

## Farmers Together

**GWYMAC Inc**



**Gwymac Inc partnered with Swan Vale Landcare Group to host a two day event in Inverell and Glen Innes to provide a farmer to farmer information exchange about the benefits of collective bargaining together as well as the benefits of establishing co-ops and to discuss opportunities for other farmer driven initiatives.**

### The issue

Members of the Swan Vale Landcare Group were seeking solutions to their long term sustainability in the face of increasing costs of production and profit margins declining. They identified the fact that farmers are often competing against each other for market share and were seeking to understand the benefits of working collaboratively which led them to partnering with Gwymac in order to seek information from successful co-operatives that had formed in other regions of Australia.

### The solution

Gwymac applied to the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services Small Community Grants program and were able to secure funds to run a two day workshop in Inverell and Glen Innes engaging 3 organisations with a known and respected reputation of forming farming collectives or co-ops. These included Ebor Beef Inc established in 1993 in the New England North West region, Monaro Farming Systems established in 2007 now consisting of 63 farm businesses and Agricultural Marketing and Production Systems (AMPS) which was established in 1999 and now has over 60 farmer shareholders from central and northern NSW.

### The impact

Participants received a number of common messages from all presenters, namely the importance of continued research to improve efficiency, improve yields, reduce losses and increase price returns. Participants valued the access to quality speakers presenting timely and relevant content as well as the opportunities to consider practice change on their own farms. Evaluations noted that the biggest take home message from all three presenters was that although each of their group structures were different it was not the structure itself that was important but rather the people within the group making sure that the structure worked for them.



## Key facts

- Structure of the group is not as important as how the people in the group make the structure work.
- It is important to have people with different skills on the board of the group.
- Always seek to access collective bargaining opportunities for the group.

## Project Partners



The Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative Program that enables the promotion of these case studies on the Gateway, is funded by the NSW Government and is supported through the partnership of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW

