

final report

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More Beef from Pastures – National Coordinator

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Abstract

More Beef from Pastures was the primary southern beef R&D extension program 2004 – 2016. The goal of the program was to achieve a sustainable increase in kilograms of beef produced per hectare through optimal management of the feedbase. During 2014 – 2016 382 MBfP activities were delivered to 12,348 participants through a network of State Coordinators overseen by a National Coordinator. The primary measure of the success of the MBfP program was state based performance against event participation KPIs. Annual state business plans were developed and reviewed regularly to ensure that appropriate strategies were in place to achieve KPIs and maximise the potential of the investment through the program. State monitoring and evaluation data was submitted to MLA every quarter by the State Coordinators to assess progress against KPIs. Each state was successful in achieving their contracted KPIs.

Executive summary

More Beef from Pastures (MBfP) commenced in 2004 as an initiative of Meat & Livestock Australia's (MLA) Southern (temperate) Beef Program and was designed as a delivery platform for outputs from research and development (R&D).

The overall goal of the program was to achieve a sustainable (economic and environmental) increase in kilograms of beef produced per hectare through optimal management of the feedbase.

Phase 2 of the program commenced in 2010 and concluded 30 December 2016 following program extensions in 2014 and 2016. This report relates to the period from 1 January 2014 to 30 December 2016 during which a total of 382 MBfP activities were delivered to 12,348 participants.

Central to the MBfP program was the Producer's Manual which was developed in 2004 and updated as an online manual in 2013.

The key program principles were:

- To be the market majority program for delivery of beef development and extension activities, taking the leadership to align beef extension and communication activities.
- Foster and strengthen both private and public extension and communication delivery mechanisms for the beef industry.
- Deploy limited industry resources effectively and efficiently, seeking opportunities to leverage resources where possible, both private and public sector.
- Recognise the engagement behaviour and different learning needs of producers, provide multiple entry points and a spectrum of aligned and coordinated activities that enable producers to engage in a complete learning pathway that seeks to improve skills, knowledge and confidence leading to practice change.
- Implement learning pathways to provide a three-tier – but not necessarily sequential – approach to learning, and include:
 - Broad scale communications activities (passive participation) to increase industry-wide awareness (Category A);
 - Targeted participatory learning activities to enhance producer knowledge, attitude, skills and/or aspirations (Category B); and
 - Targeted participatory learning activities to elicit, attribute and measure the impact of changes in key practices and procedures promoted in MBfP (Category C).

A network of State Coordinators was contracted by MLA to initiate and manage regional events and activities. A National Coordinator was appointed to provide leadership and support to the State Coordinator network to ensure the program key performance indicators (KPIs) were achieved.

Annual state business plans were developed for the 2014 - 2016 delivery period and reviewed regularly to ensure that appropriate strategies were in place to achieve KPIs and maximise the potential of the investment through the program.

State monitoring and evaluation data was submitted to MLA at least every quarter by the State Coordinators using an agreed template. This data was analysed and an updated evaluation rolling data report released shortly thereafter to allow the State Coordinators, the National Coordinator and MLA to assess progress against KPIs.

The primary measure of the success of the MBfP program was state based performance against KPIs for Category A, B and C event participation.

Each state was successful in achieving their contracted KPIs.

Target KPIs were established for evaluation return rate and herd size to encourage deliverers, via the State Coordinators, to collect as much complete evaluation data as possible and appeal to larger producers when planning events so as to maximise the impact on southern beef industry productivity. These target KPIs, while important, were aspirational rather than being contracted deliverables. While these KPIs were not achieved in every case, they did promote desired practices and encouraged engagement with larger producers.

The MBfP manual remains a useful resource and will continue to deliver value into the foreseeable future. Valuable delivery networks have been established in each state which could be leveraged during the next stage of R&D extension and adoption.

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1 Background

1.1 The More Beef from Pastures program

More Beef from Pastures (MBfP) commenced in 2004 as an initiative of Meat & Livestock Australia's (MLA) Southern (temperate) Beef Program and was designed as a delivery platform for outputs from research and development (R&D). The program provided a central source of information, decision support tools and communication and learning activities designed to foster improved management and overall performance in beef enterprises across southern Australia. This was in the form of principle and procedure-based information resources, extended and coordinated using collaborative partnerships with all southern partners.

The overall goal of the program was to achieve a sustainable (economic and environmental) increase in kilograms of beef produced per hectare through optimal management of the feedbase.

Phase 2 of the program commenced in 2010 and concluded 30 December 2016 following program extensions in 2014 and 2016. This report relates to Phase 2 of the MBfP program, more specifically the period from 1 January 2014.

Central to the MBfP program was the Producer's Manual which was developed in 2004 and updated in 2013. This update included the addition of a pastoral supplement which tailored the contents of the manual to meet the requirements of pastoral producers.

A total of 382 MBfP activities were delivered to 12,348 participants during the contract period from 2014-2016. In all 133 Category A activities were held with 6,696 in attendance, 200 Category B events with 4,922 attending and 49 Category C events with 730 in attendance.

1.2 Key program principles

The key program principles were:

- To be the market majority program for delivery of beef development and extension activities, taking the leadership to align beef extension and communication activities.
- Foster and strengthen both private and public extension and communication delivery mechanisms for the beef industry.
- Deploy limited industry resources effectively and efficiently, seeking opportunities to leverage resources where possible, both private and public sector.
- Recognise the engagement behaviour and different learning needs of producers, provide multiple entry points and a spectrum of aligned and coordinated activities that enables producers to engage in a complete learning pathway that seeks to improve skills, knowledge and confidence leading to practice change.
- Implement learning pathways to provide a three-tier – but not necessarily sequential – approach to learning, and include:

- Broad scale communications activities (passive participation) to increase industry-wide awareness (Category A);
- Targeted participatory learning activities to enhance producer knowledge, attitude, skills and/or aspirations (KASA) (Category B); and
- Targeted participatory learning activities to elicit, attribute and measure the impact of changes in key practices and procedures promoted in MBfP (Category C).

1.3 Overarching aims

In its first phase (2004-2009), MBfP focused on – and achieved – establishing a strong network of delivery partners, as well as significant levels of brand recognition, industry awareness and active engagement around the program’s suite of tools and associated activities. With this and despite consecutive years of low rainfall across southern Australia, MBfP successfully engaged over 21,000 southern beef producers.

Phase 2 (2010-2017) built on this success and, in an effort to further improve producer confidence and enterprise and industry performance, aimed to:

- Address the heightened needs of the red meat industry to remain competitive and sustainable in the face of a changing physical, financial and social environment.
- Account for the variable, rapidly changing and segmented nature of public and private sector research, development and extension (RD&E) resourcing and capability across the country.
- Robustly align with and extend the National Beef RD&E strategy.
- Be positioned as the preeminent southern beef communication and extension framework that enabled the harvesting of new R&D ideas and evaluation mechanisms that enabled more rigorous attribution of impact from MBfP investments.

In order to deliver the program, a network of State Coordinators (SC) were contracted by MLA to initiate and manage regional events and activities. A National Coordinator (NC) was appointed to provide leadership and support to the SC network to ensure the program KPIs were achieved.

2 Project objectives

The key deliverables were defined as:

- Professionally and efficiently coordinate the national MBfP program to ensure the approved KPIs are achieved, activities are aligned and integrated and all monitoring and evaluation is carried out as outlined in the MBfP Phase 2 strategy.
- Assist in the design and setting up of state delivery plans in conjunction with the respective SC.

- Set up systems to maintain regular communication with SC to track progress against milestones and identify potential issues that may hinder achievement of stated milestones in individual contracts.
- Drive effective linkages between the MBfP program and other MLA producer learning activities and programs.
- Arrange and coordinate training of SCs and their respective teams on the MBfP products and tools as well as ensuring all teams are competent and able to implement the MBfP monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Engage and lead a team of MBfP advocates and intermediaries, and develop and manage relationships with training and extension providers.
- Develop and coordinate a national communications strategy for overall program promotion, activities (including Producer Demonstration Sites (PDSs)) and events, and stories for MLA publications (Feedback magazine and the MBfP e-newsletter).
- Where required, provide input towards southern beef PDSs and ensure there is linkage between project outputs and all other relevant MBfP activities.
- Assist in the maintenance of MBfP program information on the MLA website page and ensure currency is maintained.
- Maintain the MBfP extranet.
- Coordinate and convene a working group to review and update the MBfP manual and tools when required.

3 Methodology

During the first three years of MBfP Phase 2 (2011-2013), state government employees were contracted to provide state coordination services to MBfP in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia. A private provider was engaged in South Australia. The SC positions were put to tender for the period of 2014-2015 and following an open tender process, two incumbent SCs retained their position, Victoria and South Australia, and three were replaced by private sector providers, Western Australia, NSW and Tasmania. These contracts were subsequently extended to include 2016 with extension KPIs and budgets allocated on a pro rata basis for the first six months of 2016 and then at 50% of pro rata for the final six months until 31 December 2016.

Annual business plans were developed by each state for the 2014 - 2016 delivery period. These plans are reviewed on a six monthly basis through milestone reporting and more explicitly on an annual basis to ensure that appropriate strategies were in place to achieve KPIs and maximise the potential of the investment through the program.

Face-to-face meetings were held on a six-monthly schedule until the final such meeting in November 2015 (Appendix). Teleconferences between the SCs, the NC and MLA are also conducted on a needs basis with the final teleconference occurring February 2016. Meetings subsequent to these final group meetings were not considered by the group to be warranted due to the declining activity under MBfP as efforts to establish a replacement program increased (Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS)).

State monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data was submitted to MLA at least every quarter by the SCs using an agreed template. This data was analysed and an updated evaluation

rolling data report released shortly thereafter to allow the SCs, the NC and MLA to assess progress against KPIs.

4 Results

4.1 Delivery against KPIs

4.1.1 Participation KPIs

The primary measure of the success of the MBfP program was state based performance against KPIs for Category A, B and C event participation. While the program did not discriminate against smaller producers, only producers with 100 head of cattle or more were counted against KPIs.

Each state was successful in achieving their allocated KPIs over the contract period. Table 1 presents a summary of each state's performance against their KPIs as reported in the *MLA Evaluation Report, Rolling Data January 2014 through to November 2016*.

Table 1: Performance against KPIs January 2014 – November 2016

NSW			
	Participation KPI	Actual	% achieved
Category A	2690	4249	158%
Category B	403	1456	361%
Category C	333	635	191%

VIC			
	Participation KPI	Actual	% achieved
Category A	2216	4113	186%
Category B	391	1012	259%
Category C	323	555	172%

TAS			
	Participation KPI	Actual	% achieved
Category A	444	1318	297%
Category B	223	659	296%
Category C	103	316	307%

SA			
	Participation KPI	Actual	% achieved
Category A	892	1089	122%
Category B	447	1089	244%
Category C	203	409	201%

WA			
	Participation KPI	Actual	% achieved
Category A	892	1579	177%
Category B	447	706	158%
Category C	203	247	122%

4.1.2 Target KPIs

Target KPIs were established for evaluation return rate and herd size to encourage deliverers, via the SCs, to collect as much complete evaluation data as possible and appeal to larger producers when planning events so as to maximise the impact on southern beef industry productivity. These target KPIs, while important, were aspirational rather than being contracted deliverables.

Performance against these KPIs is presented in tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Evaluation return rate KPIs

NSW		
	Return rate KPI	Actual
Category A	65%	76%
Category B	80%	90%
Category C	80%	100%

VIC		
	Return rate KPI	Actual
Category A	65%	59%
Category B	80%	69%
Category C	80%	44%

TAS		
	Return rate KPI	Actual
Category A	65%	54%
Category B	80%	82%
Category C	80%	100%

SA		
	Return rate KPI	Actual
Category A	65%	0%
Category B	80%	61%
Category C	80%	0%

WA		
	Return rate KPI	Actual
Category A	65%	58%
Category B	80%	70%
Category C	80%	74%

Table 3: Herd size aspirational KPI

NSW		
Herd size	Aspirational KPI	Actual
100 -400 head	18%	34%
401 – 1,600 head	40%	37%
> 1,600 head	37%	11%

VIC		
Herd size	Aspirational KPI	Actual
100 -400 head	28%	47%
401 – 1,600 head	7%	28%
> 1,600 head	1%	5%

TAS		
Herd size	Aspirational KPI	Actual
100 -400 head	40%	37%
401 – 1,600 head	40%	24%
> 1,600 head	10%	10%

SA		
Herd size	Aspirational KPI	Actual
100 -400 head	18%	35%
401 – 1,600 head	40%	28%
> 1,600 head	37%	16%

WA		
Herd size	Aspirational KPI	Actual
100 -400 head	40%	36%
401 – 1,600 head	7%	32%
> 1,600 head	7%	14%

5 Discussion

5.1 State summaries

Each state successfully delivered against their contracted KPIs. Detailed final reports have been provided by each SC. A summary of some of the key differentiating points raised in the state final reports is provided below:

5.1.1 New South Wales

Approximately 50% of NSW attendees indicated that they would engage in practice changes as a result of attending events. Examples of practice changes include tightening joining periods, changing calving date, vaccinating, condition scoring, start feed budgeting, wean earlier, start crossbreeding, more strategic soil testing, apply more fertiliser and re-evaluation of current stocking rates.

NSW had the highest level of monitoring and evaluation compliance (evaluation return rate) of participating states due to the communication of program objectives and the selling of the importance of monitoring and evaluation to deliverers, the linking of payment to evaluation

compliance and the small pool of deliverers engaged in NSW. Eighty five percent of events were delivered by three deliverers with one of the three delivering 58% of events.

Webinars were introduced at a relatively late stage in the project and were extremely successful. These were a highly efficient and useful tool in delivering messages to participants who otherwise may not have been exposed to MBfP. They also operated as feeder events to propel producers into Category B events.

5.1.2 Victoria

Email based newsletters, phone seminars and webinars, BetterBeef producer discussion group sessions, as well as new animal health and reproduction and business management workshops were the primary form of engagement with beef producers during the period.

The program successfully engaged producers with large herds, despite about 65% of all beef producers in Victoria having less than 100 head.

MBfP state coordination in Victoria was managed through the BetterBeef Network project in collaboration with more than 80 public and private service providers. The role of the Victorian MBfP SC was performed by the BetterBeef Project Leader.

Pasture based changes and improvements have been the most common changes made as a result of MBfP delivery and provide the greatest benefits, not only to producers, but to investors in adoption programs in terms of benefit/cost according to research conducted in Victoria.

5.1.3 Tasmania

The MBfP program successfully established a user pays culture for high quality red meat industry extension in Tasmania. The program also highlighted the importance of feeder activities and producer champions in recruitment, reinforcing messages and highlighting the value of upskilling.

MBfP Tasmania engaged with a broad cross section of the Tasmanian beef industry, working with a diversity of partners and deliverers. A particular highlight included the connections made with younger producers and agronomists from companies such as Elders, TP Jones and Roberts Ltd.

5.1.4 South Australia

The MBfP program in SA engaged with 16 delivery organisations to deliver thirty five MBfP co-funded workshops involving 53 unique presenters.

Category B events were the focus of activity and were designed to build on awareness activity undertaken in the lead up to the contract period.

Engagement with the private and semi-private delivery networks has been central to delivering the MBfP program in SA. Using a consultative approach to develop business plan with delivery network members helped ensure buy in from those in the network.

5.1.5 Westen Australia

During the last three years of MBfP delivery in Western Australia, there has been an adjustment away from government delivery to private sector coordination and delivery. This has required a significant level of direct assistance from the SC in working with producer groups, private consultants, university researchers and veterinarians. While resource intensive, the transition to private delivers has been well received and good momentum was generated during the latter stages of the contract period.

Over the three year contract period, 51 events have been delivered through MBfP in Western Australia. The use of technology to bridge vast distances is becoming increasingly important and productive. The most powerful promotional tool was the MLA's member database.

5.2 Other issues

5.2.1 M&E

The MBfP M&E requirements were initially met with resistance by SCs, deliverers and producers. Over time, the value proposition for undertaking the M&E was better defined and approaches to the collection of M&E data refined, including the use of clicker technology, with the effect that resistance to the process abated. MBfP program participants came to appreciate the benefits that could be derived from such data collection (more targeted delivery, better return on levy investment).

There was an expectation at the commencement of MBfP Phase 2 that the data would be compiled and published in a format that may be readily accessed by SCs and deliverers and allow them to improve their performance. This did not eventuate to the disappointment of the SCs.

5.2.2 PGS

Despite suggestions of a transition from MBfP to a replacement adoption program, there remains a high level of confusion among SCs, deliverers and some dedicated MBfP event participants regarding what will replace MBfP. Several information sessions were arranged to provide information to the SCs and seek their input into the development process with the most recent being 20 September 2016, although these meetings did little to clarify the situation.

5.2.3 MBfP online manual

The MBfP online manual is a valuable resource for producers and deliverers. Its format and online application will allow the resource to remain relevant and continue to deliver value following the conclusion of MBfP, although the manual will require periodic review to ensure the continued relevance and accuracy of the information contained within.

5.2.4 Delivery network

An engaged delivery network has been established through MBfP, although the extent, capacity and capability of this network varies from state to state.

The larger states of NSW and WA were constrained by the budget to some extent due to the cost and time associated with travelling vast areas. This should be considered in planning future extension and adoption initiatives and it may be appropriate for a greater proportion of budget to be allocated to coordination to fund the increased costs associated with the need to cover greater distances.

5.2.5 MMfS

In most instances, the SCs for MBfP and Making More from Sheep (MMfS) were engaged from the same organisation within a state. This delivered some significant advantages, such as facilitating combined events, but also led to confusion through there being, at times, different program requirements between MBfP and MMfS.

5.3 Achievement of contracted objectives

Professionally and efficiently coordinate the national MBfP program to ensure the approved KPIs are achieved, activities are aligned and integrated and all monitoring and evaluation is carried out as outlined in the MBfP II strategy.

State business plans were central to ensuring the approved state-based KPIs were achieved and activities aligned and integrated. Business plans were revised annually in light of the previous year's activities and in anticipation of the next 12 month's activities. Most recently, the plans were revised in early 2016 to reflect the pro-rata KPIs applied for the 2016 period. These plans were required to include a summary of progress to date, including progress against KPIs, expenditure and an assessment of what had been effective and what had not from a tactical perspective. The business plans were also required to include a clear plan to achieve KPIs over the remaining contract period.

All MBfP events were required to be scheduled to conclude by mid-October 2016 to allow M&E data to be compiled and submitted to MLA no later than 16 November 2016 for analysis and return to SCs by 10 December 2016 to assist with the preparation of final reports. Several requests for funding for events that would have occurred beyond October and into 2017 were received by

	<p>SCs and referred to the NC. These were disallowed given that M&E data from these events would not be able to be considered in the evaluation of the program. Where appropriate, these events were referred to MLA sponsorship.</p>
<p>Assist in the design and setting up of state delivery plans in conjunction with the respective State Coordinators.</p>	<p>State delivery plans were developed at the beginning of the contract period and continued to evolve through the business plans over the three years. Important elements of these delivery plans were information memorandums which were developed by the SCs in each state with the exception of Victoria, and the M&E standard operating procedures which were developed by MLA to provide clarity around reporting obligations and the M&E process. These information memorandums invited private sector participation in program delivery. Victoria relied more on the status quo which included delivery through established networks, namely the Better Beef Network.</p> <p>The annual revision of the state business plans proved to be a worthwhile exercise in that the task required the SCs to reflect upon how the program was delivered during the preceding 12 months and modify their delivery to address issues that may have arisen. This meant issues were identified and addressed before they became an impediment to achieving KPIs. An example of this was the introduction of webinars and, to a lesser extent, telephone seminars as Category A delivery tools in NSW, Tasmania and Victoria. The annual review and business planning process demonstrated that without MLA funded awareness activities, such as the MBfP expos which were a feature of MBfP Phase 1, and with the move away from state department coordination to private sector</p>

	<p>coordination (making leveraging established networks more challenging), achievement of Category A KPIs was going to be challenging unless a significant increase in funding was made available or unconventional, highly cost effective delivery methods were adopted. Having recognised the success of telephone seminars in Victoria (as presented in the annual planning meeting of SCs) and that achieving KPIs through conventional delivery was unlikely, NSW and Tasmania adopted remote delivery with good effect. Both states went on to exceed Category A KPIs.</p> <p>The 2016 business plans allowed the SCs to implement a planned, gradual reduction in activity toward the end of the year and manage producer expectations toward the cessation of the program.</p>
<p>Set up systems to maintain regular communication with SC to track progress against milestones and identify potential issues that may hinder achievement of stated milestones in individual contracts.</p>	<p>Face-to-face meetings between the SCs, NC and MLA occurred biannually during 2014 and 2015 (February and July 2014 and February and November 2015 (Appendix)). No face-to-face meetings were held in 2016 due to the reduced service requirement, established mode of operation and lack of perceived need.</p> <p>Teleconferences between all SCs, the NC and MLA were conducted on a needs basis. These typically occurred every six weeks or so during 2014-2015 and twice during 2016. These teleconferences provided a valuable opportunity for the sharing of ideas and the clarification of program elements, particularly M&E requirements. One-to-one communication between the NC and SCs occurred on a regular basis. The frequency of this communication did vary from state to state depending upon the unique circumstances within each state.</p> <p>Based on observations made as NC at the SC meetings since 2014, the SCs have learnt much from each other</p>

	<p>through the face-to-face meetings and teleconferences. Obviously some states have benefitted more from this exchange than others. These scheduled meetings have resulted in the sharing of ideas, such as the adoption of webinars, and cross-state collaboration through the sharing of speakers and resources (for example, the adoption of a version of the SA MoU for deliverer engagement in WA or technical experts such as John Francis travelling to Tasmania to deliver Cost of Production). The decline in the occurrence of face-to-face meetings and teleconferences in 2016 reflected the stage of the program rather than diminishing interest in engaging with each other.</p> <p>On a couple of occasions, the SCs raised interest in working collaboratively and in some states and some circumstances this was successful, for example when expert deliverers travelled interstate to deliver. The one obvious opportunity was in convening national webinars; however, this was not pursued due to apparent difficulties attributing attendance to particular states. Producer advocates were shared between WA and SA to help deliver universal principle and procedure-based messages at producer events. The ReproActive series of events were rolled out nationally, coordinated by the Zoetis representative, the NC and the relevant SC in all states with the exception of WA.</p>
<p>Drive effective linkages between the MBfP program and other MLA producer learning activities and programs.</p>	<p>Creating effective linkages between MBfP and other MLA producer learning activities was at times challenging, particularly due to the evolving nature of MLA's extension and adoption programs. MBfP was most closely aligned with MMfS with effective linkages being developed given the similar program approaches and coordination roles. Joint MBfP/MMfS events were held in some</p>

	<p>states; made possible by the similarity between some program modules (ie pasture production), the fact that many southern beef producers also run sheep and situation that the SCs for both programs within a state were employed by the same company.</p> <p>Linkage between MBfP and the PDSs (formerly Producer Initiated Research and Development or PIRD) was poor. SCs failed to see the benefit of such linkage, considering that such would add significantly to their workload and may not deliver within the limited timeframe governing MBfP delivery.</p> <p>Linkages were developed in the later stages of the program (2016) with relatively new programs such as eID, Bred Well Fed Well for beef producers and BusinessEDGE. This linkage was fostered in direct response to the need identified by the SCs for “off-the-shelf” resources to attract deliverers. The delay in the rollout of these resources meant program delivery was in decline by the time they became available and they did not make a material difference to M&E in any state. This is considered to have been a missed opportunity.</p> <p>Regular discussions occurred between the SC, NC and MLA communications team members to assist in maximising communication, branding and attribution opportunities as well as leverage articles produced through MBfP through MLA’s mainstream news and information services. This assistance has been noted as being valuable by the SCs.</p>
<p>Arrange and coordinate training of State Coordinators and their respective teams on the MBfP products and tools as well as ensuring all teams are competent and able to implement the MBfP monitoring and evaluation processes.</p>	<p>Central to the provision of training opportunities to SCs were the biannual face to face meetings held in 2014 and 2015. Speakers were invited to attend these meetings to inform SCs of the latest R&D outputs and extension opportunities including new resources</p>

	<p>such as southern BusinessEDGE (Appendix).</p> <p>Each SC was responsible for ensuring an adequate level of delivery expertise among their delivery teams. The level of professional development opportunity provided within each state varied with Victoria offering a superior service assisted by state government funding. The NC presented to the Better Beef Network conference in Victoria in 2014 and 2015 and reinforced the importance of the M&E process and data collection.</p> <p>M&E was discussed on a regular basis with the SCs and dialogue facilitated between the SCs and Dr Cathy Wagg, responsible for the consolidation and reporting of M&E data, to ensure the basic requirements of data entry and reporting were being met.</p>
<p>Engage and lead a team of MBfP advocates and intermediaries, and develop and manage relationships with training and extension providers.</p>	<p>At the commencement of the contract period, SCs were given the opportunity to maintain the Producer Advocacy networks established during Phase 1 of the program. Victoria and South Australia successfully did so while the other states chose to disband the formal network of Producer Advocates in their states.</p> <p>The roll out of new or modified resources, including the eID and southern BusinessEDGE, and the piloting of PGS has created the opportunity to foster relationships with training and extension providers beyond those usually maintained through MBfP.</p>
<p>Develop and coordinate a national communications strategy for overall program promotion, activities (including Producer Demonstration Sites) and events, and stories for MLA publications (Feedback magazine and the MBfP e-newsletter).</p>	<p>The NC maintained a direct relationship with various members of the MLA communications team over the contract period and facilitated communication between the SCs and the same. Initial attempts to formalise this process through a specific, documented strategy were unproductive due to the state-based nature of events and the often</p>

	<p>opportunistic and ad hoc, albeit guided by the business plan, approach within the states.</p> <p>Stories were supplied to MLA upon request and opportunities to leverage MBfP eNewsletter articles through broader MLA communication channels, such as Friday Feedback, regularly realised. MLA's email alert system was utilised by SCs to promote events.</p> <p>The MBfP/ Zoetis ReproActive events held in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania presented a valuable opportunity to coordinate and leverage communication activities. MBfP eNewsletter articles, Friday Feedback, local newspaper advertorials and email alerts were utilised to communicate and promote these events, along with Zoetis channels.</p>
<p>Where required, provide input towards southern beef Producer Demonstration Sites and ensure there is linkage between project outputs and all other relevant MBfP activities.</p>	<p>The MLA PDS manager was repeatedly invited to and obliged in presenting to SC meetings. Despite this engagement, no immediate opportunities for the programs to directly interact were identified. This was due to the perception that the SCs would be drawn into the coordination and facilitation process and direct involvement would require a significant commitment of their time; a time commitment which was not allowed for in the MBfP SC contracts. Toward the later stages of delivery in 2015 and 2016, this was compounded by the relatively long term time horizon of PDSs meaning the evaluation of the PDS would not fall within the MBfP delivery and reporting period.</p>
<p>Assist in the maintenance of MBfP program information on the MLA website page and ensure currency is maintained.</p>	<p>The MLA website was updated on a needs basis throughout the contract period. This usually involved recording changes to the MBfP program and personnel and updating content to include the articles developed for the quarterly MBfP eNewsletter.</p>

<p>Maintain the MBfP extranet.</p>	<p>Usage of the MBfP extranet was sporadic over the delivery period. While program content, including SOPs, evaluation forms, pre and post skills audit questions and various templates were housed on the extranet, these resources were relatively stable once developed and SCs tended to save them locally.</p> <p>When introduced, it was envisaged that the extranet would act as a portal for deliverers to have secure access to M&E data which would allow them to improve their delivery and tailor their offering. The M&E data reporting functionality did not evolve to the extent initially expected and deliverer access did not eventuate.</p>
<p>Coordinate and convene a working group to review and update the MBfP manual and tools when required.</p>	<p>The SCs assumed the role of the “working group” with the manual and tools discussed on a needs basis. Both manual updates and tools were standing items on the MBfP SC meeting agendas through 2014-2015.</p> <p>The MBfP manual was reviewed extensively and launched online in 2013. A pastoral supplement was also developed in consultation with the SCs and launched in 2015.</p> <p>The MBfP manual and tools are recognised as valuable resources and significant interest in these resources persists. These should continue to be made available and updated periodically to ensure the relevance of the information contained there within.</p>

6 Conclusions and recommendations

After a tentative start to the contract period as the program transitioned from majority public coordination and delivery to a majority private coordination and delivery, MBfP matured to become a highly effective engagement and adoption vehicle, influencing over 12,000 participants during the contract period. SCs effectively managed program delivery at a state level and tailored delivery to meet the particular requirements within their respective states. States with pre-existing and defined delivery capability (Victoria, Tasmania and, to a lesser

extent, South Australia) were able to leverage these networks or capability. States without such capability relied upon smaller groups of proven deliverers to achieve their KPIs and while this was effective, activity was generally more localised than in states with larger networks. The support of the state government in Victoria delivered obvious benefits in that state; advantages that were effectively realised and leveraged through public, private cooperation overseen by the state coordinator.

The M&E required under MBfP was initially met with resistance but came to be supported by the majority of SCs and deliverers. One key outcome of the M&E was a motivated team of SCs who were focussed upon achieving contracted KPIs and developing business plans to that end.

The move away from public to private delivery and user pays through MBfP Phase 2 was difficult. Very clear value propositions and producer champions were found to be fundamental to this process and the application of these should be considered in future activities.

6.1 Recommendations

6.1.1 Delivery network

Efforts should be made to retain the MBfP delivery networks within each state and for this to be leveraged in establishing the replacement program, presumably PGS.

6.1.2 MBfP online manual

As agreed by MLA at the last MBfP teleconference, there is considered to be value in maintaining the MBfP online manual. This will require periodic updating to ensure currency.

6.1.3 M&E data

MBfP (and MMfS) forged new ground in the collection and management of M&E data. There is a significant opportunity for future programs to build on this approach with the most obvious opportunities being:

- extending the application of technology to facilitate data capture and
- allowing data to be accessed in a usable format by coordinators and deliverers so that they may be able to improve delivery.

7 Key messages

After a tentative start to the contract period as the program transitioned from majority public coordination and delivery to a majority private coordination and delivery, MBfP matured to become a highly effective engagement and adoption vehicle, influencing over 12,000 participants during the contract period.

All states were successful in achieving their contracted KPIs.

A culture of userpays has begun to emerge within the beef extension and adoption area with critical precursors being an absence of funded alternatives, a strong value proposition and producer champions to aspouse the benefits of participation.

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