Innovation Working Group - Empowering Next Generation Agriculture
Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The primary purpose of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) Innovation Working Groups is to explore specific innovation opportunities and identify projects &/or initiatives to put forward for funding.

The Empowering Next Generation Agriculture Innovation Working Group (IWG) will develop, test and refine the innovation proposition/s agreed for further exploration in the preceding LDS stage, the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP), to identify and recommend a project/s for funding from the Forestry Transition Program Community Development Fund.

Recommended projects should ultimately develop innovation opportunities that will support sustainable economic development and prosperity for agriculture in the Upper Murray and its supporting communities.

2. Composition

The IWG will include participants with specific interest and expertise in innovating for regional growth and development, particularly in agriculture and the innovation themes identified for Empowering Next Generation Agriculture. They will include:

- Farmers, local businesses and industry partners
- Education & research organisations
- Local community organisations and representatives
- Local, regional, and state government representatives who can provide advice and support on policy settings and project implementation.

A Lead Facilitator will be engaged by the host agency, Upper Murray Inc. to facilitate the IWG. Facilitation support will be provided by Upper Murray Inc. and representatives from the Forestry Transition Program Community Transition Team.

Depending on the size of the IWG, it may be appropriate to establish sub-working group/s with broader IWG participants providing a consultative forum.

3. Principles of participation

In undertaking this work, participants of the IWG are asked to:

- Contribute and connect relevant expertise to strengthen innovation opportunities
- Bring a collaborative mindset to the work
- Acknowledge that the work involves learning by doing
- Share knowledge of existing and relevant innovations in the Upper Murray or elsewhere and connect, learn from, and ideally strengthen these innovations
- Draw on local and global research that can enhance innovations

With the recognition that participants may have specific interests in the innovation opportunity/s in development, the following practices apply to the work of the IWG:

- Open, respectful, and honest communication
- Declaration of real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest
- Basing all proposal development and recommendations on evidence that is:
    - Substantiated by independent research or advice as a feasible course of action for innovation in the relevant field
    - Technically and financially defensible
    - Socially, environmentally, and economically responsible
- Consensus decision making for all recommendations.

Where required, the IWG may request in outside expertise and advice to support project development, with support of the Lead Facilitator and by request to Upper Murray Inc.

4. Outputs

The IWG will identify and refine one or more relevant innovation concepts into a project proposal/s to put forward for funding for Empowering Next Generation Agriculture. While foremostly targeting the Forestry Transition Program Community Development Fund, project proposals may involve multiple stakeholders, partners and leverage funding sources.

5. Administration

Administrative support for IWG functionality will be provided by Upper Murry Inc. This includes meeting logistics and communications.

The Lead Facilitator will work closely with Upper Murray Inc. to ensure an appropriate IWG meeting schedule is established and underpinning activities such as notice of meetings, agendas, minutes and appropriate reports or accompanying information are communicated in a timely and accessible manner to IWG participants.

The meeting minutes should include issues discussed, key discussion points and action items.

6. Term

The IWG initial term will be August 2024 to June 2025 or until decision outcome/s on project/s or initiative/s put forward for funding are known, whichever is sooner. Any successfully funded project should establish fit for purpose governance arrangements.