



SENATOR THE HON. ARTHUR SINODINOS AO **Senator for New South Wales**

24 August 2017

Co-op grants to benefit farmers in Dobell

Dobell farmers stand to benefit from Coalition Government grants, delivered through Southern Cross University, to maximise profits at the farmgate.

Senator the Hon. Arthur Sinodinos AO said the grant was part of a \$4.5 million investment being made by the government to help groups of farmers, including in Dobell, to adopt collaborative and cooperative business models.

“The Coalition Government’s \$13.8 million Farm Co-operatives and Collaboration Pilot Program is an investment in giving farmers the skills and resources to take greater control of the supply chain and achieve economies of scale when it comes to negotiating prices for their goods,” Senator Sinodinos said.

Two Dobell organisations, Central West Farming Systems Inc., and Made in Hemp, will receive grants of \$78,400, and \$80,000 respectively.

The Central West Farming Systems project will create a decision support model and mentoring program for mixed farm enterprises. The aim of the project is to increase returns, marketing options and confidence of on-farm decision makers (specifically women in the first year).

The Made in Hemp project will research, prepare and present a guide on how to get involved in the recently approved hemp food industry in Australia. This will assist developing a comprehensive business plan and five-year strategy, including a budget and cash flow forecasts. It will also develop an interactive website to serve as a networking platform for the group.

“We want more Australian farmers to have access to the information and experts they need to decide whether a collaborative arrangement is right for them—that’s what Southern Cross University is now doing under the ‘Farming Together’ brand.

“These grants are helping interested businesses to make the next step, allowing groups to move towards forming a co-operative or some other collaborative business arrangement, giving farmers greater bargaining power when it comes to negotiating with buyers.

“The demand is clear: this pilot has already engaged with more than 700 farmer groups and over than 16,000 farmers across Australia.”

The Farm Co-operatives and Collaboration Pilot Program is being delivered through the Coalition Government’s \$4 billion Agriculture Competitiveness White Paper.

The Coalition is committed to helping Australian farmers to take advantage of collaboration and the cooperative structure as a mechanism to achieving better and fairer returns back through the farmgate.

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