



2026 National Agricultural Educators Conference

*Roots of Resilience: Growing
Sustainable Agricultural Education*

12 – 14 January, Shepparton Victoria

Proudly hosted by



Program

Monday 12 January

9:30am	Registration Morning tea and networking
10:00am	Welcome Damien Brookes, NAAE Welcome to Yorta Yorta Country Conference Official Opening: Growing Sustainable Agricultural Education
10:40am	Tracking Towards \$100 Billion by 2030 David Jochinke, Past President, National Farmers' Federation The vision and strategy behind growing Australian agriculture to a \$100 billion industry by 2030. Gain insights into progress, priorities, and the vital role education and innovation play in reaching this ambitious target.
11:15am	Landscape of Australian Agriculture An overview of the current landscape of Australian agriculture, the opportunities and challenges ahead, and the critical role education plays in shaping the industry's future.
11:45am	Exhibition – Connect and Collaborate
12:15pm	Lunch and Networking
1:00pm	Ag Aspirations: Exploring Student Motivations Karen Edwards, Lecturer, School of Agriculture, Food and Ecosystem Sciences, University of Melbourne
1:30pm	Rapid Fire Session Shifting Gears: Farm Safety Resources for Educators Dr Jacqueline Cotton, National Centre for Farmer Health Farm My School James McLennan Chief Executive Officer and Director Farm My School
2:30pm	Questions
2:40pm	State Meetings
3:10pm	Afternoon Tea and Networking



Please note: Program subject to change. Final schedule will be confirmed closer to the event.

Program Day 1.

3:40pm

Lightening Session

The Importance of small-scale agriculture and connecting with community

Sarah Parker, Executive Officer of the Victorian Farmers Markets Association

National Student Compendium, connecting students to primary industries, and industry to students

Jordan Norman, 2026 Student Compendium Project Officer Intern

The power of connection; Connecting Ag shows with Ag Educators
Caitlin Grieve Agricultural Shows Australia

Regenerative agriculture focused curriculum

Amanda McClaren, Agriculture and Science Teacher Seymour College

4:20pm

Voices of the Future – Student Panel

Eliza Hearmon, Dookie Graduate, Darby McClaren, Yanco Graduate, Eleanor Grieve and Rachael Cann

Hear directly from the next generation of agricultural leaders as four students from the region share their personal journeys in agricultural education. This panel will highlight their experiences, what sparked their passion for agriculture, and the opportunities they see in the industry. From classroom to career aspirations, these young voices will offer valuable insights into how education is shaping their futures and how they hope to contribute to the evolving world of ag.

5:00pm

Summary and Close

6:00pm

Welcome Sundowner

Kick off the 2026 National Agricultural Educators Conference in style at our casual Welcome Evening. This event is the perfect opportunity to connect with other educators, industry leaders, and speakers over drinks and delicious canapés.

Venue: McIntosh Centre

Canapes, drinks at bar prices



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Program

Tuesday 13 January

8:45am	Welcome
9:00am	Unlocking Conversations: From Bushfoods or Native Foods to Modern Agriculture Joshua Gilbert, Indigenous Consultant, Agriculturist & Innovator Josh is a climate advocate and leader in Traditional Native Foods, working with Indigenous farmers to shape future involvement in western agricultural systems. His efforts create new opportunities for Traditional Landholders and connect agriculture to global climate action.
9:30am	Asian Opportunities; Learnings from Asia Fruit Logistica 2025 Michael Crisera, Industry development officer at Fruit Growers Victoria From emerging consumer preferences to packaging breakthroughs and export-ready varieties, discover how Asia's dynamic horticultural landscape is reshaping global supply chains and creating new opportunities for Australia.
10:00am	Investing in Research, Innovation, and Leadership to Strengthen our Rural Industries and Regional Communities
10:30am	Morning Tea and Networking
11:00am	Workshop Sessions The workshop Sessions will offer a diverse and hands-on program designed to inspire, educate, and engage educators across all areas of agriculture. From exploring cutting-edge technologies and innovations to practical soil health solutions. Walk away with practical tips, tools and resources for your classroom. The challenge will be choosing one! • Working with Wool - Jenny Shields • Role bees play within our world - Beechworth Honey and Wheen Bee Foundation • Vermiculture - How to set up a worm farm with NutriSoil - Nakala Maddock and Shelley Scoullar
12:00pm	Swap
12:10pm	Workshop Sessions
1:10pm	Lunch and Networking
1:50pm	Exhibition - Connect and Collaborate



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Program Day 2&3.

2:00pm

Industry Connections

Wool Schools Merino Challenge – Lachlan West, Program Manager, Tasmanian School Merino Wether Challenge

Cotton Classroom – Jenny Hughes, Education Manager, Cotton Australia

VEG Education – Mark Pullin, GM Education and Training, VEG Education

Aquaculture as STEM in Action: Real-World Science for Students – Dr Matt Jones, Extension Officer, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation

4:00pm

Afternoon Tea and Networking

4:15pm

NAAE BGM

5:00pm

Summary and Close

6:30pm

Casual Dinner

Join us for a relaxed and vibrant evening at the showgrounds, where our casual dinner will blend local flavours, interactive experiences, and great conversation.

Venue: McIntosh Centre

Casual dinner, fun entertainment, drinks at bar prices

Wednesday 14 January

7:30am

Industry Breakfast

8:30am

Welcome

8:40am

Agriculture, Food and Fibre Teaching Resources and Programs
Luciano Mesiti – CEO PIEFA

9:10am

Pathways for Careers and Education in the Thoroughbred Industry
Dr Caroline Duddy, Thoroughbred Breeders Australia

Explore the structure of Australia's Thoroughbred industry and the wide range of careers it offers from breeding and racing to allied services like veterinary care and marketing.



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Program Day 3.

9:40am

Exhibition – Connect and Collaborate

10:15am

Regional Ag Tours

- More details on tours coming soon

4:30pm

Buses Return – free time

6:30pm

Gala Dinner

Enjoy a delicious menu showcasing local produce while connecting with other educators, industry leaders, and special guests.

Special Guest Speaker: Warwick Long, Presenter ABC Country Hour



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