

Foreword

This Special Issue of *Animal Production Science* (Cicerone Project) describes how a group of livestock producers, researchers, extension specialists and consultants went about 'bridging the gap' between research and primary producers. The investigations carried out were highly relevant to livestock producers because the research questions were based on a broad survey of those same producers. Whilst the work was conducted in a particular region, with its summer-dominant rainfall and generally temperate environment, we believe that many of the findings are highly relevant to other regions and, in a social sense, to all those who seek to influence the practices used by primary producers.

Within the pages of this Special Issue, readers can explore the full spectrum of this ambitious Project – from the initial concept of a learning partnership, through to seeking ideas from primary producers, the planning and conduct of a wide range of research projects, and extension activities over more than 8 years – and, finally, papers which integrate and reflect on what was achieved.

This peer-reviewed publication provides a valuable legacy from a Project which focused on practical and yet scientifically valid research, resulting in co-learning which enhanced the trust between all participants. It provides a valuable example to others interested in improving the link between research and farming practices.

Detailed acknowledgements are contained in each paper. In brief, the Project would not have been possible without generous support from wool producers and the Australian taxpayer through Australian Wool Innovation, together with the cash and in-kind support of the University of New England, NSW Department of Primary Industries, CSIRO Livestock Industries, NSW Technical and Further Education, Betty Hall Pty Ltd and the Australian Sheep CRC.

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