**312,847**

sheep impacted by BredWell FedWell



**57,623**

cattle impacted by BredWell FedWell



VALUE RATING

**10**  
EVENTS

**205**  
PRODUCERS  
ENGAGED



SATISFACTION RATING

**\$3.03**  
per cow,  
annual net  
benefit

**\$0.63**  
per ewe,  
annual net  
benefit



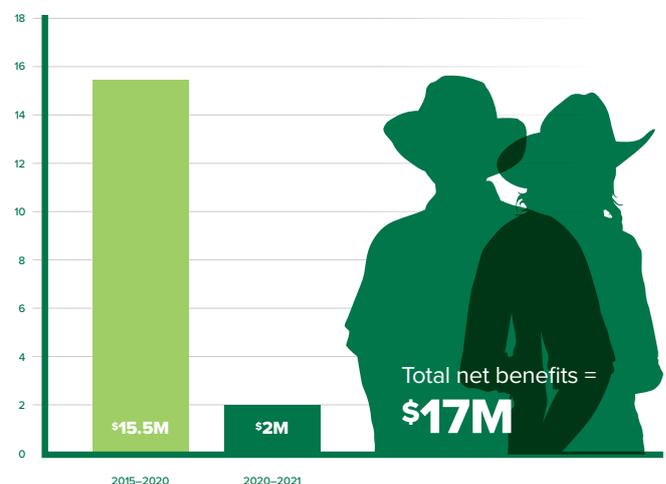
of producers  
planned to make  
changes following  
participation



**480,164**

hectares of Australian  
agricultural land impacted  
by BredWell FedWell

## Total benefits\* delivered to producers via BFWF



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

Reviewing the program will identify

**bredwell fedwell**

factors to be addressed in order for further expansion to increase producer engagement and ensure its relevance across different parts of the country. To facilitate the review and redevelopment process, the delivery of BFWF has been paused from July 2021 to December 2021. MLA will begin to pilot the new workshops at the beginning of 2022.

BredWell FedWell has delivered \$17.2M\* in total net benefits to participating producers as a result of workshops delivered between 2015-2021.

On average, sheep producers participating in a BFWF workshop can expect an annual net benefit of \$0.65/ewe. On average, beef producers participating in a BFWF workshop can expect an annual net benefit of \$3.03/cow.

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

## BredWell FedWell locations

Note - Multiple events were held in some locations



MLA's beef genetics extension and adoption activities operated via three key programs during 2020–21: Southern Beef Technology Services (SBTS), Tropical Beef Technology Services (TBTS) and the Angus genetic improvement pipeline.

SBTS and TBTS, the beef national extension network for genetic technologies for the Australian beef industry, were a partnership between a number of breed societies, the Agriculture Business Research Institute (ABRI) and MLA. These long-term programs

were developed to facilitate an increase in genetic progress through technical support and extension initiatives.

Separate to the breed societies involved with SBTS and TBTS, Angus Australia partnered directly with MLA for the delivery of extension activities through the Angus genetic improvement pipeline. These activities were developed for Angus and Angus influenced cattle producers to accelerate genetic gain across the breed.

### Southern Beef Technology Services

SBTS is an extension service that commenced in 2005 with the objective of maximising the understanding and use of genetic technologies in the southern Australian beef industry. Thirteen breed societies contributed to the service during 2020–21. As a result of work conducted between 2016 and 2021, the economic benefit from genetic change in the stakeholder breed associations increased from \$1.58 to \$6.78 per cow mated per year (three-year rolling average).

From 2016 to 2021, SBTS performed 205 herd consultations, published 143 articles and 17 technical notes, delivered seven webinars and produced 30 videos.

For more information visit [sbts.une.edu.au](https://sbts.une.edu.au).

### Tropical Beef Technology Services

TBTS is an extension service that commenced in 1997 and aims to maximise the understanding and use of genetic technologies in the northern Australian beef industry. Seven breed societies contribute to TBTS. As a result of work conducted between 2016 and 2021, the economic benefit from genetic change in the stakeholder breed associations increased from \$0.75 to \$2.52 per cow mated per year (three-year rolling average).

From 2016 to 2021, TBTS conducted 180 herd consultations with seedstock producers, presented at over 60 industry events with more than 2,500 people in attendance and facilitated a number of Beef Australia property tours.

For more information visit [tbts.une.edu.au](https://tbts.une.edu.au).

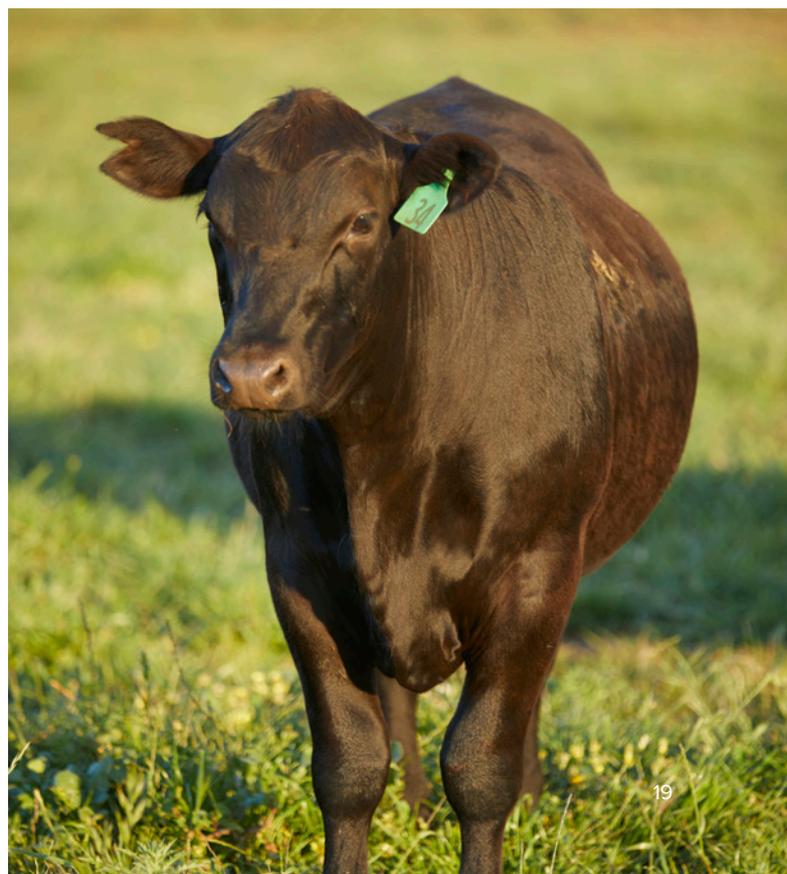
A collaborative effort between SBTS and TBTS saw 28 regional forums held between 2016 and 2021 to a total of 285 producers. Attendees noted an average skills and knowledge increase of 33%, with 81% of producers indicating they would change practice as a result of participating. Seven webinars were also conducted by SBTS and TBTS during this time.

### 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.

During 2021:

- the annual rate of genetic improvement being realised was \$4.20 per cow mated, representing an 18% increase in the rate of genetic improvement in the three years since the commencement of the project
- 642 producers engaged through extension activities
- 90% satisfaction rate with extension activities
- 65% intent to change
- 41% increase in engagement with the Angus Education Centre
- 33,840 new animals with TransTasman Angus Cattle Evaluation EBVs available
- 32,236 genomic profiles added to the TransTasman Angus Cattle Evaluation
- 262,235 performance measurements submitted for inclusion in the TransTasman Angus Cattle Evaluation.



# LIVESTOCK ADVISOR CAPACITY BUILDING

Livestock advisors play a critical role in exposing producers to new practices, products and technologies and supporting them to implement these practices or products into their businesses. It is for this reason that the capacity building of livestock advisors is a core component of MLA's adoption strategy. Upskilling livestock advisors (consultants, stock agents, agronomists, veterinarians etc.) provides MLA with another avenue to ensure that producers can implement the latest research findings, new technologies or best practices on-farm.

The MLA livestock advisor program is spearheaded by flagship awareness events Livestock Advisor Updates (LAU) and associated webinars, and Livestock Advisor Essentials (LAE). In future, we will see an increase in programs being delivered in this space aimed at building capability and capacity in the advisor sector.

## LIVESTOCK ADVISOR UPDATES (LAU)

### AWARENESS

LAU 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
- network with their peers.

To find out more about LAU email [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au) or visit [mla.com.au/advisor-updates](http://mla.com.au/advisor-updates)

livestock  
advisor  
updates

## DURING 2020–21

1  
EVENT

33  
LIVESTOCK  
CONSULTANTS  
ENGAGED

88%  
SATISFACTION  
RATING

85%  
VALUE  
RATING

84%  
of participants  
indicated they would  
advise clients to  
change practice  
following the event



In 2021, MLA launched Livestock Advisor Essentials (LAE), a southern-focused pilot professional development program designed for early career professionals involved in the livestock industry.

This opportunity is designed to teach the fundamentals of livestock businesses, develop knowledge, skills and confidence and connect participants with other livestock advisors.

The LAE workshops have been developed by industry specialists. In the pilot program, four workshops were offered to participants:

- **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.

- **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 will learn the fundamentals of human engagement, plus processes and frameworks for sustained influence.

To find out more about LAE email [getinvolved@mla.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@mla.com.au) or visit [mla.com.au/advisor-essentials](https://mla.com.au/advisor-essentials)

# livestock advisor essentials

## DURING 2020–21

2

WORKSHOPS  
ACROSS THE  
COUNTRY

20

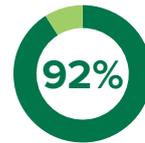
LIVESTOCK  
CONSULTANTS  
ENGAGED



KNOWLEDGE  
AND SKILLS  
ACQUISITION  
INCREASE



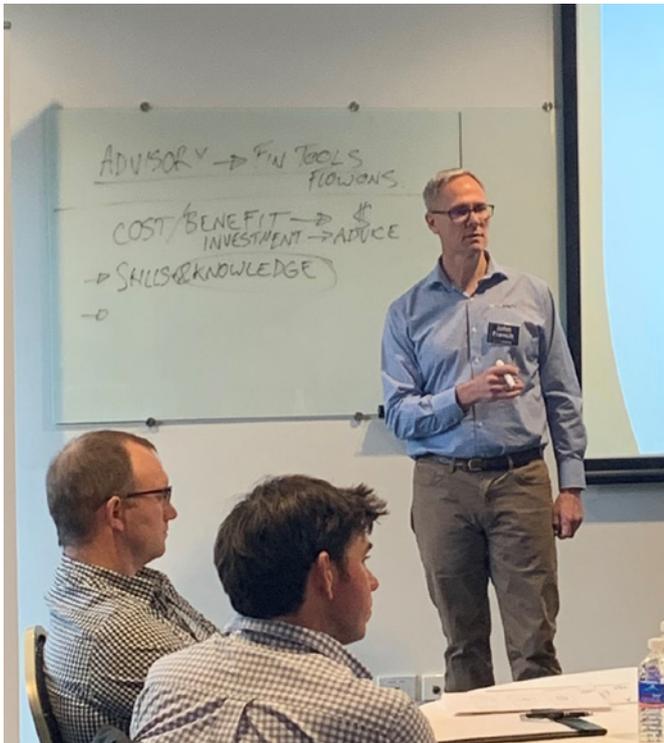
SATISFACTION  
RATING



VALUE  
RATING



of participants indicated they would use the advice learnt at workshops with clients



John Francis of Agrista Ag presenting to LAE participants.



LAE participants calculating pasture growth and leaf emergence rates.

MLA recognises that investing in the development of young people is crucial to building and retaining a skilled and capable future workforce. The Future Livestock Consultants program is designed to provide participants with the industry 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 identify, develop and implement a major industry research project, giving them a real-world understanding of the implementation of R&D.

Since launching in 2017, 19 consultants have graduated from the program. 100% of these graduates have remained in the red meat industry, with 95% 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 19 consultant roles filled since the launch of the program, 85% of these were an additional headcount to their employers' businesses.

The third installment of the program kicked off in early 2020 with an intake of 10 new participants. These participants will graduate from the program in December 2021.

## Where are they now?

Since entering the Future Livestock Consultants program in 2017, Jess Brogden has been employed as a Research and Extension Officer with Southern Farming Systems in Victoria. Since graduating from the program, Jess has increased her focus on agronomy and producer education by developing, road testing and delivering MLA's 'Pasture Paramedic' program. Jess has also delivered tailored workshops to producers, been involved in the creation of MLA eLearning modules and assisted in the development of several MLA soil and pastures resources for producers.

Working directly with in excess of 250 producers a year, Jess credits the Future Livestock Consultants program with not only connecting her with a great advisor network, but also providing insight into how best to tackle extension from the ground up.

"Taking part in the Future Livestock Consultants program fast tracked discovering what I'm passionate about," Jess said.

"The program has helped me discover and focus on my passion for sharing knowledge and educating producers."



Research and Extension Officer Jess Brogden.



The ability to deliver extension messages and digital resources through webinars has enabled MLA to continue engaging with producers and advisors as COVID-19 restricted movement and forced the cancellation and postponement of extension events across the country during 2020–21

## Productivity and profitability webinar series

These webinars are designed to assist sheep and cattle producers to increase the productivity and profitability of their businesses. They also provide direction to participate in further MLA adoption opportunities.

Some of the topics covered in the series over 2020–21 include:

- managing calf scours
- retaining older ewes
- ovine brucellosis – effects, treatment and prevention
- maximising lamb growth – pre and post weaning
- pink eye management in weaner cattle
- phosphorus application in mixed farming
- dealing with dystocia
- oestrogenic clovers – identification and remediation
- heifer management.

**DURING 2020–21**

**2,855 REGISTRATIONS**

**20 WEBINARS**

**2,380 ATTENDEES**



**SATISFACTION RATING**



**VALUE RATING**



Intended to change/  
advise clients to change  
following webinar

All webinars are available on the [MLA website](#).

## Livestock Advisor Updates webinars

This webinar series is designed to extend the reach of the Livestock Advisor Updates program. The use of webinars also allowed MLA to continue to engage livestock advisors as COVID-19 restrictions forced postponement of Livestock Advisor Updates in-person events across the country in 2020–21.

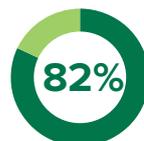


**DURING 2020–21**

**672 REGISTRATIONS**

**8 WEBINARS**

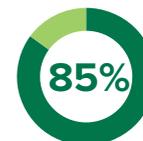
**200 ATTENDEES**



**SATISFACTION RATING**



**VALUE RATING**



of participants intended to  
change the advice they give  
to clients following webinar

All webinars are available on the [MLA YouTube channel](#).

## FutureBeef webinar series

This webinar series was developed for northern beef producers as a way of sharing the latest practical tools, scientific insights and relevant, timely advice. FutureBeef is a collaborative program between MLA and the governments of Queensland, the NT and WA, working together for a profitable and sustainable northern beef industry.

Some of the topics covered in the series during 2020–21 include:

- pain relief use in northern beef cattle
- Northern Breeding Business (NB2) update
- becoming lender ready
- making the most of the forecast
- northern beef genetics
- high intensity rotational grazing vs. continuous grazing.

All webinars are available on the [FutureBeef YouTube](#) channel.

**DURING 2020–21**

**1,853 REGISTRATIONS**

**12 WEBINARS**

**823 ATTENDEES**



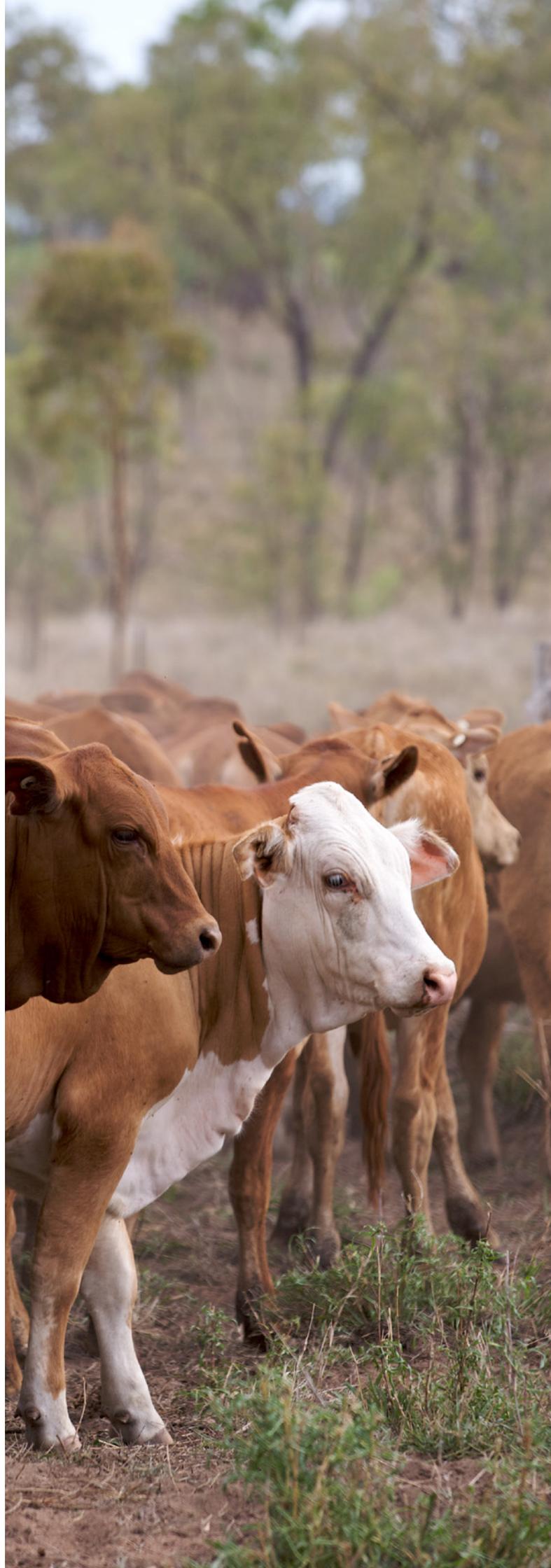
**INCREASE IN  
KNOWLEDGE  
AND SKILLS  
ACQUISITION**



**SATISFACTION  
RATING**



Intended to  
change/advise  
clients to change  
following  
webinar



## eLearning

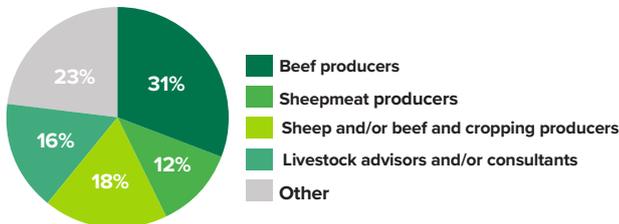


COVID-19 has increased the reliance on online delivery and in March 2021, MLA launched its new eLearning platform 'The toolbox'. The platform was developed to help facilitate the delivery of capability building packages for red meat producers and livestock advisors. Users can work through training packages 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. New eLearning packages released in 2021–22 include:

- Vaccination in sheep flocks
- Vaccination for southern cattle
- Pain relief use in southern cattle
- Pain relief use in sheep
- Establishing a new pasture
- Soil testing
- Visual indicators of soil condition
- Assessing nodulation in legumes
- Introduction to MateSel

## DURING 2020–21



**9 TRAINING PACKAGES**

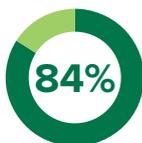
**605 USERS**



**INCREASE IN KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACQUISITION**



**SATISFACTION RATING**



**VALUE RATING**



intent to change/advise clients to change

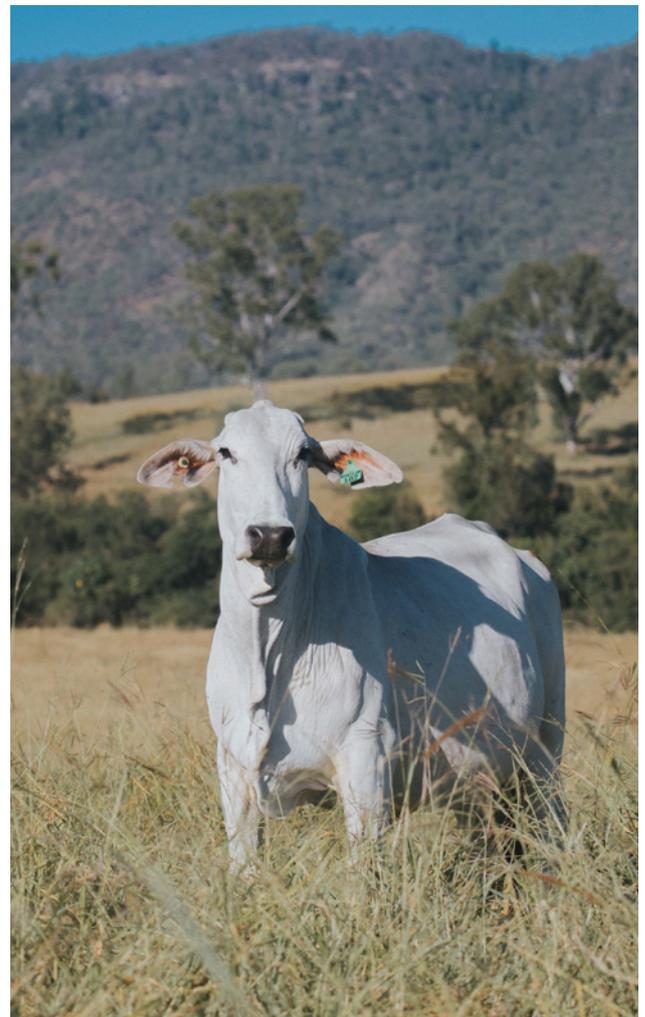
## Feedbase hubs

To support the adoption of new feedbase R&D and best practice principles, MLA has developed a range of producer resources including factsheets, decision support tools, case studies and online training modules covering the areas of soils, weeds and pastures.

These resources were shared through three new feedbase hubs on the MLA website – healthy soils, persistent pastures and weed control – created in early 2021 in time for sowing and then corresponding with the relevant seasonal decision points.

The launch of the feedbase hubs was supported by a number of media campaigns targeting southern red meat producers. The soil testing campaign aimed to encourage southern producers to do a soil test, using MLA's resources for guidance. This led to an increase in producers carrying out a soil test prior to autumn sowing, an increase in usage of MLA's feedbase tools and resources and an upswing in the number of producers accessing MLA's new feedbase hubs, eLearning platform and associated feedbase modules.

The weed control campaign aimed to encourage producers to proactively tackle weed issues through winter, referring to MLA resources on identification and treatment options. It led to a similar upswing in the usage of MLA resources.



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

## Healthy soils hub

Designed to equip southern Australian producers with practical resources for soil testing and soil management ahead of autumn sowing of pastures and dual-purpose crops. The soils hub includes all-new tips and tools on soil testing and management and practical 'how to' guides and videos to encourage producers to test their soils in order to identify and address deficiencies ahead of sowing, to ultimately optimise feedbase production.



## Weed control hub

Weeds are estimated to cost the Australian livestock industry over \$3 billion per year according to research commissioned by MLA. Left unchecked, weeds can outcompete nutritious pastures, leaving low-quality feed for livestock and unwanted costs for producers. To assist producers in combating this issue, MLA launched the weed control resource hub in May 2021, bringing together the latest research and practical tips and tools to help producers get weeds under control early.

## Persistent pastures hub

This hub is designed to help producers ensure their pastures are performing at their best. There are many considerations when it comes to new and improved pastures – the environment, varieties, composition, inputs, soils, establishment and grazing management. This hub outlines these considerations and combines them with a number of helpful resources and tools to support pasture management. This hub also provides information on a wide range of pasture types found across southern Australia.



To find out more about the feedbase hubs visit [mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/feedbase-hub](https://mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/feedbase-hub)

# INTEGRATED R&D AND ADOPTION INITIATIVES

In addition to the investment in MLA's Producer Adoption budget in 2020–21, investments into adoption and extension were made across on-farm research and development projects. These integrated programs have been created with the intention of fast-tracking the adoption of extendable research outcomes, as well as complimenting the existing suite of MLA adoption products.

Some of these programs are outlined below.

## Supporting sheep producers' transition to non-mulesed sheep

This new producer led adoption project offers sheep producers practical support to transition to a non-mulesed flock. 'Towards non-mulesed sheep', funded by MLA, utilises the principles of a Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) to guide producers through the design of a property-specific plan using existing tools and management strategies to reduce reliance on mulesing.

The practice of mulesing to reduce incidence of breech strike is becoming less acceptable by retailers and consumers. Preventing flystrike and phasing out the practice of mulesing is a goal for industry, with known alternative farm management practices available.

This project aims to support 40 core sheep producers across seven demonstration sites in NSW and Victoria to transition to a non-mulesed flock.

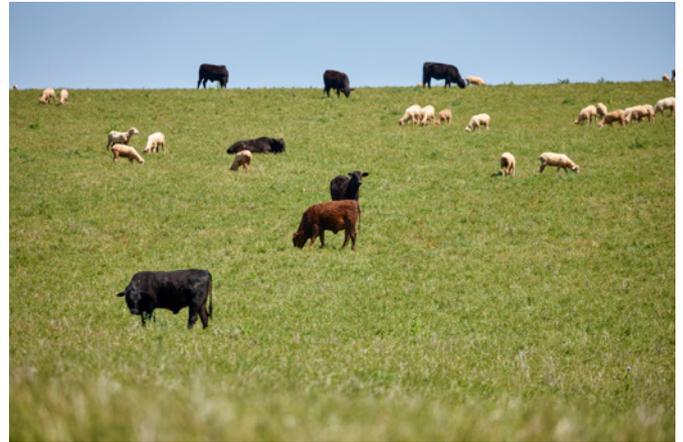
By June 2024, the project aims to meet the following adoption targets:

- 25% of core producers ready to cease mulesing
- 75% of core producers have a five-year plan to transition to a non-mulesed flock (beyond the life of this project)
- 25% of observer producers have a five-year plan to transition to a non-mulesed flock.

The project will include discussion groups and on-farm demonstrations to allow producers to identify management changes that will see them working towards ceasing mulesing across their flocks. Groups will meet on-farm throughout the life of the project to improve knowledge and skills, discuss seasonal issues and use a range of industry tools to develop and implement their plans.

Discussion group members also have the option to run a small trial with their own sheep to evaluate their chosen strategy. There are currently 'Towards non-mulesed sheep' discussion groups running in southern NSW, western Victoria, north-east Victoria and north-west Victoria.

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



## Red Meat and Wool Growth Program

The Red Meat and Wool Growth Program is an initiative of Primary Industries and Regions SA and is supported by MLA, SA Sheep and Cattle Industry Funds and SheepConnect SA. The project has committed \$7.5 million over three years to grow the South Australian red meat and wool industries, which have experienced significant stock number declines in recent years through drought, bushfires and wild dog and fox predation. This has impacted the consistency of supply of product to processors.

The project aims to support livestock producers to rebuild stock numbers and quality, increase the adoption of electronic identification and data-based decision making, enhance business-planning skills, promote the adoption of best practice farm management techniques and strengthen biosecurity. It aims to achieve this through the implementation of four activities – livestock enterprise planning, demonstration farms and producer groups, service provider development and the appointment of a Co-Innovation Officer.

Since the commencement of the project in June 2020, restrictions associated with COVID-19 have proven challenging. Despite this, the project is being flexible in its delivery approach and implementation is on track for all objectives to be achieved. To date:

- 307 producers (from 208 businesses) have undertaken Livestock Enterprise Planning training
- 15 producer groups have been formed, with 309 members
- nine demonstration farms have been established
- two field days have been delivered, attended by 118 producers and seven service providers
- six service provider development events have been held, attended by 52 service providers
- 93 producers engaged through the Best Practice Demonstration Farm Field Day.

**To find out more, email [redmeatandwool@sa.gov.au](mailto:redmeatandwool@sa.gov.au).**



## Grazing system impact on livestock productivity, soil moisture and soil organic carbon

This integrated Producer Demonstration Site project will provide evidence of grazing best management practices and their associated impacts on productivity, as well as contribute new information to the discussion around carbon sequestration for improved productivity in Australian beef grazing systems.

The project will establish 20x40 hectare Producer Demonstration Sites across 10 grazing properties in northern NSW. The sites will be used to determine the optimal blend of pastures for improved livestock productivity, while increasing soil carbon levels. The project will measure and compare land, feed and soil condition changes under a combination of low intensity/low rotation and high intensity/high rotation management strategies.

The project aims to engage over 110 producers, providing opportunity for large scale awareness and adoption beyond the primary demonstration sites, and provides evidence for broader industry adoption of practices that contribute to industry productivity, sustainability and CN30 (carbon neutral by 2030) targets. The first field day took place on 26 February 2021, with 34 attendees.

On completion, MLA will be able to provide the livestock industry with an improved understanding of soil and pasture grazing management strategies for improved productivity, land condition, pasture health and net gains in soil carbon sequestration.

The objective of this project is to develop and promote a set of standard grazing and soil benchmarks across all demonstration and control sites, which will be used to develop a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between soil organic carbon (SOC), plant available water (PAW) and water holding capacity (WHC) across a range of grazing management practices. While this project focuses exclusively on developing producer capacity to maximise benefits of SOC in a variety of grazing land management practices in northern NSW, it is envisaged that the interrelationship of these research outcomes will be used to provide a set of best practice standards to upskill producers and advisors nationally. This project runs from 2020 to 2024.

## Improving production on sandy soils

Sandy soils are a common landscape feature in SA, Victoria and WA. Farming on these soils can be very challenging. However, research has demonstrated that improvements in feed production and carrying capacity are possible on these soils through different interventions that aim to increase the retention of water.

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

Three demonstration sites will be established on grazing systems in the Coorong district of SA, with a selection of three to five treatments at each site. A further six associate producers will be closely involved in the project, with annual field days and workshops available to all. This will give producers a chance to understand different interventions implemented under local commercial conditions to facilitate adoption in the region.

The project will give producers an opportunity to review the effectiveness of different treatments and practices to improve production on sandy soils, 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. This project runs from 2020 to 2026.

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



## BeefLinks

BeefLinks is a four-year research partnership

with the University of Western Australia that 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.

BeefLinks aims to develop a higher valued supply chain that is more productive and more sustainable for the WA beef industry. 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, identification of best-practice, practical strategies for the management and movement of cattle and demonstrations, training opportunities and engagement 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.

Producers within the northern rangelands of WA and across the state who have the capacity to facilitate the backgrounding of cattle and feedlots who are looking for new opportunities are invited to participate in the program, which runs from 2020 to 2025.

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

## Rangelands Living Skin

The Rangelands Living Skin project focuses on regenerating the NSW rangelands to support livestock production now and into the future. It brings together producers, researchers and advisors with the aim of identifying practical, cost-effective solutions to deliver benefits for soil, plants, animals and people – the living skin of the rangelands. These practices include grazing management, landscape re-hydration, biological inputs and new or multi-species planting.

This project will validate and demonstrate rangeland management innovations that producers can confidently adopt to enhance the environmental and economic sustainability of their grazing businesses. It will investigate management practices that aim to increase carrying capacity, pasture species composition, groundcover and soil carbon, including opportunities to diversify farm incomes through ecosystem service markets. The collection of data throughout the project will create an evidence-base that can be used by rangeland producers and industry stakeholders in their decision-making going forward.

# BeefLinks

This project follows a collaborative research model, with replicated trials being established on four core producers' properties located across western NSW. These properties will act as demonstration sites for the region and be complimented by a further 20 observer producers that have been engaged to achieve wider implementation. Through significant producer involvement and complementary training and coaching activities, the project aims to see increased productivity on over one million hectares. This project runs from 2020 to 2024.

To be kept informed of the progress of this project and opportunities to become involved, register your interest via email [vicki.saville@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:vicki.saville@dpi.nsw.gov.au).



## Increasing adoption of phosphorus supplementation in northern Australia

This project aims to demonstrate that an easy-to-implement phosphorus supplementation strategy, the 'Easy P' strategy, is an effective method of phosphorous supplementation in northern Australia 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, a key strategy of the Easy P method, is as effective as more traditional and labor-intensive methods of providing supplementation.

The project will involve six producer demonstration sites across northern WA, Queensland and the NT to validate the Easy P supplementation method within commercial systems. Objective information will be collected to conduct cost benefit analyses, informing the adoption of P supplementation and methods of delivering the supplement to stock.

In northern Australia, only a small number of cattle that are grazing on phosphorous deficient pastures are being managed with phosphorous supplementation. This is due in part to perceived difficulties in implementing wet season phosphorus supplementation on extensive properties. The goal of this project is to validate and implement an 'easy' wet season phosphorous supplementation program and subsequently increase the adoption of P supplementation across the northern beef industry. This will address the reduction in productivity associated with phosphorus deficiency and its associated symptoms of poor growth, high breeder mortality, reduced fertility and milk production. This project will run from 2021 to 2026.

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

## Managing welfare and production at weaning (northern beef pain relief project)

This project will involve nine producer demonstration sites across northern WA and the NT, with complementary research also occurring in Queensland to validate the use of pain relief products and best practice aseptic techniques during animal husbandry procedures.

This project aims to improve the knowledge, awareness, skills and attitudes of NT beef producers in administering pain relief products when performing castration and dehorning during weaning. The study will involve objective animal wellbeing assessments (behavioural and physiological parameters) and the measurement of production outcomes to understand the benefits of using pain relief products. Measurements taken following the administration of pain relief during animal husbandry practices such as dehorning and castration include weight gain, mortality and animal behaviour such as vocalisation and movement.

Demonstration and assessment of the impacts of treatments will be complemented by training for pastoralists in undertaking animal husbandry practices, using pain mitigation products and best practice aseptic techniques. The results from this project will help inform the adoption of pain relief and animal husbandry techniques used in northern cattle enterprises. This project will run from 2021 to 2023.

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

## Northern Breeding Business (NB2)



The Northern Breeding Business (NB2) program is an initiative developed by the North Australia Beef Research Council (NABRC) in conjunction with MLA. It 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 project has set the ambitious target to deliver an estimated \$20 million/year in net benefits by 2027 to 250 northern beef enterprises.

There are four key pillars to the program, including the overarching 'adoption pillar' named Pathway to Practice – focused on delivering the practice change required to achieve the objectives of NB2. This adoption pillar is collectively delivered by the three state agencies across northern Australia: QDAF, NT DITT and WA DPIRD. The three R&D pillars including herd, feedbase, and sustainability will be directed by feedback from participating producers.

The driving force behind the program is the establishment of up to six producer groups across northern Australia where peer-to-peer learning is key to developing and implementing customised breeding management programs for each participant. There is one group in WA, one in the NT, three in Queensland and one group on the Barkly Tablelands. These

groups will discuss and assess core topics and practices and interface with the R&D activities under the NB2 program. Each group is assigned a facilitator who will help focus the group's needs based on an assessment of feedbase, herd structure and cost of production. The facilitator will also identify any skills development required by the group and partner groups with relevant R&D activities and opportunities that will achieve measurable practice change for each participating business.

To assess the impact of practice change resulting from these groups, producer participants will be taught how to gather and analyse key data. Any producer who currently operates a beef breeding business in northern Australia and identifies with a NABRC region is welcome to join these groups via an online 'expression of interest' form. This project runs from 2021 to 2028.

To find out more visit [mla.com.au/nb2](http://mla.com.au/nb2).

## Sheep Reproduction Strategic Partnership



The Sheep Reproduction Strategic Partnership (SRSP) stemmed from the producer consultation process and is informed by the Sheep Reproduction RD&E Impact Assessment review. This review generated new knowledge demonstrating pathways to improve reproductive outcomes, however, there remains a significant opportunity to boost adoption to increase reproduction efficiency on-farm. Improving sheep reproductive performance, reducing ewe and lamb mortality and improving animal welfare are key priorities for MLA, Australian sheep and wool producers and other industry partners.

The major priority of the SRSP is to lift weaning rates through improved productivity and lamb survival through the increased adoption of proven management practices that have been developed through key research projects over the years. This will be done through four key pillars:

- Pillar one – On-farm best practice management
- Pillar two – Human social factors
- Pillar three – Enabling technologies
- Pillar four – Basic research and development.

A key part of this strategy is the importance of integrating adoption practices into all pillars of the partnership, but most actively through Pillar one. The integration of adoption into the program strategy highlights the importance of extending research outcomes, as well as promoting the integration of adoption pathways at the beginning of research projects.

Since the inception of the partnership, MLA and partners have invested in a series of new projects with focus areas including accelerating sheep reproduction best practice, understanding the impacts of heat stress on reproductive performance and designing edible shelter to improve lamb survival.

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

## MLA CONTACTS

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

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

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

To learn more about MLA eLearning platform, email [elearning@mla.com.au](mailto:elearning@mla.com.au)

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



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