



## University of Southern Queensland

Through the Digital Futures - Collaborative Research Network (CRN) program of work funding has been awarded for the following research project: **Project 3: Investigating the impact of a web-based, 'discussion-support', agricultural-climate information system on Australian farmers' operational decision making**

### What is the project about?

Interactive, customisable, web-based climate 'discussion-support systems' are now increasingly indicated to overcome the limitations inherent in computer-based Decision Support Systems. The focus of the project is to provide leadership in developing innovative 'discussion support systems' and also to develop effective means of measurement of the efficacy of such systems for managing climate risks and regional sustainability.

### Why is it important?

Future issues such as regional sustainability and predicted changes to climatic regimes will place an even greater burden upon struggling rural farming communities. This raises critical questions: how do farmers prepare for a changing climate? How can reliable, expertly-critiqued seasonal and climate change information be disseminated to farmers and farming communities in a digestible and informative format that is up-to-date and in real-time to enable agricultural systems to adapt to climate variability, water and energy constraints and changing socioeconomic conditions? This project will improve decision-making by regional communities, policy-makers and civil society through the development of an innovative, web-based, discussion support system, leading to sustainable and resilient regional areas.

### Who is involved?

- University of Southern Queensland (USQ)
- Australian National University (ANU)
- University of South Australia (UniSA)

### How will the research be conducted?

Summary of the project methodology is outlined below:

- An improved understanding of climate variability and climate change, particularly relevant to the Australian climate and agricultural context
- Development of the web portal will be designed around the notion of 'discussion-support'.
- Creation of 3D Second Life climate scenarios and made available via the website.
- Assessment of effectiveness of the virtual discussion-support system by engaging farmers and workshops

### What will be delivered?

- 5-6 publications in peer reviewed journals
- 2-3 scientifically reviewed project scientific reports
- 3-4 conference presentations and proceedings
- 2-3 workshop assessment reports and policy summaries, and
- 1 completed PhD

### What is the timeframe?

The project starts in June 2012, with progressive delivery of research outputs through to May 2015.

### Project Leader

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