

# Regional Workshop: Forbes

Workshop Output Report



# Background

The Forbes regional workshop is one of 23 regional workshops to contribute to the development of the Australian Dairy Plan – a nationwide plan for a profitable, confident and united dairy industry. This report captures the discussions held at that workshop. It is intended to provide a record for workshop attendees and a basis for those who could not attend the workshop to contribute to the conversation. This report will be combined with the reports of the other 22 regional workshops in the development of the Australian Dairy Plan.

## Workshop sessions

1. **The Set-Up: Why will this Plan be different?**
2. **How big is the appetite for change?**
3. **What needs to change?**
4. **What needs to be done?**
5. **What is success for the Australian dairy industry?**

## Workshop details

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019

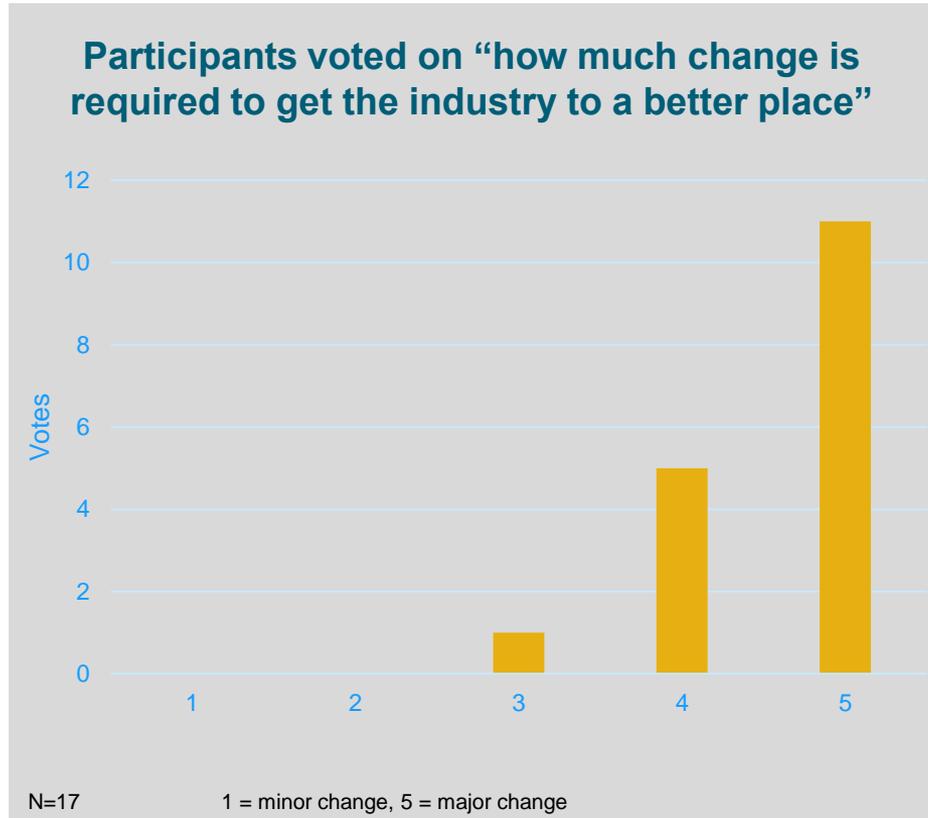
**Location:** Forbes Services Memorial Club

**Facilitator:** David Nation and David Inall

**Coordinator:** Elizabeth Warren

**Attendees:** 18

## 2. How big is the appetite for change?

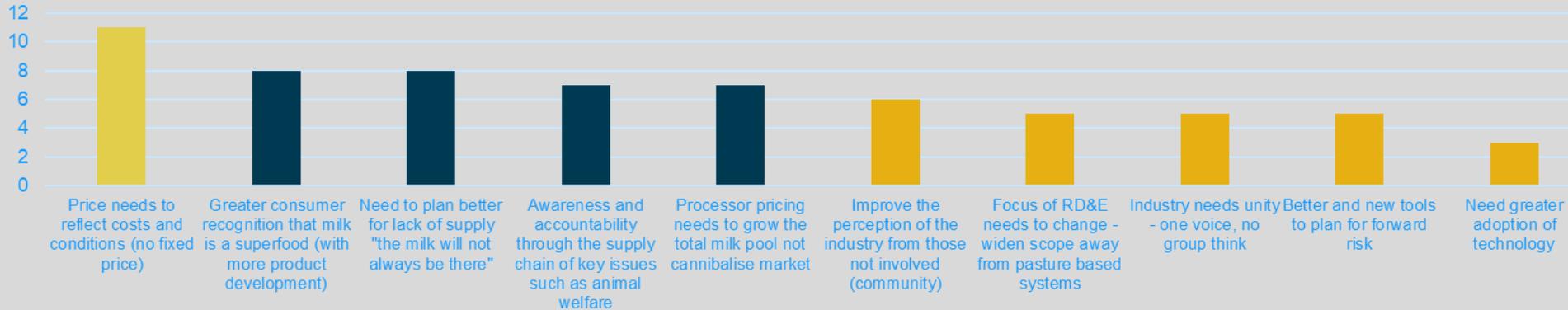


### In discussing the results, we agreed...

- Technology has taken farmers only so far, and new opportunities are required to improve farming
- Retail behavior and domestic marketing model is wrong
- Lack of understanding of dairy farmers by consumers and urban Australians, made worse by industry not being positive about its future.
- Industry needs to be able to attract more young people and new entrants for its future success

# 3. What needs to change?

Participants voted on “where should we be focusing our efforts and energy to get the change we want?”



N=17

Top 10 ideas by votes

# 4. What needs to be done?

We further developed our top 3 prioritised ideas by thinking about what success would look like, how we might get there and what might hold us back.

## Price needs to reflect costs and conditions (no fixed price)

Where do we need to be in 2025

- No discounted milk brands or products
- Milk prices reflect the cost of production with a margin for profit

What needs to be done

- Well resourced advocacy presence in Canberra
- Independent review into pricing with engagement of all stakeholders
- Price risk management
- Industry unity and strong levels of resourcing

What will hold us back?

- Industry division and lack of transparency, cheap imports, and unwillingness to change

## Greater consumer recognition that milk is a superfood

Where do we need to be in 2025

- Make MILK trendy again – this will involve a greater understanding of nutritional value

What needs to be done

- Consumer education and awareness (state the facts)
- Deal with labelling of milk alternatives that are inferior
- Emphasise the positives of milk / Better advertising
- Industry needs to be above social activism

What will hold us back?

- Lack of consumer engagement / being open to attack from animal welfare/ social right to farm issues

My idea is...better focus from advocacy groups on the promotion of milk as a super food. Get milk back into schools and improve the positioning in supermarkets

# 4. What needs to be done?

We further developed our top 4 prioritised ideas by thinking about what success would look like, how we might get there and what might hold us back.

## Awareness and accountability through the supply chain of key issues such as animal welfare

Where do we need to be in 2025

- Trusted by consumers and community with appropriate promotion and recognition. Approach proven to improve both production and health outcomes
- QA system owned and operated by the dairy industry

What needs to be done

- Education – community, farmers, employees
- Marketing – share our story (especially in schools)
- Develop QA - audit and hold farmers accountable
- Develop new markets eg Dairy Beef and adopt new technology

What will hold us back?

- Old ways, minority that do the wrong thing, cost of production/low margin prevents value add activities, differing perceptions of good animal welfare

# Summary of ideas for what needs to change

- Price needs to reflect costs and conditions (no fixed price)
- Greater consumer recognition that milk is a superfood (with more product development)
- Need to plan better for lack of supply "the milk will not always be there"
- Awareness and accountability through the supply chain of key issues such as animal welfare
- Processor pricing needs to grow the total milk pool not cannibalise market
- Improve the perception of the industry from those not involved (community)
- Focus of RD&E needs to change - widen scope away from pasture based systems
- Industry needs unity - one voice, no group think
- Better and new tools to plan for forward risk
- Need greater adoption of technology
- Government attitude to competition policy needs to change; pendulum has swung too far towards the consumer
- Improve market development
- Government support for natural disasters
- Processors should not support home branded products
- Industry and government support is needed to assist newcomers and those exiting
- Structural changes to industry organisations are needed
- Need to avoid duplication by service and advocacy organisations
- Multi-year contracts are detrimental to success
- Too easy to import products - need a buy Australian campaign
- Better recognition of dairying in planning decisions, particularly at local level
- Create better alternates than just ryegrass
- Greater focus on renewables
- Need greater awareness of environmental impacts
- Price announcements from processors need to be early and provide forward pricing signals
- Need assistance to understand how to source external funds
- Need to reduce transporting of milk around Australia to reduce costs in the supply chain
- Scrap the Basin Plan
- Greater recognition of dairying when allocating water
- Leadership has failed and needs to change. This plan is four years too late
- Need to improve the conduct and professional approach of the industry
- Better biosecurity awareness
- Farmers pool milk to sell
- Better public perception of all production systems