



Rabobank



Client Councils Update

Issue 5 – February 2016

Welcome to a new issue of the Client Councils Update, which covers the latest news and initiatives from Client Councils.

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Strengthening vital communities

Customer involvement through Client Councils

- Key clients take an active part in Client Councils.
- Use the dialogue with clients:
 - For transparency and information from Rabobank to its clients, both global and local.
 - To facilitate an active discussion on:
 - Industry challenges
 - Relevant topics for the community
 - Feedback on Rabobank's role as an agribusiness and rural bank.

Rabobank Client Council themes

1 LONG-TERM INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

- Challenge of retaining and attracting youth
- Succession planning (ownership) and agricultural force (labour)
- Decreasing offer of agricultural education in rural areas
- Lack of recognition of agricultural skills.

2 SUSTAINABILITY

- Environmental compliance
- Water availability, water quality and erosion
- Waste Management.

3 URBAN / RURAL DIVIDE

- Unbalanced communication causes misperceptions of farming practices and hurts farming's reputation.

4 RURAL HEALTH

- Access to health care in rural and remote areas
- Denial of health issues
- Need for early identification of mental health issues.

Client Councils in Australia

There are currently
13 Client Councils in Australia



Client Council	Local focus theme
Ayr	■ ■ ■ Youth engagement Sustainability
Rockhampton	■ ■ ■ Career opportunities in agriculture
Southern Qld	■ ■ ■ Financial literacy Rural Health
Dubbo	■ ■ ■ Young farmers financial workshops Rural and Mental Health
Griffith	■ ■ ■ Youth engagement
Northern NSW	TBC
Shepparton	■ ■ ■ Career opportunities in agriculture
Warrnambool	■ ■ ■ Career opportunities in agriculture Urban / Rural divide
Tasmania	■ ■ ■ Youth engagement Career opportunities in agriculture
Berri	■ ■ ■ Young farmers financial workshops Technology use
Kadina	■ ■ ■ Youth engagement
Narrogin	■ ■ ■ Youth engagement Mentoring
Geraldton	■ ■ ■ Youth engagement Mentoring

Initiatives progress update

■ ■ ■ Farm Experience Program [Australia wide]

Five Farm Experience (FX) programs were delivered across Australia in 2015 in partnership with the Rockhampton, Kadina, Western Riverina, Geraldton and Narrogin Client Councils and high schools in Brisbane, Adelaide, Sydney and Perth.

To date, 60 city high school students had the opportunity to participate in FX, with over 30 hosting farming families being proud ambassadors of the program.

The Rabobank FX Program was developed in cooperation with Client Councils to promote agriculture as an exciting career choice. High school students selected to participate in the program get to spend a week on a host family's farm to experience first-hand what farming is about. The participants also take part in a careers day which provides them with the opportunity to visit various agribusinesses and learn about the agricultural career options available in rural areas.

2015 FX Program successes:

- As a result of FX, teachers of Brisbane participating school 'Corinda State High School' reported that students had become very enthused in their Ag studies, with one student of the Rockhampton FX Program enrolling in the Emerald Agricultural College for 2016 and has been offered a place at the college;
- A student who participated in the Western Riverina FX Program returned to the hosting family farm with her family;
- A participant of the Kadina FX Program requested a traineeship from the host;
- All hosts were willing to be involved in the program in the future;
- Benefits highlighted by the hosts: students realising the different career opportunities in rural areas, awareness of the scale of operations and how farmers look after the land, an increased understanding of the role of technology in agribusiness and an appreciation for country living;
- All students indicated the program had changed the way they look at agriculture and farming and thought the experience was worthwhile and would recommend the program to friends;
- The program achieved extensive coverage in various outlets (print and radio) across the country.

To read the complete review of the 2015 Rabobank FX Programs, please click [here](#) and to visit the Program's website, please click [here](#).

With the assistance of 2realise, the Program's National Coordinator, we are planning six programs to be delivered in 2016 in New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.



Captions:

1. Rockhampton (Qld)
2. Western Riverina (NSW)
3. Kadina (SA)
4. Geraldton (WA)
5. Narrogin (WA)

■ ■ ■ Seed, Grow & Show Program [Ayr]

The Seed Show and Grow program which was run in conjunction with Home Hill State High School was very successful in 2015 with the school electing to continue with the program of introducing year 7 students to all aspects of agriculture. Students, parents and teachers were still talking about the program and the benefits at end of year festivities. Following the success of the Seed, Show & Grow Program, the Ayr Client Council has decided to offer this program to another secondary school in the district. After the final 2015 Client Council meeting held in October, a meeting was held in the Ayr Branch office to present the program to Ayr High School.



Ayr State High School teachers were very impressed with the success of the program, especially how it was coordinated and combined into the Department of Education's curriculum. Ayr High School has accepted the offer to be part of the program in 2016. A follow up meeting in early 2016 has been arranged to work out the details of the 2016 program. Both schools will be working together and with Client Council members to make the program even more successful in 2016.

The program is aligned to the long-term industry capacity the Council supports, aiming to increase youth engagement and promoting career opportunities in agriculture, while trying to retain youth and sustainability within the region.

For more information on this initiative, please click on the following links: [Seed Grow & Show](#), [Seed Grow & Show Harvest](#) and [Educating Educators in Agriculture](#).



■ ■ ■ Financial workshops [Dubbo]

The Young Farmers Financial Workshop initiative originated from the Dubbo Client Council's (DCC) desire to improve the financial understanding and subsequent decision making of young people starting out in farming. It was felt that many young people have not been adequately exposed to the financial side of running a farm or small business. The DCC believed that through better understanding of financial concepts, new business starters would make better and more informed decisions. This discussion was part of a wider debate regarding education options for young people in the bush who often don't have the financial means to overcome the challenges that distance can create.

The DCC thought Rabobank was well placed to develop an introductory workshop to expose course participants to the basic foundation knowledge concepts of finance. The workshop covers gross margin analysis, the construction of a cash flow budget and its importance, understanding financial statements – what makes up a balance sheet, what is a profit and loss, what is depreciation and what is the relationship between all these reports and their practical use and implementation. During the workshop, the participants are also encouraged to calculate their own financial ratios and these are discussed to ensure everyone understand their meaning. In addition, the workshop touches on machinery financing and how to approach a bank for a loan.

So far 50 young people over four workshops have attended the free one day course.

The next step is to have the workshop available to more regions. The Dubbo Client Council will make the workshop material available and share its experience so other Client Councils can run the workshop in their local communities. The ideal number of attendees is 10 to 15, with the target audience being farmers and small business owners aged between 18 and 25 years old. Participants are given a folder full of detailed notes to take home and use as a future resource.

If your Client Council is interested in running this workshop in your region, the council's secretary should contact the Sustainable Business Development team for more information.

■ ■ ■ Farming for Kids Inc sponsorship [Northern New South Wales]

Farming for Kids Inc, an organisation run by volunteer farmers in the Liverpool Plains area near Quirindi to support the health and well-being of the children in our community. Farming for Kids relies on local farmers donating their time, machinery and capital to grow and harvest grain on leased public land, whilst various agribusinesses assist by donating inputs.

Rabobank has been a proud supporter since the inception of Farming for Kids Inc.. Its contribution pays for the annual lease fee of the farming country.



In 2015 Farming for Kids has distributed over \$33,000 into the local community with a further \$5,000 held in an emergency fund for victims of accidents or illness. Examples of the funding included \$8,000 donated to the Quirindi High School to help towards the Mental Health Program and educating young women on breaking the cycle of domestic abuse. Both programs benefited greatly from

the contribution and will help educate children to look out for the signs and trigger points of depression in themselves or their friends. \$8,000 was donated to Quirindi Primary School for their paddock to plate program, a hugely innovative program which helps educate year 4 students on the nutritional value gained from the produce they grow themselves in the school vegetable patch which incorporates organic beds of seasonal vegetables, fruit trees, chickens and ducks. The adoption of the program resulted in a severe drop in bullying. As a result of the vegetable patch being made available for children to spend time in during their breaks, children flock there to feed the chooks, collect eggs, weed the beds or pick ripe produce. Excess produce is sold to parents and teachers one day a week with funds going back into the program. Farming for kids is also able to assist individual families where kids are suffering from ill health or disadvantage.

For more information visit [Farming for Kids Inc - Facebook](#)

■ ■ ■ Career Advisers training [Goulburn Murray]

In July 2015, two Goulburn Murray Client Council's members attended AgVision in Sydney. AgVision is an evolved version of initial efforts by the Junee High School to showcase all of the career opportunities in Food and Agribusiness sector. At the Sydney event approximately 600 Year 9 and 10 students were offered the chance to choose five workshops from a selection of 50 where they would hear directly from people working in that particular industry, role, or career. Feedback in regards to event organisation and message retention were extremely positive. The level of engagement from industry was fantastic and the practical demonstrations were well attended, which ranged from drones to shearing.

Attending council's members indicated the technology based workshops and those involving animals were the most popular ones.

In December Roger Matthews, Shepparton Branch Manager and chair of the Goulburn Murray Client Council presented at the [Career Education Association of Victoria](#) (CEAV) Conference in Melbourne. The Conference was attended by 280 careers practitioners from across the state and has been a key event on the council's calendar. At the Client Council's request, Nigel Crawley from [Rimfire Resources](#) (a specialist Food & Agribusiness Recruitment firm) presented two workshops on Graduate Outcomes on careers in Food and Agribusiness.



Roger's and Nigel's presentations were extremely well received. The majority of delegates and attendees were city based and the conference provided light bulb moments for most.

Feedback was so positive that CEAV's CEO made contact with Rabobank directly to organise a full day conference dedicated solely to careers in Food and Agribusiness. The Client Council accepted the offer and has commenced preparations for an event in May or June 2016.

■ ■ ■ Capacity Building Project sponsorship [Geraldton & Narrogin]

In response to growing concerns over diminishing workforce capacity in the WA grains industry, the Australian Grain Institute (AGI) Council established the AGI Capacity Building Project in 2015 and Rabobank WA Client Councils agreed to support the three-year project. The project is funded by 12 organisations, which span industry, government and academia with the overall objective to improve ongoing access to job ready and skilled people for the grains industry in WA by developing a comprehensive and sustainable capacity building model.



Caption: Manjusha Thorpe - Executive Officer, AGI Capacity Building Project.

The agribusiness consultancy *Agknowledge*[®] was engaged to undertake a study to develop a foundation of information and knowledge surrounding the current state of play of the WA workforce capacity of the grains industry from which the project can design and implement some solutions. Following are some of the insights generated by *Agknowledge*[®].

- The mapping of personnel numbers and skill requirements across the value chain, while still with a number of assumptions, appears to be a first for the grains industry in WA. The top three skills identified as essential to performing roles across the value chain are communication skills (written and verbal), information technology (IT) and interpersonal skills
- For growers the identified skills gaps are in business management, especially finance, risk and HR
- Increasing technology means growers will need to know more about coding, data, systems and how they read and use that
- Training in high level skills in machinery operation and integrated precision farming technologies is needed
- Practical experience and understanding of grain production systems was determined as critical to developing industry knowledge and awareness necessary for success in roles across the industry, irrelevant of the role
- While a tertiary qualification is not essential for all roles, all entrants to the industry should have some level of formal qualification, from AQF level 2-3 upwards, depending on the scope of their role
- Pursuing renewable energy is an opportunity for the wheatbelt economy
- Grains related R&D is generally being well done but it is losing its independence; more and more input supplier generated research is being done
- A gap is expected in skilled local people able to fill professional roles in the food processing and manufacturing segment of the WA edible oils industry in coming years. Tertiary degree level education in agricultural engineering, rural extension and chemical engineering (fats and oils) is unavailable in WA
- Depending on the segment of the value chain, an undergraduate degree in business, marketing, science, commerce, finance, IT and computing, engineering, international business, logistics and supply chain management, economics, mechatronic engineering, biology, business administration or entrepreneurship could be more than adequate for entry into many roles in the grain industry
- Imperative that all graduates entering the grain industry have 'hands on' practical exposure in the industry
- Financial benchmarking will be necessary
- Most segments of the WA grain value chain have effective, good quality, client focused training services however, there is a need for much more coordination of training and extension across the broader agricultural production industry. Grain producers are only one component of a much larger inter-related production chain, and resources need to be shared and coordinated across its entirety – so many groups/organisations with many duplicating and doing the same things
- By 2025 manual labour jobs in the grains industry will be replaced with advanced robotics, autonomous vehicles, energy storage, the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), cloud technology, precision farming, robot farm swarms, drones and agbots – skills development to understand and use new technologies must be integrated into secondary and tertiary education as a core focus – the challenge for industry revolves around its ability to embrace the new technologies and use them to best advantage to improve production, profit margins, agrifood market share and the sustainability of natural resources and the environment. Secondary and tertiary education and training institutions must be actively reviewing course curriculum to ensure new graduates have the necessary foundation in these new skill areas.

In February and March 2016, a number of key stakeholders will come together to design and select the solutions for implementation by the project. The implementation phase will begin in April 2016 and the project has approximately \$1.2 million funding available between April 2016 and 2018.

■ ■ ■ **INSPIRE Summit - Supporting women in agribusiness** [Geraldton & Narrogin]

The Geraldton and Narrogin Client Councils agreed to support, as a summit partner, the Partners in Grain (PinG) INSPIRE Summit to be held in Perth (WA) on the 6 and 7 April 2016.

The WA PinG branch will host an advanced farm business skills summit for 100 women from WA farm businesses to meet the needs of today's growers. Some of topics the program will cover, include:

- A global perspective – the future of agriculture feeding the world
- Our role in promoting agriculture positively
- Overcoming adversity and succession
- Social media and technology

The objectives of the summit is for participants to go home and contribute to the wider community by inspiring others locally to realise their potential in managing their farming business. These objectives align nicely with three of the Client Council themes:

1. Long-Term Industry Capacity and Agricultural Education;
2. Sustainability; and
3. Farming Reputation.

Geraldton LCC member Erin Green is the WA Co-Ordinator for PinG and is involved with the organisation of the day and guest speakers.



Caption: Erin Green, Geraldton Client Council member and WA Coordinator for PinG and Steve Kelly, acting WA State Manager.

■ ■ ■ **Knowledge Partnerships Pilot Program** [Geraldton]

Since the last newsletter edition, the knowledge partnerships pilot has commenced in July 2015 in Dalwallinu and will run until March 2016 with 40 members of the Liebe Group.



The program aims to:

- Improve confidence
- Safeguard knowledge and understanding of agricultural production and agribusiness
- Improve leadership and communications skills
- Broaden farming networks
- Attract, engage and retain talent
- Support succession planning

The viability of the program will be assessed at the conclusion of the pilot. Feedback to date has been very positive about the first workshop.

The ultimate aim is to develop a mentoring program that can be replicated and scaled up to run for farmers across Australia and New Zealand.

Your valuable contribution as a Client Council member

We would like to thank you for your input into the Client Council dialogue so far.

Rabobank has a long term view on business and relationships. This allows us to contribute meaningfully to a sustainable food and agribusiness industry.

As the Client Council concept is still quite new, we are sometimes asked, 'What is my role as a Client Council member?' Your contribution as a Client Council member can include:

- Active participation in Client Council meetings;
- Suggestions for agenda items;
- Your feedback on current and future initiatives related to the agreed themes;
- Use of your network of contacts when engaging with local stakeholders like schools, research institutes, councils, other community members, etc.
- Recommending subject matter experts;
- Recruiting participants for the local activation of initiatives;
- Knowledge sharing;
- Your feedback on our strategy, products and services.

As explained in previous meetings, our ultimate view on ownership of the Client Councils is by having them chaired by our clients.