

TEMORA SHIRE COUNCIL



TEMORA

The Friendly Shire

TEMORA AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION CENTRE (TAIC) CROWN RESERVE PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

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Plan of Management for Crown Reserve No. 47731,

Being a reserve for General Community Use – Experimental Farm

**Lots 1, 10 Section A DP 7293, Lots 1213-1214 DP 45494, Lots 1062–1063, 1067,
1069-1075, 1087-1088 DP 750587, Lot 7001 DP 94428, Lots 132-133 DP 750621**

476 Goldfields Way, Temora NSW.

Adopted by Council on.....

1. Introduction

1.1 About TAIC

Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre (TAIC) is an agricultural research farm, delivering agricultural innovation for the benefit of local farmers, the Temora Shire community and the wider Riverina region. In 2010 the Temora Shire Council (TSC) became Trustee of the former Temora Agricultural Research and Advisory Station. The Station has operated as a research facility since 1912. The property is a Crown Reserve, with the gazetted purpose of the Reserve being 'Experimental Farm'.

In 2011 TSC renamed the property the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre (TAIC) and entered into an agreement with FarmLink Research Limited (FarmLink) to manage the property as a commercial mixed farm and research facility.

FarmLink is member-based, not for profit farming systems group, that services 12 local government areas in southern NSW. FarmLink has approximately 320 member organisations (700 registered members) across the farming, agri-business and research sectors. In addition to managing the TAIC, FarmLink undertakes independent research, project manages research for external organisations and delivers extension services.

TAIC is a 647 hectare research farm with soils and rainfall typical of the major crop and pasture growing areas of southern NSW. For almost 100 years, prior to 2010, it was operated by the NSW Department of Primary Industries. With the transition to commercial agricultural research, over Government led research, the centre was at risk of being closed. In response to the significant concern by their local community, Temora Shire Council was swift to take up an offer for the centre to fall under Council ownership. This decision was made in order to retain the role of TAIC as a thriving hub of agricultural research and development. It is managed on Council's behalf by Farmlink, a not for profit farmer group. The partnership of Council with Farmlink has allowed for the continuation of agricultural research in Temora Shire and employs five full time skilled professionals.

Delivering locally relevant innovation and research significantly increases the knowledge of local farmers and farm services professionals to deliver increased crop, pasture and livestock yields, which in turn benefits the local economy. There are now 17 private and public organisations conducting research, development and extension at the TAIC, specialising in the integration of advances in cropping, livestock and/or mixed farming into the farming systems of Southern NSW. TAIC is a unique resource being a fully operational commercial mixed farm, typical of Southern NSW, hosting field based crop, pasture and livestock research; with facilities to host major events, workshops and seminars; managed by a not for profit farming group focussed exclusively on the long term productivity and profitability of Temora Shire and regions farms and farmers.

1.2 Agriculture in Temora Shire

Agriculture is the main land use and economic activity in Temora Shire. Approximately 93% (2601.77 km²) of the Shire is farmland. The Shire has 202 farming businesses, of which 95.5% are involved in cropping, sheep and/or livestock production. There are also 132 agri-businesses. The farming sector is the Shire's largest ratepayer providing 49.8% (\$1.855M) of the Shire's rate revenue.

Temora Shire's land and climate supports diverse agricultural production, with the Shire being a major producer of wheat and other cereal crops, canola and sheep (for both meat and wool). Other

agricultural activities include cattle production, piggeries, bee keeping, and egg production. Temora Shire is strategically located between Sydney and Melbourne and benefits from connections to the national freight network. Agricultural activities support a diverse range of agri-businesses including agronomy and advisory services, grain and wool storage and brokerage, agricultural equipment supplies and servicing, chemical and fertilizer supplies and transport. The major rural supply companies and agricultural machinery suppliers each have outlets in the Shire.

Agriculture is the Shire's main economic driver and employer¹. In 2016, broadacre cropping and livestock production (sheep, beef and dairy cattle) accounted for 20% of local employment (470 job out of 533 in the Agriculture – Forestry – Fisheries sector) and 21% of local output and 17.9% of value-add. From 2011 to 2016, there was a net increase of 293 jobs in Temora Shire (14.2%) with 35.5% of these jobs (104) being in agriculture (24.2% increase in jobs in the agricultural sector).

1.3 Council objectives

The TAIC is constructed upon Crown Reserve No. 47731, a reserve for General Community Use for the purpose of an Experimental Farm, gazetted on 24 April 1912. In accordance with the Crown Land Management Act 2016, Temora Shire Council has been appointed the Crown Land Manager and is required by this legislation to adopt a plan of management, using the framework for community land under the Local Government Act 1993.

The purpose of this Plan of Management is to meet the statutory requirements of the Crown Land Management Act 2016 that protects the current and future use of the Crown Reserve to ensure it continues to be used and developed consistent with its original reservation purpose of General Community Use - Experimental Farm and to develop a framework for the future management, use and development in consultation with the community.

Through a recent business review process, Council has confirmed that the TAIC contributes towards the economic prosperity of the regions' farmers, supporting the Shire's most important industry and generating economic benefit through business and educational tourism, as well as generating local employment opportunities. Temora Shire Council provides an annual contribution towards the ongoing operations and enhancement of the TAIC, in accordance with a signed management agreement, in order to support agricultural research, development and extension. The support of Council responds to the strategic objectives included within the Temora Shire Community Strategic Plan 2013, specifically,

- 3.5 Strengthen the Temora Shire economy
- 3.6 Support Tourism, acknowledging the value it brings to the Temora Shire economy
- 6.1 Maintenance of infrastructure to support agriculture
- 6.2 Optimise the opportunities to develop Agricultural industry
- 6.3 Commitment to the support of Agriculture in Temora Shire

The main purpose of this Plan of Management is to provide the community and other stakeholders with a set of management guidelines and permissible uses for the TAIC that is consistent with its reservation for General Community Use – Experimental Farm, meets the requirements of the Crown Land Management Act 2016 and the Local Government Act 1993 and is consistent with Temora Shire Council's Local Environmental Plan 2010.

¹ Information in this paragraph is taken from RDA Riverina: Temora Shire Profile

1.4 Land to which this plan applies

This Plan of Management applies specifically to Crown Reserve No. 47731 for General Community Use – Experimental Farm, known as the TAIC, 476 Goldfields Way, Temora NSW. consisting of Lots 1, 10 Section A DP 7293, Lots 1213-1214 DP 45494, Lots 1062–1063, 1067, 1069-1075, 1087-1088 DP 750587, Lot 7001 DP 94428, Lots 132-133 DP 750621

These parcels of land total approximately 595.1 hectares (excluding Lake Centenary, which is covered by a separate Plan of Management) and bounded by Goldenfields Way, to the west, Research Station Road to the north, Trungley Hall Road to the east, and Rose Street (unformed road and adjoining privately owned land to the south, as shown by Figures 1 and 2, edged heavy black. The site is approximately 2.5 kilometres north of Temora town centre. The land is located in the Temora Shire Council Local Government Area in New South Wales and within the State electorate of Cootamundra. The land is zoned RU1 Primary Production under the Temora Local Environmental Plan 2010.

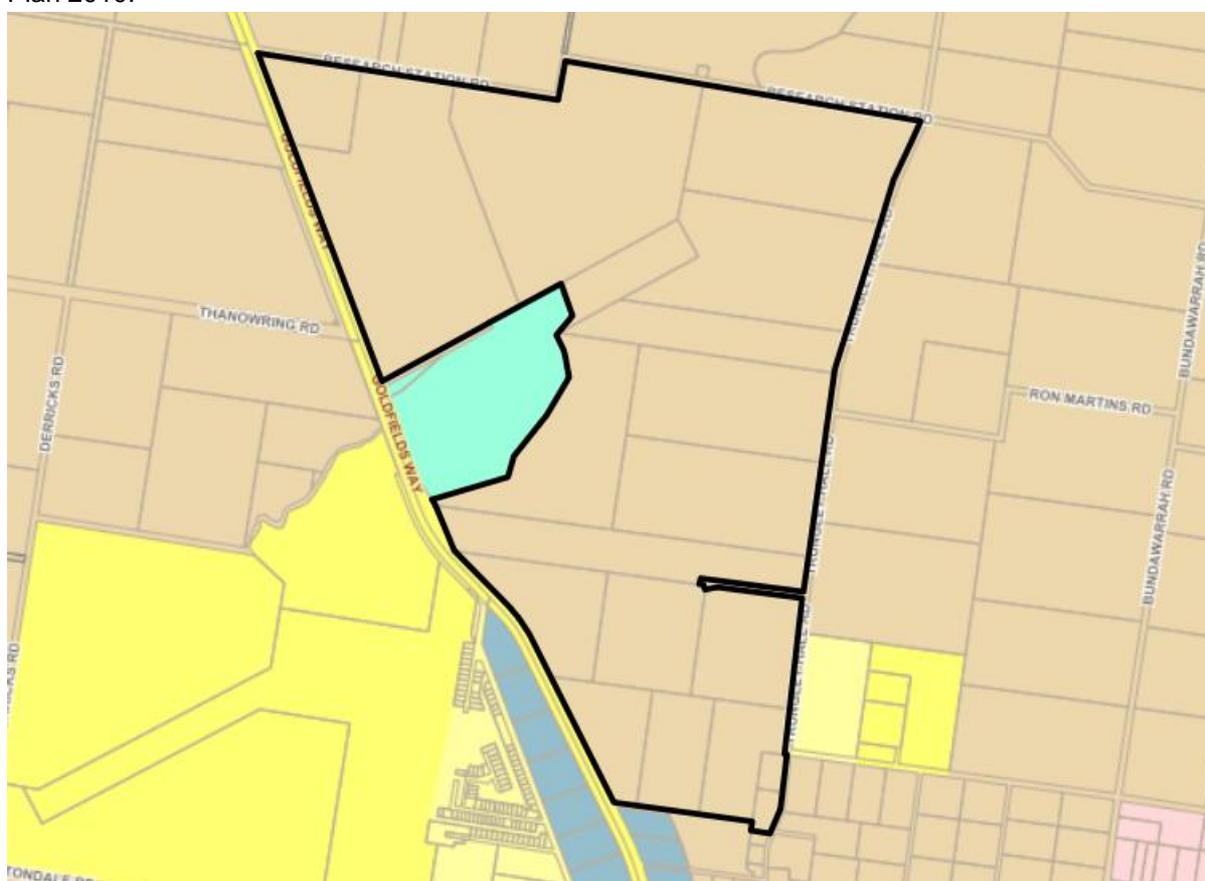


Figure 1: Zoning map of the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre



Figure 2: Aerial image of the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre

1.5 Owner of the land

The land is owned by the Crown and is managed by Temora Shire Council as Crown Land Manager under the Crown Land Management Act 2016.

1.6 Categorisation of the reserve

In accordance with the Crown Land Management Act 2016, Temora Shire Council was required to categorise Crown Reserve No. 47731, known as the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre as if it were community land under the Local Government Act 1993. Council adopted the category of General Community Use being the most closely aligned category to the original reserve purpose and reflecting the current development and use of the park for an experimental farm. The category of General Community Use applies to the whole of Crown Reserve No. 47731.

2. Relevant legislation, policies and procedures

2.1 Local Government Act 1993

The Local Government Act 1993 requires that community land be categorised as; natural area, park, sportsground, area of cultural significance, or general community use.

In developing this Plan of Management, Temora Shire Council as the Crown Land Manager, is required under the Crown Land Management Act 2016, to consider the categorisation of the land in

accordance with the Local Government Act 1993. The category chosen that best reflected the initial reservation purpose of the land, the current use of the reserve and community expectations was General Community Use. The guidelines for this category are:

Land that may be made available for use for any purpose for which community land may be used, whether by the public at large or by specific sections of the public.

Under the legislation, the core objectives for management of community land categorised as a General Community Use are:

- to promote, encourage and provide for the use of the land, and to provide facilities on the land, to meet the current and future needs of the local community and of the wider public:

- in relation to public recreation and the physical, cultural, social and intellectual welfare or development of individual members of the public.
- in relation to purposes for which a lease, licence or other estate may be granted in respect of the land (other than the provision of public utilities and works associated with or ancillary to public utilities).

2.2 Crown Land Management Act 2016

The Local Government Act 1993 (the Act) requires a Plan of Management to be prepared for all public land that is classified as 'community' land under that Act.

A Plan of Management (PoM) is an important management tool, which is developed by council in consultation with the community. A PoM outlines the land's features, and clarifies how Council will manage, use or develop the land in the future. A PoM provides a transparent and co-ordinated approach to public land management.

Community land may include a wide variety of properties, ranging from small recreation reserves to iconic parks, and in some instances buildings.

Community land supports important aspects of community life, and is valued and appreciated by residents, workers, and visitors to the Temora Shire Local Government Area.

A PoM can be prepared for more than one parcel of land (Generic or Geographic) or for a single property (Significant or Specific).

The purpose of this Plan of Management is to address the relevant statutory requirement of the Crown Land Management Act 2016. The principles of Crown land management are:

- a) that environmental protection principles be observed in relation to the management and administration of Crown land, and
- b) that the natural resources of Crown land (including water, soil, flora, fauna and scenic quality) be conserved wherever possible, and
- c) that public use and enjoyment of appropriate Crown land be encouraged, and
- d) that, where appropriate, multiple use of Crown land be encouraged, and
- e) that, where appropriate, Crown land should be used and managed in such a way that both the land and its resources are sustained in perpetuity, and
- f) that Crown land be occupied, used, sold, leased, licenses or otherwise dealt with in the best interest of the State consistent with the above principles.

With the above principles in mind, this Plan of Management aims to establish the objectives and performance targets for the TAIC while promoting its active land management and use in accordance with the purpose of its reservation as General Community Use – Experimental Farm.

2.3 Native Title Act 1993 (Commonwealth).

Native title is considered to be extinguished due to community purpose lease and completion of public works prior to 23 December 1996.

2.4 Other relevant legislation and statutory controls

In addition to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 and the Local Government Act 1993, the management and use of the TAIC must comply with all applicable planning controls under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Future development that may be approved by the Crown Land Manager under this Plan of Management will be subject to the Temora Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2010 and the Temora Shire Development Control Plan 2012 and any relevant environmental planning instruments and planning policies that may in future apply to the land.

The TAIC is subject to the provision of the Temora Local Environmental Plan 2010 and is zoned RU1 Primary Production.

The objectives of the RU1 Primary Production zone area are as follows:

- To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base.
- To encourage diversity in primary industry enterprises and systems appropriate for the area.
- To minimise the fragmentation and alienation of resource lands.
- To minimise conflict between land uses within this zone and land uses within adjoining zones.
- To minimise the degradation of natural scenery and rural landscapes.
- To encourage the conservation and efficient use and of water.
- To protect, enhance and conserve the natural environment, including native vegetation, wetlands and other natural features that provide wildlife habitat, protect flora and fauna, provide scenic amenity and that may prevent or mitigate land degradation.
- To encourage the provision of tourist accommodation in association with agricultural activities.

2.5 Review of this plan

This document represents the initial Plan of Management for the TAIC undertaken by the Crown Land Manager and community consultation was undertaken in 2020 to determine the values and management objectives of the Crown Reserve. As the community consultation has only recently been completed, it is considered appropriate to review this plan in five years from its acceptance by the Minister, or sooner should it be required.

2.6 Community consultation

Under section 38 of the Local Government Act 1993 councils are required to undertake community consultation in the preparation of plans of management, providing the community with opportunities to determine the values and issues detailed in a plan and to further encourage comment and feedback on the completed draft document before it is submitted to the Minister for acceptance. Specifically, councils must give public notice of a draft plan of management for a period of not less than 28 days and must specify that submissions can be made for a period of not less than 42 days from the commencement date of the public notice period. All documents referred to in the plan of management must be displayed and available for public access.

Additionally, under section 40A of the Local Government Act 1993, should a proposed plan of management (including one that amends another plan of management), have the effect of categorising or altering the categorisation of community land, a public hearing must be conducted. A public hearing however is not required for the initial draft Plan of Management unless the initial assigned category as Park changes during the plan of management process.

In accordance with Temora Shire Council's Community Engagement Strategy and Policy (2016), to ensure effective community engagement in the development of this initial Plan of Management the following process was adopted:

Review of TAIC operations by an independent consultant to develop a discussion paper
Consultation conducted as part of the discussion paper with relevant stakeholders, including

- Temora Shire Council
- TAIC Management Committee (Section 355 Committee of Council)
- FarmLink
- Temora Agricultural Bureau
- Farming community – Temora Shire and surrounding region. The consultation included both FarmLink members and non-members
- Riverina Local Land Services (LLS)
- Mirrool Land Care group
- Agronomists and other agricultural advisors
- Agri businesses, including machinery and rural suppliers, and educators
- Commercial companies undertaking research at the TAIC
- Research and development organisations: CSIRO, Charles Sturt University (CSU), Grain Research and Development Corporation (GRDC)
- Government Agencies: Federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Bureau of Meteorology, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Regional Development Australia, Riverina.
- Birchup Cropping Group
- Temora Business Enterprise Group
- Local accommodation and food and beverage operators
- Local schools

Consultation and discussions with Councillors, Council staff and Farmlink representatives regarding a range of strategic and operational matters

2.7 Value to the community

The consultation process outlined above provided the community with the opportunity to contribute to the development of this Plan of Management. The most recent Resident Satisfaction Survey in 2016 rated the TAIC 3.66 out of 5, which is a good result although at the time there was some confusion from the community about the location and role of this facility and questions about Council's involvement in this facility. Since this time there has been far greater awareness of the TAIC through promotion of the facilities and services by both Council and Farmlink through open days, events, school partnerships and media promotion.

3. Development and use

3.1 Overview

The TAIC farmland and facilities provide a wide range of opportunities for the community, particularly for the district's farmers and supporting businesses. Temora Shire Council recognises the value to the community of these facilities and provides resources in its annual operating budget to maintain existing improvements to a high standard, while continuing to make capital improvements, usually with financial assistance from other sources and in partnership with Farmlink.

The TAIC has an area of 647 hectares. At the time of transfer (2010), the property was in poor condition. Most of the property's buildings and infrastructure was 60 to 100 years old. The continuous use of full tillage practices to prepare the cropping paddocks and trial sites had resulted in poor soil health and weeds were a major issue.

Over the past 9 years, FarmLink has, through changed management practices, significantly improved the quality of the farming land, with the property now considered comparable to well-managed mixed farms throughout the district. Grant funding has enabled buildings and other infrastructure on the site to be upgraded and new facilities (100ML dam and irrigation system, and the Treflé Exhibition Shed) to be developed.

The property is managed as a mixed commercial farming enterprise and research facility for both plot and paddock trials. The commercial farming activities are designed to remediate land following trials and to prepare it for the next set of trials. The farm works on a 3-year rotational cycle, with approximately a third of the land under trials and the remainder available for farming. Around 330 hectares per annum (pa) is used for cropping with the main crops being wheat, barley and canola. The property is too small to be a viable commercial farm.

FarmLink uses part of the site to undertake research on behalf of its members. The remaining research land is rented out to external organisations, with these organisations including the CSIRO, Charles Sturt University, NSW Department of Primary Industries and a range of commercial plant breeding, ag-research, agronomy and agricultural chemical companies. FarmLink, is in the process of transitioning the property to a 'smart farm'.

Other activities held on the site include extension activities conducted by FarmLink and other organisations, machinery demonstrations and training schools, rural support services (eg financial, mental health), social and corporate functions and school programs.

There are currently 16 people employed at the Centre, most of whom relocated with their families to Temora.

3.2 Condition of the land and structures on adoption of the plan

At the date of adoption of this plan, the TAIC and its improvements and facilities are maintained to a high standard. Recent improvements to the site include the 100ML irrigation dam, to provide year round water security, and the Treflé Exhibition Shed. The site also features recently refurbished office and administration building, amenities, meeting space and machinery and storage sheds.

Facilities include:

Administration office buildings – occupied by FarmLink and Local Land Services.

Treflé Exhibition Shed – large exhibition space suitable for displaying and demonstrating machinery, with the Shed having a commercial kitchen and mezzanine level with a fully-equipped meeting room (seats around 50-60 theatre style). The Shed is the only facility of this kind within the Region. It can sit around 400 banquet style.

Several historic farm sheds that can be used for meetings (up to 120 theatre style) and small functions.

Office space and workshop – which is leased to Precision Agriculture.

A fully equipped seed cleaning facility which is not in use.

Cold store.

Workshops and storage areas, including silos.

Equipment washing bay.

Trial cages and plots.

Three older style houses two of which are leased out by Council and the third used to accommodate the Lake Centenary caretaker.

100 ML dam and irrigation system. The dam uses wastewater from the Temora Sewage Treatment Plant.

3.3 Use of the land and structures at the date of adoption of the plan

Working in partnership with Temora Shire Council, FarmLink will manage facilities at the Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre as a commercial agricultural research facility and in doing so will pursue opportunities for agricultural research, extension, machinery demonstration and training, and education opportunities for primary and secondary school students. FarmLink will undertake commercial farming, facilities hire for agricultural purposes including irrigated land, research and development as well as extension activities that engage the agricultural industry and create economic and social benefits for Temora Shire and beyond.

3.4 Permitted use and future use

Temora Shire Council as Crown Land Manager for TAIC is satisfied that after extensive consultation and feedback from the community, the current uses, buildings and

improvements are consistent with the core objectives for General Community Use under the Local Government Act 1993 and does not propose to make any changes unless required by law or for safety reasons.

In line with community expectations and Council's strategic community plan future improvements to existing facilities or development of additional facilities are proposed and are set out below. By identifying future permitted uses or activities at TAIC and its facilities, it in no way implies that Council will have resources available, unless otherwise stated, during the term of this Plan of Management.

3.5 Future activities expressly authorised by this plan

Activities expressly authorised by this plan subject to compliance with sections 45, 46 and 47 of the Local Government Act 1993 are:

- i. Lease, licence of hire of the site for any purpose with the consent of Council;
- ii. Granting of easement with the consent of Council;
- iii. All necessary fire control exercises carried out by Council or its agents are authorised, such as fire hazard reduction, construction of fire trails or firebreaks etc
- iv. Construction and dedication of public roads;
- v. Construction of buildings and facilities as approved by Council.

3.6 Management Committee

The facilities are governed through a Section 355 Committee of Council, known as the TAIC Partnership Committee, comprising Council delegates and Farmlink representatives.

This Committee is responsible for:

- Agreeing the scheduled maintenance priorities (short, medium and long term) as well as reprioritising when emergency works arise
- Agree the community engagement plan including partnership signage
- Agree maintenance plan for shared assets including the waterways and shared zone
- Progress economic development initiatives and opportunities
- Initiate lobbying and funding opportunities
- Ensure compliance to funding agreements set by State Government
- Ensure compliance to agreed uses of TAIC facilities

Meetings are convened a minimum of twice per year (March and September)

4. Strategic Assessment

The following assessment of TAIC summarises the main issues that were considered in the preparing this Plan of Management.

Benefits and Opportunities

- The economic activity generated by the TAIC includes:
 - increased employment – with 16 jobs at the TAIC (with estimated wages bill of \$1.53M), supporting a further 10-11 jobs within Temora Shire.
 - estimated \$2M pa in TAIC / FarmLink expenditure within the Shire.
 - attraction of around \$1.5M pa in project and grant funding and sponsorship from sources external to Temora Shire.
 - increased visitation with an estimated additional 2,328 day and 218 overnight visitors to Temora Shire, injecting around \$200,000 pa into the Shire economy and supporting 1.5 local jobs.
- The value of TAICs contribution to agricultural research. The value is estimated through the improved quality and accessibility of the trials held at TAIC compared to farm-based trials.
- Reputation benefit for Temora Shire – with the TAIC – FarmLink arrangement raising the awareness and profile of the Shire and enhancing its reputation. The Shire, Council and FarmLink are perceived as progressive and innovative, with the Shire now recognised as a key location for agricultural research, development and extension.
- Substantial increase in money flowing into the Shire as a result of the purchasing of local goods and services by the organisations based at the TAIC; staff and their families relocating to the Shire increasing the demand for local goods and services; increased visitation to the Shire; and grant funded research and capital investments at the TAIC.
- The TAIC-FarmLink arrangement is delivering a range of non-quantifiable environmental and social benefits for the Temora Shire community and broader region. These benefits include:
- Environmental:
 - Water reuse – the capture and use of wastewater from the Temora Sewage Treatment Plant
 - Soil health improvements.
 - Changes in farming practices to increase water-use and nitrogen-use efficiencies and reduce chemical impacts.
- Over time, these environmental benefits will improve the condition and performance of the TAIC and other farming properties that adopt the research findings.
- Social:
- The social benefits can be broadly grouped into:
 - Access to / exposure at the TAIC: the property provides Temora with quality exhibition, function and meeting facilities in an attractive setting. These facilities are being used by a range of agricultural groups, agri businesses, catering businesses, community and sporting groups and local schools. Exposure at the TAIC has generated additional business in the surrounding region for Temora's agri-businesses and catering companies.

- Increased social interaction both on-site through events and activities, and within the broader community with the influx of visitors and as well as people moving to Temora to take up positions at the TAIC.
- Capacity building – including upskilling farmers and agri-businesses; relocatees establishing new businesses in the Shire; developing the next generation of farmers through involvement with schools and tertiary students; and the upskilling of FarmLink administration staff in venue and event management.

Risk Management

There are some risks associated with Council being the Crown Land Manager of this site, due to the unique usage of the site. These risks include:

- Farming risks, including drought and severe weather events, outbreak of disease and fluctuating demand and commodity prices
- Change in operating arrangements which increases farm operating costs
- Loss of rental income if tenants leave
- Loss of trial revenue resulting from a reduction in grant revenue and/or the corporate sector choosing not to use the TAIC
- Changes to Farmlink's direction and/or business model

Temora Shire Council makes a financial contribution towards the operating costs of TAIC, supported on the basis of the wider benefits of having an agricultural research facility located within Temora Shire. The level of contribution and basis has recently been reviewed by Council and a new agreement has been signed between Council and Farmlink to provide ongoing certainty to both members of the partnership.

5. POM administration and management

Temora Shire Council has categorised the TAIC as General Community Use under the provisions section 36G of the Local Government Act 1993, details of which are discussed in section 2.1 of this Plan. While Council as the Crown Land Manager has ultimate responsibility for the administration and management of the Crown Reserve, day to day operations are managed by Farmlink, as well as delivery of longer term goals identified through the TAIC Partnership Committee.

As a result of consultation with Farmlink, the objectives and performance targets were developed together with manner in which Council proposes to assess its performance with respect to these objectives and performance targets, as identified within the agreement. The Plan of Management will support applications for Government grants or other funding opportunities that might present in future, so that the community's support for future activities and development can be demonstrated through this Plan of Management.

