

Dungog Future of Farming Forum No1 Outcomes

Dungog and District Chamber of Commerce hosted this forum which involved a range of producers from across the Shire giving a short presentation about their agricultural pursuits. The aim of the forum was to:

- Build networks related to agriculture and local businesses
- Showcase unique local and regional agricultural ventures
- Update participants on Dungog Shire's economic planning initiative

The event was facilitated by Cameron Archer, who has had a long association with agriculture in the region as former principal of Tocal College.

Mayor John Connors, Dungog Shire Council, and local beef producer and landowner opened proceedings. Mr Dave Layzell MP, Member for Upper Hunter also spoke at the commencement of the forum.

Agricultural industries represented included:

Poultry	Fresh local produce outlet
Beef	Mixed Farming
Dairying	Avocados
Poultry processing	Timber
Horticulture	Equine

Following the presentations, the floor was open for discussion from attendees. Over 80 people attended from across the Shire.

This short report aims to record the issues raised during the forum which will direct the way matters can be addressed into the future.

- Importance of collaboration across the industries and the community to enable the interests of farming to be heard
- Opportunities for agritourism
- Various views on further land sub division in the rural areas
- Not many standalone farmers but many serious about farming while maintaining an off-farm income
- Importance of having an effective marketing strategy if in a specialised boutique enterprise
- Dairying continues with some strong family farms
- Need to encourage young farmers to stay in the district by creating conditions for agriculture to have a long term future
- Importance of Lostock Dam water for agriculture
- Impact on farming if Paterson Valley is linked into Hunter Water supply meaning many more restrictions on agricultural developments because the catchment is supplying potable water
- Some innovative farm equipment manufacturing in the Shire as well innovation in land and soil management

- Potential for horticultural enterprises to relocate from Sydney basin and establish large nurseries in the Shire
- Extensive interest in equine activities, much diversity and expenditure in the area and potential for further growth
- A successful sustainable timber enterprise with expansion underway.
- A poultry meat processing operation is a Woodville and available to slaughter and process all kinds of poultry
- Two successful local avocado farms were showcased
- The supply of labour for these and other farms was identified as an issue with on farm casual accommodation as an option for the future
- Dungog Wholefood Coop recently opened which will provide all sorts of opportunities
- The closeness of Dungog to large population centres and the expanding Newcastle airport was raised as an important advantage for local producers
- Carbon credits and carbon farming potential identified
- Important to involve schools in future initiatives
- Create a youth development plan for agriculture
- Council is seeking a dividend from Hunter Water for the supply of water to urban areas similar to Resources for Regions in mining.
- Possibility of having those involved in equine pursuits to come together to identify potential for collaboration
- Potential to lease small areas for intensive production from lifestyle blocks which are not fully utilised.
- Discussion regarding delays of some DAs – being followed up by Council.

Follow up

Nathan Pratt who is preparing the Economic Development Plan for the Shire attended the forum and he will incorporate many of the outcomes into his report.

A second forum is planned to cover off on some of the industries and enterprises not showcased in Forum No1.

The second forum will involve the local High School and Tocal College to progress a youth in agriculture initiative.

Further initiatives will be identified in due course

Marion Stuart
President DDCC

25 May 2022

