



Lets Get Earthy Conference & Expo September 2022

The very positive written feedback from delegates and exhibitors that can be found in the Delegate Feedback report, plus verbal feedback, suggests that the conference hit the mark. All, attributed, feedback said that the conference fully met expectation.

After a very long gestation period, followed by lengthy planning, interspersed with some disagreements and, lastly, a long nail-biting period waiting for bookings, the conference was dragged kicking and screaming into the light!

The conference had a packed program and needed to be kept to schedule, something that was greatly assisted by our official timekeeper, Elizabeth Grice, holding up very large, brief and unambiguous signs as the clock wound down. A big thanks to all of our speakers for finishing on time.

The photo below hopefully shows the event was fun as well as serious.



Stirling Dixon and Robert Favaloro having a bit of a laugh! Photo by Nicola Fraser

Morning Sessions

The Acknowledgment Of Country was delivered by Teena Riley, a Gundungurra and Burra Burra woman.

Keynote Address By Walter Jehne – innovative strategist , plant ecologist and Internationally recognised soil micro-biologist . There is no presentation.

Audio https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/walter_jehne.mp4



Walter gave a fascinating talk about the Soil Carbon Sponge and the need for local regenerative farmers to find profitable markets for their products in Sydney. Walter also provided some startling farming figures such as that the average size of the farm debt in Australia was \$1m and the return on the sale of vegetables was miserable and unsustainable. The foregoing was in the context of food security, a global issue that is worsening. Walter's talk would have been of interest to Minister Wendy Tuckerman who would otherwise probably

missed it if the MC, had put her on before Walter as per the program.

Welcome By the Hon Wendy Tuckerman Minister for Local Government

Audio https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/wendy_tuckerman.mp4



Minister Wendy Tuckerman acknowledged the importance of farming to Goulburn Mulwaree and beyond and listed the various grants to help farmers build farm sustainability, rebuild eco-systems by planting more biodiversity and sequester carbon. These grants will help the not just our farmers but the achievement of NSW's 2030 carbon reduction targets.

Transforming our Lives and Our Land - Jenny Bell Regenerative Farmer and Artist

Audio https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/jenny_bell.mp4



Jenny started her talk about her and husband Rod's transformative experience after joining Landcare to plant some trees, by acknowledging the local Gundungurra and Ngunnawal people and acknowledged that she would never have the same understanding of Country and their ability to live in communion with the land. Whilst having a lifelong love of stock work and with being in nature she had no conscious desire to be a farmer herself but found that her work as an artist and their life and work together on the farm ignited her curiosity about how we interact and

manage our land and together with Rod and the family they adopted regenerative practices enriching their environment and their lives within it. Photo by kind permission of the Goulburn Post

A comprehensive approach to ecological sustainability – Dr Di Dibley Environmental lawyer with a career in environmental policy and advocacy

Audio https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/di_dibley.mp4

Presentation https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/di_dibley_presentation.pdf

Paper https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/dr_di_dibley_zerose_paper_-_making_our_landscapes_sustainable.pdf



Di spoke about the impact that humans have effected on Earth Systems to the point where they were now truly a “force of nature”. Di talked about the importance of managing landscapes at scale in order to be able to make the level of change required to halt and reverse the damage. Also about the need to avoid creating the impediment of artificial boundaries. Di talked about the work that ZeroSE was doing, across the SE NSW through its affiliates and the opportunities to reduce carbon emissions and, through that, to stimulate the economy. See Di’s paper on this important topic.

Benefits to water quality and animal health from fencing off your farm dams – Dan Florence Ecologist, ANU Sustainable Farms Project

Audio https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/dan_florance.mp4

Presentation https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/dan_-_farm_dams_fieldday_september2022_v2_15-09-2022.pdf



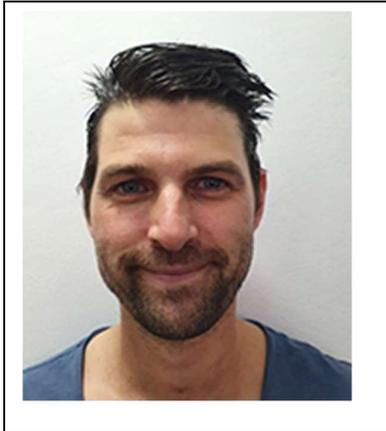
Dan expounded on how Farm dams provide essential water sources for stock, and about how their potential for biodiversity and wildlife conservation is increasingly recognised. To date, there has been minimal research on the production benefits of clean drinking water for livestock, or the impacts of different management practices on improving dams in ways that can benefit both livestock and biodiversity. Dan expounded on the work and results of the ANU’s successful and long time project across some 125 farm dams across NSW and Victoria to investigate the potential of grazing control (such

as through fencing) and revegetation to improve biodiversity, at the same time as improving water quality.

A Regenerative Journey - Adam Rabjohns Regenerative Farmer

Audio https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/adam_rabjohns.mp4

Presentation https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/adam_rabjohns_presentation_land_care_.pdf



Adam talked about how his family had been farming in this Goulburn Mulwaree area since 1917. In his talk, Adam explained how his focus on plant health and high utilisation grazing had seen ecological function on his farm improve, complemented by the creation of a highly productive soil carbon project under the Australian Government's Emissions Reduction Fund. Preliminary numbers indicate that some 11.5t of carbon dioxide equivalent /ha has been stored, which if verified, will make for a significant extra income stream. Adam also talked about the successful adoption of rotational grazing and how he had worked to minimise the cost of the additional fencing, to reduce paddock size and the provision of related water to those paddocks. Adam's experience demonstrated that it pays to make the change to regenerative

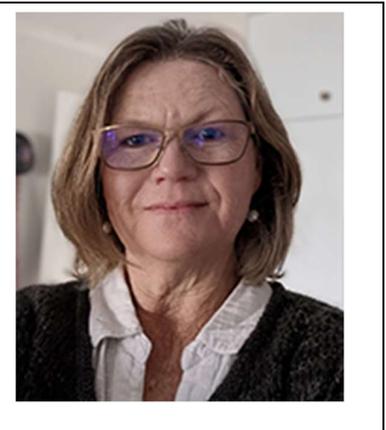
agriculture in many ways that secures the farm's future

Rehydrating Australia - Nolani McColl Landscape Planner and Science Administrator, Farmer, at The Mulloon Institute

Audio https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/nolani_mccoll.mp4

Presentation https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/nolani_mccoll_mulloon_presentation_v2.pdf

(Video that goes with the presentation can be found on the home page. <https://themullooninstitute.org/>)

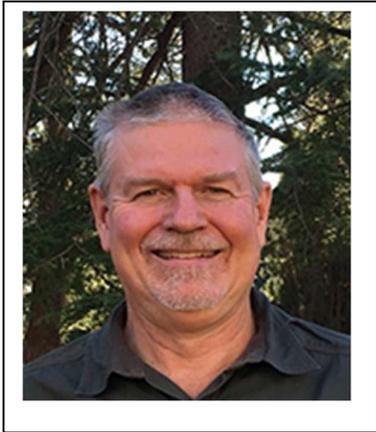


Nolani gave an outline of the Mulloon Institute, that was followed by an explanation of landscape rehydration, along with examples from the Mulloon demonstration farm – Mulloon Creek Natural Farms near Bungendore. A video was played that demonstrated how water moves through a landscape and how modern farming techniques have altered that flow and how landscape rehydration techniques can assist its amelioration. Mulloon's work has been recognised by the UN as a member of their Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Verifying ecosystem health for farm productivity and satisfying market demand – Tony Hill CEO Land to Market and Capital Consulting, Farmer

Audio https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/tony_hill.mp4

Presentation https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/tonyhill_ahmcgoulburnletsgetearthly20220916_0v1.pdf



Tony talked about how various organisations were now stepping forward to support sustainable agriculture. In the past, great work has been done by volunteers and philanthropists in campaigns to protect important environmental assets. But the pace of improvement in ecosystems is not fast enough while it does not address the ecosystem health of agricultural production land. In the face of global challenges, how can we engage all of the population to be active and move beyond sustainable, to a regenerative world? Land to Market Australia seeks to transform our food system and take robust information about the ecological health of our farmland into a place where businesses and consumers can support regeneration.

Soil Improvement Project with Multi-Species Pasture - Craig Hunt Farmer and Hannah McInerney Agronomist, Project Officer Landcare Goulburn Mulwaree Regen Grazing & Farming Group

Audio https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/craig_and_hannah.mp4

Presentation https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/craig_hunt_building_resilience_with_multi-species_sept_2.pdf



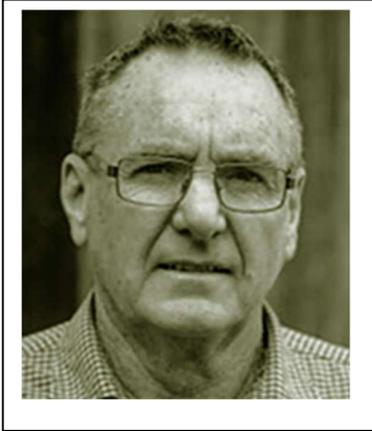
Craig Hunt talked about the motivation of his pilot project to improve his soil through the planting a multi-species pasture in a paddock. The paddock had been divided into 12 separate plots and a control plot. Each plot was planted with differing amounts of fertiliser and the control plot has neither of the two chosen biological agents or fertilisers. Hannah talked of her investigation into how to best measure the results within the project's two simple principals:- to reduce chemical inputs and; to increase the soil biology. Hannah talked about how the project was being taken to other farmers in the Landcare Group, as a foundation of making their farms more

sustainable and, in one case, to increase stocking numbers.

Climate Opportunities For Farmers in South-East NSW – Peter Holding Farmer and Community Outreach Officer at Farmers for Climate Action

Audio https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/peter_holding.mp4

Presentation https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/peter_holding_lets_get_earthy_-_goulburn.pdf



Peter discussed the challenges that climate change presents for farmers in SE NSW, as well as the myriad of opportunities that exist for farmers in taking climate action on farm and beyond. He also discussed how agricultural leaders and rural Australians can work together to secure strong climate solutions from our leaders, particularly climate solutions which can benefit rural communities. He explained what Farmers for Climate Action does and the various ways we can all support farmers.

Afternoon Sessions

Wondrous Wetlands - A Drought Resilience Strategy - Julia McKay Dairy Farmer, Research Catalyst, Environmental Policy Specialist.

Video https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/video_afternoon_part_1_julia_mckay.mp4
(The video file will download and will need to activated).



Julia spoke about the When, Why, How and Where of Wetland Grazing. Mapping, Protecting, Using and Monitoring Wetlands from a Grazing Viewpoint. This project is funded by the Southern NSW Innovation Hub and run in conjunction with Charles Sturt University, the University of Canberra and Deakin University and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The research into wetlands grazing is from College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland. Keywords: Biodiversity, Carbon, Nutrition, Economics

Riverine Restoration - Lori Gould, Program Manager, Australian River Restoration Centre

Video https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/video_afternoon_part_1_lori_gould.mp4



Lori delivered an overview of river management issues (loss of biodiversity and vegetation, soil erosion, poor water quality etc), and practical ways to address these within sustainable farming systems. Case study using the Rivers of Carbon project and stock and waterways guide.

Managing Your Mental Health - A Case Study - Dr Robert Favaloro Farmer and retired GP Centre

Video https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/video_afternoon_part_1_robert_favaloro.mp4



Robert talked about the recognising and understanding of mental health issues. Mental health problems can affect us all. We are learning to recognise them early and the steps to take for better mental health. Some 'Rules of Life' that may help are discussed.

Helping Farmers on the Ground - Matthew Lieschke, (Senior Agriculture Advisor - Livestock) at SE Local Land Services

Video https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/video_afternoon_part_2_matthew_lieschke.mp4



Matthew talked about how, over the last 2 years, South East Local Land Services (LLS) has been running 'Soil testing and interpretation workshops' throughout the Southern Tablelands. These workshops were designed to help landholders gain a better understanding of how to obtain a robust soil sample and how to interpret the numbers on the results sheet from the laboratory. Using the successful "Five Easy Steps" course, producers have been able to develop a soil management program that is tailored to their soil type,

environment and production goals.

**Large Scale Carbon Sequestration Across SE NSW, Justin Borevitz Professor Research School of Biology
College of Science**

Video https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/video_afternoon_part_2_prof_justin_borevitz.mp4



Agriculture and ecosystems are tipping toward collapse due to land use and climate extremes. Irreversible feedbacks in the land system can lock in food insecurity, biodiversity loss and a hot house world. However regenerating agro-ecosystems is possible and can be profitable. Prof Justin Borevitz introduced the components of precision landscape regeneration, linking genotype, phenotype and environment, and the outsized role Australia can have in the world. The solutions are to both increase carbon capture via photosynthesis of grasses and trees and to reduce emissions from plant stress (autotrophic respiration) and soils (heterotrophic respiration). Smart farming practices including regenerative agriculture and ecosystem restoration can rebuild agro-ecosystems. This includes methods for boosting soil carbon with microbes and management. Integrating and scaling these land-based solutions.

Expert Panel

Video

https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/video_afternoon_part_2_expert_panel_part_1.mp4

https://www.cv-4h.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123529351/video_afternoon_part_2_expert_panel_part_2.mp4

The expert panel included all of the speakers. Members of the Expert Panel are below, assuming that none of them were hiding.



From L-R in the front row we have: Jenny Bell, Prof Justin Borewitz, Julia McKay, Walter Jehne, Jono Forrest standing in for Nolani McColl of Mulloon, Adam Rabjohns, Matthew Lieschke, Peter Holding. Next row seated are Dan Florance, Tony Hall and Robert Favaloro, in the corner. Standing are Lori Gould, Di Dibley, Hannah McInerney, and Craig Hunt

Last but by no means least our thanks to the intrepid technology gurus, Tom and Howard, from the CCL (Citizens Climate Lobby), for working so long and hard the night before and the early the next morning, to ensure we could broadcast the conference online.

And not forgetting our volunteer photographer, Nicola Fraser.

Organising Committee in alphabetical order

- Robert Favaloro
- Roger and Elizabeth Grice
- Craig Hunt
- Julia McKay
- Bob Philipson
- Mike Steketee