

Expression of Interest

# Farmer Group Support Pilot

Empowering farmer groups to thrive in a changing climate



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry



Future  
Drought  
Fund



**TAS FARM**  
INNOVATION HUB

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA  
**TIA**   
Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture

# Overview



The TAS Farm Innovation Hub is seeking expressions of interest from established farmer groups across Tasmania to participate in the Farmer Group Support Pilot: an initiative designed to support the long-term capacity and sustainability of local producer groups.

This pilot recognises farmer groups play an essential role in our communities, supporting the learning, innovation and connection that helps our farmers to grow and adapt in changing environments.

The Hub also recognises that for farmer groups, there can be barriers to success and growth such as limitation of key individuals time and group financial resources. With groups often relying on volunteers with limited time, a lot of effort goes into the administration, which doesn't always leave time or energy to focus on the bigger picture. The Farmer Group Support Pilot aims to alleviate these pressures by offering targeted support and assistance. This includes part-time facilitation to assist with group coordination, communication, and member engagement. Groups will also receive financial assistance to support strategic planning and the design of activities to build preparedness for future drought and climate variability.

The Hub works with Tasmanian farmers, advisors, and the agricultural industry to help make Tasmanian farms more resilient to drought and climate risks. The Hub is part of a network of 8 hubs established across Australia by the Future Drought Fund and sits within the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture at the University of Tasmania.

You can read about the Hub at: [www.tasfarmhub.com.au](http://www.tasfarmhub.com.au)

## What's on offer?

To support the growth of capacity and capabilities within farmer groups, and climate resilience on-farm, from July 2025 to June 2026, the Hub's Farmer Group Support Pilot will provide:

### **Facilitation and administrative support from a Hub-based facilitator to enable group activities – up to 6 hours per week**

The facilitator will support groups to define their goals, then assist with planning and implementing a series of activities to meet these goals. The facilitator will not replace group office bearer responsibilities (such as Secretariat or Treasury duties) but can support the group's day-to-day operations, including event planning, communications, and connecting groups to information and expertise.

### **Up to \$10,000 (ex. GST) for farmer group activities**

Funding to be used for activities defined by the group, and tailored to their needs and interests, but must increase knowledge and encourage on-farm practice changes that build preparedness and resilience to future drought and climate variability.

### **A payment of up to \$5,000 (ex. GST) for a local lead and administrative support**

Funding to be used to recognise the time and contribution of farmer group member(s) acting as a local lead for the group and key liaison between the facilitator and the group. Funds can also be allocated to support administrative capacity building, governance training and grant writing.





## What is the commitment?

Successful groups will need to commit to participation throughout the pilot. This will include:

- Appointing group member(s) to act as a key liaison to the Hub (local lead, see below).
- Identification of specific challenges and information needs to support group members increase drought and climate resilience.
- Development of an activity plan, outlining at least 4 group activities (funded out of the \$10k operational fund) between July 2025 and June 2026 to help address identified needs.
- Member participation in group activities.
- Sharing knowledge and experiences with others in the group.
- Participating in evaluation and communications activities and providing feedback on the pilot.

The local lead will be the key liaison between the facilitator and the farmer group. The local lead will be expected to assist with:

- Planning and promoting group activities.
- Ensuring activities are relevant and meaningful.
- Gauging participant satisfaction and communicate any concerns.

The Hub will be responsible for:

- Providing support for each participating farmer group – up to 6 hours per week.
- Supporting the group to develop and implement the activity plan.
- Supporting activity evaluation and reporting back to both the farmer group and the Hub.
- Linking the farmer group with other opportunities and resources.

## Eligibility

The Farmer Group Support Pilot is open to established farmer groups that:

- Are an Incorporated Association or have an auspice agreement with an incorporated association that is responsible for managing the contract.
- Have an ABN and a bank account.
- Currently have, or are willing to obtain, public liability insurance (minimum \$10M per occurrence and not less than \$20M in aggregate)
- Are Tasmanian-based, with a majority of group members farming in Tasmania.
- Can comply with the Professional Services Agreement of the University of Tasmania.

## How to apply

To apply, complete the online Expression of Interest form at:

**[www.tasfarmhub.com.au/supporting-tasmanian-farmer-groups/](http://www.tasfarmhub.com.au/supporting-tasmanian-farmer-groups/)**

The form asks for information about your farmer group, why you would like to participate in the Farmer Group Support Pilot, and how you anticipate your group would benefit from participating. For ease in applying, you are able to save and exit the form until the EOI closure date.

During the evaluation process, Hub staff may be in contact to get further information.

**Expression of Interest open at 9:00AM, Friday 6 June 2025.**

**Expression of Interest close at 9:00PM, Friday 4 July 2025.**

We encourage groups to contact the Hub with any questions or would like to discuss the application. Please reach out to the contact officer detailed on page 4.



## How groups will be chosen

Individual Expressions of Interest will be considered by an evaluation panel against the criteria below.

Evaluation Criterion	
1	Evidence that the farming group is eligible (including governance structures, ABN, insurance cover, bank account, or appropriate auspice arrangements).
2	Group members have demonstrated interest in increasing knowledge and on-farm practice change that build on-farm preparedness and resilience to future drought and climate variability.
3	Participation in the pilot will help group members overcome key barriers to group activity and contribute to longer-term connectivity and growth of the group.
4	Group members have time, capacity and willingness to work with Hub staff and group members to develop and deliver locally relevant activities over the pilot duration.

The panel will also consider other factors during the evaluation process, to ensure the participating groups represent a mix of industries, group format, and region.

## Key Dates

The key dates are detailed below:

Key dates	
Expression of Interest opens	6 June 2025
Expression of Interest closes	4 July 2025
Applicants notified of outcome	18 July 2025
Onboarding of successful farmer groups	25 July 2025
Design and roll-out of activity plan	28 July 2025 – 30 June 2026
Pilot close	30 June 2026

## Contact Officer

For more information, please contact:

Hannah Lewis  
 TAS Farm Innovation Hub  
 Project Manager  
 P. 0404 399 448  
 E. [fdf.tas.hub@utas.edu.au](mailto:fdf.tas.hub@utas.edu.au)





# Frequently Asked Questions

## About the pilot

### “Why is the Hub running this pilot?”

The Hub’s aim is to improve on-farm drought and climate resilience in Tasmania. Learning from peers is a highly effective way to trial, learn and innovate on farm to achieve this. This pilot is designed to support farmer groups, encourage information sharing and adoption of innovation and best management practices between peers.

The pilot incorporates lessons and insights from:

- A project run with the East Coast Primary Producers Association, a farmer group based in Tasmania’s south-east, which highlighted the value of supporting groups with resources to drive their own learning agenda and build social connection.
- Interviews with groups across Tasmania, asking about key challenges and ideas for how the Hub could best support them. These interviews highlighted key barriers (time, headspace, finances) and ideas for how the Hub could help (bring in new ideas, help coordinate and connect to information and other programs).

### “Why the short timeframe?”

The Hub is funded by the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund. Currently this funding only extends to June 2026. This means that at this stage, the Hub can’t fund or plan activities beyond this.

The Hub is one of eight Drought Resilience, Adoption and Innovation Hub’s nationally included within the Future Drought Fund (FDF) Investment strategy through to 2028.

### “What do you mean by ‘activity plan’?”

The activity plan outlines the activities that the farmer group intends to hold over the activity period. The activity plan will be drafted by the farmer group with the support of the facilitator.

The \$10,000 per group (ex. GST) funding for farmer group activities can be used to deliver the activities that increase knowledge and encourage on-farm practice changes that build preparedness and resilience to future drought and climate variability.

### “Do you have examples of what you mean by ‘activity’?”

Examples of activities could include:

- Group meetings/workshops with invited guest speakers.
- On-farm demonstration of a particular management practice you’re thinking about adopting.
- Facilitated workshops where the focus is sharing information and experience between group members.
- Seminars/webinars where the focus is sharing knowledge and experience on a particular topic.
- Farm visits or field trips.

The Hub facilitator brings expertise to help the group decide on appropriate formats for learning activities, based on the information being shared.





## Groups and eligibility

### **“How do you define a ‘farmer group’?”**

Farmer groups come in many different forms. We are looking for groups that are farmer managed organisations that bring peers together to address local challenges, share ideas and information related to agriculture.

### **“What if our group isn’t incorporated?”**

Only groups with an ABN and governance structure, including a bank account, will be eligible to participate at this time. Unincorporated groups that have finances managed by another organisation via an auspice arrangement are eligible.

The Hub is committed to ensuring the longevity of farmer groups in Tasmania. If your group is not yet incorporated, there are other ways that the Hub can work with your group to provide opportunities for climate resilience-linked knowledge sharing and practice change adoption. We welcome you to reach out to the Contact Officer to discuss these opportunities further.

### **“Our group already has an administrator, facilitator or executive officer – can we still apply?”**

This pilot is not aimed at groups that already receive significant external funding to support the group.

If your group already has a nominated administrator, facilitator or executive officer, please get in touch with the Contact Officer to discuss other opportunities for collaboration.

### **“If we are successful, can we choose our facilitator?”**

No, the facilitator will be shared across the participating 5 farmer groups. The facilitator is an employee of the TAS Farm Innovation Hub.

Successful groups will have the opportunity to meet with the facilitator to ensure that both parties feel confident they can work together to achieve successful outcomes.

## How it will work?

### **“What does the local lead do?”**

The local lead is the primary point of contact between the facilitator and the broader farmer group.

The local lead will:

- Support the facilitator with planning for activities.
- Promote and encourage participation in activities.
- Ensure activities are relevant and meaningful
- Gauge participant satisfaction and ensuring open lines of communication with the Hub-based facilitator.

### **“Can we split the local lead role across multiple people?”**

Yes. We understand that a role like this can be involved and time consuming. Groups will have the option of suggesting alternative arrangements. In nominating a local lead, it is important to consider if the person(s) has time and is willing to actively engage and bring the group members together.



## Agreements and finances

### “Who is the farmer group signing an agreement with?”

Farmer groups will sign a formal agreement with the University of Tasmania. This agreement will specify the terms and conditions upon which the Hub (University of Tasmania) will provide funding. This will detail when the pilot milestone payments will be made, and what activities the farmer group needs to have completed before payment is made.

### “How will payments from the Hub be made?”

Once a formal agreement has been signed between the Hub (University of Tasmania) and the farmer group, payments will be made to a nominated bank account, through milestone payments.

The farmer group will be required to raise an invoice, which will then be paid by the University of Tasmania. Payment terms are 30 Days from the date of invoice.

Below is an indicative pilot milestone structure. Groups can propose alternative milestone payments to assist in financial governance.

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Payment Amount (ex. GST)</b>
<b>1</b>	Signed agreement between the Hub (University of Tasmania) and farmer group	24 July 2025	\$2,500
<b>2</b>	Activity plan agreed between the farmer group and Hub	28 August 2025	\$5,000
<b>3</b>	Completion of Activity 2	15 December 2025	\$5,000
<b>4</b>	Completion of Activity 3	15 April 2026	\$2,500
<b>5</b>	Financial acquittal and submission of pilot feedback to facilitator	30 June 2026	

### “What can the \$10,000 for activities be used for?”

<b>What activity budget <u>can</u> be used for:</b>	<b>What activity budget <u>cannot</u> be used for:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs related to activities as agreed between the Hub and farmer group, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialist presenters</li> <li>Event catering (excluding alcohol)</li> <li>Venue hire</li> <li>Field trips</li> <li>Participation enabling costs (e.g., childcare)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular farmer group administration costs, e.g., electricity, phone, computing hardware</li> <li>Wages</li> <li>Costs of past activities</li> <li>Work that duplicates other activities, events, or programs</li> <li>Activities already funded by the Commonwealth, state, or local government bodies.</li> <li>Purchase of capital items</li> <li>Travel overseas or individual member travel to/from standard meetings or calendar items.</li> </ul>





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