




2019 ANNUAL REPORT


farmers for
climate action



thank you for supporting farmers for climate action

Farmers for Climate Action is a movement of farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians working to ensure farmers are a key part of the solution to climate change.

We support farmers to build climate and energy literacy and advocate for climate solutions both on and off farm. We are independent, non-profit and non-partisan.

“Your care, commitment and organisation inspired me to support FCA. FCA is well placed to speak to the wider farming community as opposed to non-farmers.”

Helen Mabbutt, supporter

“I am very impressed with what you have achieved in such a short time. The organisation is viewed as proactive, with highly credible, well trained authentic voices.”

Lynne Strong, farmer

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“FCA is proof that climate change is not something dreamed up by the radical left, or extreme greens. This is real, and it concerns all of us.”

Mal Donaldson, farmer

“For me, FCA is a fresh breath of air. It is about a group of like minded people who’ve had enough of the inaction from conservative, right-winged politicians who pretend to represent the views and concerns of farmers and rural constituents. FCA has a wide cross section of farmers who wish to have their voices heard about their concern over the lack of direction and policy towards environment and energy and the impact that has on our farms, families, communities and health (physical and mental). FCA is about being heard and having a voice.”

Steven Hobbs, farmer

message from the chair

lucinda corrigan

In 2019 I was delighted to witness our dynamic team completing many successful events, projects, campaigns, incredible fund raising and lifting the profile of FCA. The Board thanks Wendy Cohen, Verity Morgan-Schmidt, Fiona Davis, Cam Klose, Peter Holding, Anna Rose and Claire Boyle for all you have done.

My highlights included:

- The continuation of our climate-smart agriculture conferences, which build communities of action, literacy and make conversations for agriculture about the challenges of climate change more accessible.
- The Climate-Smart Agriculture Master Class program in Victoria which shows how the grass roots capability can be developed
- The fantastic work of our scientist panel in supporting our activities

I am immensely proud of the completion of the project with The Australian Farm Institute, Change is in the Air. The collaboration between FCA and AFI has been a hallmark of the last 12 months, and most importantly gives us the evidence to

pursue a National Strategy for Climate Change and Agriculture through state and federal Agriculture Ministers (AgMin).

Finally I want to focus on our governance and the board. At the end of 2018, Verity informed the board that she needed to step away from the intense commitment and leadership that is the work of the Chief Executive Officer. After a lengthy search, that campaign was successful and our new CEO Wendy Cohen joined us in September. Thank you Wendy for joining us at this crucial time and we are delighted to be working with you.

On behalf of the board I would like to personally thank Verity for her contribution, carrying out her role with a high level of skill and integrity and juggling the geography of a remote team so ably. Australian agriculture is in your debt and we thank you resoundingly for all you achieved as CEO.

Our governance has matured due to the people we have around the table and I thank each and every board member for their contribution. This year we welcomed lawyer Michael McDonald and farmer Dale Park to the Board and farewelled Richard McLellan. Brett Hall, who chairs our Finance, Risk and Audit Committee; lawyer Michael McDonald, who has conducted a governance review; Richard McLellan, Christie Kingdon and Angus Emmott for your tireless contribution to FCAs social media presence. Charlie Prell, our Deputy Chair, has been the face of renewable energy and handling the FCA work at National Farmers' Federation. Anika Molesworth has been the face of the next generation of agriculturists and their concerns about the changing climate.

It has been a pleasure working for the future of agriculture in Australia.



Lucinda Corrigan
Chair, Farmers for Climate Action



message from the CEO

wendy cohen



Since joining Farmers for Climate Action in September, I've been incredibly impressed with the tenacity of the producers I speak to and their commitment to the kind of future they want to help build. Even in the face of record-breaking heat, drought, floods and fires, all of which were experienced in 2019, the farmers of FCA inspire me everyday with their will to tackle climate change head on.

There is an enormous appetite among farmers for information and tools which will help them navigate the challenges that climate change presents. This was demonstrated by the sell-out crowds that attended our Managing Climate Risk in Agriculture events held in Stanthorpe, Qld, in April, and Orange, NSW, in June.

At our Climate Smart-Agriculture Masterclass, held in Seymour, Victoria, in March, around 20 southern Australian farmers embraced the opportunity

to build their climate knowledge and media and advocacy skills, as they brainstormed together how to help agriculture, and the communities on which it relies, meet the challenges ahead.

A number of the farmers who graduated from our Masterclass joined the delegation of 20 farmers we accompanied to Canberra in September to launch our 'Change in the Air' report with the Environment Minister Sussan Ley. We commissioned the Australian Farm Institute to produce the report, which explored the need for a national strategy for climate change and agriculture. The report made a clear case for such a strategy, outlining the complex and far-reaching ramifications of climate change on Australian agriculture).

Across the year we kept up a constant drum beat of media stories and political advocacy to ensure that our farmer voices were continually heard – whether on primetime TV, their local paper or in the halls of state and federal parliament.

In late October we were rewarded when the state and federal agriculture ministers announced a National Climate Change Agriculture work program, which forms a key part of the puzzle of the national strategy that we have long been calling for.

Reflecting on the year, there are so many people I want to thank for their incredible commitment to our work. They include:

- Our experts, who help us to maintain the robust evidence-base that is critical to our work. They include (but are in no way limited to) Professors Richard Eckard, Snow Barlow and Mark Howden, along with Drs Steve Crimp, Jeff Baldock and Lauren Rickards.
- Our funders, without whom our work would not be possible. Thank you for recognising the value in what we do; we are so grateful for your contributions both financial and intellectual.
- Our Board members, who generously give their time to help guide our work
- Our partner organisations, who help us to extend our reach far beyond that which we could achieve alone

- Our supporters, who are behind us every step of the way, championing our cause online and in real life
- Our farmers, whose passion and commitment to their communities, their land and a sustainable future is second to none. They are at the centre of what we do and despite the many challenges they face on farm, constantly step forward to show the leadership that our politicians all too often lack.

I am so proud of the achievements of Farmers for Climate Action, both under the leadership of former CEO (and, most recently, former policy and partnerships director) Verity Morgan-Schmidt – to whom I am very grateful - and my own leadership as incoming CEO from September.

When I joined Farmers for Climate Action, I was attracted to its clear purpose, solid reputation, vital supporter base and cohesive board and team. I have not been disappointed. My vision as the incoming CEO is to consolidate these strengths and introduce development and growth strategies to enable Farmers for Climate Action to maximise its role in driving climate action in agriculture. I am thrilled and honoured to be able to implement the strategy for the next phase of FCA's growth and add my voice to the story of our success.

I look forward to working with you all over the coming year to continue to grow FCA's reputation and position within industry and politics and to see our farmers get the research, outreach and policy support they need to sustainably and profitably farm now and into the future.



Wendy Cohen
CEO, Farmers for Climate Action



progress toward 2021

measuring impact against our focus areas

Focus area one:

Agriculture is climate smart

Our goal is to achieve an increased uptake of climate-smart agriculture across the supply chain.

We support farmers to be part of the solution to climate change through climate smart farming practices, and we recognise that many farmers are already leading the way. We are actively advocating for more targeted research, development, extension and adoption to support farmers in successfully adapting to changing climatic conditions.

2019 highlight:

Reached 720 farmers through climate-smart agriculture training opportunities via conferences in Orange and Stanthorpe, our fellowship, workshops and webinars.

Focus area two:

Farmers mobilised to drive a clean energy transition

We are calling for a rapid transformation of Australia's energy system away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy in a way that maximises benefits to farmers and regional communities.

2019 highlight:

Amplifying the voices of farmers in the public conversation about clean energy, with 58 individual media articles covering renewables and agriculture.

Focus area three:

Rural and regional MPs are championing climate action and renewable energy for regional Australia

Rural and regional MPs have the potential to play a critical role in helping Australian agriculture respond to the challenges of climate change. Farmers for Climate Action will work with key rural and regional MPs to ensure they are championing the climate action and renewable energy critical to the future of their electorates.

Focus area four:

Agriculture leaders are championing climate action

Farmers for Climate Action is committed to helping the leaders of Australian agriculture become champions for climate action.

2019 highlight:

AGMIN (the forum of state and federal agricultural ministers) supporting the development of a National Climate Change and Agriculture Work Program.

2019 highlight:

Bringing a delegation of 20 farmers to Canberra to meet with politicians and launch our Change in the Air report with the Australian Farm Institute.

in the paddock

climate-smart agriculture in action



We continued to support Australian farmers with education and training around climate change and agriculture. We are delighted that our farmer-to-farmer networks continue to grow and strengthen.

We continued to work with farmers and farming groups across the country to support Australian agriculture to become climate-smart.

As well as our day-to-day support to the formal and informal networks of farmers in our movement, we had a number of standout moments.

Here are our top five moments.

1. Victorian Climate-Smart Agriculture Masterclass

Our Masterclass gathered 20 up-and-coming climate-smart farming leaders from across Victoria. Drawn from a range of agricultural industries, including bee-keeping, horticulture, dairying and mixed farming, participants learned about the impact of climate change on agriculture - and what they can do about it.

They heard from word-class experts, including ANU's Professor Mark Howden, University of Melbourne's Professor Snow Barlow, the Bureau of Meteorology's Andrew Watkins and Sarah Barker from leading law firm MinterEllison, building their climate literacy while also honing their advocacy and media skills.



2. Farmer in Focus series

In 2019 we launched our Climate Smart Farmers in Focus series, kicking off in February with a profile of Wentworth farmer Angus Whyte.

Across Australia, farmers are taking amazing steps both on and off farm to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate. Our farmer in focus series profiles these farmers to highlight their incredible work and allow other farmers to learn from them.

Existing farmer in focus profiles are features on our website and we welcome any farmer with a climate-smart farming story to get in touch.

"FCA is the best voice I have encountered for highlighting the impact that climate change is having on Australian Agriculture."

Peter Batten, farmer



3. Managing Climate Risk in Agriculture Conference, Stanthorpe

The conference on 3 April in Stanthorpe drew 180 farmers and industry experts to discuss climate risks and opportunities in the Granite Belt.

Attendees heard from experts and industry leaders including Professor Mark Howden, sugar cane farmer Robert Quirk and Elizabeth Rose of EY who discussed adaptation, resilience, profitability and diversification in responding to a changing climate.

The farmer-led Granite Belt Climate Action Network was initiated following the event, with over 35 attendees arranging to keep in touch to share information about mitigating climate risks and improving drought resilience on their properties into the future.





4. Climate Reality Leadership Training

In June we gathered 14 farmers and graziers from across Australia in Brisbane to participate in Climate Reality Leadership training and the Natural Capital Summit.

At the training, representatives from agriculture and beyond joined together to develop a plan to better manage our natural resources.

5. Risks and Rewards of Farming in a Changing Climate Conference, Orange

Around 200 farmers turned out for our Risks and Rewards of Farming in a Changing Climate conference in Orange in September, which brought the experts in the lab together with the experts in the paddock.

Speakers shared insights on legal and market implications, climate science, carbon accounting and more.





“The Masterclass was the most confronting and daunting, but importantly the most empowering, workshop I’ve ever participated in - in my entire life!”

Anthony Houston, Houston Farms, lettuce producer

“While I have for a long time thought we as a nation should be doing much more towards climate action, I gained a lot of confidence and urgency to do my little bit. We as farmers have significant sway with the general population. There is a great opportunity for us to make some difference and the timing is excellent. With FCA training and guidance we have the tools.”

Andrew Young, vegetable producer

in parliament elevating farmers voices



Farmers for Climate Action continued to tread the halls of parliament throughout 2019. We brought farmers to meet with politicians to:

- advance a national strategy for climate change and agriculture
- support more ambitious climate targets
- call for a rapid transformation of Australia's energy system away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy in a way that maximises benefits to farmers and regional communities.

Here are our top five moments.

1. Canberra delegation

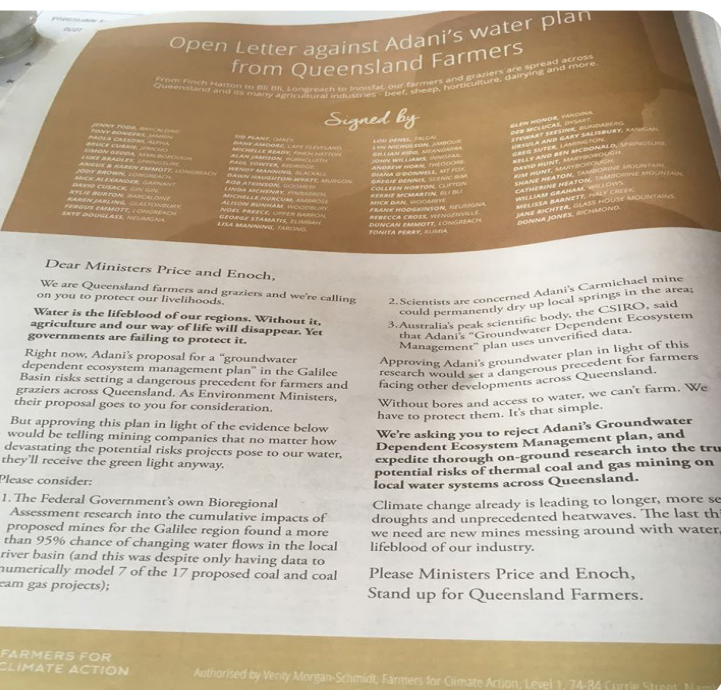
In September we brought 20 farmers to Canberra to launch our Change in the Air report with the Australian Farm Institute. We were delighted in October when the AgMin agreed to support the development of a National Climate Change Work Program.

Read more about these milestones across pages 16 to 19.

2. Parliamentary Friends of Climate Action and Climate Proofing Alliance

In February we helped launch the Climate Proofing Australia (CPA) Alliance at Parliament House and the Parliamentary Friends of Climate Action Group.

The CPA Alliance is a coalition of industry groups joining forces to encourage a collaborative land management approach to Australia's climate change mitigation strategy. We're one of the founding members of this important initiative, alongside the Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC), Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) and Greening Australia.



3. Courier Mail open letter

In March we published a full-page open letter in the Courier Mail, featuring 59 Queensland farmers and graziers opposing Adani's 'Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem Management Plan'. It reached 600,000 people and got the attention of the two Ministers that the letter addressed: Federal Environment Minister Melissa Price (Liberal Party) and State Environment Minister Leanne Enoch (Labor Party).

4. Central Queensland Ad Campaign

In April we launched our Central Queensland ad campaign, which featured three graziers urging voters to prioritise protecting the region's groundwater and moving towards a clean energy future this federal election.

The three-week advertising campaign ran across Mackay, Rockhampton and surrounding regions.



My name is Simon Gedda and my family and I run a beef cattle operation here in Central Queensland. We want future generations to be able to produce food sustainably here, forever.

The most critical issue facing Central Queensland's future is water. We've all seen drought hit our region hard. Scientists tell us it's only going to get worse if fossil fuels keep being burned, damaging our climate.

Because of this, I'm deeply concerned about plans to dig new thermal coal mines in Central Queensland. These mines risk precious groundwater that farmers desperately need. Some politicians will tell you we don't have a choice. But we know our region is more than just a thermal coal mine.

The renewable energy projects already in the pipeline for our region are set to deliver over 30,000 jobs in construction and over 1500 ongoing full-time jobs [1].

This election, your vote matters. I'll be comparing the parties' positions on these issues and I ask you to do the same. It's time to demand a future beyond thermal coal.

Sincerely,

Simon Gedda (simongedda2018@gmail.com)

P.S. Please think carefully about how you vote on May 18th, with protecting water and a clean energy future in mind. To keep producing food, farmers need your support.

[1] "Renewable Energy Across Queensland's Regions" report by Tritan Edis, Green Energy Markets, September 2018.

5. Amplifying farmers' voices in the lead up to the 2019 Federal Election


The lead up to the Federal election in May was a critical time to amplify the voices of our farmers, and we wasted no opportunity to do so!

Our work included:

- Leafleting over 100,000 mailboxes in marginal seats calling for farmers and graziers' ground-water to be protected from new coal
- Posting 400 "I'm a farmer for climate action" signs to be displayed on farm gates, fences, utes and farmers markets across the country
- Pitching interviews and opinion editorials in newspapers, online platforms, radio and television, reaching millions of people
- Creating and boosting targeted social media content reaching tens of thousands more.
- Supporting our farmers to have face-to-face conversations about the climate crisis with candidates and sitting members of Parliament on all sides of politics throughout the election campaign, some of them even hosting farm visits.
- Placing two full page open letters from prominent farmers in regional newspapers - one in the West Australian electorate of Environment Minister Melissa Price, and one in the Energy Minister Angus Taylor's seat in New South Wales

Regardless of the outcome, our political leaders - and much of the broader community - felt the pressure of our strong, and growing, contingent of farmers demanding climate action.





"I was so very pleased to see this group as there appears that some wish to create a deep divide between those on the land who are portrayed as raping and pillaging and the so called "greenies" who want to stop just about everything, when in actual fact both are seeking the same thing, sustainability."

Elizabeth Wood, farmer

"FCA is an important part of the movement against climate change. Farmers can see the effects and the general public believes our stories."

Rod Hoare, farmer

"FCA is doing a great job. I love the media you're doing and that consistency of messaging with climate change in ag - with all the challenging weather events it's so important to be constantly linking back to climate change and demanding change."

Marisa O'Halloran, farmer

the case for a a national strategy on climate change and agriculture

Farmers are on the front lines of climate change in Australia. In 2019, huge swathes of our country's farmland were subject to the worst drought in living memory, while other parts experienced devastating flooding and storms that wiped out entire paddocks of crops in an afternoon. Fuelled by climate change, the 2019 fire season started in August and culminated in what will long be remembered as our Black Summer. Global grain yields have declined by 10% from heat-waves and floods connected to climate change; bushfires and droughts are becoming the new normal.

Throughout 2019, we focussed much of our efforts on encouraging the government to commit to a National Strategy for Climate Change and Agriculture, to support farmers to navigate the challenges ahead.

Early in the year we commissioned the Australian Farm Institute to draft an independent report on the need for a national strategy for climate change and agriculture, which we officially launched the report, *Change in the Air*, at Parliament House in September.

The report authors noted that while it was difficult to put a dollar figure on the projected economic impacts of climate change on agriculture, they were significant as agriculture was "more vulnerable to climate impacts than other economic sectors."

Without a national strategy, agriculture would face significant threats to its viability, with falling production and farm profits; rising food insecurity and decreasing sectoral trust. Investment would lag, the energy transition would be impeded and barriers to adaptation would remain.

In its report, the Australian Farm Institute made two key recommendations:


1. A systemic view of climate impacts across society which informs a policy on climate change and agriculture
2. A national strategy for climate change and agriculture, which rests on a foundation of risk minimisation, supported by the pillars of strong

research, development and extension, adoption of clean energy and a focus on the capture and storage of carbon, within an environment of continuous improvement.

The month following the launch, in October 2019, we welcomed the endorsement by Australia's Agriculture ministers of a national strategy for climate change and agriculture. The national climate change work program, to be led by the Victorian Government, will see governments collaborate to support farmers to tackle the challenges of climate change. The program is set to deliver on-farm support, drive research and development, strengthen market opportunities for diversification including renewable energy and manage changing biosecurity risks.

We understand it to be a key platform in a national strategy for climate change and agriculture and in 2020 will continue to work with our farmers towards the program's full implementation.





“I see a huge need for a national strategy. Things are changing big time in this part of the world. And it’s different at a local level across Australia, and we need plans that reflect that.”

Longreach grazier Angus Emmott in Mike Foley, ‘Policy black hole will drag ag down as the climate changes’, Farm Online, 17 September 2019

“I have a 12 year old daughter and she wants to stay on our property when she grows up. I want her to feel like there’s a future there for her ... There is a future there for her, but we just need to figure out what it is. We need to know what to invest in today, what enterprises will work when she’s old enough to run the place and we need information that is what this is all about.”

Goomalling farmer Christie Kingston in Mike Foley, ‘Policy black hole will drag ag down as the climate changes’, Farm Online, 17 September 2019

“Australian agriculture needs a national, cohesive climate change strategy. We need this strategy because Australian agriculture is both partially responsible for, and increasingly impacted by the effects of climate change ... Australian farmers are very good at dealing with risk ... However, the pace and extent of change that the climate is now experiencing is beyond the capacity of even the best farmer using the best practises and technologies to adapt. It is beyond time for action.”

Australian Farm Institute Executive Officer Richard Heath in Nick Baker, “Beyond time for action”: Australian farmers call for climate change plan’, SBS News, 16 September 2019

the farmer delegation to Canberra

In September we took a delegation of 20 farmers to Canberra to meet with politicians and launch the 'Change in the Air' report.

The meetings between farmers and politicians were incredibly fruitful. We discovered some unexpected allies in the Coalition government and learnt more about what it would take to achieve bipartisan support for a fully funded National Strategy on Climate Change and Agriculture.

The 'Change in the Air' report produced by the Australian Farm Institute was launched by Federal Environment Minister, Sussan Ley. The report highlights the importance of a National Strategy for Climate Change and Agriculture, clearly articulating the threats that climate change poses to the industry.

The delegation achieved media saturation, with reports across all mediums including in The Guardian, The Australia, SBS News, The Canberra Times, Farm Online, the Saturday Paper, Triple J, ABC RN and the Super Radio Network.

Politicians our farmers met with include:

- Michael McCormack (Deputy PM and leader of the Nationals)
- Perin Davey (Senator for NSW)
- Bridget Archer (Member for Bass)
- Nola Marino (Member for Forrest)
- Russell Broadbent (Member for Monash)
- Gavin Pearce (Member for Braddon)
- Ken O'Dowd (Member for Flynn)
- Susan McDonald's office (Senator for Queensland)
- Anthony Albanese (Leader of the Opposition)
- Joel Fitzgibbon (Shadow Minister for Agriculture)
- Mark Butler (Shadow Minister for Climate Change & Energy)
- Helen Haines (Member for Indi)



"It's a very difficult topic for a lot of graziers and some ways it is like the frog in the boiling water because it is not immediately obvious – it has always been hot and dry up there, it is just getting hotter and drier."

Longreach grazier Jody Brown in Sarah Martin, 'Nationals MPs snub launch of farming group's climate change report', The Guardian, 16 September 2019



"I commend the Farmers for Climate Action organisation for their advocacy in the area of agriculture and climate change. I look forward to meeting with them again soon to discuss their call to create a national strategy on climate change and agriculture that is based on a consultative, co-design process involving government, industry, science research bodies, Australian farmers and regional and rural communities."

Hon Member for Bass, Liberal MP Bridget Archer, Hansard Federation Chamber on 14/10/2019

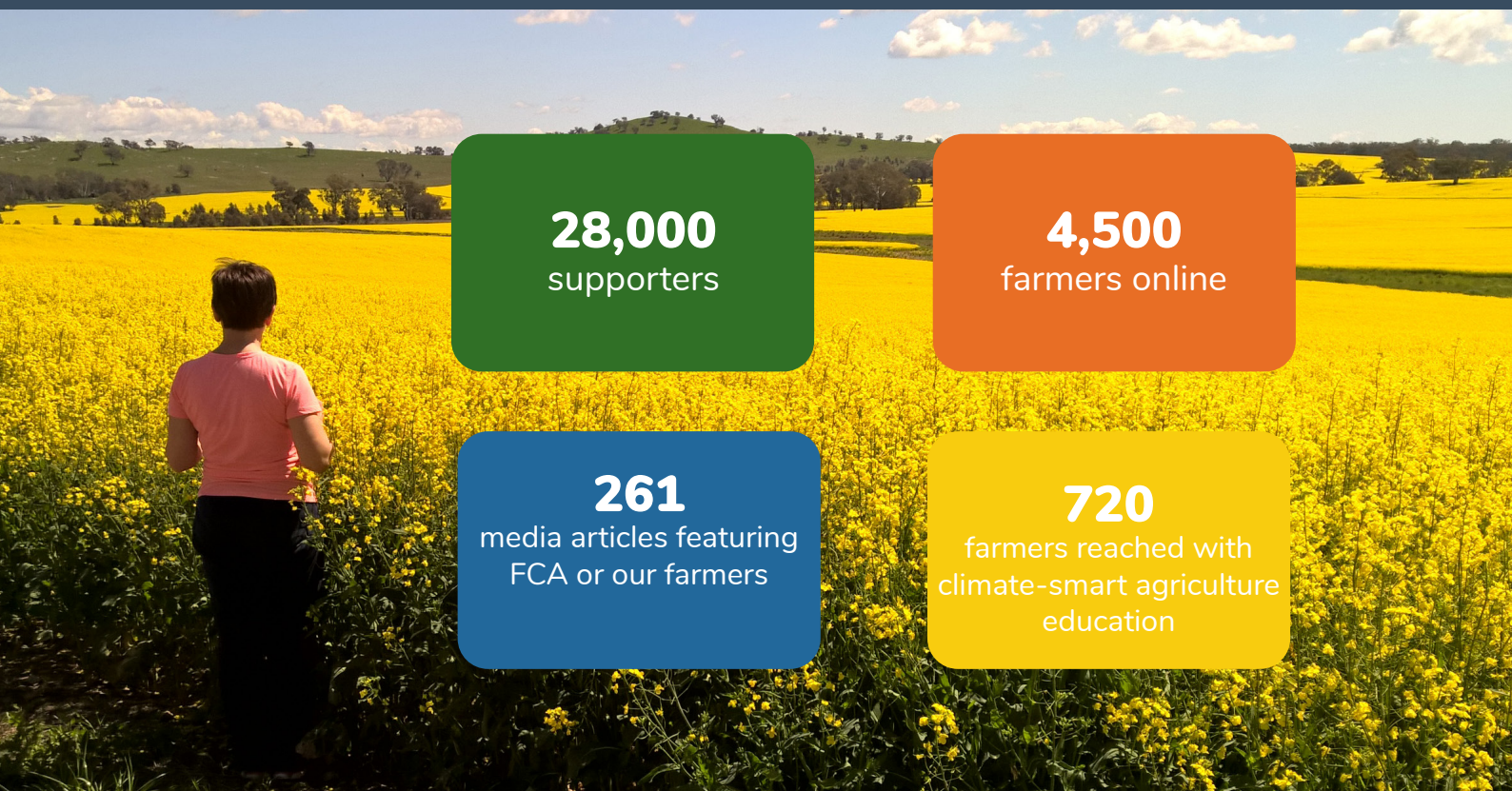
"I share the view that we face very real challenges from climate change now and in the years ahead," she said. "There is no question that our climate is changing, and the science on that is conclusive."

Federal Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley in Sarah Martin, 'Nationals MPs snub launch of farming group's climate change report', The Guardian, 16 September 2019



our movement

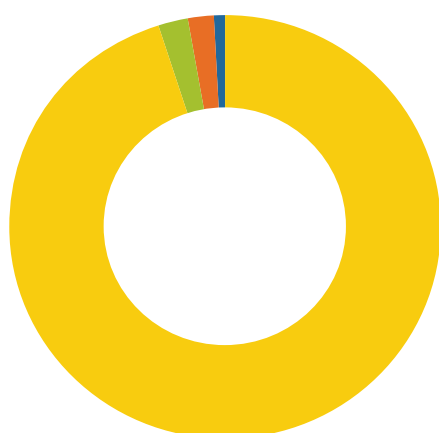
what makes our work possible



Financial summary

In 2018-2019, Farmers for Climate Action managed a budget of more than \$1 million, primarily derived from generous donations.

Income - \$1,176,588



- 95.21% from donations and bequests
- 2.15% from government grants
- 2.06% from other
- 0.58% from goods and services

Expenses - \$852,945



- 60.57% on other[2] – including events and travel
- 39.43% on expenses from employees

Donors

As an organisation that relies on community support, we are incredibly grateful for everyone who has made a financial contribution over the last twelve months. We would especially like to thank all supporters who make an ongoing contribution to our work. We cannot thank you enough.

Over the last twelve months we have been especially humbled by support toward our two key crowdfunder appeals to support our farmer delegation to Parliament House in Canberra and our work to elevate farmer voices. Without the support of our community, we would not be able to do this important work. Thank you.

Seeds of Change

In 2019 we launched our Seeds of Change giving circle, a community that is deeply committed to ensuring Farmers for Climate Action meets the goals within our strategic plan, sowing the seeds for transformative change in our political system and within the agricultural sector to address the climate crisis.

Donors within our Seeds of Change network commit to making an annual financial contribution to support Farmers for Climate Action's work for three years. The giving network allows for a deep connection to the impact of your support and opportunities to meet other like-minded supporters.

We are immensely grateful for the support of all donors within the Seeds of Change circle and thank them for their commitment to achieving action on climate. We thank FCA Board Director Anna Rose for her leadership in launching the Seeds of Change circle.

Media highlights

Our climate smart agriculture events achieved significant media coverage in Orange, Stanthorpe and the Riverina. Local newspapers, radio stations and digital media featured a range of interviews and news coverage about the events, demonstrating clear local support for these events. A number of the newspapers also featured opinion articles from local farmers about their learnings from the workshops.

Social media highlights

12,725

Facebook followers - a growth of 50.4%

1.23 million
Twitter impressions

37.4k

Reach on our most popular Facebook post - featuring Naomi Kingston on 15 March 2019

Farmers for Climate Action is a movement of farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians working to ensure farmers are a key part of the solution to climate change.

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FCA publications can be found at farmersforclimateaction.org.au/what-we-do/reports/

