



Valuable groups for *farmer input*

Former education committee member encourages others to get involved.

Stanhope dairy farmer Rob Schloss was a member of the Regional Extension and Education Committee from 2006 to 2014.

He joined after taking part in a Murray Dairy study tour to University of Sydney's Camden campus, and was then encouraged by Murray Dairy to apply for a position on the committee.

Initially the REEC was formed to provide a forum to help oversee and inform relevant stakeholders on priority programs and research regarding current issues and needs. The group aims to provide strategic advice around priorities relevant to the region.

Since that time, Mr Schloss has seen a number of changes take place within the committee, including the addition of the education component that incorporated the

local National Centre for Dairy Education. He said the REEC played a vital role in helping shape dairy education and for the northern Victorian and southern NSW region.

"The Regional Network Group and REEC structure is a strong and efficient set-up for farmers to be able to put forward current issues and contribute to the planning of dairy services for the coming years,"

Mr Schloss said.

"Being a part of the RNG allowed me to contribute information that I had heard from other farmers and through my networks. I knew that putting this information forward would ensure that the services and programs rolled out to us farmers would meet our needs."

Mr Schloss said he enjoyed his experience on the REEC, especially how the group focused on the whole of the Murray Dairy region, which spans from Swan Hill right through to Corryong. He said there was a lot to be learnt from farmers in other areas and what they were experiencing.

"When I started on the committee it was a bit daunting, but now that I have moved off, I look back and realise how much I have personally developed from being involved with both the REEC and RNG.

"We need farmers to be involved in these RNG meetings, it's the way farmers can have their say in the services and resources we receive from Murray Dairy, DEDJTR and then NCDE."