

Ready Macleay 2024

Theme: Agricultural Communities
Date: 29 February
Venue: Kempsey Showground
Facilitator: Dr. Chad Renando
Notes: Kerry Grace
Guest speakers: Lorraine Gordon (Natural Capital Australia), Georgia Munro and Anita Rodeghiero (Mangiato)

Attended by:

Ali Briggs (Kempsey Shire Council), Brendan O’Brien (LLS), Nathan King (ETC), Taylor Kelly-Scholes (Learning the Macleay), Emily Neilson (Agskills), Sam Preston (Bucket Brewery), Maura Luxford (TAFE NSW), Ryan Martin (Macleay Vocational College), Eden Kaminski (Cultivate Ag), Troy and Mirisal Irwin, Michael Kemp MP, Bruce Morris, Julie Humphris (Blue Marbel Farm), Vicki Vaughan (CWA), Chontelle Shore (Learning the Macleay), Karyn Cassar (Agri-skills/Taree TAFE), Alice McVee (Cultivate Ag), Hayden Carter (Cultivate Ag), Jo Kelly (Learning the Macleay)

Meeting notes:

Existing and past initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macleay valley food bowl initiative • CDEP market garden • Agriskills program (Taree) • Cultivate Ag <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State wide opportunities, young people currently paying their own way ○ Opportunities to school aged students: Meet farmers, engage community ○ Currently cattle, could be equine ○ Need to source funding and develop business model • Tastings on the Hastings • Farmers market Eungai • Open food networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable table ○ Local produce map • Bellingen: Young farmers using land
Ideas for initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kempsey farmers market (stalls need to be a reasonable price) • Waste water reuse, feasibility study • Small producers access to market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Many have other jobs and can’t attend markets ○ Collective stand similar to creative industries • Inclusive to all producers (e.g. may not all be organic) • Join properties for scale • Harness natural capital / environmental assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Net 0 by 2030 ○ Mitigate risks against climate events ○ Insurance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nature repair act 2023 ● App to link producers to hospitality industry ● School to farm employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Year 13 (Cultivate ag) ● Agricultural school of excellence (Macleay Vocational College)
Additional ideas shared out of session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Women in Dairy program (as per Taree) ●
What contributes to a strong agricultural sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trust ● Independent advice ● More support during emergencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fencing ○ Fodder ○ Mental health ● Strong supply chain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delivery area ● Collaboration and working together ● Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Join groups – e.g. women who farm ● Affordable farming ● Share farming ● Profitability ● Farm visits ● Quality ● Prepare for flood and fire ● Cooperatives ● Social connections ● Education for farmers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environmental markets ○ Natural asset opportunities ● Access to local produce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can local supermarkets sell more? ○ E.g. freddo store ● Cost of living / keep costs down ● Living wage for farmer
Linkages and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chamber of commerce – need agricultural representation ● NSW Farmers
Challenges to overcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteer fatigue ● Stronger communication channels ● Broader industry representation

Actions and ideas to explore

(NOTE: Responsibilities and actions are not assigned to date, please respond to the survey via [this link](#) to assist us assign responsibilities, resources and timeframes)

Action / idea	What we heard
Develop a farmers market	Hosting a regular farmers market and ensuring stall fees are affordable
Initiate or expand a waste water reuse feasibility study	A study to better understand how to utilise water particularly post floods
Develop a collaborative market stall for farmers at markets (a shared stand for farmers that are working or can't get there)	A shared stand for farmers that are working or can't get to the markets
Facilitate joining properties for scale	Creating partnerships to join properties particularly to support natural capital markets and initiatives
Provide workshops on natural capital and environmental assets	Workshop with Lorraine Gordon to better understand natural capital / environmental assets
Develop or implement a software app to link producers to the hospitality industry	New app to ensure hospitality industry can access local produce
Develop more opportunities to link school and industry	Stronger pathways to link young people to industry
Develop an agricultural school of excellence	Macleay Vocational College considering developing this model
Develop more opportunities for Cultivate Ag - a program that engages young people into then agriculture sector	Support opportunities related to existing Cultivate Ag program

Action / idea	What we heard
Develop or enhance a Women in Dairy program	Develop program similar to successful Taree based Women in Dairy program promoting more opportunities for women in agriculture
Improve communication across the Macleay agriculture sector, including producers and the supply chain	Stronger communication between industry
Increase and enhance mental health support for producers and the agriculture sector	Timely mental health support for farmers and easy access to links
Develop independent advice for farmers	Farm advice that isn't delivered by a particular brand
Reinvigorate or develop something like the Macleay Valley Foodbowl initiative - an initiative that provided "news, information and contacts to stimulate supply and demand for food produced in the Macleay Valley Food Bowl precinct"	Reignite Kempsey Shire Council's Macleay Valley Food Bowl initiative
Market garden and social enterprise opportunities	Reignite CDEP market garden concepts across the community
Events showcasing local produce	Create an event such as Tasting on the Hastings
More support during and after natural disaster	More support for farmers including fencing and fodder
Strengthen supply chains for local produce	Make it easier for farmer to get produce to market

Action / idea	What we heard
Strengthen and share support networks for farmers	Create a central point for information about support networks
Farm visits	Create a series of farm visits

NOTE: While care has been taken to capture and record the Community Conversation, the notes may not be an exact reflection of what was said. If you would like to add further information and/or provide other feedback please contact the Ready Communities team.