



FAT FARMERS
RURAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

2024 Calendar

Promoting Health and Wellbeing in Rural Communities

Supported by

Ski for Life

FAT FARMERS: RURAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Fat Farmers got started back in 2010 when Greg Hean, Ben Wundersitz and Scott Hoyle, all farmers near Maitland (Central Yorke Peninsula, South Australia) began meeting for PT sessions at the local gym. They joked that they needed to get more active because they were becoming 'Fat Farmers' now that they were in their 40's and no longer playing footy. They soon realised that there were many benefits to be gained from regular exercise, so they started organising sidewalk BBQ's outside the gym to encourage other farmers to come along!

At the time, it was virtually unheard of for blokes to be going to the gym and this was reflected in the gym's client base being 99% female. But these days, head to the Maitland gym early on a Monday or Friday morning and you will find a room full of farmers being put through their paces! Over time word spread and other 'Fat Farmer' groups got started across South Australia and we welcomed our first interstate group at Moama, NSW in 2023.

While the initial purpose was simply to encourage farmers to be more active and improve their physical health, those participating soon realised that there were also many benefits to their mental health (eg. regular exercise can help reduce stress, improve mental clarity, sleep quality and overall well-being). While the group sessions also offer a healthy social network.

Our big event each year is the City to Bay fun run in Adelaide, generally held mid-September, which we encourage all our groups to take part in and join us for lunch and presentations afterwards. We also welcome rural participants who don't have a local group to join our City to Bay team. See the August story for more information.

In September 2021, Fat Farmers: Rural Health Initiative became an Incorporated Association and is now governed by its own Constitution and Board. We had our first "in person" Board Meeting in Adelaide in July 2023, which was very exciting after two years of zoom meetings!

We are excited for the future of Fat Farmers and look forward to further growth and some exciting new projects in 2024!

Visit our website for more information: www.fatfarmers.com

Find us on social media



Fat Farmers representatives pictured with T-Ports CEO, Nathan Kent and Client Relations & Business Development Manager, Tim Gurney at Anna Binna. Tim says "T-Ports are proud to support Fat Farmers as our growers are at the heart of what we do, so it makes absolute sense to ensure we support their wellbeing."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to Ski for Life and our major sponsor, T-Ports for making this project possible and covering the printing costs so that the calendars are free!

We were pleased to have the calendars designed and printed locally by the Yorke Peninsula Country Times. Their assistance with this process was very much appreciated.

Thanks also to everyone featured in the calendar. We are fortunate to have so many passionate people part of our Fat Farmers community.

Stories by: Kristin Murdock
Project Manager: Tessa Colliver



OUR LEADERSHIP

View the profiles of all
our Board Members
www.fatfarmers.com/about-us



Ben Wundersitz

**Co-Founder and
Board Member**

Ben has been involved with Fat Farmers since the very beginning. He was a founding member of the Maitland group and has been a driving force in growing Fat Farmers across SA. Ben is a fifth-generation farmer from Yorke Peninsula and his motivation for keeping fit is to do active things with his family and maintain his resilience in managing a large cropping enterprise. Ben served as inaugural Chairman of the Board from 2021 to 2023 and continues to be involved as a Board Member and an active member of the Maitland Fat Farmers group.



Richard Sheppy

Chairman

Originally from the UK, Richard brings over 20 years of experience in agriculture and related industries. He moved to Australia with his family in 2006 to manage a large property near Keith. He has been Managing Director (AUS) for Agrifac Australia since December 2019, lives in Loxton and works between there and Adelaide. Richard is a passionate advocate for rural health, both physical and mental and has a real appreciation for the benefits that fitness and group inclusion can bring. Richard commenced in the Chairman role as of the 2023 AGM.



Tessa Colliver

**Executive Officer &
Board Secretary**

Tessa grew up on a farm near Arthurton on Yorke Peninsula, returning to the area in 2013. She has worked with and for not-for-profit organisations for most of her career, including 10 years as an independent grant writing consultant. Tessa completed a Diploma in Business (Governance) in 2019 and has served as Secretary for several Incorporated Associations. Tessa is also very passionate about mental health awareness, having lost her Dad to suicide in 2006 and in 2015 was a founding member of "SOS Yorke" the suicide prevention network for Yorke Peninsula.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Sometimes we need a helping hand and there are many services available.

Regional Access provides free professional counselling for anyone living in rural or regional Australia.

Call 1300 032 186 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or visit saregionalaccess.org.au

Rural Business Support services include: Rural Financial Counselling, Landowner Information Service, Farm Business Management Programs and a Relief Fund.

Call 1800 836 211 or visit ruralbusinesssupport.org.au

Rural Aid provide a range of services for primary producers, including disaster relief for those affected by fire, flood or drought.

Call 1300 327 624 or visit ruralaid.org.au

Beyond Blue – visit beyondblue.org.au

Relationships Australia – Call 1300 364 277

CRISIS SUPPORT

Lifeline **13 11 14**

Suicide Call Back Service **1300 659 467**

Kids Help Line **1800 551 800**

Mensline Australia **1300 789 978**

2022



CONGRATULATIONS
FAT FARMERS 2012

for successfully completing the 2012 Sunday Mail City-Bay Fun Run.

Ben, Greg and Scott Farmers, Maitland (SA)

Fat Farmers began in 2010 when Greg Hean, Ben Wundersitz and Scott Hoyle, all farmers near Maitland (on Yorke Peninsula, SA), started going to the local gym. They were all over 40 and joked about becoming "Fat Farmers" now they were no longer playing footy. The name stuck as the Maitland group grew and gradually other communities got involved. There are now 15 "Fat Farmers" fitness groups dotted across SA and one in NSW, with more starting soon!

Greg Hean says "Back in the early days, we had a few sessions in the gym, then made it a goal to take part in the City to Bay in 2012. It was the catalyst to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Group sessions and getting together with other farmers really makes you aware of the importance of your health – both mental and physical. Without that, everything else falls apart."

Ben Wundersitz has been a key driver of Fat Farmers over the years, and he is still as enthusiastic and committed as ever! "Getting together with other farmers cannot be over-rated," he says. "Farming is such a solitary lifestyle usually, so joining others for a fitness session and a good chat is fantastic therapy. I always go away from a gym session feeling positive."

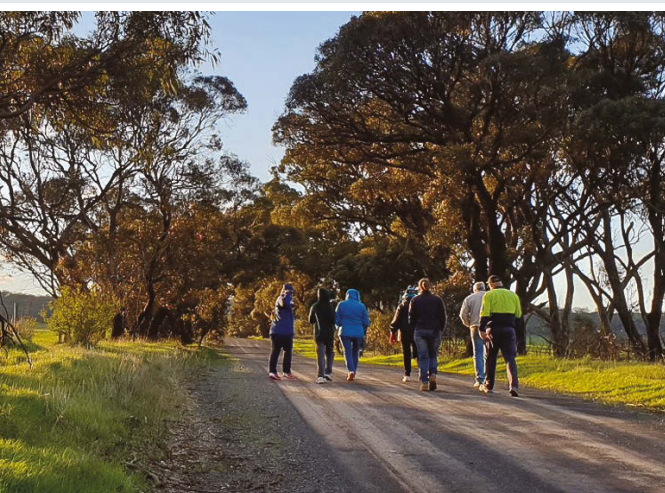
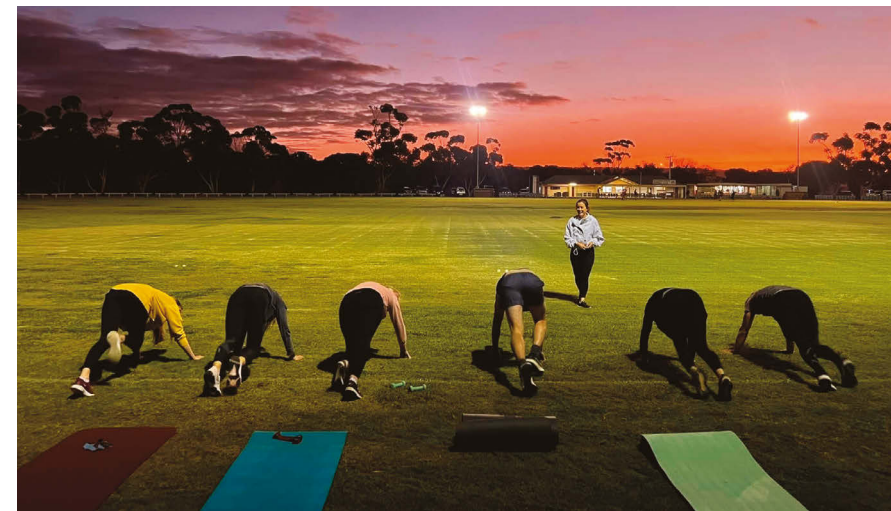
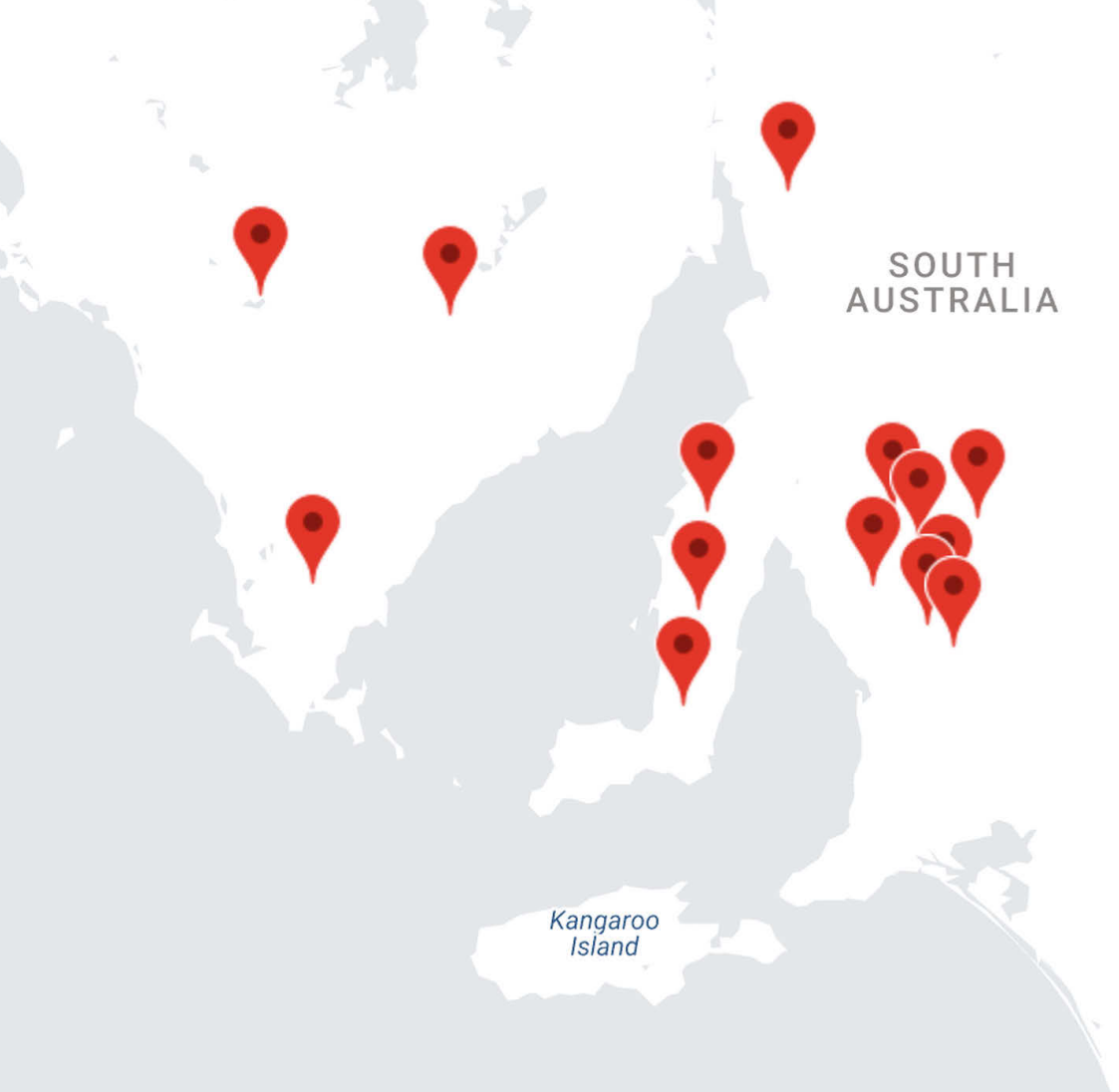
"It's as much for your mental health as your physical health," Scott Hoyle adds. "Work tends to get in the way a lot, and while I'm not as involved in the sessions as I used to be, I encourage any farmer considering joining Fat Farmers to get on board. It's unbelievably good for stress and wellness."

**Interested in getting involved?
Jump ahead to February...**

January



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26 Australia Day	27
28	29	30	31			



GET INVOLVED!

It's easy to find your local Fat Farmers group on our website! Just scroll down the home page to the map and click on the red flags to see the town and contact details for each group. There are likely to be more groups added since this calendar was printed, so please check – www.fatfarmers.com

If one happens to be close by, chances are you will know someone that is already attending! Most of our groups are in a gym or involve a PT-led workout but we also have a couple of walking groups, currently at Kapunda and Saddleworth. Our groups are inclusive of men and women of all shapes and sizes! Anyone is welcome to come along.

No Fat Farmers group near you? We can help with that too. If you are interested in getting a group up and running in your community, please contact us and we can help you get started. Our groups are a great way to be more active while having some fun and a catch up with others...

Regular exercise has many benefits! It can:

- Reduce the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers
- Help manage weight
- Reduce stress
- Help manage mild depression and anxiety
- Improve sleep
- Strengthen bones and muscles
- Improve clarity of thinking and memory

What are you waiting for? Contact us today!

Email: info@fatfarmers.com

www.fatfarmers.com

February



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Kate Gunn

ifarmwell

Kate Gunn grew up on a farm near Streaky Bay and founded the ifarmwell website based upon calls from farmers within her own community for relevant and accessible ways for them to prevent and manage the stress that goes with life on the land.

The website contains wellbeing tip sheets, interactive self-help modules, a podcast and advice for everyone; farmer, supporter or ag-related professional, about how to cope effectively with life's challenges, get the most out of every day and access other forms of help if required.

The great thing about ifarmwell is that it was designed with farmers, specifically for farmers, and you can access it confidentially from anywhere – your home, your shed, your ute, even your tractor. As long as you have internet access, ifarmwell is just one quick click away.

Use your computer, smartphone or tablet for access - you can even receive text message reminders from the site to help keep you focused. It's based on what farmers have said they want, and what psychological research shows will help. And, it's free!

If you currently feel down or stressed OR just want some new tools to improve your ability to cope with the uncertainty that comes hand in hand with life on the land, look no further than ifarmwell.

www.ifarmwell.com.au



March



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 <small>Adelaide Cup</small>	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 <small>Good Friday</small>	30 <small>Easter Saturday</small>
31 <small>Easter Sunday</small>						



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LUMARY CITY BAY

Sam Correll

Farmer, Sunnyvale (SA)

Sam is a member of the Fat Farmers group at Kadina and while he was already a regular gym-goer before getting involved with Fat Farmers, Sam has found that group training is “a great vibe, totally different to working out by yourself.” And the group doesn’t just consist of farmers with local bank and insurance employees involved as well – everyone is welcome.

The Kadina group meets weekly at the Copper Coast Sport & Leisure Centre, under the guidance of a personal trainer, tackling anything from circuits and weights to cardio and conditioning workouts.

“The conditioning workouts can be tough,” Sam said. “but you get out of it whatever you want to, and I really urge people to come along and try.” After the 6.30am sessions, most of the group then hang around for a coffee and chat.

“It’s just great for your mental health to be able to chat to each other face to face and after a fitness session,” Sam said. “People talk on mobile phones all the time but its not the same as sitting down and having a catch up.”

Sam relishes the challenge of encouraging other farmers and urges anyone interested to come along.

“If you are umming and ah-ing, just come along and give it a go,” he says. “You don’t know how great it is until you try. It’s interesting that most blokes aren’t all that keen but those who come and give it a try, tend to keep coming back, which I think says a lot!”

Contact Sam on Mobile: 0400 275 420 if you are interested in joining the Kadina group.

April



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	1 Easter Monday	2	3	4	5	6
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21	22	23	24	25 Anzac Day	26	27
28	29	30				



Louise O'Neill

Farmer, Denmark (WA)

Originally from the UK, Louise met her now-husband at a pub in Northam while in Australia on a working holiday! Farm Life Fitness grew out of Louise's belief that agricultural businesses and communities need professional health and wellness support, delivered by people who genuinely understand what it's like to be in the sector.

And Louise is well-placed to deliver such support! She has a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sports Therapy and expert technical knowledge of human movement along with a Bachelor of Psychology and Counselling. While her educational credentials are impressive, it is her lived experience of farming and life in a rural community that has helped create Farm Life Fitness, a resource which aims to incorporate fitness as part of everyday farming life.

"Yes, living rural is a wonderful life," Louise says "But finding ways to look after yourself can be a challenge. Escaping to the gym is rarely an option (hello, the nearest town is miles away and doesn't even have a gym!), so accessing the equipment to do most of the workouts you find online is a deal breaker."

Through speaking, education, community building, one-on-one coaching, and fitness programs, Farm Life Fitness supports businesses and individuals in the agricultural sector to transform their overall health and well-being.

As Louise says. "Farming can be the best job and lifestyle in the world. However, by not prioritizing your health, you are impacting your productivity and your potential for a happier, more fulfilling life."

www.farmlifefitness.com.au



farm
life *fitness*

May



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Luke Barlow

Farmer, Moama (NSW)

Fat Farmers Ambassador, Luke Barlow doesn't just talk the talk, he walks the walk ... actually, he runs it! A third-generation farmer, Luke only took up running in his forties and completed the Melbourne Marathon (42km) with his wife, Kate in 2016. This inspired him to join the Echuca Triathlon Club where he found the combination of swimming, cycling and running more to his liking.

"The training at the tri-club was so removed from my day-to-day life," Luke said. "As a farmer, it's quite easy to become isolated, so to be able to come together every Wednesday at the club was life-changing. Everyone was so encouraging, and I loved hearing their stories about what they'd achieved. My mind started thinking, 'why can't I do that?'"

It was around this time that Luke came across Fat Farmers on social media. "Even though they were in South Australia, I asked if I could wear one of their singlets to training nights and events to help spread the positive message, and it became a real talking point," Luke says.

Since then, Luke has been a big supporter of Fat Farmers and hopes that sharing his story of going from not exercising at all to running a marathon aged 42 will help motivate other blokes to get motivated and up off the couch, even if they are happy to leave "the crazy stuff" (like the 3-day Ultra Man event he completed in 2022) to others like him.

"If it just gives someone a push to go for a parkrun or go to the gym or join a Fat Farmers group that would be awesome" he says.

Follow Luke on Twitter @thyrafarmer

June



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9	10 <small>King's Birthday</small>	11	12	13	14	15
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Joe Ross Farmer, Robertstown (SA)

Back-to-back droughts in 2017 and 2018 put enormous physical, emotional, financial and mental strain on farmer and truck driver, Joe Ross. Joe has been on the family farm at Robertstown since the late 90's, along with stints of shearing and livestock transport which saw him travel around most parts of Australia.

"The drought took its toll and led to me spending more time in the truck to make ends meet. Eventually this led to burnout," Joe says.

In 2022, Joe, wife Lauren and sons, Dan and Paddy, gave away the livestock freight business and focused completely on cropping. "This allowed balance back into my life and to spend more time with my family. Doing some work on myself and deciding getting physically fit was important, led me to finding Fat Farmers on Facebook," Joe says.



"I needed motivation and couldn't do it alone, so with support from Fat Farmers, along with local PT Kylie Zivic – Actively Persistent Lifestyle, the "Saint's" Fat Farmers team was born."

Naming the group after the local football and netball club, the keen Fat Farmers group train during footy season under lights after the junior team trains.

"We alternate between Robertstown and Eudunda to be as inclusive as possible." Joe says. "Without really knowing how the community would respond I have been overwhelmed with support, reaching people of all ages and fitness abilities. I'm proud to see the inclusiveness of the group."

Eleven years ago, Joe ran in the City to Bay and as it is the annual Fat Farmers event to get together which inspired him to make it a goal for the local team.

"In 2021 we took a team of 12 to the City Bay, and in 2023, we set our goal to have the largest group - and we won with 23 participants," Joe says. "I have been overwhelmed with the community support and positive feedback. The benefits of this is that I have lost some weight and while the workouts can be quite tough at times, the group is always fun and a great social catch up."

Check out the "Saint's Fat Farmers" page on Facebook!

July



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Prepare for City to Bay!

The annual City to Bay fun run in Adelaide is our big event for the year and a great opportunity to meet other "Fat Farmers" from across SA and beyond...

We generally have participants in all distances from 3km, 6km, 12km through to the 21km half marathon. Not a runner? No problem. Jog or walk or a combination – whatever gets you to the finish line!

Last year Robertstown won the coveted title of "Biggest Team" with 23 participants! Can they do it again? Or will another group take the prize?

And you don't need to be part of a Fat Farmers group, anyone is welcome!

Then join us for lunch afterwards – this is always a highlight! In recent years we have added guest speakers to the mix so make sure you check out website to see what is happening for City to Bay 2024.

Having a goal like City to Bay can be great motivation! It's usually held on the middle Sunday of September. So why not register and start training now...

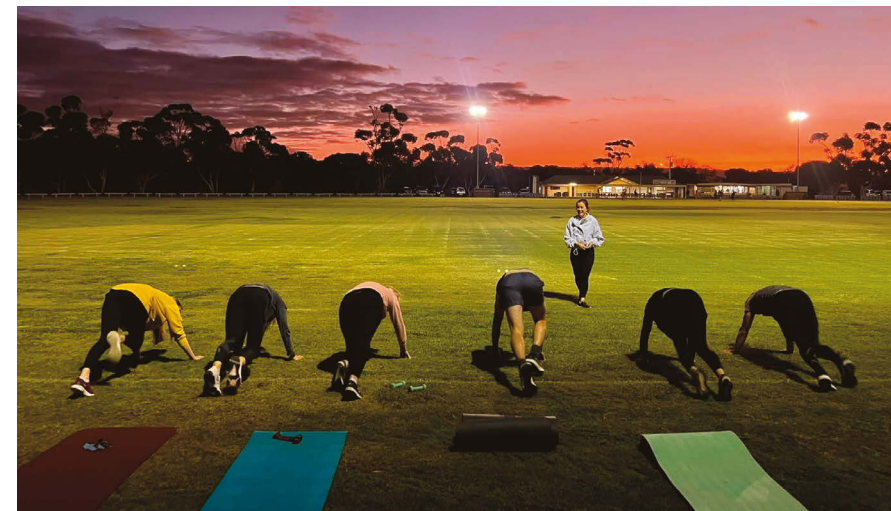
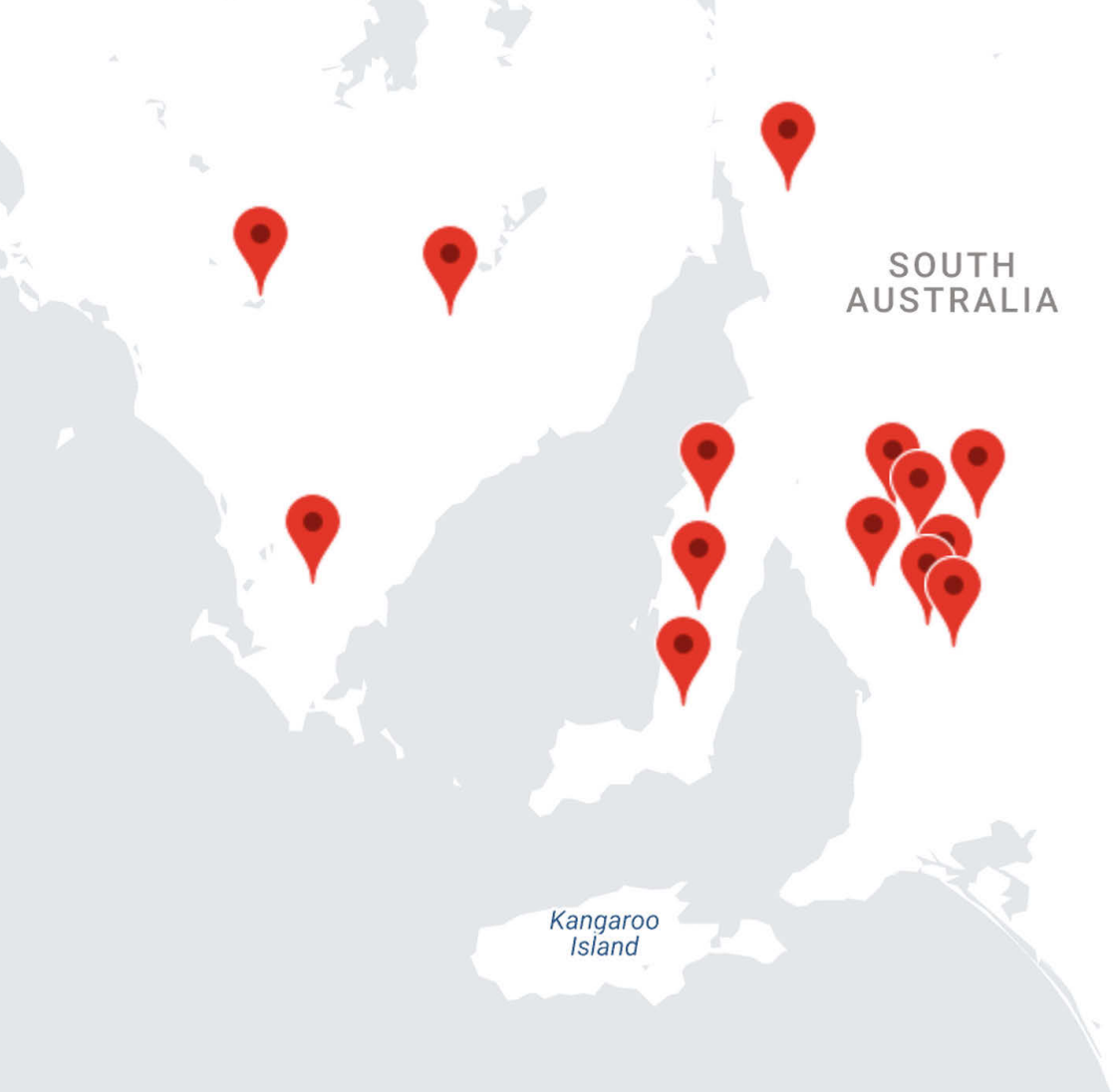
We hope to see you there!

www.fatfarmers.com/citytobay

August



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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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- Reduce stress
- Help manage mild depression and anxiety
- Improve sleep
- Strengthen bones and muscles
- Improve clarity of thinking and memory

What are you waiting for? Contact us today!

Email: info@fatfarmers.com

www.fatfarmers.com

September



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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					



Richard Sheppy

Fat Farmers Chairman

Richard is passionate about the role Fat Farmers can play in rural health and fitness.

"Fitness and mental health have a very direct correlation for me, I can very quickly see a decline in my mental health if I am not exercising regularly. Rural communities can be lonely places and one hour a week in a group session maybe the only interaction people get with others apart from close family. The benefits are massive."

Richard joined the Fat Farmers Board in early 2023 after following the group on social media and became Chairman at the October 2023 AGM.



“When I saw the opportunity to join the board, I didn’t hesitate to put my hand up to get involved. My passion is for people, leadership, agriculture, and both physical and mental fitness – Fat Farmers ticked all the boxes.”

Richard’s personal health story has seen him faced with challenges.

“In 2015 I decided to lose some weight, cut down on my bad habits and get fit so I decided to start going to the gym and running. I am pretty driven, so it soon became a big part of my life, I lost 25kgs and went from not being able to run 1km to regularly running 30-40km per week.”

“The benefits have been massive and having been diagnosed with bladder cancer in July 2022, I don’t believe I would have handled this challenge as well as I have if I hadn’t been fit. It has been quite tough maintaining exercise around work and treatments, but it keeps me motivated!”

“Farmers are the most reluctant people to see the doctor about anything and often just carry on whilst ignoring symptoms because they are too busy. I know about this from personal experience - I ignored the symptoms of blood in my urine after exercise for nearly two years. When I eventually went to the doctor, I was diagnosed within a week and fortunately the tumour had not got into the muscle of my bladder - I dodged a bullet!”

“If I can advocate for fitness and health in the ag industry and make a difference by sharing my story it may save others.”

Richard believes Fat Farmers is the perfect organisation for those who work on the land.

“Ag is such a tough place - getting out and active whilst meeting others is a great way to share the load, get a break and realise that you are not alone.”

October



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Labour Day	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



Brett Burton

Ambassador

Brett is a Wellbeing and Leadership Facilitator, Speaker and High Performance Coach. He is a former AFL player with the Adelaide Crows, playing 177 games across 12 seasons and is perhaps best remembered for his spectacular high marking, which saw him win the AFL Mark of the Year in 2009.

After retiring from playing, Brett spent 10 years in key leadership positions, as High Performance Manager at the Brisbane Lions and then Head of Football at the Adelaide Crows. Today, Brett aims to inspire people to reach their full potential, through evidence-based wellbeing, neuroscience and positive psychology tools and strategies.

Brett is a dedicated father of five and enjoys sharing his story of navigating the public nature of high-performance sport and finding a new career after 20 years in the AFL industry.

We have been fortunate to have Brett as a guest speaker at many events over the past two years, where he has shared an important message about the benefits of movement and connection for physical and mental health and wellbeing. Which is a perfect fit with what Fat Farmers is all about!

Brett says "I really enjoy my role as a Fat Farmers Ambassador, as I believe that regular exercise and connecting with those in our community are foundations to our wellbeing and quality of life. Having the opportunity to connect and educate those in the rural communities on how we can both lead ourselves and others to feel good and function effectively is very enjoyable and fulfilling."

www.aledacollective.com

November



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30



**Ben Brooksby – Founder
“The Naked Farmer”**



Ben Brooksby

Farmer, Penola (SA)

Ben is a fifth generation farmer from St Helens Plains in Western Victoria. As founder of "The Naked Farmer" he has travelled around Australia connecting with farmers of all varieties and taking "naked" photos to start conversations around mental health and raise awareness. Ben says "it takes just as much guts to take your gear off as it does to talk about mental health."

This is a subject close to his heart, having suffered from anxiety since he was a child. "When I turned 18, I was still struggling with this issue" Ben shares. "One night I was driving with a few mates and starting having chest pains and felt like I couldn't breathe or stop shaking. I ended up getting rushed to hospital but they couldn't figure out what had happened. These strange attacks kept happening at the strangest times and luckily my grandma worked out that I was actually having anxiety attacks. At last I had a name for what was happening and that I wasn't some strange freak. But despite trying lots of things to control my anxiety, it wasn't until August 2015 and the tragedy of losing our beautiful family homestead in a fire that everything changed."

"I was 22 years old and my Grandparents and Dad decided to put me in charge of the rebuild. In my head I knew there was no way I could make all the necessary phone calls and go into shops to pick out carpet and things. But I didn't want to let my family down, so I pushed myself WAY out of my comfort zone and finally learned to control my anxiety." The Naked Farmer started in 2017 when Ben created an Instagram account and posted a near naked photo of himself in the back of a grain truck full of lentils. "Within 7 days I had 1,000 followers and knew I'd struck a chord with the wider community" says Ben.

He visited Anna Binna farm near Maitland on The Naked Farmer SA tour in August 2020 - "It was epic, with 21 farmers stripping naked and a plane flying overhead for the photo. And then we had nearly 100 farmers turn up for a blokes night and I told my story. I could never have done that five years ago".

You can follow The Naked Farmer on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/thenkdffarmer/>

December



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26 Proclamation Day	27	28
29	30	31 New Year's Eve				

PHOTO CREDIT: Emmy O'Brien



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