Supporting Change for Resilient Communities in Cotton Regions

Resilience Assessment Workbook and Tools

1 March 2020

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Suggested citation:

Rural Innovation and Research Group/ Cotton Research and Development Corporation (2020) 'Resilience Assessment Workbook and Tools for the Australian Cotton Industry - Supporting Change For Resilient Communities in Cotton Regions, Melbourne.

Cover Photo: Cotton Women (Ruth Redfern)

INTODUCTION

This Workbook was developed in collaboration with three regional communities connected to the cotton sector, cotton industry and other regional industry stakeholders as well as environmental, local and state government stakeholders in the states of New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland (QLD).

The purpose of this workbook is to enable groups to understand and support changes occurring in their region due to particular social, environmental, and/or economic pressures. It outlines a practical and useful group process to guide potential collective action, how to work together, and coordinate your response to a challenge given different expectations, responsibilities and roles of stakeholders.

It is acknowledged that the effectiveness of the workbook process depends on the level of ownership participating groups take of the process itself as well as the availability of a facilitator able to manage the practicalities involved, including, but not limited to, the financial and other resources needed to convene workshop sessions, engage identified stakeholders into the process, manage communications and to coordinate follow-up actions. This requirement and how to approach it is detailed under the section 'Workshop Facilitation'.

The Workbook process has been drawn from more than a decade of work by the Rural Innovation Research Group at The University of Melbourne combined with other major resilience assessment frameworks (see Resilience Alliance 2010). It has been designed to be useful for a range of groups or project teams across a variety of scales and timelines of change. While underpinned by a theoretical framework it is written in everyday language where only basic knowledge of resilience concepts is required.

The process is primarily targeted at challenges facing regional and rural communities that rely on agriculture as key element of their regional economies. It has been tested with communities in regional (and remote) Australia in the context of a prolonged drought but it can be used at a range of scales and will be relevant in response to a number of social, environmental and economic challenges.

The case study section provides more background to the particular scenarios this workbook was applied in, providing examples of opportunities and frameworks for action developed by participants in our case study towns. These can serve as inspiration for other groups/ communities embarking on a facilitated process using this Workbook.

While this workbook has been designed to limit the use of jargon, some terms are explained here.

Change Challenge
This describes the specific situation you face. This situation may appear simple and straight forward or may result from interacting factors or situations. In this workbook it is assumed that in order to achieve improvement, this situation involves some significant and challenging change.

Desired Change
The type of change you want to occur. Determining the desired change involves collective assessment of the possible pathways to change, along with collective decision-making processes around the most desired change and pathways.

Resilience
Resilience as a key concept has been variously interpreted in different contexts. One generally accepted definition of resilience is the capacity of a system (a community, industry, region etc.) to absorb shocks, to avoid crossing a threshold into an alternate and possibly irreversible new state, and to regenerate after disturbance.[1]

Specified resilience
Specified resilience typically relates to specific (known) threats and shocks, such as droughts, bushfires or changing market scenarios. A linked idea is that parts of a system can be managed in ways that increase the system's resilience to particular kinds of disturbance and allow it to stay within a 'safe operating space'.[2]

General resilience
General resilience is a property of the system as a whole and does not focus on any particular disturbance or part of the system. While both kinds of resilience, specified and general, are important, making and understanding their distinction is equally crucial. For example, managing for the resilience of a particular part of the system can negatively affect the resilience of other parts or the whole system.[1]

Community Resilience
This workbook focuses on community resilience over individual resilience. While individual mental health and well-being are important aspects that may play into the ability of a group to deal with change, the community resilience approach emphasises the existing social capacity of a community, their combined skills, knowledge and connections, their ability to self-organise, and their access to resources and capacities that enable their response to change challenges. In considering the economic, institutional and social dimensions of resilience, the community resilience approach encompasses individual resilience as embedded in the larger system.

Adaptive capacity
Adaptive capacity is defined here as the ability of a community to change in ways that allow them to better manage actual, anticipated and unexpected change challenges. Importantly, adaptive capacity draws on multiple resources. These can be summarised as:

Institutional resources: local government, community or farming organisations, and other institutions

Physical resources: Infrastructure and services (roads, communications, health, education)

Natural Resources: Healthy and productive soil, water and landscapes

Financial resources: Business and household finances, access to financial assistance

Human resources: Mental and physical health, self-efficacy, skills, leadership, knowledge

Social resources: social networks with friends, family, other community members, business and cultural groups

Scenario
A possible future course regarding the challenge you are facing. There might be many possible scenarios, dependent on changes in factors such as legislation, climate, economics, consumer behaviour.

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[1] Resilience Alliance (2010). Assessing socio-ecological Resilience: a Workbook for Practitioners. Version 2.0. https://www.resalliance.org/files/ResilienceAssessmentV2_2.pdf.
[2] Rockström, J., et al. (2009). "A safe operating space for humanity." Nature **461**: 472.

ABOUT THE WORKBOOK

USEFUL TOOLS FOR YOUR PROCESS ▼

The Workbook includes some helpful frameworks and ideas for teasing out the challenges and perspectives you will face during the assessment process. Look for the symbol below where a suggested tool is provided in the 'Workbook Tools' section.

Workbook tool

WHO COULD USE THIS WORKBOOK ▼

This Workbook is set up to cover general concepts applicable to people or groups facing a socio-economic or socio-ecological challenge. While initially targeted at supporting community resilience in three agricultural regions affected by prolonged drought and attendant challenges, it can be used by groups including: agricultural industry groups, public sector organisations, farmer groups, and local community groups.
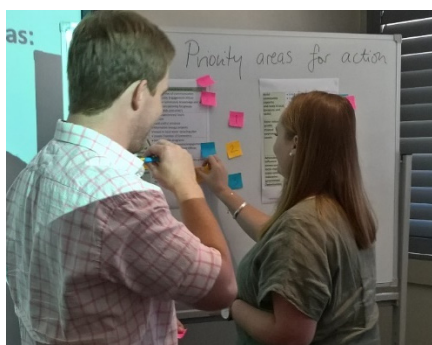
PLANNING YOUR WORKSHOPS ▼

The process outlined in this Workbook is designed to fit within two separate workshops, each of about four hours duration. Naturally your own process, and the time/resources you have available to allocate to it, may vary from this general design. You may have more – or less – time available to run your workshops, and you may wish to adapt some of the workbook components. Some workbook tools have been marked 'optional' to allow for such variations. View this document as a guide to your process, which you can adapt to your needs and circumstances.

WORKSHOP FACILITATION ▼

This workbook is designed to help you work your way through the 'messy' problem of resilience. It has been written in a way which requires little prior knowledge of resilience terminology or processes. In effect it is aimed at guiding you through the thinking process. You should consider engaging an experienced facilitator to help with the process, to keep the group moving forward while also facilitating open exchange of ideas and lateral thinking. Your facilitator will also have experience in planning an effective workshop and therefore it is good to involve them as you plan the day(s).

You can also run the workshops without engaging an external facilitator; however, it is advised that you select a member of the group to the facilitator role. This person does not have to be experienced in facilitation, but they will need to be prepared to direct the conversation and activities if things are running off course.

Ensure you decide how your discussion will be recorded. Some of the worksheets in this Workbook will help you to write down and revisit your discussions and results but you may need to nominate someone who will be keeping notes of the workshop discussion overall. It is also a good idea to share a summary of the day with participants and potentially other stakeholders interested in following up with your initiative.

Keeping people engaged with the process in between workshops and to keep momentum going is another challenge that may require a dedicated role. Additional workshops and/or convening a dedicated working group targeting such discussion, decision-making and action outcomes might be required.

The following provides a possible position description for a 'Community Facilitator (Resilience Assessment)', alongside estimated time frames and salary costings for a regionally located engagement professional.

Community Facilitator – Position Description

Position summary

The role of 'Community Facilitator (Resilience Assessment)' is responsible for the facilitation of a collaborative resilience assessment process outlined in the Resilience Assessment Workbook, 'Supporting Change for Resilient Communities in Cotton Regions' (the Workbook). The Workbook was a key output from action research funded by the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) and conducted by the Rural Innovation Research Group from the University of Melbourne in collaboration with three regional communities as well as cotton sector and other regional stakeholders from 2018-2020.

The purpose of the Workbook is to enable groups to understand and support changes occurring in their region due to particular social, environmental, and/or economic pressures. It outlines a practical and useful group process to guide potential collective action, how to work together, and coordinate responses to a challenge given different expectations, responsibilities and roles of stakeholders.

While the Workbook was piloted together with communities and other stakeholders in cotton growing regions, the workbook process is relevant and applicable outside the cotton sector. The process is primarily targeted at challenges facing regional and rural communities that rely on agriculture as key element of their regional economies. It has been tested with communities in regional (and remote) Australia in the context of a prolonged drought but it can be used at a range of scales and will be relevant in response to a number of social, environmental and economic challenges

This position is a capacity building opportunity for an experienced and well-networked engagement professional.

Key Responsibilities

The 'Community Facilitator (Resilience Assessment)' is responsible for the management of the workbook process, including:

- Identification, engagement and recruitment of a diversity of stakeholder participants
- Connecting core participants and run activities that facilitate engagement (i.e. workshop and meeting design and related organisational tasks)
- Facilitating communication and collaboration processes with core participants towards achieving resilience assessment outcomes (during and between workshop events).
- Manage administrative tasks (including summary reporting, organising workshops and meetings).
- Based on the process outline in the workbook, refining design and delivery of the process, tailored to local/regional contexts
- Ensuring efficient and timely delivery of the workshops and delivery of reporting activities to participants
- Convene working groups and follow up with individual working groups to ensure continuity of their engagement and progress of actions between workshop events and after (capacity building)
- Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) and Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) responsibilities.

Selection Criteria

- Existing local knowledge and networks in and beyond the community or group wishing to undertake the resilience assessment (desirable: networks across scales, i.e. industry, local government, local businesses, not-for-profit organisations, regional bodies)

- Stakeholder engagement skills
  - Track record in initiating and establishing partnerships and networks and maintaining effective relationships with a range of people and organisations associated with rural, regional and agricultural industries and communities (including community organisations, farm businesses, local government, not-for-profit and environmental organisations, industry bodies and other stakeholders).
  - Proven skills and experience in workshop facilitation with a range of stakeholders
  - Knowledge, skills and experience of working collaboratively with a range of stakeholders
- Experience in extension and/or stakeholder capacity building
- Demonstrated experience in project management and administration, including

  - Proficiency in small team management

  - Proven communication skills

  - Strong negotiating skills

  - Demonstrated risk management skills

  - Proven skills in report writing and delivery of other outputs in a timely and efficient manner

Special Requirements

- May involve some regional travel
- This role is event-based and therefore involves some intensive work periods

Time plan and estimated costings for the position

Estimated time frame: 6-12 months to maintain ongoing stakeholder engagement and allow for appropriate follow-through of actions identified through the Workbook process.

Time commitment: 100+ hrs @ $80 -$100 per hr, including stakeholder recruitment, workshops, administrative tasks, ongoing engagement throughout the project's duration (i.e. facilitation of working groups between workshops)

Overall costing estimate $8,000 - $10,000 plus workshop costs (approx. $2,000 for two 4-5 hour workshops, venue and catering) = $10,000 - $12,000

INVITING PEOPLE TO THE WORKSHOP ▼

Getting the right people along to your workshop is important. Think about the different people/groups who have a stake in the issue, as getting a wide variety of views is vital to appropriately assess the different perspectives. You might know that some people/groups have outspoken views, or opinions quite different from your own, but these different perspectives can help broaden a group's thinking when trying to focus in on the challenge.

It is also important that you clearly communicate the purpose and aims of the workshop and engage people around these prior to the workshop. Ask yourself why people would want to participate. Engaging people and getting them to participate can be time intensive and requires that enough effort is put into communicating in the lead up to your workshop. Be prepared to invite additional stakeholders to your second workshop (workshop B) and ensure that they can review, modify and add to the findings of workshop A.

RUNNING YOUR WORKSHOPS ▼

In this Workbook there are **seven stages to the process of assessing your 'change challenge'** (Figure 1). Working through these stages has been split into two tasks for the two workshops: **'Assessing the change challenge' and identification of opportunities for action or 'A collective vision for change'**. The two stages take your group from defining the challenge and making sense of it and the different perspectives involved, to identifying different change scenarios and a scenario you collectively wish to support. The tools in part B assist you in developing a framework for actions that can be taken in the short, medium- and long-term future

WORKSHOP A:
Assessing the change challenge

WORKSHOP B:
A collective vision for change

Step 1
What is the change challenge?

What are the important inter-actions?

Step 2

Who are the stakeholders?

Step 3

What are strengths and opportunities?

Step 4

Where should your effort be directed?

Step 5

What are the gaps for enacting change?

Step 6

What are the important next steps for action?

Step 7

Figure 1: . Seven stages to the process of assessing your 'change challenge'

Drought in New South Wales

With a variable climate, drought has been a constant and inevitable feature of the NSW landscape. While there is no universal definition of drought, it is generally described as a prolonged, abnormally dry period when the amount of available water is insufficient to meet normal use. The current drought (time of writing March 2020) began in NSW in mid - 2017 and it is equivalent to a major drought event on the long term historical record (100 years). [3] In many regions across NSW, this drought has been declared the worst on record, with the Central West, Far West and North West regions affected the worst. [4] In the 2018-19 season, cotton farmers in northern NSW cotton valleys received 0% of their general security water allocation due to drought. [5]
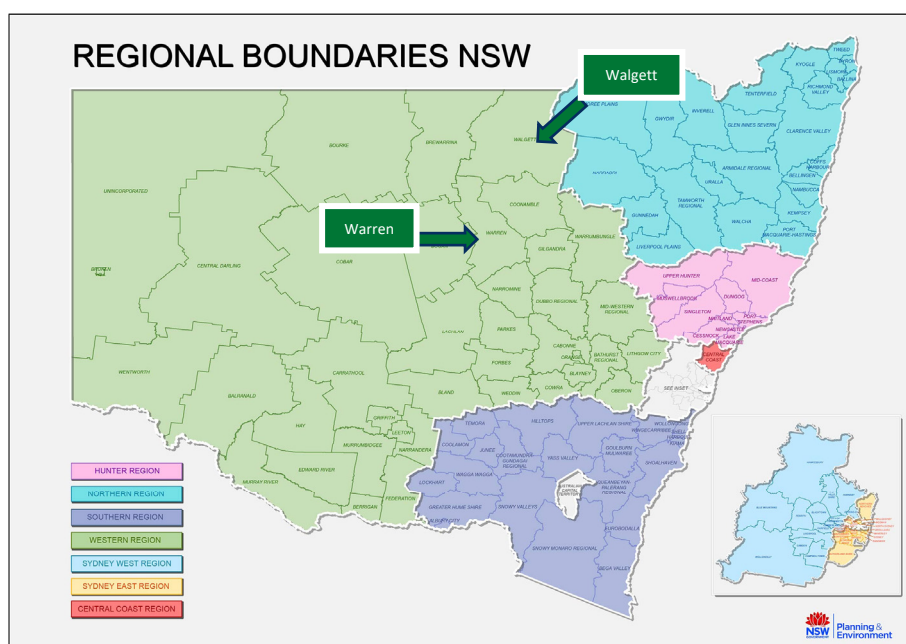

Image source: https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Images/DPE/Maps/regional-boundaries-nsw-2400x1685.jpg?la=en

Walgett and Warren Regional Shires

The regional Shires of Walgett and Warren are located in the Western regions of NSW. The main agricultural industries are cotton, wool, grazing and cereal cropping. Other industries include: mining, manufacturing, tourism and education. The towns and their regions were selected as case studies for the application of this resilience assessment workbook, following careful consideration of a range of factors. This included past and current experiences with change, level of impact of changes to water policy, drought and level of perceived need and potential benefit gained from particpating in this study. Another factor for selection was their location on two different river systems, Walgett on the Barwon and Namoi Rivers, and Warren on the Macquarie River.

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[3] https://www.waternsw.com.au/supply/drought-information/regional-nsw

[4] https://www.waternsw.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/154660/Regional-Drought-Monthly-Report-Summer-2020.pdf

[5] Fact sheet: Australian cotton - Our water story; https://cottonaustralia.com.au/assets/general/Publications/Industry-overview-brochures/The-Australian-Cotton-Water-Story.pdf

The town of Walgett is located approximately 640 kms by road from Sydney, near the junctions of the Barwon and Namoi Rivers and the Kamilaroi and Castlereagh Highways. In 2016, there were 6,107 people in the Walgett Local Government Area, with a population of 2,145 in the town itself. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up close to 30% of the Shire's population.[6] In 2015, the town was listed as one of the most socially disadvantaged areas in the state of NSW (Dropping Off The Edge report).[7] The town is the seat of in the Walgett Shire Council. Walgett has a community college and highschool, a private catholic school and a TAFE NSW branch. In the summer of 2018/2019, due to the **ongoing drought, loss of river flows and a heat wave, Level 6 Water Restrictions were imposed** in Walgett and other towns in the Shire. Walgett residents had to rely on bore water for 18 months.

Two resilience assessment workshops were run in Walgett in April and November 2019. The diverse group of about 12-15 participants at each event included representatives from the cotton sector and other agricultural industries, Women in Cotton (WinCott) and the Walgett Country Women Association. Further, natural resource management groups, Walgett Shire Council, the Department of Primary Industries' Rural Resilience officer and other community figures. Together, the workshop participants **defined their shared challenges, community strengths and assets, and opportunities for action**. They then utilised the 'Framework for Action' planning tool (workbook tool B10) to develop, and later present, a submission to Council requesting a **dedicated local grant writing and project management position**. There were many local ideas to address current challenges, but translating these into action needs financial resources, facilitation and project management skills.

Main challenges: Walgett, like many rural and remote communities in Australia, experiences the negative dynamics of a **decreasing population**. **A lack of industry diversity and employment opportunities** leads to the loss of skilled workers and further jobs, alongside the loss of government, medical and infrastructure services. **The fragmentation of social networks is** accompanied by an **'ideas drain' and volunteer fatigue**. Cultural divides and **poor community cohesion** between 'town' and 'bush', farming families, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and a disconnect between regional industries and local groups exposes issues of governance, including a **lack of leadership**. Community fragmentation weakens the ability to draw on diverse knowledge and experiences to act collectively and influence local decision-making.
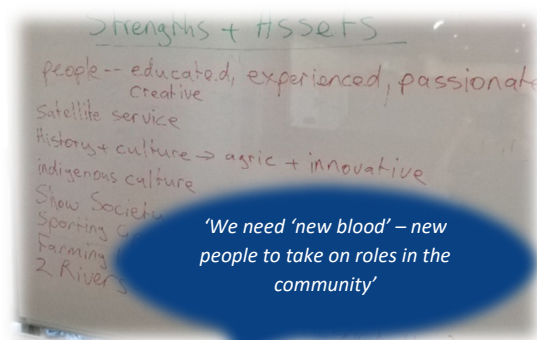
Drawing on existing strength: The people living in Walgett, their diverse experiences, passion, skills and creativity, their unique environment, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage, are the community's greatest assets. **Creating and strengthening community** through more meeting and networking opportunities, proactive and inclusive communication across industries and groups, increased local involvement and representation in Council, and the celebration of a **'Walgett pride of place'** were amongst the ideas and actions discussed. However, community workshop participants agreed that an essential support role (community development, grant writing, project management, community facilitation) was needed in Walgett to help drive such initiatives. **Advocating for such a role at council level** was at the centre of the **action framework** they developed. One community member created http://walgett.net/ - a website with events calendar and business directory for Walgett after the first workshop to assist better communication.

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[6] https://itt.abs.gov.au - Walgett (A) (LGA) (17900)

[7] https://dote.org.au/findings/full-report/

Warren

Warren is a town in the Orana Region of NSW, situated near the Macquarie River. It is located on the Mitchell and Oxley Highways, 120 kilometres north west of Dubbo, and is the seat of the Warren Shire local government a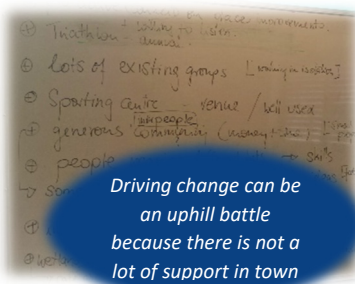rea. In 2016, the Shire had a population of 2,732, with 1,530 residents living in town. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 14.4% of the Shire's population.[8] Warren has a relatively young population: 52% of people in Warren Shire were children or young adults (0 to 44), and 48% were 45 years and over in 2016.[9] A number of organisations respond to the resulting need for childcare, although workshop participants noted a lack of opportunities for older children and young adults. Agriculture as the largest employer includes sheep, wool, cattle, grain and cotton. Other important sectors are retail trade, education and training, health care and public administration.[10] Warren has several community and sports-based organisations and the Far West Academy of Sport is based in Warren. In March 2019, Warren Shire Council introduced **level 3 water restrictions** to adapt to decreasing flows in the Macquarie River.

Stakeholders represented at both the April and November workshops included: Cotton Info; Cotton Australia; CRDC; Kenmark Communications; Warren Shire Council; Macquarie Valley Cotton Growers Association; DPI Rural Resilience Program; Barnados Social Services / Outback Arts; Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health – NSW Health; Riversmart (the Macquarie Wetlands); Warren Presbyterian and Catholic Churches; Young life Australia Warren Area and the Community Hall in Marthaguy.

Participants described very **similar challenges** to those in Walgett around **population decrease; lack of community coherence and governance**: while they observed that Council is willing to listen and be proactive about place-making initiatives, it was also felt that Council **could improve on opportunities to provide leadership and sense of direction** in bringing community together in action, and **to address existing divides**. Creating **more meeting spaces and opportunities for communication**, deliberation and participation in local decision-making were amongst the ideas suggested to improve on local liveability and collective actions, not least to stave off the **exodus of young people** resulting from a lack of local opportunities. Crucially, losing young people leads to volunteer fatigue, **succession issues and resistance to change** in local community organisations.

Drawing on existing strengths: People in Warren are used to uncertain or 'boom and bust' times and are therefore **good at planning ahead and adapting**. People in the community have **different skills, ideas and influence** and there are a lot of **existing groups, initiatives and events** drawing visitors from beyond the Shire boundaries (the annual show, the annual triathlon, the Warren Cup). **Women and mothers' groups link across many 'social boundaries'** and can connect people and groups that don't normally interact. One of the initiatives out of the first workshop was therefore a revival of existing mothers' and play groups. The Macquarie marshes are an **important environmental asset** with the potential of creating **job opportunities in tourism, including Indigenous Tourism**. Increasing awareness of the importance of water beyond its agricultural production value and how it can drive economic diversification with farmers and young people, emerged as an action from the second workshop. **Revitalising groups and leadership initiatives, and offering general skills training** was the focus of another action framework developed on the day. The need for '**community champion' and coordination/ facilitation roles** at several levels to **'kick start' some of these ideas and initiatives into actions** stood out, particularly where clear roles and responsibilities or commitment to progressing action could not be identified. Additional workshops and/or convening a dedicated working group targeting such discussion, decision-making and action outcomes might be required.

WORKSHOP TOOLS

OVERVIEW: WORKSHOP MODULES

Workshop A

This first workshop is aimed at defining the 'challenge' you face while taking some time to step back and consider the different perspectives and roles of those involved. There may also be a complex interplay of social, economic and environmental factors to consider. In order to assess the challenge, you need to consider the following:

STEP	ACTIVITIES	APPROXIMATE TIME
1. What are current issues or challenges we face?	Workbook tool A1: Defining the challenge(s)	30 mins
2. How are these challenges linked? What are the important interactions inside/outside the region?	Workbook tool A2: Assessing interactions Exploring links and interactions	30 mins
3. Who are the stakeholders?	Workbook tool A3: Stakeholder assessment What are stakeholder perspectives and levels of influence?	30 mins
4. What are strengths and opportunities?	Workbook tools A4-A7	
Understanding your community and strengths	Workbook tool A4: Resilience indicators, community assets, inputs, and strengths.	30 mins
What opportunities for action can we identify?	Workbook tool A5: Opportunities and gaps Where do you see opportunities for action?	30-50 mins
Where are the gaps and who can address them?	Workbook tools A5 and A6: What is missing or where do you need support in developing an opportunity? What needs to change and at what levels, i.e. who can act on this change? Optional: Workbook tool A7: Mapping future scenarios	30-50 mins
Looking ahead	Plan the next workshop date(s); what additional stakeholders do you need to engage/ invite?	30 mins or after workshop

STEP 1: WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE?

Sometimes the challenge at hand is more complex than we first think, with conflicting views from different stakeholders and multiple future outcomes dependant on interactions between factors such as people, institutions, and the environment. This section provides a process for narrowing in on the particular challenge you face.

ACTIVITY: DEFINE THE CHALLENGE

Use a whiteboard or flip chart to capture a brainstorming session aimed at focussing in on the challenge. To start the discussion, ask the group the question:

"Identify the main features of this change challenge"

Particular aspects to explore during this session involve:

- What are the main issues involved in the challenge?
- What are the boundaries to the challenge? (geographically, socially)
- What is the history of the challenge? (i.e. have similar events occurred before?)
- How has the system/region/community changed over time? (e.g. water use practices, production, community, farming types)
- How have people reacted to the challenge so far?

STEP 2: WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT INTERACTIONS?

It is important to understand the interactions within the system boundaries of the challenge you are assessing, as well as the interactions with larger-scale systems. For example, such interactions might involve the impact of State legislation on your region, or the way that broader changes in your region will affect individual farms.

ACTIVITY: HOW ARE THE CHALLENGES LINKED? WHAT ARE THE INTERACTIONS THAT IMPACT YOUR SYSTEM?

Consider the interactions which happen with your system from outside, and within. Use the questions below to explore these interactions.

- What are the main influences from larger-scale systems on your system?   e.g. The impact of State/Federal legislation, Global commodity markets, Climate factors, Environmental/animal welfare organisations
- What are the main interactions within the system that influence the challenge?
  e.g. Influence of local communities, Farmers or farmer groups

STEP 3: STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

ACTIVITY: WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?

Discuss the stakeholders who are relevant to your challenge, using the stakeholder assessment framework provided to help with this. Questions to consider in regard to stakeholders are:

- What are their existing roles or interests?
- What is their level of influence in this challenge? (Low, Medium, High)
- How much are they currently engaged with the challenge? (Low, Medium, High)
- What resources/capacity do they potentially offer?

STEP 4: IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES AND GAPS

ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMMUNITY AND STRENGTHS

Think about what makes your community resilient. Note down some of the most important community assets, inputs, and strengths. This can include environmental or cultural assets, past and present local industries, especially creative and innovative people, businesses or networks, a good sense of community, or popular events.

Discuss: How can these assets and strengths help your community with addressing your key challenges or achieving positive change?

ACTIVITY: DEFINING OPPORTUNITIES AND GAPS

Think about the challenge you want to address and your community assets and strengths, where do you see opportunities for actions that can help address the change challenge(s) you have identified?

`Repeat the process by identifying the gaps, i.e. what is missing or where you may need support in developing an opportunity.

ACTIVITY: DEFINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Having identified opportunities and gaps, what needs to change and at what levels, i.e. who can act on this change?

Optional: Depending on the time you have available, you can develop different change scenarios to help you explore your opportunities and actions. To start thinking, address these initial questions:

- What are some possible future scenarios in response to the current challenge?
- How might these scenarios play out in the short to medium term?
- And what might influence each of these scenarios becoming reality? (i.e. what are the major drivers for each scenario)?
- What types of natural and social capital need to be maintained to enable adaptation, reorganisation, renewal?

LOOKING AHEAD

Planning for the next workshop date(s) and what additional stakeholders you need to engage/ invite to that event is an important step that can take place as part of workshop A. You could also consider meeting in between workshops events, for example by convening smaller working groups that are tasked with further exploring identified opportunities for action, raising awareness for the initiative and identifying and engaging with additional stakeholders.

Warren Fish release (Amanda Thomas)

Workshop B

The second workshop will review findings from workshop A and work towards developing a plan for action. It is important to note that actions will need to happen at different scales and across different timelines. The tools in this section of the Workbook will assist you in exploring more deeply the opportunities for action identified in the first workshop and how they can be seized and turned into real-world action.

STEP	ACTIVITIES	APPROXIMATE TIME
5. Where should out efforts be directed?	Workbook tool B1: Prioritising opportunities for action Workbook tool B2: Exploring the opportunities Workbook tool B4: Identifying incentives	30-50 mins
Optional	Workbook tool B3: Ranking your change scenarios Workbook tool B5: Assessing awareness	30-60 mins
6. What are the enablers and gaps for enacting change?	Workbook tool B6: Reserves Workbook tool B7: Resources Workbook tool B8: Governance	30-50 mins
7. What are the important next steps for action	Workbook tool B9: Planning your work together	30-50 mins
Looking ahead	How are you going to maintain momentum? Consider convening a working group to coordinate follow-up meetings	30 mins or after workshop

STEP 5: WHERE SHOULD YOUR EFFORTS BE DIRECTED?

ACTIVITY: PRIORITISING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION
List the opportunities or areas for action from the first workshop for all to see. Assess whether all participants agree with these opportunities.

- Do you have anything add or qualify?
- What could be additional actions?
- What are the most important opportunities/ priority areas for action?

Rank all opportunities in order of importance over time. Vote for the 3 most important action areas but keep a record of all opportunities as some may need to be explored further.

ACTIVITY: EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES AND IDENTIFY INCENTIVES
- What is the geographic area relevant to this opportunity and what is the timescale of addressing it? (e.g. is this a 10 year challenge? 50 year?)
- What are the main drivers of this opportunity?
- Who is most affected by this opportunity?
- Who has to be involved to make this opportunity a reality?
- How can this opportunity be seized?
- Which incentives do you think are the most important in relation to your desired change? What incentives are missing or needed?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:
Depending on the time you have available, you may choose to further explore what positive change would look like for you. Think about Ranking your change scenarios from the most to the least desirable.

You may also want to consider the level of awareness people may have of the challenge/opportunity you want to address and explore what other awareness factors are in place to support your desired change using this optional Workbook tool.

- What may be sources or avenues for sharing information between govts, industry and community?
- What mechanisms are in place for industry and community engagement in government policy processes?
- Are there opportunities for training and skills development?
- What awareness factors are missing or needed?

STEP 6: WHAT ARE THE ENABLERS AND GAPS FOR ENACTING CHANGE?

ACTIVITY: RESERVES AND RESOURCES

Identify the social, natural and financial reserves and resources needed to enable adaptation and renewal.

- What are the reserves relevant in relation to your change challenge?
- What other reserves are in place to support your desired change?
- Which reserves do you think are the most important in relation to your desired change? What reserves are missing or needed?

Resilience Resources

- Which resources do you think are the most important in relation to your desired change?
- Do you have access to social, natural and financial resources you can draw on to help you cope with and adapt to change?
- Resilience resources together provide you with 'adaptive capacity'. Are there areas where access to the resources could be improved?
- What resources are missing or needed?

ACTIVITY: GOVERNANCE

Use this workbook tool to assess the governance capacities that are in place (for example, regulatory arrangements, cross-jurisdictional decision-making mechanisms; community/stakeholder networks) to support your desired change.

- Which governance capacities do you think are the most important in relation to your desired change?
- What governance capacities are missing or needed?

STEP 7: WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT NEXT STEPS FOR ACTION?

ACTIVITY: PLAN FOR ACTION

Use Workbook tool B9 to develop a step-by-step roadmap towards change. What needs to happen so that actions can be progressed? Be specific about what steps need to be taken, who needs to be involved, at what level and how you would measure success. What do you want to achieve and when?

MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

Be sure to include in your action plan: How is the group planning to stay in contact? Who will be managing group communication? How will you monitor progress on actions taken? Consider regular meetings and/or updates to maintain interest and momentum.

EVALUATE

Don't skip this step! It is important to assess how people experienced the workshop process and their ability to participate, share and learn. What can be improved about the process? What has been missing? What went well?

WORKBOOK TOOL A1: DEFINING THE CHALLENGES

What are the main challenges for your community right now and into the future (10-20yrs)?

What are the impacts?

What are the geographic and social boundaries of the impacts?

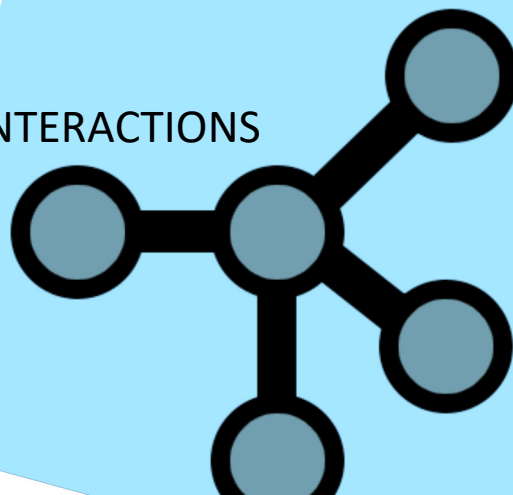**In small groups of 2-4, discuss these questions and note your answers on post-it notes.**

Collect post-its and order them thematically if possible (i.e. sort challenges regarding population; the environment…).

Photo: Family (courtesy Carly Donnelly and Cotton Australia)

WORKBOOK TOOL A2: ASSESSING INTERACTIONS

How are these challenges linked?

Are there key challenges underlying these linked challenges?

Aspects of the key challenges that we (or others) can address?

Consider how these challenges might be linked and interact. Discuss and note down on the white board.

What may be 'bigger picture issues' or key challenges underlying these linked challenges?

Explore 3 key challenges using the table below. What are key aspects that we can address?

Key challenge	What are the main influences from larger- scale systems on your system? *e.g. The impact of state/federal legislation; global commodity markets; climate factors*	What are interactions within the system? *e.g. Influence of local communities; farmers/growers or farmer/grower groups;*	Can be addressed

WORKBOOK TOOL A3: STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

Who are the stakeholders in these challenges?

Who is affected and how?

Think about what might be their interests?

What main roles or kind of influence do they have in respect to the challenge?

How much are they currently engaged, and what resources do they potentially offer?

Use the table provided to note down your responses.

When planning your next workshop, return to this list and invite key stakeholders identified.

Key stakeholder groups	Existing roles or interests	Level of influence in this challenge (Low, Medium, High)	How much are they currently engaged with the challenge (Low, Medium, High)	What resources/ capacity do they potentially offer?
Community e.g. Local retailers association				
Industry e.g. Farmers, Processors, Consultants, Cotton Industry				
Governance e.g. Federal/state/ local government				
Environment				

OPTIONAL WORKBOOK TOOL: STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

If you have the time available, you may wish to deepen your understanding of the stakeholders in the change challenge you have identified. This may help your future engagement with additional stakeholders and to understand existing networks and connections – or where new connections could be initiated.

Get people in your group to take the role of different stakeholders (if some stakeholders are not present, try to represent their perspectives). Capture each stakeholder perspective as a summary of around 30 words and note the connections that exist and don't exist between stakeholders.

	30 word summary of their perspective on the issue	Which other stakeholders are they closely connected to?	Which other stakeholders are they not connected to?
Stakeholder 1			
Stakeholder 2			
Stakeholder 3			

WORKBOOK TOOL A4: RESILIENCE INDICATORS, COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND ASSETS

What makes you resilient as a community?

Important community assets, inputs, and strengths

In groups of 2-4 people, discuss what a resilient community looks like. Note down some key indicators of resilience.

Think about what makes your community resilient. Note down some of the most important community assets, inputs, and strengths.

Your analysis

How can these assets and strengths help your community with addressing your key challenges or achieving positive change?

WORKBOOK TOOL A5: OPPORTUNITIES AND GAPS

Thinking about the challenge and your community assets and strengths, where do you see opportunities for action?

List these and then choose 3 that the group feels are the most important.

Repeat the process by identifying the gaps, i.e. what is missing or where you may need support in developing an opportunity.

Opportunities	Top 3	Gaps	Support/resources needed

WORKBOOK TOOL A6: WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE AND AT WHAT LEVELS, I.E. WHO CAN ACT ON THIS CHANGE?

Drawing on your discussions and the stakeholders, top 3 opportunities and gaps you have identified, you can now develop a more detailed map of opportunities, stakeholders and suggested short to mid-term actions.

Opportunities	Key challenge addressed and Purpose/ details	Who (stakeholders and influencers)	Suggested short-mid-term actions
For example: Continue to identify and engage community stakeholders	Community is fragmented/ not engaged Improve communication		Meetings with local councils to present project aims and social research findings Additional community meetings
Develop and formalise action plan and future goals	Maintain momentum; build trust and sense of collective agency		

OPTIONAL WORKBOOK TOOL A7: MAPPING FUTURE SCENARIOS

This optional activity allows you to further explore future scenarios. Think about the following questions:

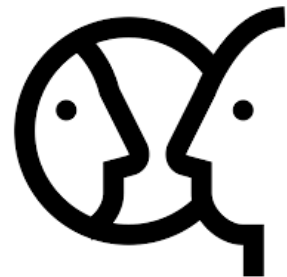|	What are some possible future scenarios in response to the current challenge?	How might these scenarios play out in the short to medium term? (5-10 yrs)	And what might drive each of these scenarios becoming reality?	What types of natural and social capital need to be maintained to enable adaptation, re-organisation, renewal?
Scenario 1				
Scenario 2				
Scenario 3				

OPTIONAL WORKBOOK TOOL: KNOWING YOURSELF

Questions to consider
What kind of change do you wish to enact? e.g. incremental; large leap (transformation)
What kind of role do you expect to take in the change process? e.g. leadership; building capacity for others to lead
What kind of trade-offs might be required for stakeholders before this change can occur? e.g. incentives for change

WORKBOOK TOOL B1: PRIORITISING ACTION

Revisit the list of opportunities (or threats) that were identified in workshop A. In groups of 2, discuss the action areas, asking: Do you have anything add or qualify? What could be additional actions? What are the most important opportunities/ priority areas for action? Rank all opportunities in order of importance over time.

Vote for the 3 most important action areas. For example:

Opportunity/ action area	Suggested actions
Improve opportunities for participation in local decision-making	e.g. create more meeting opportunities/ events; improve information about local initiatives, debates
Diversify industries/ income sources	e.g. explore potential of running farm experiences/ tours; Aboriginal tourism; alternative energy projects
Improve connection/ coordination of existing services and programs	e.g. Cotton Farmers and other business in Northern NSW/ QLD

WORKBOOK TOOL B2: EXPLORING THE OPPORTUNITIES

Explore the 3 main opportunities via this table. Consider the geographic area and timescale, the main drivers which would push this opportunity, who would be most affected, and who would need to be involved. Also discuss how the opportunity might be brought to reality.

	Example opportunity:	Your opportunity
Geographic area and timescale (e.g. is this a 10 year challenge? 50 year?)	e.g. To be developed within the next 2- 4years in Northern NSW in QLD	
What are the main drivers of this opportunity?	e.g. Adequate water allocations; New demand-supply chains for niche products	
Who is most affected by this opportunity?	e.g. Cotton Farmers and other business in Northern NSW/ QLD	
Who has to be involved to make this opportunity a reality?	e.g. cotton and other agricultural sectors, industry bodies and farmers/growers	
How can this opportunity be seized?	e.g. Stakeholders to establish working group to explore supply issues and product development, identify consumer markets, and plan for product distribution and marketing	

WORKBOOK TOOL B3: RANKING YOUR CHANGE SCENARIOS (optional)

Change scenarios	Short description	Participant rankings 3 points=most desirable, 1 point=least desirable									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	etc	
Change Scenario 1											
Change Scenario 2											
Change Scenario 3											

WORKBOOK TOOL B4: IDENTIFYING INCENTIVES

Can you identify the following incentives for change in relation to your change challenge	What is the local scale Incentive? (including farm scale)	What is the regional scale incentive?	What is the national scale incentive?	Other
Tax benefits				
Subsidies				
Structural adjustment				
Membership of decision-making bodies				
Opportunities to be engaged in policy development				
What other incentives are needed to support desired change?				

Questions for further discussion:
Which incentives do you think are the most important in relation to your desired change? What incentives are missing or needed?

WORKBOOK TOOL B5: ASSESSING AWARENESS (optional)

Can you identify the following awareness factors in relation to your change challenge?	Local (including farm scale)	Regional Scale	National Scale	Other
Public communication of science and innovation				
Mechanisms for industry and community engagement in government policy processes				
Mechanisms for sharing information between govts, industry and community				
Opportunities for training and skills development				
What other awareness factors are in place to support your desired change?				

Questions for further discussion:

Which awareness factors do you think are the most important in relation to your desired change? What awareness factors are missing or needed

Workbook tool B6: Reserves

What types of **social, natural and financial reserves** need to be maintained to enable adaptation, re-organisation, renewal?

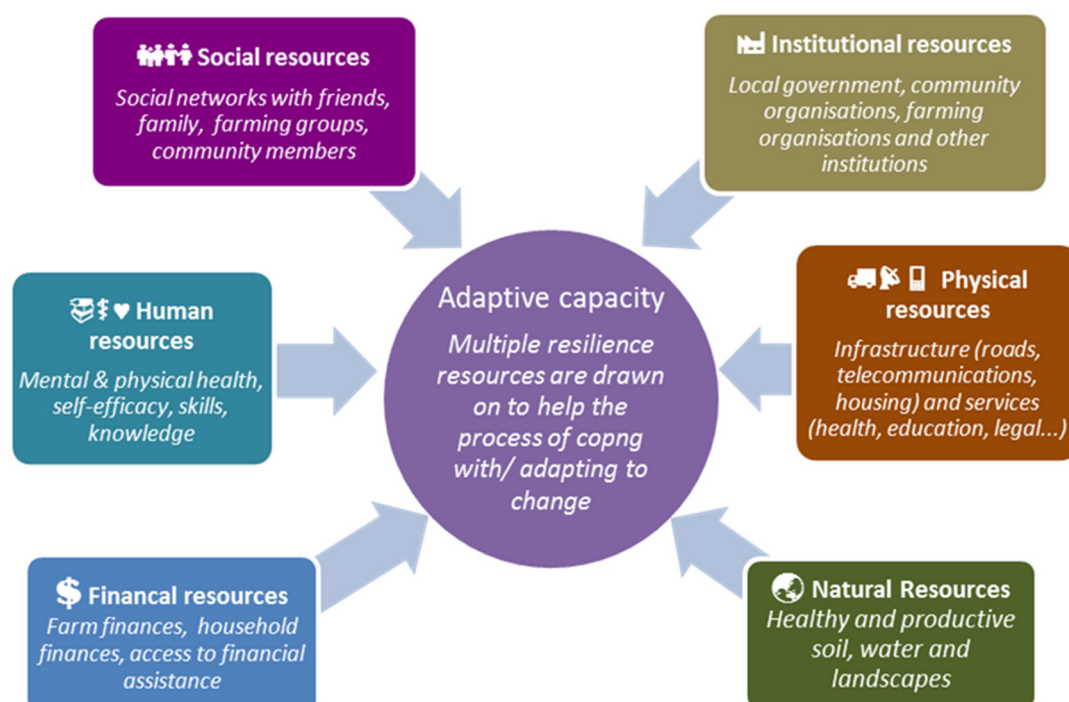| Can you identify the following reserves in relation to your change challenge?	Local (e.g. farm, town) scale	Regional scale	National scale	Other
Natural (ecological) give examples				
Economic				
Institutional				
Cultural				
Social				
What other reserves are in place to support your desired change?				

Questions for further discussion:
Which reserves do you think are the most important in relation to your desired change? What reserves are missing or needed?

WORKBOOK TOOL B7: RESOURCES

What types of **resources** need to be maintained to enable adaptation, re-organisation, renewal?

Can you identify the key resources in relation to your change challenge?	Local scale	Regional scale	National scale	Other

Questions for further discussion:

Which resources do you think are the most important in relation to your desired change? What resources are missing or needed?

Resilience Resources

Do you have access to resources you can draw on to help you cope with and adapt to change?

Resilience resources together provide you with 'adaptive capacity'. Are there areas where access to the resources could be improved?

WORKBOOK TOOL B8: GOVERNANCE

Can you identify the following governance factors in relation to your change challenge?	Local (e.g. farm) scale	Regional scale	National scale	Other
Regulatory arrangements				
Cross-jurisdictional decision making mechanisms				
Community/ stakeholder relations				
Supply chain management				
What other governance factors are in place to support your desired change?				

Questions for further discussion:
Which governance capacities do you think are the most important in relation to your desired change? What governance capacities are missing or needed?

WORKBOOK TOOL B9: PLANNING YOUR WORK TOGETHER

What do we need to do and how are we going to do it? In groups of 2-4, nominate the opportunity you're most interested in and work with the guiding questions and framework provided to develop a plan for working together to achieve change. Try to be as detailed as possible when developing your plan. Report back to the group.

What are some tangible actions?	Is this a local action? Or does it require action at 'other levels'? What are these levels? How do we connect?	Who needs to be involved to get this started?	When can we do this? (list short- and medium-term actions)	What are resources required – and where can we find them? (What support mechanisms are there already?)	Indicators of success – How do we you know that the action(s) are working?

Decision point	Guiding Questions	Your responses to questions
Should we act?	What is already happening (to support or move towards our desired change)? What initiatives? Projects? Alliances? Arrangements? Who is involved in these? And at what scale/s (local, regional, national, other)? What or who is/has the mandate for leading change in the area of our change challenge? What are the risks of NOT taking any action? How important are these risks? (For us? For our organization/s? For our communities?)	
How do we act?	Who needs to be involved in addressing our change challenge? Who are the most important stakeholders we need to work with? What mechanisms are there to support the key people and organizations to address the challenge together?	
How do we achieve our desired change?	What are the barriers in relation to our change challenge? How can we address these together? What process will we choose to achieve our desired change? e.g. (collaborative change management project; new group to undertake further action planning for change; community engagement process etc).	
What are the first actions we need to take?	How can we kick start action? What needs to / can happen within the next month?	

NEXT STEPS – COMMITTING TO ACTION

In closing your workshop, make sure each participant commits to one achievable action they are willing to take within in the next month. Examples for such actions could include: report on the workshop and suggested actions in your organisation; contact one or more of the identified additional stakeholders according to your level of influence.

Maintain momentum:

Decide on how the group participants will continue to maintain contact. Consider scheduling regular follow-up meetings to report on actions taken, potentially using selected workbook tools to review whether additional actions are needed. Convening a dedicated working group to coordinate decision-making and action outcomes might be required.

WORKBOOK TOOL C1: EVALUATION

Your feedback will help improve future workshops

Your name (optional): _____

Overall, how would you rate your workshop experience? (Please tick)

No value at all ☐	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐	6 ☐	7 ☐	Extremely valuable ☐

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate your response to each of the statements below:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A. As a result of this workshop I have a good general understanding of the challenge we discussed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. I was able to share knowledge and experience relevant to the practical application of the change challenge	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. I picked up new information or ideas from other participants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. The workshop generated insights that will be useful for me in future	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. I feel hopeful about instigating an action in my community or beyond	.	.	.	.	.
F. The workshop was well organised and facilitated	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐

The most valuable aspects of the workshop for me were:

Was this discussion useful for exploring your change challenge? If so, why? If not, why not?

Was this discussion useful for identifying and planning future actions? If so, why? If not, what can be improved?

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