

# MEDIA RELEASE

20 December 2024

## **The South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub Hosts Successful Showcase and Field Tour**

The South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SW WA Hub) hosted its inaugural Showcase and Field Tour last Wednesday and Thursday (11-12 December 2024). The event brought together farmers, grower groups, researchers, agribusinesses, and government agencies who are committed to enhancing the resilience of Western Australia's agricultural sector.

In Western Australia, where seasons are increasingly more variable, building resilience to climate challenges is a necessity.

Acting Hub Director Dr Jo Wisdom emphasised the unique challenges of WA agriculture in her opening remarks.

"WA's distinct climate and reliance on winter-dominant rainfall mean that resilience is a way of life for our farmers. It's about the capacity to adapt, recover, and thrive amidst adversity. Achieving this requires foresight, patience, and collaboration," Dr Wisdom said.

The two-day event provided a platform to collaborate and explore cutting-edge solutions and strategies for accelerating drought resilience and fostering innovation in agriculture. The event highlighted innovative projects from around Australia that are specifically relevant for Western Australia's unique agricultural environment.

Some of the highlights include:

- "Containment feeding to boost business performance and resilience" with Dr Penny Schulz, South Australian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub
- "Paddock level carbon benchmarking" with Glenn Briggs, Aglytica
- "De-risking the seeding program: adoption of key management practices for the success of dry and early sown crops" with Rachel May, Ag Excellence Alliance, and Ravi Parmar, Facey Group
- "Managing Rangelands for drought resilience" with Richard Marver, Contour Environmental and Agricultural Consulting
- "Virtual fencing for improved drought resilience on South Australian farms" with Megan Willis, South Australian Research and Development Institute
- "WaterSmart Dams: making dams work again" with Dr Bonny Stutsel, University of Western Australia and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

Dr Wisdom reflected on the event's success, which attracted more than 90 guests, highlighting the importance of collaboration in addressing the challenges facing agriculture.

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“The Showcase was a testament to the value of collaboration and co-design. By engaging with stakeholders from the ground up, we can ensure that our initiatives address real needs and leverage the diverse expertise within our agricultural networks,” she said.

“The projects, funded through the Future Drought Fund and other Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry funding streams, demonstrate the power of this approach, both locally and nationally.”

Dr Wisdom said, since its inception in 2021, the SW WA Hub has been a driving force for drought preparedness and innovation across our region.

“Our work is guided by a comprehensive list of drought resilience priorities, co-designed with our four Regional Advisory Committees, eight Regional Nodes, and local farmers,” she said.

“These priorities shape every project we undertake and every resource we produce, ensuring that our efforts deliver practical, on-ground benefits to farmers and communities across South-West Western Australia.”

Each Regional Node plays a key role in connecting the SW WA Hub with farmers, leveraging their extensive networks to ensure a two-way flow of information.

“They bring valuable regional insights to the Hub while extending our knowledge and resources to farmers, fostering the adoption of drought-resilient practices,” Dr Wisdom said.

Thursday’s program took participants on a Field Tour, offering firsthand insights into the SW WA Hub’s activities and partnerships across Western Australia. The tour included visits to three demonstration sites showcasing the following projects supported by the SW WA Hub:

- “Digital Edge: Next generation agribusiness analytics for the Eastern Wheatbelt” and “On-farm water demand” with Dr Julia Easton, Centre for Crop and Disease Management, Curtin University
- “Sustainable transformation of waste from the potato industry into novel feedstock” with Nick Stamatiou, Whole Green Foods
- “Implementing improved vineyard floor management for premium grape production in a warm and dry Mediterranean climate” at Roscic Estates, Henley Brook.

The SW WA Hub, led by the Grower Group Alliance and funded by the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund, is dedicated to fostering collaboration and facilitating knowledge exchange to enhance the climate resilience and preparedness of farmers and communities in South-West WA. Initiatives like the Drought Resilience Showcase play a vital role in building connections and fostering meaningful partnerships to enhance resilience and adaptability.

Video recordings of the Showcase presentations will be available in early 2025 on the SW WA Hub website ([hub.gga.org.au](http://hub.gga.org.au)).

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Caption:

**Key leaders at the Drought Resilience Showcase gathered to celebrate collaboration and innovative drought resilience projects:** L-R: Mark Sweetingham (Hub Steering Committee member), Graham Smith (GGA Board Director and Hub Steering Committee member), Dr Jo Wisdom (Acting Hub Director), Kieran Macdonell (Drought Hubs Management Director, DAFF), Deb Turner (Drought Hubs Management Assistant Director, DAFF), Dale Park (Drought Hubs Advisory Committee member), Rikki Foss (GGA Chief Executive Officer), Brent Finlay (Drought Hubs Advisory Committee Chair and Future Drought Fund Consultative Committee Chair).

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### Contact

Hub Stakeholder and Communications Manager

**Jessica Scholle**

[jessica.scholle@gga.org.au](mailto:jessica.scholle@gga.org.au)

0449 662 074

### About the Grower Group Alliance (GGA) and the South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SW WA Hub)

The Grower Group Alliance is a thriving state-wide network of more than 90 member groups from across Western Australia, with a collective membership exceeding 4,000 farm enterprises.

The South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SW WA Hub) was established in 2021 as one of eight Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs nationwide that form part of the extensive initiatives delivered via the federal Future Drought Fund aiming to help Australian farms and communities prepare for the impacts of drought.



South-West WA  
Drought Resilience Adoption  
and Innovation Hub

E: [swwadroughthub@gga.org.au](mailto:swwadroughthub@gga.org.au)

Web: [gga.org.au](http://gga.org.au)

Twitter: @GGA\_WA

Postal: Locked Bag 4, Bentley Delivery Centre 6102

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As a major GGA-led project, the SW WA Hub leverages the GGA grower group network through a 'hub and spoke' model to promote ground-up innovation and help farmers enhance resilience to an increasingly variable climate in the South-West WA region.

Grower groups are among the SW WA Hub's more than 50 consortium partners, which represent all sectors of the WA agricultural supply chain and are providing cash and in-kind co-contributions to bring the project to life.

For full details visit the Hub project page: <https://hub.gga.org.au/>