

Media Release

Andrew Broad

Member for Mallee

Thursday 31 August 2017

WIMMERA MALLEE AND MILDURA FARMERS TO BENEFIT FROM CO-OP GRANTS PILOT

The Federal Government's \$13.8 million dollar Farm Co-operatives and Collaboration Pilot Program is investing in three local organisations to maximise profits at the farmgate.

The Birchip Cropping Group Data Farmer Co-operative, The Warracknabeal East Conservation Farmers, and Out of the Box by Sunraysia Local Food Future have all received funding delivered through Southern Cross University to assist projects that will help various groups of farmers throughout the Wimmera Mallee and Mildura regions.

Federal Member for Mallee Andrew Broad said in total the region will see more than \$200,000 come our way from the program.

“This program is investing in our farmers, giving them the skills and resources to take greater control of the supply chain. We’re helping groups to move toward forming co-operative or collaborative arrangements that will give them more power when it comes to negotiating prices for their goods,” he said.

Under the grants program the Birchip Cropping Group Data Farmer Co-operative will receive \$105,000 in funding to develop and implement a business structure to enable data sharing amongst growers. The project will allow like-minded grower groups around Australia learn and grow from one another.

A funding amount of \$41,350 will see the Warracknabeal East Conservation Farmers improve soil health by inviting agricultural and environmental experts to share expertise and help local farmers increase productivity.

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The Out of the Box project by Sunraysia Local Food Future will receive \$84,520 to help them establish a network of small-scale organic growers, support them and establish more small-scale organic farms by providing a local market, fair returns and advice on growth methods and managing pests and disease.

Mr Broad says the pilot program has already engaged with more than 700 farmer groups and over 16,000 farmers across Australia.

“Our successful projects across the Wimmera Mallee and Mildura region will help our farmers take advantage of this co-operative structure and in return achieve better and fairer outcomes through the farmgate.”

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

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