

### **Changing farmer attitudes is an ongoing process**

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Climate predictions point toward a drying climate and an increased likelihood of drought being a more common feature of the Australian landscape. With much of Australia's agriculturally important areas located in marginal rainfall zones, farmers must prepare for these risks for Australian agriculture to remain viable. This paper examines the impact of the Farm Planning program on participant attitudes. The aim of the program was to increase the number of farm businesses with strategic business plans that, when implemented, would result in businesses that were more self-reliant and better prepared to manage drought and other future challenges. Surveys were completed by 142 program participants between six and 18 months after completing the program, and compared to data collected from participants prior to commencing the program and immediately at the programs' completion. The information was used to identify the influence of the program on participant attitudes. The program was successful at changing the attitudes of the participants over the short-term, but less so over the medium-term. In particular, participants showed declining optimism toward the future and their ability to personally influence the business' performance when compared to data collected immediately after completing the program. In general, program participant attitudes six to 18 months after completing the Farm Planning program were comparable to those of people that did not participate in the program. The research highlights the potential pitfalls of relying on 'end of day' evaluation to identify project impact.

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