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The Sustainable Farm Families™ flood recovery program and learning's from the bushfire and drought recovery program

Susan Brumby

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- *“Land of plenty or land of want, where the grey Companions dance, Feast or famine, or hope or fear, and in all things land of chance, Where Nature pampers or Nature slays, in her ruthless, red, romance”.....*




- Banjo Patterson Australian Scenery

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Climate change

Climate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century. Effects of climate change on health will affect most populations in the next decades and put the lives and wellbeing of billions of people at increased risk. The Lancet vol 373 May 16, 2009

The farming sector is amongst the most vulnerable, with many communities, particularly in southern Australia, already dealing with more intense and more frequent drought, fire and flood. The Climate Institute 2009



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- Sustainable Farm Families approach
- Better health
- Better understanding
- Better business



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Sustainable Farm Families | AUSTRALIA WIDE PROGRAMS




Victoria The Place to Be Western Districts Health Service

0 312.5 625 1,250 1,875 2,500 Kilometers

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Natural disaster programs

- Drought recovery - Victoria
- Flood recovery – Queensland (known area of flooding)
- Kinglake bushfire recovery
- Climate of change – Victoria and Queensland
- SFF – Future Directions by the way how has changing climate affected you health, wellbeing and business?



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Sustainable Farm Families (SFF)

- Funded - Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC 2003-06)
 - 10 farming regions SE Australia
 - 190 farming men and women.
 - Farming enterprises cropping, sugar, cotton, wool and meat production.
- Program provided
 - Annual physical assessments, review of health conditions, assessment of health behaviours, focus groups and education relating to common health conditions.

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In 2009 -11 funded to assess:

- Longitudinal effects of the program
 - health indicators,
 - health, well being and safety behaviours
 - health, well-being and safety knowledge
- Greater part of Australia still suffering drought keen to assess the impact climate had upon:
 - farm men and women and
 - their agricultural businesses.

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By the Way - has a changing climate impacted on your health, career or farm business decisions?

- "Last 8 and 9 years have tested us out - lots of farms are up for sale and I have never seen it like this before in my lifetime" SA
- "Looking out of the window was really depressing there was just dust everywhere... every time you opened the window" VIC
- "Didn't know it (climate) had changed" NSW
- "Pretty simple - if we are not getting any rain we are getting less income" VIC

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By the Way - has a changing climate impacted on your health, career or farm business decisions?

- "Bank will not take land as an asset – you must have water" VIC
- "The hope for a good season becomes very tiring" QLD
- "Regardless of what people want to call it - the changing climate has impacted on our decisions" VIC
- "We see it as a normal cycle" QLD
- "Started to think about our future" NSW

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By the Way - has a changing climate impacted on your health, career or farm business decisions?

Impact Category	Percentage
Farming decisions affected	28.9%
Too wet	20.5%
Increased stress	19.3%
Future viability uncertain	13.3%
Too dry	9.6%
What changing climate?	8.4%

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Quotes from drought - floods

- People were transitioning, but larger events took over, harder to look after yourself! Mental tiredness is harder than physical tiredness
- When floods on everyone helped
- Isolated towns felt 'left'
- **Farmers helped the farmers, but the town 'didn't' help the same**
- **Floods hit Kerang and then Swan Hill – it was like there was nothing in between.**
- Fires tend to unite, but the floods have divided with people fighting the authorities
- Isolation of community was terrible

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Operational level

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Strategic level

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Coordinated

- Integration of services
- Allocation of appropriate time for recovery
- Delivery of first workshop, 14 months after the event


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Flexible

- Adapted the program
- Changed the intervention periods
- Creative and innovative locations
- Involved the community
- Some things aren't flexible

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Professional

- Personal attributes of the team
- Specialised knowledge
- Familiarity

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Outcomes

- *'Very impressive program – very informative, learnt a lot, the follow up was great – has helped me to stay on track'*
- *'Accurate information addressing issues that concern us all. Good health gives you more confidence – a better longer life'*

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Key learning's

- Partnerships and inter-sectoral collaboration -
 - Share information with your team
- Tailor programs to the event that has occurred – know your history
- Awareness of key dates
 - Know key dates for activities
- Incorporate lessons learned from each event into future planning efforts

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