

# Drought and climate adaptation program

## GrazingFutures Narrative: “Women of Wealth”

In May 2020, the South GrazingFutures team was approached by Quilpie producer Annabel Tully of ‘Bunginderry’ who was interested in establishing a dedicated producer business group for her region. Annabel saw the need to streamline her business management and office efficiency during a break in the season to ensure she was upskilled and prepared for when the dry returns. The idea was to invest time and energy now getting her books sorted and establishing good business management practices, so when necessary she could spend more time out in the paddock managing drought. Establishing a dedicated group of local producers also meant they could form a support group, learn off each other and share their experiences – both good and bad.

On 22 August 2020, GrazingFutures held the inaugural Quilpie Producer Business Group meeting where likeminded women of all experience levels gathered to discuss what training or support they wanted to receive. In support of this meeting, GrazingFutures provided a basic bookkeeping and office organisation session through Kerri Mooring, a local producer who is also a bookkeeper and BAS agent. The session focused on:

- Setting up appropriate accounts and streamlining reconciling
- Understanding and meeting your statutory obligations
- Outlining what constitutes a contractor vs. employee
- Explaining the Australian Tax Office (ATO) free tools and resources
- Running a Q & A session

The group consists of seven women from seven enterprises covering more than 145,000 ha who have coined themselves ‘Women of Wealth’, based on the notion of seeing themselves become wealthy with time due to their newly obtained business skills and office efficiency. The average satisfaction rating from the first session was 9.2/10 with all agreeing they now have more information to make business management decisions.

A second session will be delivered on 24 October 2020 to build on the foundational skills developed in August, with the ladies having the opportunity to work on their accounts receivable under the guidance of Kerri. The group is also interested in receiving Excel, cash flow budgeting and strategic planning training. GrazingFutures is working in collaboration with Leading Sheep to see an Excel workshop delivered towards the end of the 2020.

A key learning throughout this experience has been the value of having a dedicated local contact as the driving force behind the establishment and successful continuation of a producer business group. In 2019, a business group in a neighbouring shire was formed but lacked a dedicated local producer contact. Without this contact GrazingFutures found it challenging to gather adequate producer interest in follow-up sessions and the group became unsustainable. In contrast, the Cunnamulla Women’s Business Group with a dedicated local contact, has received semi-regular training since its formation in 2018. Having a dedicated producer contact, who helps promote and drive the project, has proven invaluable in maintaining group momentum and on-going training. The GrazingFutures support of these producer groups and improving business literacy are critical in building drought-ready livestock operations in southwest Queensland.

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