

Thursday 8 and Friday 9 March

2018

FARMING FOR SUSTAINABLE

SOILS

CONFERENCE

PROGRAM

BENDIGO

The much anticipated conference showcases the results of the North Central Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) Farming for Sustainable Soils (FSS) project over the five-year period 2013–2018.

The conference will begin with a tour to Dunluce (near Maryborough) on Thursday 8 March, followed by a dinner with a Regenerative Agriculture theme at the Capital Theatre, Bendigo in the evening.

Day two of the conference is on Friday 9 March at the Capital Theatre, Bendigo and features two keynote speakers in the morning followed by reports from each of the three current FSS community groups in the afternoon.

Dinner Speaker – Day 1

Suzanne Lewis farms with her husband Evan; she was runner up Farmer of the Year in 2016 and is also a proud mother of three amazing kids!

Location: at Werneth, about 75 kilometres north-west of Geelong.

Farm Area: 1200 hectares

Annual average rainfall: around 1000 millimetres

Soil Types: heavy, sodic soils with very poor water holding capacity

Soil pH: Low

Running a prime lamb enterprise with mixed sheep/cropping operations. They are finding production gains from their low-stress sheep management. The lambing rates are up, the losses are down and the sheep are healthy. The sheep complement the cropping system. Suzanne is a renowned advocate for diversity, healthy soils, healthy animals, and healthy people.

Key Note Speakers – Day 2

Major General The Honourable Michael Jeffery, AC, AO (Mil), CVO, MC (Retd) was born in Wiluna, Western Australia in 1937. He graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon into infantry serving operationally in Malaya, Borneo, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam, where he was awarded the Military Cross and the South Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. He retired from the Army in 1993 and was appointed Governor of Western Australia until 2000. Post retirement as Governor, he established a not-for-profit strategic research institute – Future Directions International (FDI) – in Perth. From 2003 to 2008 he served as Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia where his key interests were in youth, education and food security. Currently he is Chairman of FDI and Outcomes Australia and patron of some other 16 charitable organisations and the Executive Chairman of the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust in Australia. In October 2013 he was appointed by the Prime Minister as Australia's Advocate for Soil Health. Married to Marlena, he enjoys golf, cricket, fishing, reading and music.

Grant Sims, 2015 Weekly Times Young Farmer of the Year, farms with his wife Naomi and parents, Ken and Wendy Sims.

Location: Pine Grove, northern Victoria

Farm area: 4100 hectares, including 110 hectares under flood irrigation

Annual average rainfall: 430 millimetres

Soil types: red, black and brown clays

Soil pH: 6.5 to 7

The sixth generation farmer says his core aim is to build soil organic carbon, which he sees as “the currency of healthy soil” and the key to a more robust cropping operation that runs on fewer inputs. Grant says the main catalyst for the program was the yield gains that stemmed from his father's introduction of no-till practices to the farm in the 1980s. “Better soil health and moisture retention through no-till farming led me to consider what else we could do to improve the biology of our soil and optimise its functionality and workings,” says Grant, who is also vice-president of the Victorian No-Till Farmers Association and President of the Lockington Farming for Sustainable Soils group (FSS).

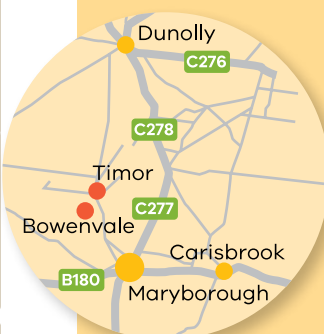
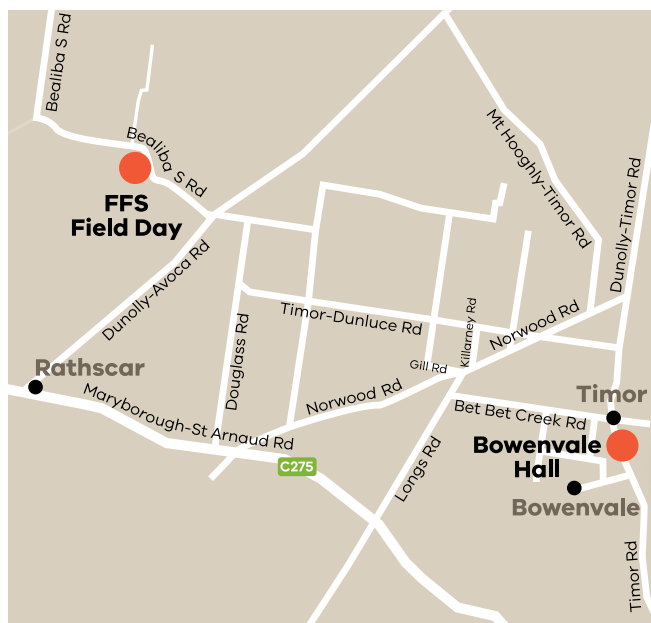


The conference is supported by the North Central CMA's Farming for Sustainable Soils project, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Day 1 – Thursday 8 March

Pre-conference tour
and dinner
Capital Theatre

From	Registration
9.30am	Coffee and morning tea, Capital Theatre
10.30am	Bus to Bowenvale
11.45am	Arrival and briefing about FSS project and Timor West FSS group
12.30pm	Lunch at the Bowenvale Hall
1.30pm	Travel to Wiseman farm at Dunluce and inspect soil health issues and the activities of the Timor West community. Discuss break of slope tree planting, cover cropping, halophytes, subsoil manuring, curse buster soil conditioning etc.
3.00pm	Depart Dunluce for Bendigo
4.30pm	Arrive back in Bendigo
From	Pre-dinner drinks and canapes at Capital Theatre, Bendigo
5.30pm	
6.15pm	Sit-down for dinner
6.45pm	Master of Ceremonies, Cr. James Williams officially opens the dinner and introduces the night
7.30pm	Dinner speaker Suzanne Lewis – Real World Regenerative Farming in southwest Victoria (Warts and All)
8.15pm	Following dinner speaker, question and answer session (roving microphone)
8.45pm	Cr. James Williams summary and close
9.00pm	Networking
9.30pm	Finish



Day 2 – Friday 9 March

Formal Conference
Capital Theatre

From	Conference registration (tea and coffee available)
9.00am	
9.45am	MC Cr. James Williams welcomes delegates
9.50am	Opening address – Brad Drust, Chief Executive Officer, North Central CMA
10.00am	Welcome to Country by Dja Dja Wurrung
10.10am	Farming for Sustainable Soils. An overview of the project and an introduction to the day from Phil Dyson, FSS Project Manager, North Central CMA
10.30am	First keynote speaker, Major General Michael Jeffery, National Soil Advocate – Soil Health a National Perspective
11.00am	Morning tea
11.30am	Second keynote speaker, Grant Sims, 2015 Weekly Times Young Farmer of the Year – Building Soil Health in northern Victoria
12.10pm	Question and answer session with keynote speakers (roving microphone)
12.30pm	Lunch
1.15pm	FSS Group Reporting – featuring the challenges, successes and opportunities as presented by the FSS community-based facilitators
1.20pm	Glenloth/Wycheproof FSS group, Craig Cossar
1.40pm	Pyramid Hill FSS group, Adam Twigg
2.00pm	Timor West FSS group, Merron Ipsen
2.20pm	Question and answer session with FSS community-based facilitators
3.00pm	Table discussions – peer review of project outcomes. Afternoon tea
4.00pm	Closing remarks – Brad Drust, Chief Executive Officer, North Central CMA
4.30pm	Close

