



Food &
Agribusiness
Network

ADVANCING
INNOVATION IN PLACE



ADVANCE
QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government



TRANSFORMING THE FOOD AND AGRIBUSINESS ECOSYSTEM IN SOUTHEAST QUEENSLAND

South East Queensland boasts a thriving food production sector, yet like many regional areas, it faces a crucial juncture – how to solve the challenges and milk the opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution.

This is a big issue, especially given many producers are small to medium-sized companies. Which is why we see the emergence of what are called food innovation clusters.

Innovation clusters bring together regional businesses, research institutions and government organisations to form a local innovation ecosystem, thereby value-adding beyond what could be possible if operating in isolation. In effect, innovation clusters are about building hot spots of productivity and collaboration, delivering a new economy that is export-oriented, lower carbon, innovation-driven, and ultimately prosperous.

One of these innovation clusters is the Sunshine Coast-based Food and Agribusiness Network (FAN). Established in 2015, FAN is a food innovation cluster. It has more than 370 members across the food value chain, from Gympie to Moreton Bay.

Members include the Australian Macadamia Society, Belladotti Fine Foods, Blackflag Brewing, Gamble Family Lychees, Harefield Horticulture, Hum Honey, Little White Goat Cheese, Planet Organic, and Walker Seafoods.

In 2022, FAN received almost \$200,000 in Advance Queensland Regional Futures Collaborative Project funding for their Advancing Innovation in Place project to build a dynamic regional innovation cluster.

Acknowledging the maturity and diversity of local innovation systems throughout Queensland, the Advance Queensland Regional Futures Collaborative initiative seeks to enable entrepreneurially minded organisations and partners to collaborate on solving regionally significant or cross-industry relevant real world problems through innovation.

FAN CEO Nicole McNaughton said the Advancing Innovation in Place project aimed to enable everyone in the food and agribusiness industry to participate, benefit and add value in the evolving food landscape in Australia.

The Australian food landscape is driven by increasing nutrition literacy, the multicultural nature of contemporary Australian food, good eating and health, and the environmental impact of food production.

“The food and agribusiness industry is a major contributor to Queensland’s Gross State Product and to the Gross Regional Product in the regions in which FAN operates,” Ms McNaughton said.

“The industry is experiencing significant change and challenges, which need to be collectively addressed due to 87 per cent of the industry being made up of SMEs.

“Regions around the world that are doing this really well, build their futures on collaboration and innovation, where cooperation and competition go together.

“However, the sector is at the early stages of innovation, largely segmented and mostly inwardly focused.”

This is where FAN’s Advancing Innovation in Place comes into play.

“The Advancing Innovation in Place project draws inspiration from successful regions worldwide where collaboration and innovations forge a synergy between cooperation and competition.” Ms McNaughton said.

“The project has brought together stakeholders from diverse sectors across four distinct regions: Gympie, Noosa, Moreton Bay, and the Sunshine Coast.”

Within the first 12 months of implementation, significant strides have been made.

A blueprint for change has been laid out through the development of Regional Action Plans for each of the four regions.

“The themes of provenance, identity, agritourism and collaboration opportunities were key priorities mapped out by stakeholders in all of FAN’s four regions as part of the Regional Action Planning Process.”

In effect, the project has set out building four innovation clusters with a focus on collaborative food and beverage manufacturing on the Sunshine Coast, regenerative farming and natural capital in Gympie, food tourism and hospitality in Noosa, and peri-urban farming alongside large-scale horticulture production along with food tourism and food waste opportunities in Moreton Bay.

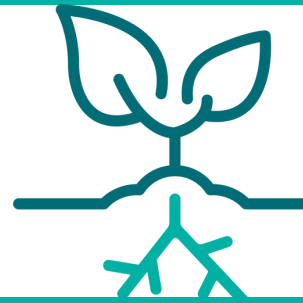
Ms McNaughton said the project served as a testament to the place-based cluster facilitated collaborative approach to drive innovation and economic growth to support regional development and has set a precedent for other regions and industries across Australia.



Pictured above - Industry Consultation Workshops

- Sunshine Coast Workshop
- Moreton Bay Workshop
- Gympie Workshop

ADVANCING INNOVATION IN PLACE PROJECT



ACHIEVED TO DATE



Regional Action Plans endorsed



Activation of 11 out of 17 project / activities identified as key priorities in Regional Action Plans.



80% or above attendance at the Regional Action Group meetings.



19 events held in each of the 4 regions | 3 online events
7 Sunshine Coast | 5 Noosa | 4 Moreton Bay | 3 Gympie
765 participants at the events



Draft impact measurement framework developed.

ADVANCING INNOVATION IN PLACE PROJECT

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL ACTION PLANS



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NOOSA

- Value Chain / Infrastructure research project being briefed to Future Food CRC / see wider CRC Strategic Partnership – research due to commence August
- Provenance and Agritourism now incorporated into Project CRAFTED
- Collaboration Congress first meeting held in June – with participation of Slow Food Noosa, Country to Noosa and Tourism Noosa



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MORETON BAY

- Provenance and Agritourism now incorporated into Project CRAFTED
- Sustainability framework – on hold pending involvement of new RDA Moreton Bay participant



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SUNSHINE COAST

- Provenance and Regional Identity now incorporated into Project CRAFTED
- Collaborative Value Chain – Framework grant proposal submitted as part of Sunshine Coast Council Grants – grant successful in submission
- Biosphere and Turbine leverage – FAN provided input into biosphere brand development. Overall Turbine activity to be scoped pending start of new Turbine CEO



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GYMPIE

- Spring Harvest 'event' delivered via Insights and Inspiration Event as part of Project CRAFTED
- Reinvigorated network - being reestablished with ongoing workshops and meetings
- Education activity in discussion with new Gympie Council Economic Development team
- Map of Gympie producers to be scoped with new Gympie Council team