

final report

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More Beef from Pastures South Australian 2010-2013 State Coordination

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Abstract

More Beef from Pastures (MBfP) is Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA) flagship extension and communication program for the southern beef industry. Simon Vogt, Rural Directions Pty Ltd, has been engaged to deliver the State Coordination of Phase II of the MBfP program in South Australia. Phase II of the MBfP program aims to achieve the primary objective of sustainably increasing beef productivity and/or profit through optimisation of the available feed base.

Successful engagement with the private and semi-private delivery networks in South Australia has been essential to the success of the MBfP program. Attracting event partners and co-funders has also been central to the success of the program.

The MBfP program in SA engaged with 19 different delivery organisations to deliver 50 MBfP co-funded workshops and events to 1,013 participants between 2010 and 2013. 73 unique presenters were utilised to present to beef producers in this process.

South Australia recorded an excellent level of performance across our MBfP KPI's. The program achieved 241% of its target participation KPI's, averaged across all three levels of engagement. We also achieved a high level of producer satisfaction across the events delivered. The results and evaluation data support continued investment in the program.

Executive summary

More Beef from Pastures (MBfP) is Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA's) majority market extension and communication program for the southern beef industry. The MBfP program is currently in its second phase. Simon Vogt, Rural Directions Pty Ltd, was engaged to deliver the State Coordination of Phase II of the MBfP program in South Australia (SA) from 2010 to 2013.

Phase II of the MBfP program aims to build on the activities and awareness created in Phase I of the program and continues to strive towards achieving the primary objective of sustainably increasing beef productivity and/or profit through optimisation of the available feed base. Productivity is measured at the producer level as the number of kilograms of beef produced per hectare per unit of rainfall.

As the South Australian State Coordinator, Simon Vogt worked as part of a national team, led by Peter Schuster as the National Coordinator, to deliver the program objectives. State coordination responsibilities have included:

- Development of a state business plan that detailed an annual operating plan of activities in line with the associated state key performance indicators.
- Allocating the delivery budget to best meet the requirements and KPI's of the program.
- Coordination and implementation of the business plan, including allocating resources and engaging public and private sector deliverers/facilitators, as appropriate to best meet the requirements and KPI's of the program.
- Engaging, coordinating, and integrating activities with the existing state based extension and delivery networks.
- Facilitating the communication of event activities and dates between the delivery network and MLA.
- Working closely with the delivery network to fulfil the monitoring and evaluation requirements of Phase II of the MBfP program.

By the completion of its second phase (2015), MBfP aims to increase the average pasture utilisation of targeted producers by 10%, thereby enabling an increase in enterprise throughput (kilograms of beef per hectare) and hence productivity and profitability gains.

Phase II of the MBfP program has been built around achieving engagement with beef producers at three different levels. These levels were defined as Category A, Category B, and Category C level engagement. In principle:

- Category A events relate to MBfP program awareness activities,
- Category B events are focused on increasing producer knowledge and skills,
- Category C events are focused on achieving effective on-farm practice change.

Successful engagement with the private and semi-private delivery networks in South Australia has been essential to the successful delivery of Phase II of the MBfP program. Attracting event partners and co-funders has also been central to the success achieved by the program. As a result of there not being a public sector beef extension and delivery platform in SA, there was an increased requirement to partner with other industry funding sources.

Michael and Jane Evans, Wootoona, Angaston, SA, and Bruce and Libby Creek, Hillcrest Pastoral, Avenue Range, SA were selected as the MBfP Producer Advocates for South Australia and have added value to the program.

Across the three years of delivery from 2010 to 2013 the MBfP program delivered 50 MBfP co-funded workshops and events in South Australia through engagement with at least 19 different delivery organisations. The 50 MBfP co-funded workshops were attended by 1,013 beef producers and delivered by 73 unique presenters. In addition to the 19 unique delivery organisations that were engaged to deliver MBfP activities, co-funding and in kind support was provided by a further 15 organisations. The additional funding and support greatly assisted engaging South Australian beef producers with high quality MBfP events and activities.

South Australia recorded an excellent level of performance against our KPI's. The program achieved 241% of its target participation KPI's, averaged across all three levels of engagement. We also achieved an average satisfaction score of 8.45 out of 10 across all MBfP events and an average 'value to my business' rating of 8.17 out of 10.

Successful engagement with the private and semi-private delivery networks has been central to delivering the MBfP program in South Australia. The integration of the national monitoring and evaluation framework into Phase II of the MBfP program has also been very successful.

Recommendations for future delivery include:

- Reconsidering the coaching model of delivery and how it can be applied within the MBfP program in South Australia.
- Continuing to explore different event types to assist with achieving effective practice change.
- Considering the establishment of a 'Beef Reference Group' within South Australia with a charter to enhance beef extension within the state through effective collaboration and communication.

In conclusion, the MBfP program in South Australia recorded an excellent level of achievement against its KPI's for the three year period from 2010 to 2013 across all three levels of engagement. The monitoring and evaluation data has clearly demonstrated that the MBfP activities held within SA were able to increase producer knowledge, skills, and confidence. The evaluation data has also provided valuable insights into the level of practice change that producers were planning on implementing within their businesses as a result attending MBfP activities and events. The level of intended practice change recorded was very encouraging.

We were successful in engaging with some producers at four or five different MBfP events over this three year time period, reinforcing a high level of satisfaction with the events that these producers attended. Both the evaluation data and the producer uptake of the program suggest that the MBfP program provided a robust return on investment for MLA and its co-investors, which includes the levy-paying producer. This supports future investment in the MBfP program.

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1 Background

More Beef from Pastures (MBfP) is Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA's) majority market extension and communication program for the southern beef industry. The MBfP program is currently in its second phase in Southern Australia.

Through its first phase (2004-09), MBfP established a strong network of delivery partners, as well as significant industry recognition of the program's suite of tools and associated activities. Culminating in the successful engagement (in awareness and/or participatory learning activities) of over 21,000 southern beef producers and an overall benefit:cost ratio of 4.4:1. MBfP phase one generated a robust platform upon which to build more comprehensive improvements in producer confidence and enterprise and industry performance.

The second phase of MBfP (2010 -2015) aims to build on what was established during the first phase (2004-2009) of the program with a focus on:

- Increasing the levels and permanency of skills and enterprise performance,
- Improving the rigour around monitoring and evaluation of practice change and change in producer skills and knowledge, and
- Enhancing the mechanisms through which new R&D ideas are collated from industry.

The program strategy for MBfP phase two (MBfP II) was the result of a comprehensive internal and external review, and a concerted effort to ensure the program capitalised on the significant brand recognition, awareness and engagement generated since 2004. Core to the success of the proposed program were several features designed to increase its versatility and efficacy, especially in the face of significant changes to, and on-going variability in, the beef production and extension environments in Southern Australia.

Simon Vogt, Rural Directions Pty Ltd, was engaged to deliver the State Coordination of MBfP II program in South Australia (SA) from 2010 to 2013. This engagement resulted in Rural Directions Pty Ltd being the first private consulting organisation to be involved in a state coordination role for the MBfP program.

MBfP II aims to build on the activities and awareness created in Phase I of the program and continues to strive towards achieving the primary objective of sustainably increasing beef productivity and/or profit through optimisation of the available feed base. Productivity is measured at the producer level as the number of kilograms of beef produced per hectare per unit of rainfall. MBfP II is focused on targeting beef producers with greater than 100 head.

The defining feature of MBfP II program was the requirement for producers to move beyond awareness of the program and program material to a point where it can be demonstrated that, as a result of participating in a MBfP activity, they have either:

- Quantifiably increased their knowledge, skills or confidence, and/or
- Implemented a practice change on farm that has resulted in an economic benefit.

As the South Australian State Coordinator, Simon Vogt worked as part of a national team, led by Peter Schuster as the national coordinator, to deliver the program objectives.

State coordination responsibilities included:

- Development of a state business plan that detailed an annual operating plan of activities in line with the associated state key performance indicators.
- Allocating the delivery budget to best meet the requirements and KPI's of the program.
- Coordination and implementation of the business plan, including allocating resources and engaging public and private sector deliverers/facilitators, as appropriate to best meet the requirements and KPI's of the program.
- Engaging, coordinating and integrating activities with the existing state based extension and delivery networks.
- Facilitating the communication of event activities and dates between the delivery network and MLA.
- Working closely with the delivery network to fulfil the monitoring and evaluation requirements of phase two of the MBfP program.

2 Project objectives

The following background and project objectives were outlined at the commencement of the MBfP II program.

2.1 Background to project objectives

Since the inception of MBfP, average utilisation of the pasture base in southern Australia has remained relatively constant at approximately 35% (Black, pers comm., 2009). Importantly, while this figure has highlighted relatively little improvement in industry-wide utilisation of the feed base, it highlights three important considerations:

- The full benefit of the awareness and engagement levels achieved in MBfP to date have not yet been translated into tangible changes in feed base utilisation across southern Australia;
- There remains a significant opportunity and imperative to capitalise on the existing high levels of awareness and motivation to improve this, and other aspects of grazing management; and,
- There is enormous value to industry to be realised from a concerted approach to increase pasture utilisation in specific market segments, especially medium and large scale enterprises.

2.2 Project Objectives

By the completion of its second phase (2015), MBfP II aims to increase the average pasture utilisation of targeted producers by agro-climatic zones by 10%, thereby enabling an increase in enterprise throughput (kilograms of beef per hectare) and hence productivity and profitability gains.

MBfP II program was built around achieving engagement with producers at three different levels. These levels were defined as Category A, Category B, and Category C level engagement.

- Category A events are awareness style activities with the intention to maintain broad industry awareness of the MBfP program, the MBfP manual, and the suite of MBfP producer tools.
- Category B events are about building producer skills and capacity and are focused on achieving change in producer Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, and Aspirations (KASA change).
- Category C events are about supporting adoption and increasing the uptake of beneficial on-farm practice change.

In coordinating the MBfP program, each of the State Coordinators were set Key Performance Indicator (KPI) targets across each level of engagement. The specific key performance indicators for South Australia are outlined in the following table.

STATE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & PRODUCER SEGMENTATION

CATEGORY	IMPERATIVE	PRODUCER ENGAGEMENT			
		BY HERD SIZE (% OF TOTAL CATTLE SALES)			TOTAL (100%)
		100 – 400 hd (18%)	400 – 1600 hd (40%)	1600 – 5000+ hd (37%)	
AWARENESS (A)	Maintaining broad industry awareness (50% of southern beef producers)	476	217	36	729
KASA (B)	Building knowledge, skills and confidence (30% producers engaged in A)	143	65	11	219
PRACTICE CHANGE (C)	Supporting adoption and practice change (50% of producers engaged in B)	72	32	6	110

3 Methodology

3.1 Business plan development

Successful engagement with the private and semi-private delivery networks in South Australia, from the outset of the project, was considered essential to the successful delivery of MBfP II program. To achieve this, at the commencement of the project, the following two initiatives were implemented:

- An 'Information Memorandum for Program Delivery in South Australia' for MBfP II was developed.
- An Expression of Interest process for the delivery of MBfP activities in South Australia was publically advertised in December 2010, requesting that interested parties contact Simon Vogt as the MBfP State Coordinator to receive a copy of the 'Information Memorandum for Program Delivery in South Australia.

These initiatives were successful in establishing the objectives of MBfP II. Publically advertising Phase II also ensured that all potential delivery partners within South Australia were made aware of the opportunity to be involved.

Based on the expressions of interest received, and also through consultation with the industry networks within South Australia, a State Business Plan was developed at the outset of the program. This business plan:

- acknowledged the achievements of Phase I of the program,
- identified any current challenges being experienced in the beef industry,
- established the goals and focus for MBfP II,
- identified the program delivery partners,
- identified the risks to effective delivery including outlining mitigation strategies to address these risks, and
- outlined the operational plan for delivery funds for the first year of the project.

The State Business Plan was subsequently reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

3.2 MBfP Producer Advocates

As part of the State Business Plan process, two MBfP producer advocates were selected for South Australia, being Michael and Jane Evans, Wootoona, Angaston, Barossa Valley SA, and Bruce and Libby Creek, Hillcrest Pastoral, Avenue Range, South-East SA.

Michael and Jane were selected as the Northern Producer advocates with their Wootoona property being located between the Fleurieu Peninsula, Barossa Ranges, and Mid North beef regions of the state. Michael and Jane represented mixed livestock enterprises as their Wootoona operation involving a prime lamb and self-replacing merino enterprise in conjunction with their beef herd.

Bruce and Libby Creek were selected to represent the South East region of South Australia, an important beef production region in the state with more than half of the state's beef cattle numbers. Bruce and Libby were chosen because of their management role with a large scale, specialist beef operation in the region. Hillcrest Pastoral runs more than 2,000 breeding cows and pursues a number of different target markets. In late 2011 Bruce accepted a management role in Kazakhstan to guide the development of a large scale Angus herd for Sever Agro N. Bruce

commenced this role in early 2012. Libby continued on at Hillcrest and kindly offered to continue in the MBfP Producer Advocate role in Bruce's absence, fitting things in with her regular travel schedule between Australia and Kazakhstan.

The South Australian MBfP Producer Advocates were engaged in the following ways.

Michael and Jane Evans

- Michael participated in the Producer Advocate induction workshop in Sydney in February 2011. This was combined with the MMfS Producer Advocates.
- Michael presented at the Hahndorf MBfP 'Raising the Steaks' forum in July 2011.
- Michael and Jane hosted the 'Farming Resources Forum' on their Woottona property in April 2012.
- Michael attended the "Confident Livestock Marketing" workshop in August 2012.
- Michael participated in the MBfP Producer Advocate and State Coordinator field and study tour to Mansfield, Victoria in October 2012.
- Michael and Jane contributed to a case study for the MBfP E-News.
- Michael also attended most of the MBfP activities held in his local area.

Bruce and Libby Creek

- Bruce participated in the Producer Advocate induction workshop in Sydney in February 2011. This was combined with the MMfS Producer Advocates.
- Bruce presented at the Naracoorte MBfP 'Raising the Steaks' forum in July 2011.
- Bruce and Libby contributed to a case study for the MBfP E-News.
- Libby attended the 'Confident Livestock Marketing' workshop in August 2012.
- Libby contributed to an article on bull selection in June 2013.
- Libby hosted and presented at the MBfP Breeder Workshop held in October 2013 at Hillcrest Pastoral.
- Bruce and Libby attended most of the MBfP activities held in their local area.

The South Australian MBfP program also utilised Victorian MBfP Producer Advocate Mark Bunge to present at the SEPLA/MBfP Beef Innovation Day held at Lucindale in April 2013. MBfP SA also engaged with Western Australian Producer advocates Phil Chalmer and Craig Forsyth to present at the "Raising the Steaks" forums held in South Australia in July 2011.

3.3 Delivery

Following the development of the State Business Plan came the opportunity to make the program operational in South Australia. This involved the selection of suitable activities to co-fund from the interested delivery partners and working closely with each of them to ensure that the robust monitoring and evaluation procedures were followed at each event. Making the program operational also involved consideration of an appropriate mechanism to launch MBfP II program with South Australian beef producers. Having clearly identified the monitoring and evaluation requirements in the 'Information Memorandum for Program Delivery in South Australia' made the reinforcement of these requirements a relatively straight forward process as a clear expectation was established at the commencement of the program.

Nationally, MBfP II program involved delivering activities across three different levels or categories. These categories are introduced in the following table.

Activity Category	Definition
Awareness (Category A)	Maintaining broad industry awareness of the MBfP program, the MBfP manual, and the MBfP producer tools.
KASA change (Category B) Knowledge Attitudes Skills Aspirations	Category B activities are about building producer knowledge, skills and confidence. KASA change is defined as a measurable increase in Knowledge, a positive change in Attitude, an increase in Skills or a change in producers Aspirations.
Practice Change (Category C)	Category C activities are about supporting adoption and increasing the uptake of practice change among producers to achieve quantifiable increases in on farm productivity.

One of the principles behind this delivery model was to attract beef producers to the MBfP program and resources through effective awareness activities (Category A), and then see these producers progress to participate in Category B and Category C activities over time. Another one of the principles behind this model of delivery was that as producers moved from Category A style activities through to Category C style activities they were on an increasing continuum of a 'user pays' approach. The expectation was that producers would need to be contributing to the delivery costs associated with taking part in Category B and Category C style activities. The reason for this being that there would be an increasing element of private good as producers moved to smaller group activities with a focus on supporting on-farm practice change.

3.4 MBfP “Raising the Steaks” forums

To launch MBfP II in South Australia an awareness campaign was developed that included the delivery of two MBfP “Raising the Steaks” workshops. These workshops were held in Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills and in Naracoorte in the South East of South Australia in July 2011. The purpose of these workshops was to:

- inform South Australian beef producers that MBfP II was operational and open for business,
- introduce the South Australian MBfP Producer Advocates and State Coordinator,
- stretch producer thinking about the potential of the MBfP program and what could be achieved by following the key principles detailed in the MBfP manual,
- advise producers how they could become involved with the program, and
- outline the increased monitoring and evaluation requirements which would be applied during MBfP II.

To achieve these objectives Phil Chalmer and Craig Forsyth, experienced MBfP Producer Advocates from Western Australia, were invited across to speak at the MBfP “Raising the Steaks” workshops. Phil and Craig were both very well received

by producers and clearly demonstrated what could be achieved through following the pasture management principles introduced in the MBfP manual. They also demonstrated what could be achieved through innovation and collaboration across the beef industry and the beef supply chain.

While successfully achieving a number of objectives, with the benefit of hindsight, some aspects of the session plan at the “Raising the Steaks” workshops could have been improved. While the sessions around production management were really well received, producers felt that the time spent on outlining the nature and structure of MBfP II and how it differed from Phase I could have been spent more wisely. This reinforced the need to keep MBfP activities focused on the needs of producers and closely linked to production management at all times. This also provided an indicator that the appetite for awareness style activities in South Australia was not particularly strong and that producers were already primed for Category B and Category C style activities.

3.5 Event application process

Following the MBfP “Raising the Steaks” workshops, delivery of Category B and Category C activities were prioritised. To be able to deliver high quality Category B and Category C activities in South Australia, the State Coordinator understood that there would be a need to partner with other sources of funding within the industry. This would enable an adequate pool of funds and resources to be combined to deliver events and activities within the state that were of the right standard. This effectively created a win:win situation for the beef industry in South Australia as the MBfP delivery funds alone could not achieve the desired outcomes and yet there were also industry groups that required additional co-funding to be able to make events and activities happen. Without the co-funding, resources, and promotional support from the MBfP program these industry groups would not have been as effective at reaching beef producers with high quality events. As a result of there not being a public sector beef extension and delivery platform in SA, there was an increased requirement to partner with other industry funding sources.

An event application form and process was developed to facilitate any expressions of interest to access MBfP co-funding. This event application form captured a wide range of essential information against which applications for co-funding could be assessed. A full event budget was captured on the event application forms such that other event partner and producer contributions could be easily recognised.

3.6 Delivery channel enhancement

The State Coordinator recognised that there was a need to enhance the number of channels through which the MBfP program could reach beef producers within the state. The traditional channels to beef producers through private and semi-private consulting and extension providers needed to be upheld and enhanced however there was also a need to look for additional channels and new opportunities. A number of channels were explored. The most effective new channels were the partnerships established with breed societies, the Beef CRC program (while it was active), and The University of Adelaide.

3.7 Delivery outcomes

Across the three years of delivery from 2010 to 2013 the MBfP program in SA delivered 50 MBfP co-funded workshops and events through engaging with at least 19 different delivery organisations. These delivery organisations included:

1. Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM
2. Ag Concepts
3. Angaston Agricultural Bureau
4. Angus Australia (SA Branch) and Penny Schulz
5. Barossa Improved Grazing Group
6. Beef CRC
7. DAFF Western Australia
8. Greg Johnsson – Kangaroo Island Vet Clinic
9. Landmark
10. Limousin SA
11. Murray Grey Society (SA)
12. ProAdvice
13. Pro-Ag Consulting
14. Rural Directions Pty Ltd
15. Rural Solutions SA
16. South East NRM
17. T Prance Consulting
18. The University of Adelaide
19. Victorian DEPI

In the delivery of the 50 MBfP co-funded workshops and events held within South Australia between 2010 and 2013, 73 unique presenters were utilised to present to beef producers. A total of 1,013 participants were engaged with the MBfP program through the 50 co-funded workshops and events that were held.

In addition to the 19 unique delivery organisations that were engaged to coordinate and deliver MBfP activities we also received co-funding or in kind support from a further 15 organisations. These additional sources of funding and support greatly assisted us in reaching South Australian beef producers with high quality events and activities.

3.8 National meetings

As the State Coordinator for South Australia, Simon Vogt also participated in nine national face to face meetings for the MBfP program. These meetings brought together the State Coordinators from Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and New South Wales with the MBfP National Coordinator and the MBfP project manager from MLA. The meetings were held at the following times and locations:

- November 2010 in Sydney
- February 2011 in Sydney with the MBfP & MMfS Producer Advocates
- June 2011 in Sydney
- October 2011 in Sydney
- May 2012 in Sydney
- September 2012 in Mansfield Victoria with the MBfP Producer Advocates
- February 2013 in Sydney
- July 2013 in Sydney
- November 2013 in Sydney

These meetings were invaluable in establishing national consistency across the monitoring and evaluation framework and also for sharing ideas for workshops and events between states. The meetings also allowed each of us as State Coordinators to come to strong understanding of who the specialist speakers were on certain

topics relevant to beef production in southern Australia. Holding most of the meetings in Sydney also enabled insightful updates on other MLA projects and programs to be provided, including how they could be integrated with the MBfP program. Involvement in these national meetings also enhanced the professional networks between the national MBfP delivery team, MLA, and other industry stakeholders. The strategic nature of these meetings was considered to be valuable with issues such as capacity development within the consulting sector discussed at the meeting in November 2013 and how it could be enhanced nationally.

Participation in each of the national meetings also enabled Simon Vogt to be in a strong position to recommend expert speakers across a wide range of topics to the delivery network in South Australia.

3.9 Supporting the monitoring and evaluation process

To support the implementation and application of the MBfP monitoring and evaluation framework strong levels of support from the State Coordinator were offered to each of the delivery organisations in South Australia. As the State Coordinator Simon Vogt reviewed all of the pre and post evaluation questions that were applied at each of the MBfP co-funded events to ensure consistency against the requirements. This review process also ensured that the questions were pitched at the right technical level and could be linked to the key learning outcomes for the event. Application of the national monitoring and evaluation framework was outlined as a condition of funding for all MBfP co-funded events held in South Australia. Payment was conditional on receiving all of the required evaluation data from events.

4 Results

4.1 Performance against KPI's

4.1.1 Participation KPI's

The following level of performance was achieved against our KPI's in South Australia.

SA ATTENDEES KPI			
	KPI	Actual	% Achieved of 3 Yr Target
Category A KPI	729	1,013	139%
Category B KPI	219	714	326%
Category C KPI	110	285	259%

These results demonstrate that an excellent level of performance against each of our participation KPI's was achieved. They also demonstrate the SA focus maintained around prioritising the delivery of Category B and Category C events.

4.1.2 Evaluation return rate

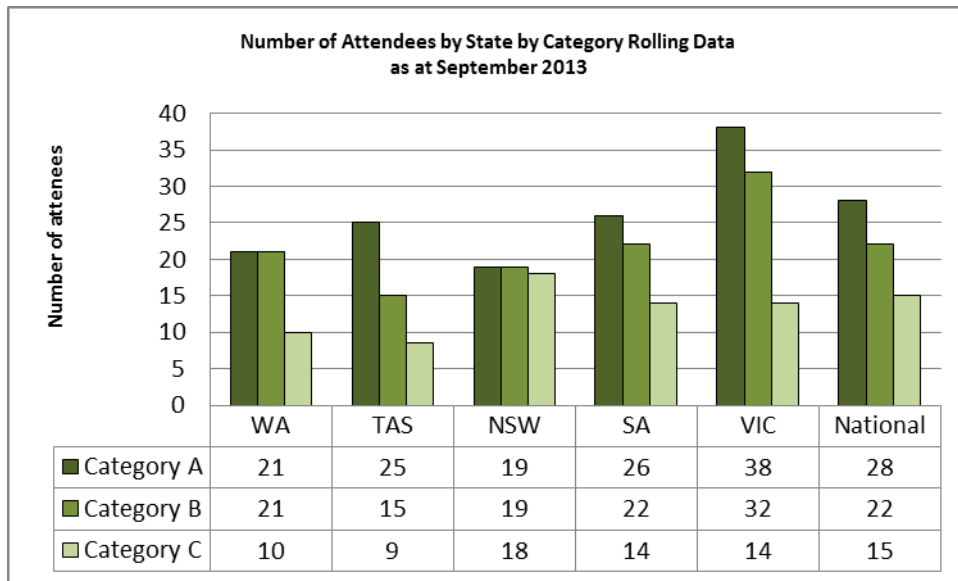
The following evaluation return rates were achieved across South Australia for each of the different categories of events.

SA RETURN RATE KPI			
	KPI	Actual	% Achieved of 3 Yr Target
Category A KPI	65%	147	57%
Category B KPI	80%	473	66%
Category C KPI	80%	25	60%

The evaluation return rates achieved in South Australia were lower than the target which was set, however these rates of return were consistent or slightly better than the rates achieved nationally.

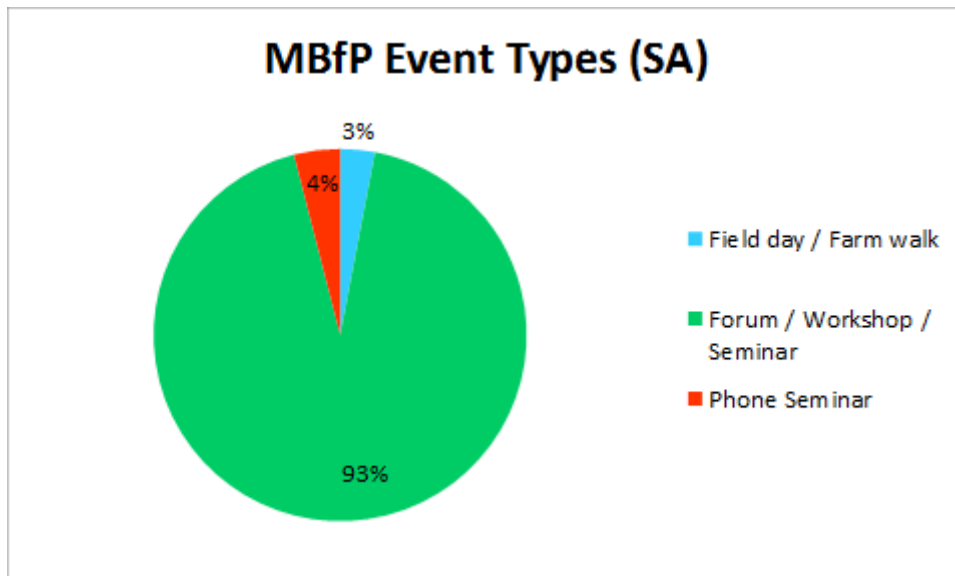
4.1.3 Number of attendees per event

Nationally, the average number of attendees per MBfP event for each of the different categories were as follows.



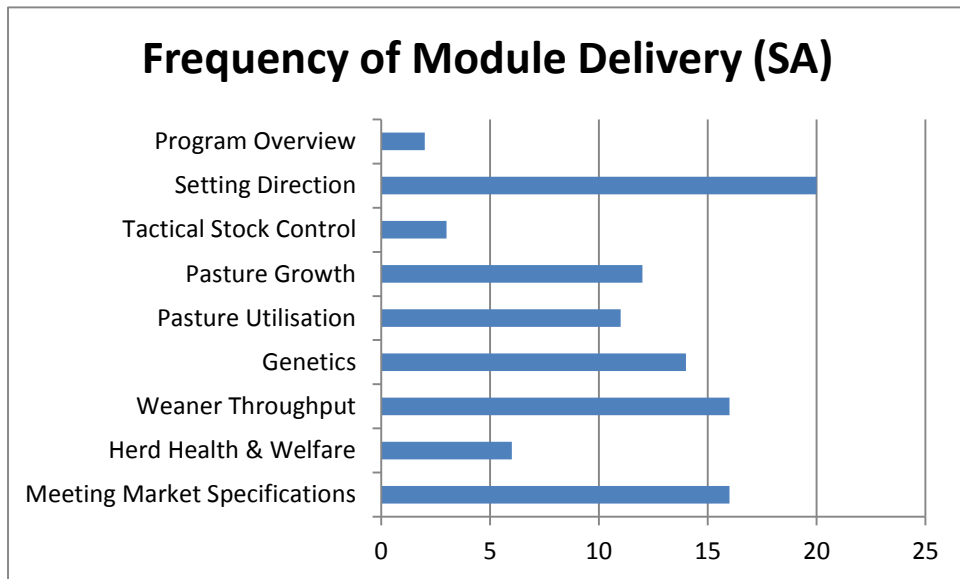
4.1.4 Event types

The following graph demonstrates the different types of MBfP co-funded events which were held in South Australia and the delivery frequency of each type of event.



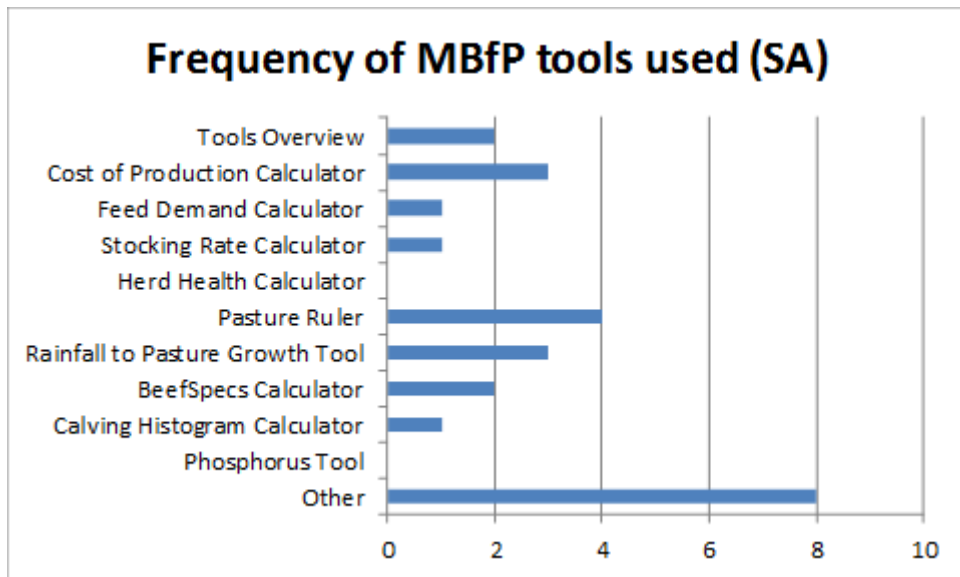
4.1.5 Frequency of module delivery

The following figure demonstrates the frequency of delivery in South Australia for each of the respective modules that make up the MBfP Manual.



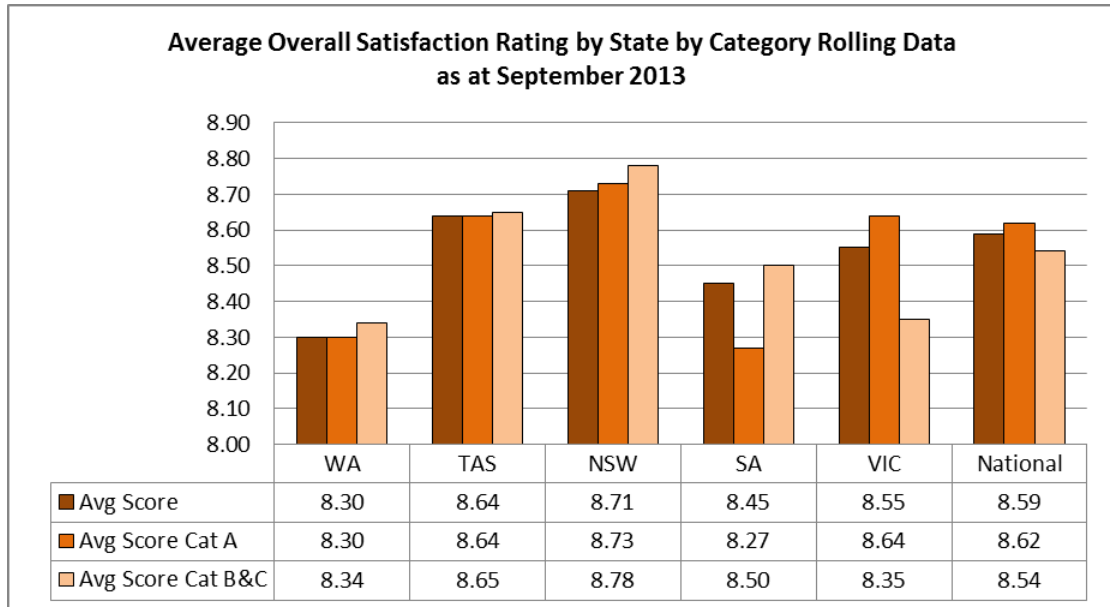
4.1.6 Frequency of tool delivery

The following figure demonstrates the frequency of delivery of each of the different MLA & MBfP tools at MBfP co-funded events in South Australia.



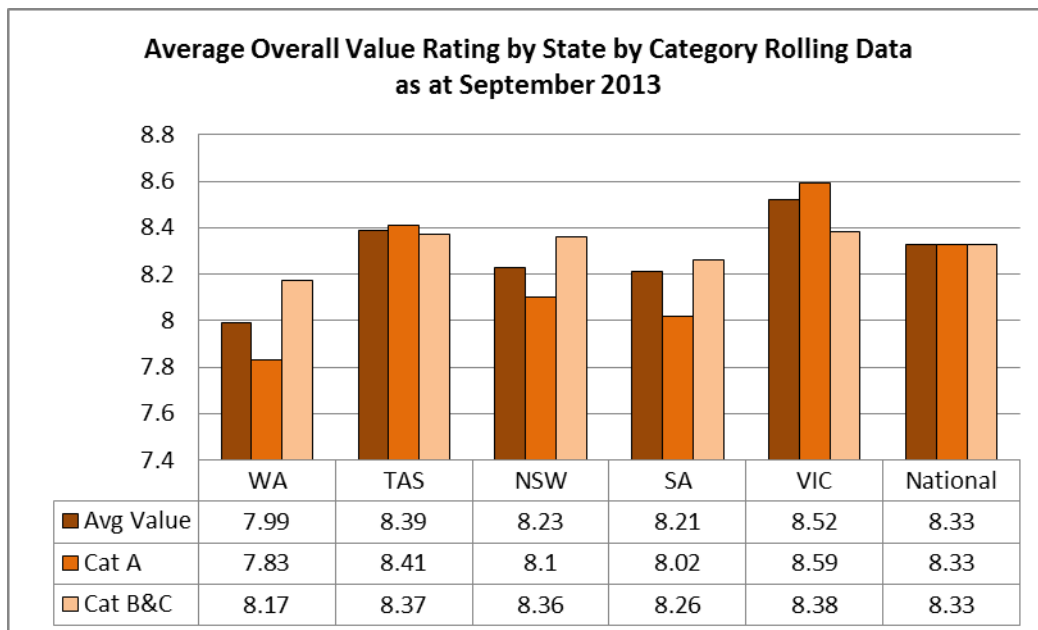
4.1.7 MBfP event satisfaction scores

An average satisfaction score of 8.45 out of 10 was achieved across all MBfP events delivered in South Australia. This is relatively consistent with the national average as demonstrated by the following graph.



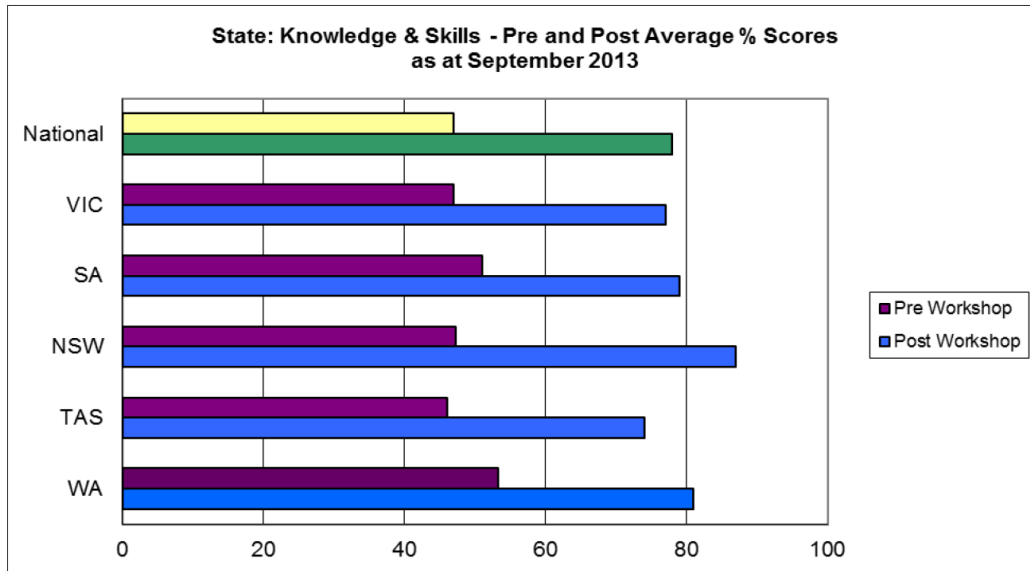
4.1.8 MBfP event value rating

An average value score of 8.17 out of 10 was achieved across all MBfP events delivered in South Australia. This is demonstrated in the following table.



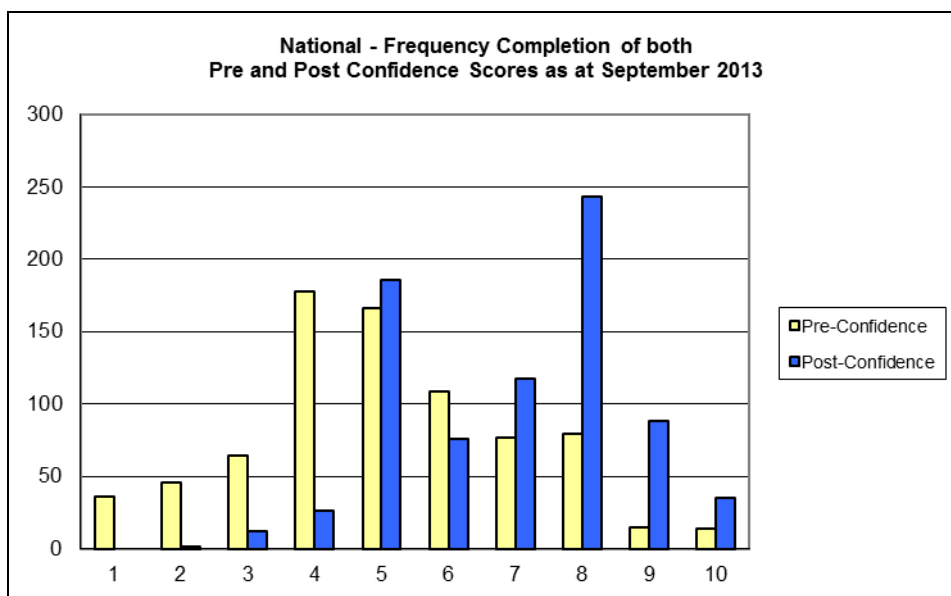
4.1.9 Pre & post workshop skills and knowledge

The following graph demonstrates the average pre workshop and post workshop scores for the knowledge and skills questions asked at each MBfP workshop. The average percentage of correct answers for the pre workshop knowledge and skills questions was 51% in South Australia. Post the workshops the average percentage of correct answers increased to 78%. This demonstrates that the MBfP workshops added value and increased producer skills and knowledge.



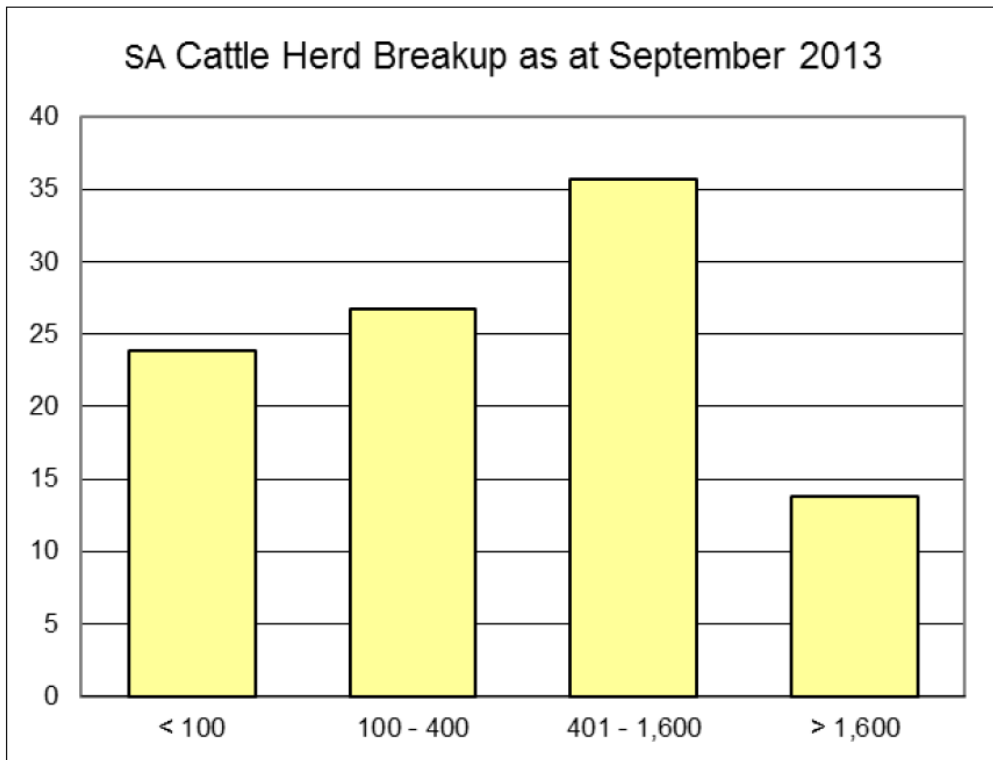
4.1.10 Pre and post workshop confidence

Producer confidence in regard to a specific workshop topic was also captured at a number of events. The range of confidence scores pre and post each of the national MBfP workshops are demonstrated in the following graph. The yellow bars capture the individual pre workshop confidence scores while the blue bars capture to individual post workshop scores. This graph shows that the MBfP workshops held nationally resulted in a significant increase in producer confidence in regard to the topic at hand.



4.1.11 Herd sizes reached

The following graph demonstrates the herd size structure for the MBfP participants that were reached in South Australia.



The following table demonstrates the herd size structure of beef producers in South Australia against the herd size structure for participants that were reached through the MBfP activities that were delivered within South Australia. This indicates that MBfP II was successful in reaching the larger herd sizes with MBfP activities.

Herd Size	Number of Beef Producers in SA (Source: ABARE)	Number of Beef Producers in SA (%) (Source: ABARE)	Producer profile reached by the MBfP program in SA
<100	811	36%	24%
100 - 400	952	42%	26%
401 – 1,600	434	19%	36%
>1,600	71	3%	14%
TOTAL	2,268	100%	100%

5 Discussion

5.1 Performance against our KPI's

South Australia recorded an excellent level of performance against the MBfP II KPI's, recording a 241% level of achievement averaged across all three categories of engagement. MBfP II in SA achieved an average satisfaction score of 8.45 out of 10 across all MBfP events and an average 'value to my business' rating of 8.17 out of 10.

This high level of achievement was the result of:

- a structured and planned approach to delivery,
- successful engagement with the private and semi-private delivery organisations within South Australia,
- strong uptake and application of the MBfP monitoring and evaluation framework,
- effective promotion of upcoming MBfP activities and events and
- selection of event topics that were relevant and of high value to producers.

The high level of achievement was made possible due to strong levels of co-investment from other industry stakeholders. This boosted the available resources and resulted in the delivery of high quality events. The success of the program also demonstrates that South Australian beef producers were well informed about the MBfP and keen to engage with the program to increase the productivity of their beef enterprises.

5.1.1 Event promotion

Event promotion was achieved through the development of a contact database of previous MBfP participants which was updated regularly. Previous participants were made aware of upcoming MBfP events through an email or mail out campaign. Event promotion also occurred through the MLA website, MLA Feedback magazine and targeted email campaigns to MLA members. Traditional avenues such as Rural Press advertising was also used for MBfP key events by the delivery organisations. Some event coordinators also phoned key producers prior to their events to discuss the content of their workshops and recommend why producers should be there.

5.1.2 Collaboration with Making More from Sheep

The Making More from Sheep (MMfS) program in South Australia was also coordinated by Rural Directions Pty Ltd and was led by Natasha Morley. This allowed collaboration on seven different activities during the 2010 to 2013 period. The seven activities were jointly branded between the MBfP and MMfS programs. These events generally involved topics which related to either setting directions or pasture growth and utilisation and as a result could be implemented in both a sheep and beef context.

5.1.3 Delivery channel enhancement

During the delivery of MBfP II each of the SA beef cattle breed societies were contacted offering MBfP co-funding and support for suitable and eligible extension activities. MBfP II was successful in engaging three South Australian breed societies that developed activities that were eligible for MBfP co-funding and support. A condition of this co-funding and support was that any of the key messages delivered by the speakers during sessions supported by the MBfP program needed to be breed neutral and underpinned by the principles contained within the MBfP manual. MBfP

It was successful in partnering with the Angus, Murray Grey and Limousin breed organisations within South Australia.

It was also valuable that MBfP II was able to establish a strong working relationship with Dr Stephen Lee and Associate Professor Wayne Pitchford of The University of Adelaide. Both Stephen and Wayne were heavily involved in the Beef CRC research projects and in particular the Beef CRC Maternal Productivity project. Stephen Lee is also the national coordinator for the Beef CRC Champions network along with being the Beef CRC Champion for Maternal Productivity. Stephen also secured funding in 2012 from DAFF's Extension and Outreach program to run the Steer Growth Path Project. This project involves tracking the growth path of different groups of steers from weaning through to slaughter with a goal to reduce turn-off age whilst maintaining or increasing turn-off weight. This has the potential to provide three benefits to the beef industry, namely

- reduced emissions per unit of beef produced,
- increased carcase quality through lower age at turn-off and
- potentially increased profitability for the producer.

It has been valuable for the MBfP program in South Australia to be close to the Growth Path project. The MBfP Breeder Workshop held at Hillcrest Pastoral in October 2013 was based around some of the early findings from the Growth Path project.

5.1.4 Engagement with the private delivery network

Successful and effective engagement with the private delivery networks has been central to delivering MBfP II in South Australia. There are a number of key principles which need to be followed when engaging with private delivery organisations. Firstly it is essential to recognise that all such organisations need to achieve a commercial outcome from their involvement in delivering MBfP activities and events. Attracting other event partners and seeking contributions from producers can assist with ensuring that enough resources are available to make their involvement in delivering MBfP co-funded events a commercial proposition. It is also critical to be unbiased and neutral when engaging the private delivery network and assess all event applications on merit. When engaging with the private delivery network it is also important to take a long term view and plan ahead, as pulling together multiple sources of funding to run events takes both time and effort. It is also very important to provide good levels of support to private and semi-private delivery organisations with the application of the monitoring and evaluation framework. In the state coordination role it is also essential to build trust and a transparent approach amongst the delivery network such that resources and ideas can be shared, while also appropriately protecting any intellectual property of the organisations involved.

5.1.5 National monitoring and evaluation framework

The integration of the national monitoring and evaluation framework into MBfP II has been very successful. It has taken significant efforts in relation to coordination, implementation and data entry however the process has demonstrated the value that MBfP II has added to SA beef producers. The implementation of the pre and post evaluation process has resulted in increased clarity of the key delivery messages. This has occurred because many presenters take the time to ensure that their key messages are highlighted and reinforced during their presentations.

The 'keepad' or 'clicker' technology has also been trialled and utilised at a number of MBfP events as a mechanism to encourage engagement with audiences and

streamline some of the monitoring and evaluation processes. This has been beneficial and generally well received. However it has been proven that clickers cannot fully replace the paper based pre and post evaluation process as the current monitoring and evaluation process requires some information which cannot be collected via clickers. This, along with deliverer confidence in using the clicker technology, is the biggest limitation to further use and uptake as it takes deliverers additional preparation time to run both the 'clicker' system and a paper based system. When used well, the clickers can add significant value to a presentation. This generally comes down to thoughtful and targeted question development.

5.2 Recommendations for future delivery

5.2.1 Coaching

It would be valuable to reconsider the coaching model and how it can be applied within the MBfP program in South Australia. The coaching model was introduced to the national MBfP delivery team by Basil Doonan at the outset of Phase II. Integration of the coaching model into the curriculum and delivery for MBfP II was initiated using Basil Doonan's model but unfortunately uptake was unsuccessful within the MBfP delivery network.

As a business, Rural Directions Pty Ltd has been involved in many successful scenarios where coaching has been used as a mechanism to drive business growth. Many of these situations have involved one on one engagement, whereas to meet the current requirements of the MBfP delivery model these coaching sessions would need to be group based. We believe that further consideration of how the coaching model could be integrated with the MBfP program in SA would be beneficial.

5.2.2 Event type

It is also important that the MBfP program continues to work with producers over a period of time and explores delivery methods beyond single day workshops. This can be enhanced in future delivery through developing more activities which involve a series of events delivered over a number of months. The practice change process is one which takes time and commitment and attendance at a single workshop is very unlikely to result in the uptake of effective practice change by itself. Effective practice change requires the influence of an underlying need or motivator, a strong resolution to make a change, and then the commitment to follow through and gather the many required sources of information to commence implementation. It also requires working through the teething problems or growing pains that the change will bring and remaining committed to the refinement of the implementation process until the change achieves the desired outcome. On-farm practice change also needs to be integrated in a 'whole of business' context for it to be successful. On-farm practice changes also need to be tailored to the environmental and management characteristics of the business involved. To be effective the adoption and uptake of practice change must be consistent with the strategic direction being taken by the underlying business.

Practice change also requires an appropriate skill base within the farm management team to successfully implement proven strategies that will drive productivity and profitability. The MBfP program has an excellent capacity to contribute to this skill development. To effectively achieve this there is a requirement to work with producers and managers across a period of time with targeted learning programs.

5.2.3 SA Beef Reference Group

In November 2012 a meeting was initiated between a small number of key industry stakeholders involved in beef extension within South Australia. At the time this was informally referred to as an 'SA Beef Reference Group' that could meet to encourage collaboration and effective beef extension. This meeting was considered beneficial from the perspective of the MBfP coordination role in South Australia. Although committed, the group was unable to secure any industry funding to be able to resource the group coming together on a more regular basis. The establishment of such a 'SA Beef Reference Group' that meets regularly would be valuable to the coordination of effective beef extension and is certainly worthy of further consideration.

5.2.4 Evaluation Return Rates

Against a targeted evaluation return rate for Category A activities of 65%, a return rate of 57% was achieved in SA. Against a targeted evaluation return rate for Category B and C activities of 80%, an average return rate of 63% was achieved in SA. Similar results were achieved in other states. It is also important to understand that the evaluation return rate is currently calculated based on the level of completion within an evaluation form rather than simply the physical number of forms received.

Given that a targeted approach was implemented in SA to maximise the evaluation return rate, the target return rate of 80% for Category B and C activities may need to be reconsidered. An evaluation return rate of 65% for Category B and C events may be more realistic. The approach taken to increase the evaluation return rate in SA involved:

- Setting a clear expectation with the delivery network of the evaluation return rate required.
- Establishing that all MBfP co-funding was subject to the MBfP evaluation framework being applied and the evaluation data being received.
- Encouraging the delivery network to pitch the evaluation requirements of the MBfP program in a positive manner with producers. This includes:
 - Ensuring deliverers build in sufficient time in their session plan to complete the evaluation process. At least 30 minutes is required within a session plan to apply the pre and post evaluation process for Category B & C activities.
 - Highlighting the benefits of the evaluation process around continuous improvement and ensuring that an appropriate return on producer levies is being achieved.

In regard to the evaluation return rate requirement, our view is that it is important that:

- All producers have an opportunity to provide feedback on events.
- The deliverer encourages producers to participate in the evaluation process.
- The evaluation requirement is pitched in a positive manner.
- That evaluation data is collected from a representative sample of producers.
- That the evaluation process does not impede producers from having a positive experience at MBfP activities.

Given this and the track record achieved to date, there could be merit in revising the current evaluation return rate expectation of 80% for Category B and C activities.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the MBfP program in South Australia recorded an excellent level of achievement against its KPI's for the three year period from 2010 to 2013 across all three levels of engagement. The monitoring and evaluation data has clearly demonstrated that the MBfP activities were able to increase producer knowledge, skills, and confidence. The monitoring and evaluation data also demonstrated a high level of producer satisfaction with the events that were held and that these events were of value to producers. MBfP also collected some very valuable insights into the level of practice change that producers were implementing within their businesses as a result attending MBfP activities and events. The level of intended practice change recorded was very encouraging.

MBfP was successful in attracting a good selection of producers to multiple MBfP events during this three year period. Repeat business and participation is always a healthy sign.

Both the evaluation data and the producer uptake of the program suggest that the MBfP program is providing a robust return on investment for MLA and its co-investors, which includes the levy paying producer. This supports future investment in the MBfP program.