

Advancing Beef Leaders: enhancing business resilience through risk analysis and peer-to-peer learning

The Advancing Beef Leaders (ABL) program is a peer-to-peer leadership and professional development initiative for emerging primary producers and aspiring beef industry and community leaders.

The program overlays technical skills delivered through six modules with self-development and leadership opportunities. These include a supply chain tour, formal one-on-one mentoring from leading industry representatives, group projects to apply program learnings to benefit the grazing industry or local communities, a biennial forum with further training, and a formal graduation dinner.

PLANNING FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

As part of the *Business and Financial Fundamentals* module, ABL participants engage in three structured workshops over three weeks. The first two sessions focus on financial literacy, accounting options, financial statements, budgeting, and business management best practice.

The final session focuses on holistic farm business resilience and key aspects of good business management where participants are equipped with practical tools and strategies to strengthen their enterprises' long-term resilience.

This includes:

- establishing realistic, measurable goals for Production, Natural Resource Management, Business, and Human Resources and Relationships,
- addressing risks with evidence-based strategies suitable for participants' individual regions, and
- planning tasks in a structured and achievable manner, both time-wise and monetarily.

Prior to the business planning session, participants complete an Extensive Grazing Checklist, highlighting their key risks. Examples included typical Queensland grazing situations such as water and pasture availability, fire management, cash flow, and setting up an Enduring Power of Attorney for business directors.

PEER TO PEER LEARNING

The session includes small-group, peer-to-peer components in break-out rooms, supported by trained facilitators, to encourage participant engagement in collaborative discussions, share lived experiences of and strategies for drought, disaster, and common agricultural challenges such as succession to explore practical approaches to risk management and goal setting. The checklist completion prior enabled participants to acknowledge their identified areas for improvement and engage with peers to find potential solutions and support.

Farm Business Resilience Program

Risk Analysis

Risk Examples

Production		Natural Resource Management		
Climate Drought Flood	Biosecurity Diseases Weeds	Land Condition Soil erosion Native pasture loss	Water Availability Quality	
Business		Human Resource and Relationships		
Financial Risk Interest rate volatility Cost of inputs Retirement needs Loss of relationship with bank	Market Risk Market demands Animal welfare Export market closures	WHS Mental Health Machinery	Key Person Communication breakdown Siloing of roles Physical health	Family Succession Wills Power of Attorney

Ask yourself:

- What could go wrong?
- How likely is that to happen?
- What would be the impact?
- What can you do to either minimise or remove the risk?

The Farm Business Resilience Program is jointly funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the Queensland Government's Drought and Climate Adaptation Program.

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

A key outcome for participants is completing their Two-page Plan, including identifying risks, strategies and goals with articulated actions. This may be expanded into an extended business plan with a drought management section and long-term strategic goals.

ABL participants have displayed genuine interest in this field, describing a range of actions that they intend to undertake in the next 12 months:

“Implement actual strategies and make sure we follow through.”

“Review [our] current business plan and take steps to further educate and upskill myself on the financial and business management of my business.”

“Prioritise actively working on the business periodically: reviewing business concepts, outlooks and budgets versus actuals. This course gave me the confidence to keep working on these areas and keep striving to do better.”

“Implement more evidence-based decision making.”

Increased knowledge and understanding has also been a highlight for many:

“How to plan and action financial goals and how important they are!”

“Lots about terminology, business planning, how to juggle relationships between those involved in the performance of your business, i.e. accountants. These topics are often hard to discuss in public due to the sensitivities of them.”

“Working on the business is a key part in success, and the better the understanding of how the business operates financially, the easier it will be to make operational decisions.”

“A good decision is an informed or evidence-based decision. A right decision relies on hindsight.”

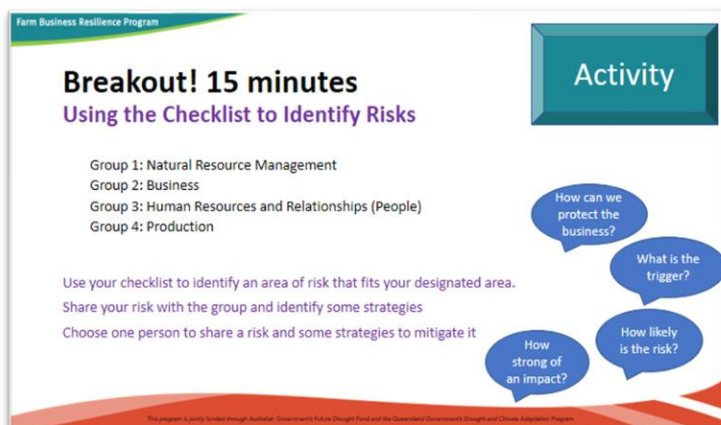
The integration of the Farm Business Resilience Program within the Advancing Beef Leaders initiative underscores the importance of facilitated peer-to-peer learning and collaboration in enhancing business resilience.

By combining leadership development with targeted resilience strategies, the program contributes to strengthening the grazing industry's capacity to address future challenges and advancing the business skills of rural leaders.

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