

Rural Resilience Program

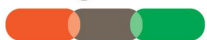
Listen, learn and link to create opportunities for farming communities

National conference: Practice-based suicide prevention targeting men and women in farming occupations



Photo from www.dailytelegraph.com.au

**Rural
Resilience
Program**



**Department of
Primary Industries**

We're farming and we grow it

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unBS-xQ4V3g>

What does this video tell us?

- Farmers are passionate about what they do
- They work long hours outside
- They can feel pressured '*gotta feed everyone*'
- The importance of having fun



Rural Resilience Program



Department of
Primary Industries

Listen,
learn and **link**
to **create opportunities** for farming communities

The **evidence** behind our program

- Research project with the University of Canberra on farmer resilience (using data from the National Wellbeing Survey) *importance of social capacity and self-efficacy skills*
- Independent evaluations of the RRP in providing drought support
- Independent evaluation of the Sir Ivan Fire Recovery Support Service
- Stakeholder survey 2016
- Drought survey 2016
- Anecdotal feedback from staff and clients
- Case studies demonstrating outcomes

Women in dairy unite

Kate Stark

AFTER tragically losing a friend and fellow farmer to suicide in 2015, Lansdowne dairy producer Megan Nicholson took action, organising the first meeting for the Mid-North Coast Women in Dairy.

"Nobody really knew what to do or how to talk about what had happened or what we were going through," Megan said.

"After a phone call between a couple of the farmers' wives, we decided we'd all get together and start networking a little bit more and looking after our dairy community."

The first meeting opened as a general discussion with the second allowing time for the women to lay the foundation of what they wanted to achieve.

"One of the really big things we noticed in the first meeting was that we all felt so isolated but, when we got together, we realised we all have things in common and it was a huge load off our shoulders."

Megan said she could clearly remember feeling a little lost when it came to seeking out industry support.

"I remember being at a field day somewhere and seeing a small brochure advertising rural resilience and that's where Liane Corocher, the rural resilience officer at the NSW Department of Primary Industries, came in," she said.

"It was the pivotal moment for our group in getting her involved."



The Nicholson Lansdowne-based dairy farm.

Megan said the support Liane gave the group in helping organise the flow for future meetings set the tone for the group's future.

"The group is really about looking after ourselves, each other and our businesses."

Megan said, above all, the women recognised how important it was to not only care for each other, but themselves.

"It's become a great support group and a safe space to talk about what's worrying us."

Megan said making the decision to meet on the first Friday of each month was one the women in the group had little issue adhering to.

"At first, there were some excuses because I think people feel guilty taking time away from



Megan Nicholson

the farm but now, they say 'no, this is my time' and they all usually turn up."

Often enjoying guest speakers and skill building workshops, the women also attended the NSW Women in Dairy (WID) Conference 'Bale Up' at Jamberoo Resort in September.

Let's work together



BUILDING resilience in an isolated environment can sometimes feel like an uphill battle, which is why Megan Nicholson has spent her time compiling a booklet to help her fellow farmers form similar groups.

The 'Sharing and Learning' booklet pinpoints how producers can work to support themselves and each other.

"I think my nursing background has probably given me the compassion, along with my love for the industry, to help others," Megan said.

From bringing friendship into farming to taking time out and creating conversation, the booklet uncovers a number of support pathways which producers can take to break down the barriers of isolation.

"It's important to be part of a women's group and to see the women in our generation and the next are recognised, supported and encouraged for the work they do."

■ Visit [facebook.com/WIDA-Women-in-Dairy-Australia](https://www.facebook.com/WIDA-Women-in-Dairy-Australia)

Applying this research to program design

CASE STUDY 1: *Building social capacity by strengthening and supporting Women in Dairy Groups*



Applying this research to program design

CASE STUDY 2:

Building self-efficacy skills through SOFT and TUFF resilience workshops

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=33&v=-QsnRWEMrQk



Points to ponder for the future

- Building resilience takes time and resources – how do you identify where resources are allocated? (rapid assessment tool)
- Need improved partnerships between the non-government and government sector and connection with traditional agricultural service providers ie: stock and station agents, agronomists
- Balance between community capacity building (prevention and preparedness) and crisis intervention
- Continue building social capacity and self-efficacy skills
- Need to improve health and wellbeing holistically
- Continue research to inform improved service delivery and gain resources

For more information

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