

Beyond The Paddock - Women Who Mean Business

Guest Speaker Panel

@YP Field Days



Annabelle Homer

Event MC

Annabelle Homer is a voice coach, podcaster, storyteller, mother, and wife.

She is a former award-winning ABC broadcast journalist who has reported on rural affairs for 12 years across Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia. Annabelle grew up on a cattle station in Central Queensland, who now lives in South Australia's Clare Valley with her young family. After a brief stint at Channel Seven, she cemented her journalism career at the ABC, firstly at ABC TV Landline then branching off to Rural Radio. She spent many years presenting the South Australian Country Hour as well as brief stints on ABC Landline, Behind the News and Local Radio.

In 2020, using her journalistic skills and 12 years' experience of AMEB Speech and Drama, Annabelle launched Voice it, a communications business specialising in public speaking and media training, podcasting, and personal audio memoir production. Voice it is all about providing regional people the tools to be confident communicators by delivering localised, face-to-face fun and engaging training programs. Annabelle also assists rural businesses and organisations to promote their stories and research projects through podcasts.

She was also was a finalist for the 2025 Rural Women's Award.

When Kathy Ottens married her husband Jeff, he had just purchased his first block of land at Lochiel. They started married life in debt, and farming only a small block of land. Together they worked the land, increasing its size over the years.

While raising three children, Kathy worked off-farm in multiple roles, and in 1991, during a time of economic hardship, she became a Rural Financial Counsellor for the Mid and Upper North Region. Over 13 years, she supported more than 1,000 farming businesses, earning recognition as a regional winner in the ABC Rural Women of the Year award and completing a national leadership course in Canberra.

Kathy has served on a number of government committees and contributed to national agricultural policy through the Rural Finance Summit and Southern Rangeland Rural Plan. She was also a long-time member of the Hart Field Day committee and received a Centenary Medal for her service to rural communities.

Today, Kathy remains passionate about agriculture and rural people, and believes that all rural people need to be acknowledged for the essential role they contribute to Australia.



Kathy Ottens

Guest Panelist

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Claire Catford

Cultivating Resilience in
Agriculture and Community
Guest Panelist

Claire Catford is a grain grower, business manager, and rural advocate from Hoyleton, South Australia, where her family is celebrating 100 years of farming. As previous Chair of the Rabo Client Council for SA and NW Victoria, Claire champions grassroots initiatives that build industry capacity and community wellbeing. Recently awarded a Nuffield Scholarship supported by GRDC, Claire is exploring how thriving farmers and vibrant communities can empower agriculture. Her research spans Australia and abroad, investigating strategies to support farmer wellbeing, foster connection, and strengthen rural resilience.

Claire brings hands-on experience from her family's continuous cropping enterprise, a Bachelor of Agricultural Science, and leadership roles including local coordinator for 'Fat Farmers'. Her insights reflect the real-life juggle of business, family, and community—and her passion for sustainable growth, innovation, and storytelling makes her a compelling voice on the panel.

Emma Gilbert is a dynamic leader in Australian agriculture and agribusiness, recognised nationally for her innovation, impact, and community focus. She is a 40 Under 40 Winner (2025), a Finalist in this year's AgriFutures Rural Women's Award, and ranked among Australia's Top 10 Digital Lead Generation Experts in 'The Australian Business Journal'

Through her work as both a farmer and educator, Emma has built one of the country's most unique agribusiness ecosystems, blending primary production, agri-tech, and community engagement. Her career is defined by resilience, creativity, and a commitment to empowering others—especially the next generation of rural entrepreneurs and changemakers.



Emma Gilbert

Farmer and Educator
Guest Panelist

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