# Thriving Farmers and Vibrant Communities – A Dynamic Duo for Agriculture

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## Research Purpose

- Australian farmers and rural communities are facing sustained and increasing pressures, impacting their wellbeing.
- My curiosity about what is possible when farmers look after themselves and look out for each other led me to this research. Together, we can build a more productive sector, rural communities people want to stay in, an industry the next generation wants to be part of, and one that is worth investing in.
- Throughout my study, I explored the dynamics of rural communities, identifying what is already working and what more can be done. From this, several simple yet powerful principles emerged to help farmers and communities support their wellbeing, and live well to farm well.




## Key Learnings

- The everyday keys (Fig 1) are simple, and best kept that way. Beginning with a purpose matched to your values.
- Peer level support with the right guardrails, is one of the most powerful pathways to farmer wellbeing
- Successful programs are built with trust, empathy and facts.
- Community has multiple dimensions – Place, Identity and Purpose.
- Strengthening community is a wellbeing strategy in its own right.

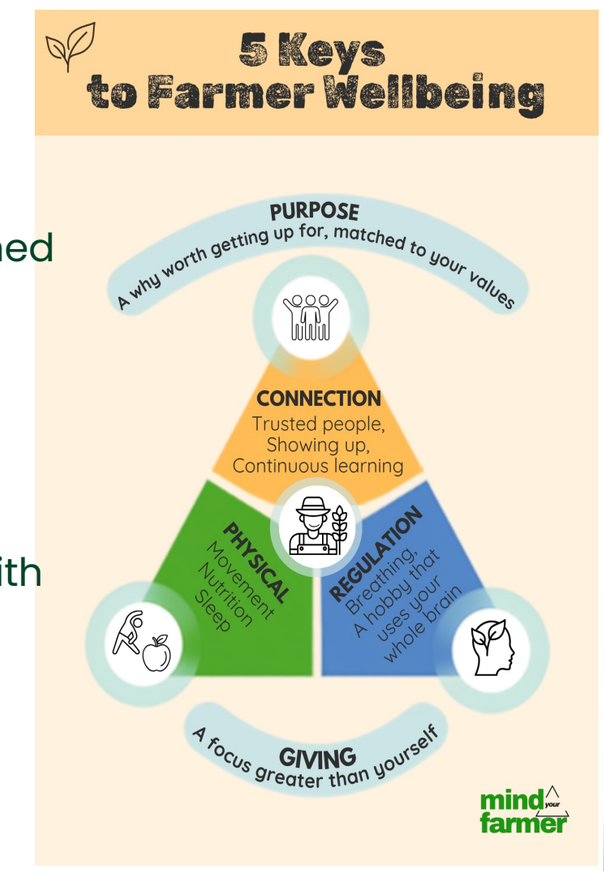



Fig 1.

## Travel




## Case Studies

- Alex and Emily Crawley (UK) have a unique first-generation farmer lens. They have strong purpose and shared useful perspectives. "The mind is not a truth machine; it's a prediction machine".



- Tim Morden (Canada) generously shared learnings from his recovery from depression. He strongly recommends peer connection and says trust is a crucial part of successful programs.




## Recommendations for Industry

***Farmer wellbeing*** *- Know your why, and fill your wellbeing account with regular deposits. Invest in the community around you – whatever its format*

***Community*** *- Strengthen community and support the people who hold it together. Promote everyday opportunities for connection. Resource the people, not just the programs*

***Program design and delivery*** *- Simplify and reduce the overwhelm farmers face, using language that works for them. Design programs using trust, empathy and facts together. Build peer-level connection into existing programs, with the right guardrails. Coordinate and collaborate rather than duplicate. Measure in a way that fits agriculture. Prioritise long-term funding*



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