GRDC In Conversation - Stuart & Lyndall Tighe

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**SPEAKERS**

Stuart Tighe, Oli Le Lievre, Lyndall Tighe

**Oli Le Lievre** 00:02

Yeah, I think just firstly, Stuart and Lyndall, are you guys able to just to paint a little bit of a picture of where we are at the moment. I can say we're at your kitchen table. But, Lyndall, do you wanna tell us a little bit about the area?

**Lyndall Tighe** 00:12

Um, well, we are on our property Dimboola. And it's about 15 kilometres out of Pallamallawa, our little village, and 50 ks from Moree, which is our local shopping and Business Centre. We've been here in this area for about 21 years, 22 years, Stuart a little bit longer. Yeah, I don't know, what can you add Stuart?

**Stuart Tighe** 00:43

A little old siting called millgai which was a grain corp delivery centre. And it's it's part of what they call the Golden Triangle in this part of the world, and it's predominantly cereal cropping. Not a lot of livestock here on the very east of where that is. And it's probably been farmed for some time. 100 percent cropping since the wheat boom in the late 70s. Hasn't hasn't been a lot of stock around here.

**Oli Le Lievre** 01:19

What was it that brought you guys to the area?

**Stuart Tighe** 01:21

I think it was the for me anyway, it was the opportunity. In the late late 90s, dryland cotton was really booming, there was a lot of work for contract farming. And Moree is just still is today, I believe a great community that will support people that are willing to have a go. And yeah, we were turned off here with no paradigms, because I'm not from a grain production background or from a livestock background. And, yeah, we've had some extended family that would come out and I came in and did some work for as harvest and sewing etc and sort of got liked it from that.

**Oli Le Lievre** 02:04

The Moree like community is definitely interesting. I came up last, well I've come up a few times for the races. But more recently, last year with the young Aggies, and it's just such an awesome vibrant community of young people. And it seemed to be really keen on coming back, it feels like there's a real injection of youth kind of in the area.

**Stuart Tighe** 02:22

Yes it's certainly a large large attraction on many fronts. It's the corporate farming that's happening in the district creates a larger skill set that's required, right, right down to very large farming families, and then all the other businesses that are happening in the district. And with Inland Rail coming through, hopefully, there'll be a further and because we will have a precinct which is in a modal hub happening. So there'll be a lot more in the future, hopefully.

**Oli Le Lievre** 02:51

More and more opportunities. And so you're from Gunadai. Whereabouts are you from, no Lyndall you're from Gunadai? Yeah.

**Lyndall Tighe** 02:57

Well, my family was originally from Sydney, and then born in Tamworth, but then did most of my teenage growing up years in Gunadai. Yeah. So. And then, met Stuart in Armidale. Later on, after studying

**Oli Le Lievre** 03:15

Were you both studying?

**Lyndall Tighe** 03:16

No, no, no, I went to orange ag and did an ag commerce degree. And then I had a job at an accountancy firm in Armidale. And, yeah, met Stuart there. So.

**Oli Le Lievre** 03:29

And what about you Stuart? Am I right in thinking you, did you finish school the whole way through it? Or did you decide it wasn't you're a bit too

**Stuart Tighe** 03:36

Yeah I think once you one you learn how to learn, then I think I think you're better off and you know, what you want to do and got a plan of how you're going to get there or attempt to get there. Which which we I did so yeah got out of there as soon as I could really.

**Oli Le Lievre** 03:51

Tell me more about that. What was the was the plan, and what did it kind of look like to you at 15 or 16?

**Stuart Tighe** 03:56

I think it was to, it was to make money in agriculture, predominantly around the livestock or cropping. And that there were opportunities if you worked hard and aligned yourself with the right people that I could see would would advance me a lot quicker than spending those extra years in the tertiary education. And were those opportunities for you in and around the family farm or did you have to go external? Started off shearing up at around Longreach.

**Oli Le Lievre** 04:26

Did you?

**Stuart Tighe** 04:26

Up that way. And then came back around the home country and then worked for some people down around the Belatta and out here not far from here. And yeah, got with the right clique of people and community that's where we that's where I thought you know I could really make some advances in some of our plans what we had way back then.

**Lyndall Tighe** 04:52

But also your father, parents who have sheep and cattle up between Byron Inverell, had bought country out here, so just next door to us. So you did have an insight

**Stuart Tighe** 05:05

And an understanding of what it was about.

**Lyndall Tighe** 05:07

Around this sort of area.

**Oli Le Lievre** 05:09

And so Lyndall, did you meet Stuart when he was the shearer or at what stage?

**Lyndall Tighe** 05:15

You'd come back home and you were working at home and out here. And Stuart, I'm a little bit older than Stuart. Um, so he only just turned 21 When I met Stuart, we just met at a course it was nothing.

**Stuart Tighe** 05:32

Met at a course. And yeah, I was just working in the family business at home. And as Lyndall said we had country out here and back around, and decided it was what we call the Christmas Day factor was always gonna be a better Christmas day if I wasn't working in the within the business. So we went out on our own.

**Oli Le Lievre** 05:52

That's so interesting. And I think I was only thinking, I think about it a lot this time of year as well, because I've done a few different harvests with mates, families and things over the years. And one of the things that a friend has said to me once was he, he wished he'd gone the corporate farming route, because he kind of dreaded Christmas because he hated that time of year it was, yeah, the relationship with his father kind of blown up, and you turn up at Christmas and pretend it's all happy.

**Stuart Tighe** 06:17

That's right.

**Oli Le Lievre** 06:18

That's, that's a big decision, though.

**Stuart Tighe** 06:20

Yeah, big, big decision. And then, as I said, found the right support and community out here and we, but when we when I met Lyndall, we'd just started off contracting, and share farming and some leasing and sort of contracting in and in a way for absentee land holders, where we would do majority of everything, nearly a full farm management service wasn't quite as sophisticated as that. But we would try to provide everything that they needed. And that gave us some scale when we were very small, and then a little bit of land that we will share farming, and owned, that we would buy all the inputs for all the different people I was contracting for. And that would get us a better, a bit more economies of scale,

**Oli Le Lievre** 07:05

gotcha. And help them out as well that tey were getting.

**Stuart Tighe** 07:08

Because if you were if you're in a level of control of all the inputs going in, then you could make the contracting a lot more seamless and a lot more efficient, as well as getting better deals because of your scale. So that really enabled us to, to invest in better gear and get a a scale that would have taken us a long time to get on our own.

**Oli Le Lievre** 07:32

What about like the team? Or was it you guys at this stage just going hell for leather and not saying a lot of each other? Except for at work?

**Lyndall Tighe** 07:39

Yes. Stuart did work very hard. A lot of nights at home on my own. There was one time when Stuart had gone out west of Moree, and Ruby, our eldest, he came home and she ran the other way, because he'd been away for three weeks or something out there. And there's always the story that he just took his swag and a loaf of bread and a bottle of water.

**Oli Le Lievre** 08:07

How accurate is that story, Stuart?

**Stuart Tighe** 08:09

Some of it. We got a fair bit done, but nah from, we always tended to have a little bit of help. And then that quickly grew as a scale grew. And it very quickly became about the people and will remain always about the people around us. And that's both working in the business and on the business. So from very early on, we've had a supportive people helping us on the business, it was not a governance board, but a board that would help us and other other people that would come and oversee what we're doing or guide us. And of course, you got people within your business to make it work on a day to day basis. So from a long time ago, it's been always about people.

**Oli Le Lievre** 09:02

Yeah interesting. Can I Can I just ask so what's the How would you guys describe your roles that each of what you guys do, I guess within the business

**Lyndall Tighe** 09:11

Now?

**Oli Le Lievre** 09:12

Yeah

**Lyndall Tighe** 09:13

Today? We have various businesses I guess in different not enterprises, but different businesses, I guess within what we do, we employ staff that do a lot of that like from the outside to, to the bookwork and all the cash management and all decision making financing, all those sorts of things, but I probably do our personal stuff and get involved with overseeing it. And the just bouncing ideas off Stuart or he bounces ideas off me and I have an opinion that he may think about or not. And I guess just being there as another figure. Is that about, right? I mean, I am on boards, and I am I'm involved in all of the different businesses but more keep a backseat role, I guess these days compared to in the past. Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 10:13

So what did your roles look like as as the business has well, yeah. As the businesses have

**Lyndall Tighe** 10:18

evolved?

**Oli Le Lievre** 10:18

Yeah.

**Lyndall Tighe** 10:19

Well, ori-, I guess my background was I'm not an accountant. But I was bookkeeping sort of thing. So I did all our book work up until our youngest was born. That's right. Yeah. So that's 11 years ago. And then that was when we employed our first office staff.

**Oli Le Lievre** 10:42

Okay.

**Lyndall Tighe** 10:43

Out here on the farm, and then that morphed and grew to a lot, a lot more. That was a hard, a hard time to well it's hard for me to give up a lot of that, but sort of did a big circle. And I was quite happy to give it up in the end. And then I slowly as the kids have got older, come back in, in different stages, I guess. Yeah. So but always a sounding board, and overseeing it and involved, go to meetings and all those sorts of things.

**Stuart Tighe** 11:14

Had a lot of partnerships along the way, Lyndall has been instrumental in, you know, helping keep those partnerships together.

**Oli Le Lievre** 11:20

Yeah.

**Lyndall Tighe** 11:21

So

**Oli Le Lievre** 11:23

Lyndall, for you what was so and I think this is something which I find really fascinating with people. And I've learned a little bit with my job is like you think, you're, if you bring someone else in to do a lot of the stuff that you've been doing that maybe your role becomes redundant? How, how did that then shift for you? Like, did you very quickly actually end up quite occupied with that higher level strategic thinking within the business?

**Lyndall Tighe** 11:46

I think you you do. I guess. I was very much in mothering mode as well, but and also my nature, accountant, nature, so I was probably more in the weeds a lot of the time. And that was where my capabilities were, I guess, not in big picturey would be in words, maybe not in figures. Is that right, Stuart? I'd be more big picture in that way, I guess. And in the actual

**Stuart Tighe** 12:25

Financial sense. Find our direction,

**Lyndall Tighe** 12:28

direction and decisions.

**Stuart Tighe** 12:30

The right people, yeah, something was sustainably you know, commercially sustainable, as well as, in general. Is it the right way to be going?

**Oli Le Lievre** 12:42

Yep, so I'm gonna jump back to it. So the contracting stage, you guys had structured it. So you were buying inputs, which is genius. But what stage did it start to go the need go from being about supporting others to then actually going and starting to grow your own enterprises?

**Stuart Tighe** 13:01

Pretty early on contract didn't last too long. Yeah. Because we became very customer customer focused, and we started started dealing direct with end users that we were growing commodities of. So customer demand driven agriculture is our phrase we often hear talk about. And it was at that point that A I started spend a lot more time focused on that myself. But B it was more about how can we grow and facilitate and create a product within a bulk commodity that had something different, something that they were able to either tell a story about, or get an economical advantage of, because it was stored differently or treated differently, or at, you know, grown differently. And so once that started happening, it was more about collecting, not not so much the contracting but more about doing it more for us ourselves initially, and then bring on lots of other partners that we went in, in leasing and purchasing land, etc.

**Oli Le Lievre** 14:15

So you talk like it was quite easy. Was it easy to get a foot at the table of ultimately, the end customers?

**Stuart Tighe** 14:21

Well it's never easy.

**Oli Le Lievre** 14:23

Yeah, how'd you go about?

**Lyndall Tighe** 14:24

It's a long journey.

**Oli Le Lievre** 14:25

It because you made it seem like it was quite just yeah, just happened.

**Stuart Tighe** 14:29

No, I think one one key factors been is knowing your customers customer.

**Oli Le Lievre** 14:34

Okay. Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 14:35

And after you talk to them, then you come back to your customer. And say I think what you're ultimately looking for with this being advantage, knowing that that's, you know, what are they after? And I think that was one thing that people weren't, they were just saying to their customer, what would you like or how can I give you this as opposed to offering something that you knew ultimately was going to help them by intrinsically knowing your customers Customer. I think that's one point that is I've always relied upon to help get in the door.

**Oli Le Lievre** 15:10

And so like, what kind of commodity? Or what kind of products? And who are the customers we're talking about?

**Stuart Tighe** 15:14

Sorry the case you're talking to your customer might be the Malthouse, but their customer's the Brewer. And so exactly what is the brewer looking for, that you're able to provide to your customers being the malt house, that's gonna help them.

**Oli Le Lievre** 15:26

And so really kind of, I guess, trying to identify problems as such, and be like, well, we've actually already or we can address that for you

**Stuart Tighe** 15:33

Yeah you can address that, and then trying to be involved in the majority of the steps of the supply chain. So I think that's quite quite an important part. It helps, it helps you right back at the farm, harvest efficiencies and what you're doing on that front through to having a level of input and control on how it's been stored through how it's been transported, and how the data today it's as much about the data flow with that right the way through, it's going to be seamless data flow capture of that data, and present it in a format that is customised to each individual customer. And that, that, identifying exactly what that is, is where the where the trick is where the fun is.

**Oli Le Lievre** 16:23

Can you give me an example of what that like might look like as a bit of a?

**Stuart Tighe** 16:27

So one will be if you're talking to a malt house or equivalent, there are processing. So what can make their processing more efficient? How do you narrow the bell curve to allow less to be fall outside, and if that saves him a percentage of power or a percentage of water usage or something on that front? That's going to create a large benefit for that

**Lyndall Tighe** 16:52

going back a step. It's, for example, the the criteria of your grain that you're testing, when you get it out of the paddock, that's what you're talking about being if it's a particular protein or a specific specification that they're looking for, we can get so many tonnes that they want that fits that particular beer. That sort of thing. I guess is

**Stuart Tighe** 17:20

So that's what they're. If you go to the bar today, you got so many taps of beer available to you. So if you then think back through the supply chain, at some point, that becomes a nightmare for somebody to create the way to create all those different different types of beers. So it actually starts back at the sowing rig, which then which then moves through to the storage, which then moves through to the Malthouse and onto the brewery how you enable all those taps to turn off on the at the bar as an example.

**Oli Le Lievre** 17:57

And so what will like, and I guess, and that's where it becomes so complex, doesn't it? So and how did you guys have? Have you? And do you identify who whose problem that you're going to kind of help solve and how you actually address that kind of practically in your operations?

**Stuart Tighe** 18:15

Well think within your operation. Number one is your tribe, we call it pillar crop focused. So you try to focus on a pillar crop, and not try to be the best or be across everything that you are able to grow on your farm down to that level. So we've got a few and particularly as is around the malting, and it's barley and sorghum. And then they're the ones that you dive away a lot deeper into and get a lot better understanding and form better partnerships, as opposed to trying to do it on the six or seven commodities you might be trying to produce on your farm.

**Oli Le Lievre** 18:54

Gotcha. So it's a specialisation of a single does that how does it how do you then manage risks? Like, I guess that's by going narrower? How do you offset your risk with fluctuations and whatever else?

**Stuart Tighe** 19:08

Yeah, so I think you can do it over a number of different ways depending on what it is whether it's varieties, and sowing times of your different barley's as basic stuff through to geographical spread. That's really our customers. In the malt house and brewer is saying we really like what you're doing up here in one part of Australia, can you go and do it another and that's where pure grain was formed from. And really all it is doing is using all the IP that we've developed over the years to help other growers and connecting them directly through to the end user in different regions. So therefore the one malt house which is in different states can know or have confidence that the exact same product done with the exact same data recording is going to turn up in WA the same as VIC as same as northern New South Wales, because although we don't have control over the growers, the, the way that they're doing it and how they're recording it and is all the same across a very large geographical area.

**Oli Le Lievre** 20:09

And so how? Because I would say, amongst friends and different people that is like, an underlying, like competitiveness with neighbours and things like that, where you guys sit when you're trying to deal directly with customers? Like, how have you balanced? I guess that that sharing of IP knowledge? Because that's actually your competitive advantage?

**Stuart Tighe** 20:32

Yeah. I don't hide I just say mate, just straight transparency? I think if you can be the more transparent you are the, you know, less less. sheets and vials and, and don't be a trader.

**Oli Le Lievre** 20:50

Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 20:51

And you can just be transparent and say, Well, this is this is how should and could work and the way it should be. And it's not everyone's cup of tea, right? You're removing yourself a long way from the growing of the crop.

**Oli Le Lievre** 21:05

Yeah

**Stuart Tighe** 21:05

So I don't know if it's really to say that's a competitive advantage to go deeper into the supply chain. Unless you're that way inclined and wanting to wanting to do that. I think it's a more sustainable model. And I think there's definitely advantages in it. But it's not, I wouldn't suggest it's for everyone. You went around all your neighbours, how many would want to go down that path? I don't know.

**Lyndall Tighe** 21:30

No, but also, with your transparency and with pure, like your LTAs and OTAs, you're actually imparting this information. You're we are being transparent and sharing it. So they can be part of it as well.

**Stuart Tighe** 21:47

Yes, so we've offered continued on a very large to lots of people everywhere.

**Oli Le Lievre** 21:53

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 21:54

And for those who are interest, interested in into it, and want to be, want to know where their commodities going to.

**Oli Le Lievre** 22:03

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 22:04

And they're the ones that tend tend to come on board and others that are more just for the day or the price driven, etc, then, yeah, they're not necessarily ones that want to come along the journey.

**Oli Le Lievre** 22:16

Yeah. Before we chat about Pure Grain I was gonna ask you, Stuart, because I'm, what part or what part of business farming? The grain industry you most like? What? Where does your true passion lie?

**Stuart Tighe** 22:29

No in the business.

**Oli Le Lievre** 22:30

It's the business side,

**Stuart Tighe** 22:31

I don't think it matters, which which part of it.

**Oli Le Lievre** 22:34

Yeah, okay.

**Stuart Tighe** 22:35

It's just it's, it's the wanting to make something more efficient. Wanting to do it in a sustainable way that I can see will continue on and the drive to create something that makes value for both customer and the grower. And that will outlast Lyndall and I, because it's, it's a cracking model, that would be the end goal.

**Lyndall Tighe** 23:10

Yeah, but over the years, it's like, going back I'm not current now. It's like, there's a new challenge. And so Stuart would have to accomplish that challenge, succeed at that challenge, and make it work no matter what, and kill all the paradigms or not be frightened of what other people think. But once he's done it, then it's the next one. That's the next one. It's the next one.

**Stuart Tighe** 23:37

Thanks.

**Lyndall Tighe** 23:38

Yeah, it is. So it's been like that over the years. It's I thought I was just marrying a farmer and having four kids and living on a farm. That hasn't quite right. It's been an exciting, yeah. Period. So.

**Oli Le Lievre** 23:55

And how do you guys approach that need to stay focused on the here and now but actually, then because obviously you are really big picture. Anything's kind of possible.

**Stuart Tighe** 24:04

I think it's who you surround yourself with the team and develop and give them as much buy in and part of it as they want to be. So my management style is not to stand over and watch and it's to give a lot of width and scope for them to. And so some people like that and some, some don't. So you end up with people surrounding you that are really into the taking the bull by the horns and doing that themselves that allows them to focus on what they're wanting to and what they're good at.

**Oli Le Lievre** 24:43

And we bring in like people like that into the business does it does it always look like is it in a is it in a monetary equity way? Or is it actually just in that people really thrive on that ownership of role and opportunity?

**Stuart Tighe** 24:56

I'd say up to our scale, we've done an in individualised it however they want.

**Oli Le Lievre** 25:02

Okay.

**Lyndall Tighe** 25:02

Yes.

**Stuart Tighe** 25:02

For some people it's

**Lyndall Tighe** 25:05

That's over the years.

**Stuart Tighe** 25:06

A vehicle or a house or something that's very important to them.

**Oli Le Lievre** 25:10

Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 25:11

And others. It's definitely equity in the business. And, and so we've got all facets.

**Oli Le Lievre** 25:16

Yeah cool. And is that something that... I'm just going on a huge tangent here. Is that like, it was the equity side of things something which was difficult to weigh up like whether you bring in those extra shareholders or not?

**Stuart Tighe** 25:26

Never for me.

**Lyndall Tighe** 25:28

Always is for me.

**Oli Le Lievre** 25:29

What you just give it away?

**Stuart Tighe** 25:30

What's that?

**Oli Le Lievre** 25:31

You just give it away?

**Stuart Tighe** 25:32

Oh yeah. Yeah. You're gonna you're gonna grow it. I believe you will grow it so much quicker and more successfully with with skin in the game?

**Oli Le Lievre** 25:43

Uh huh. Yep.

**Lyndall Tighe** 25:44

Yeah, with people having skin in the game.

**Oli Le Lievre** 25:46

And what do you reckon Lyndall?

**Lyndall Tighe** 25:47

Oh no I agree. It's just it's harder for me to let go. Sometimes.

**Oli Le Lievre** 25:51

Yeah. Because lots of people would be fearful of that. I'll say the share, not the shareholder taking over. But that potential well there might be power and that decision making ability that comes in like, is there yeah?

**Stuart Tighe** 26:07

Our time we've never seen that.

**Oli Le Lievre** 26:09

Okay.

**Stuart Tighe** 26:09

You can give as much as they're either not wired that or that's not the reason they wanting the equity, or it's not the reason it's gonna get them out of bed.

**Oli Le Lievre** 26:16

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 26:17

They just want to have it or that they want to see it as opposed to I want to overtake us or the leader of the group, as an example, I'm not saying it wouldn't be anywhere, but I haven't necessarily come across it and to be challenged by some people that are you know, going closer to wanting to do that. It's a good, it's healthy. It's good.

**Oli Le Lievre** 26:40

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 26:41

Yeah, you don't want to be you want to be challenged. And the more you can get challenged witin your group, I reckon is pretty cool.

**Oli Le Lievre** 26:49

And if well and I guess if they're coming from a position where they are owners, and they're really coming from it where they have it's a vested interest in what's best for the business.

**Stuart Tighe** 26:57

Yeah. And so I always think it's, and as long as you've got the growth continuing, then I don't see it as a impertinent to our well being.

**Oli Le Lievre** 27:13

I was gonna ask for you guys. Like where you sit. Now? What does? What does? What did success look like? Back in the beginning? What was the dream?

**Stuart Tighe** 27:21

Ah, well, I was to own land and, you know, have cropping and cattle production, etc. Over Over a scale. And to give you some idea. I love the Sydney Kidman book, like most kids that are into agriculture. Yeah, you know, that big drought proofing yourself and all that sort of stuff. So I would have thought it'd be something around that.

**Oli Le Lievre** 27:48

And that's still the dream?

**Stuart Tighe** 27:50

I think the dream's now is slightly more focused.

**Oli Le Lievre** 27:55

Less horses.

**Stuart Tighe** 27:56

But yeah, and more more around creating that sustainable supply chain as opposed to just the growing of the commodity. And getting these partnerships, the partnerships and the relationships between end user supply chain and grower I think is the absolute key especially hedging more into the carbon economy and social and environmental, the whole ESG. It's both sides needing educating us as growers need educating just as much about the issues and the troubles, they're having to raise capital, as they are about the realities of, you know, what's happening out here. So everything from what you you're doing, Humans Of Agriculture is excellent through to exactly what I spend most of my time doing is educating both both sides. And I think that's a huge challenge. But B if you get that, right, and I've seen it and got some relationships, right, it creates the most sustainable pathway for that commodity to go.

**Oli Le Lievre** 29:08

Gotcha. And what about for you Lyndall?

**Lyndall Tighe** 29:10

Umm my success. what success looks like is I'm much more on the family side. So it's having the family around and supporting my husband in whatever endeavours he wants to do, basically, but being challenged and we always enjoy not being the status quo, I guess, always doing something a little bit different. And I guess we sort of thrive on that and like that, in a way. But yeah, more more. I'm more on the homefront. I guess I keeping that on the straight and narrow.

**Oli Le Lievre** 29:51

Stuart We were chatting the other day on the phone and you mentioned something and it was around, like well the customer, what was it the customer

**Stuart Tighe** 30:03

Customer demand driven agriculture

**Oli Le Lievre** 30:05

Customer demand driven Ag. But there was something else about, I guess your approach to business that you mentioned. So it would obviously is that that customer first, but like, in the this world of that you guys are operating in, and I'll say, anecdotally, I heard a story of a brewer up in Queensland needing malt barley. And they were taking the malt from Geelong up there. Which just when you think of carbon miles, all of that it just doesn't make any sense. But then at the same time, too, is the is that end user going to be more pissed off that they can't buy a great northern on tap? Or that it's not carbon neutral? How do you and where you sit, What are you using in these conversations? And is there one lever that's pulling harder than another?

**Stuart Tighe** 30:50

Yeah, I think I think it's been one of our biggest challenges. And you touched on it before to say how to you know where to get to the right people within the business? Because you can have high level executive teams that are saying or wanting something around ESGs or, etc, which is totally different to the procurement team. And that that that is definitely a challenge to try and work your way through. Through that because procurement teams KPI to meet their budget and do what they've got to do. And that, is that aligned necessarily with what the executive team is trying to meet on an ESG. You know, you can often feel as though you're they're making a sandwich there.

**Oli Le Lievre** 31:40

Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 31:41

You know, in a business that you have really? Shouldn't you end up trying to manage? Manage? manage that relationship between return those two?

**Oli Le Lievre** 31:52

Yeah. within their own business?

**Stuart Tighe** 31:54

Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 31:55

Yeah God.

**Stuart Tighe** 31:56

Yeah. But

**Oli Le Lievre** 31:58

Mediator.

**Stuart Tighe** 32:02

But once again, if you if you are able to get it, right, it's, it's a winner. And in some, some companies are better at it than others. And they're ultimately the ones you end up partnering with more. The ones that do do it well.

**Oli Le Lievre** 32:16

Have you ever had any false starts with with businesses? And I guess, because if

**Stuart Tighe** 32:21

Certainly could have grown a lot quicker and a lot faster if we weren't so picky and choosey so if they're not, we identify where value is created in the supply chain and believe it should be shared equitably, as to taking on the risk. And if different companies don't want to do that, well, then they're not the right fit for us.

**Oli Le Lievre** 32:44

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 32:45

Yeah, a very small example of that is the farmer has some critical data that the farmer has, at the end user is able to leverage off and the end user is not willing to give them anything for that data, then why should they hand it over? Are they really the ultimate partner there?

**Oli Le Lievre** 33:00

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 33:01

That that type of type of thing. And that's where you hang in a traditional trading model where one takes all based on the risk of the trade.

**Oli Le Lievre** 33:10

Do you think we're going to see a shake up of that more traditional model? Or is it do you think we're at a stage where there's There's comfort and efficiencies as things are, and we kinda just keep going without a real shake up?

**Stuart Tighe** 33:24

No I think you're constantly seeing little bits of it, it's not as size shift necessarily, straightaway. If you look into how many branded beef brands there are, you know that's the start of it, to certain extent. And in in in the grain, it's a small steps on farm storage. And it's big in some areas, and probably going to be growing in others that aren't necessarily, you know, the longer term thinking end users that. Either A want to can see the benefit of having some of the data now and want to understand it, and what are the true costs of say regenerative agriculture, then, then they'll, they'll have no choice in one way. But to get to understand the grower, there's only a few ways of doing that. How to how to really form that relationship. Whereas there'll be plenty, plenty of others that won't might see the advantage in that or don't have that longer term mindset.

**Oli Le Lievre** 34:29

So where do you see it in say 20 odd years?

**Stuart Tighe** 34:32

Well, I don't think that the bigger getting bigger is going to change. So I see a lot more direct, direct, end user relationships happening for sure.

**Oli Le Lievre** 34:44

And that's how people will be getting our site their scale as such like their their value.

**Stuart Tighe** 34:48

Yeah. Now, generalising here Australia's still exports you know 90% of what we produce. So

**Oli Le Lievre** 34:56

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 34:56

You have to do it at a scale where you can do it you know, and and this is where you're getting different groups or different like minded people come together to try and do it, etc.

**Oli Le Lievre** 35:07

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 35:08

Yeah, I think they'll be many wise have been able to able to achieve that without necessarily knowing your end user customer straightaway.

**Oli Le Lievre** 35:17

So can you can you explain to us a little bit about what is pure grain? How was it set up? And who's involved today?

**Stuart Tighe** 35:24

Yeah, it was set up to be that linkage between the grower and the end user.

**Oli Le Lievre** 35:31

Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 35:32

In a transparent model. And it is in all grain growing regions of Australia. It has both domestic and export customers that that the grower it's within the network, provide and providing they're managing the commodity they're growing and the data, then the customer has, you know, a lot of a lot of satisfaction isn't the right word, but a lot of comfort that what he's ordering is going to turn up.

**Oli Le Lievre** 36:06

Yep. Assurance.

**Stuart Tighe** 36:07

Yeah, a lot of assurance, because there's the same way it's being done over different different regions and areas.

**Oli Le Lievre** 36:15

Yeah gotcha. Has that been something that which is difficult to manage, or it really was working out, I'll say the model of how it worked with

**Stuart Tighe** 36:22

A little bit of the model, and then trying to enact that in different regions has been a bit more of a challenge.

**Lyndall Tighe** 36:27

And education,

**Stuart Tighe** 36:28

Bducation. But you got to show the value.

**Oli Le Lievre** 36:32

Education of participants within pure grain or within the

**Stuart Tighe** 36:36

Education of both.

**Lyndall Tighe** 36:37

Both.

**Stuart Tighe** 36:38

Yeah, I mean, growers and end users in WA, as you would imagine, would be, you know, a lot different education there to a northern New South Wales grower.

**Oli Le Lievre** 36:49

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 36:50

And a Queensland domestic user.

**Oli Le Lievre** 36:53

And for you, how do you stay across like that? Or do you really let that kind of I'll say that localities, like those local areas really manage because they know their systems and how it works.

**Stuart Tighe** 37:05

It's the local areas where the, you know, tried and proven formula that's worked, what have you got to tweak in the in the different areas? And how much? Do you have to change the model to suit? Versus, How much is the education?

**Oli Le Lievre** 37:21

Gotcha. yeah. So what's on for you guys for the next few years here?

**Lyndall Tighe** 37:25

No well, I mean, we've got the pure that we're trying to grow. We also have our other entity, Buller farms, which is our contracting entity,

**Stuart Tighe** 37:36

Land service management.

**Oli Le Lievre** 37:36

So as is in they're, like absent?

**Lyndall Tighe** 37:36

Land Service Management. And then we have another combined northern venture, which is bringing in your external property owners, and spreading risk and farming country from well, at the moment from, I don't know, northern New South Wales to Gunadai. But it's a very different and new concept that can get investors into this Co farming arrangement

**Stuart Tighe** 38:11

So they generally are absentee land holders. And it's a way of getting their land managed.

**Oli Le Lievre** 38:17

Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 38:18

And spreading their risk to level out their return somewhat, because they're exposed to a lot larger geographical spread, and a lot more commodities. And both irrigation and rain fed country. So you become part of the co-farm model by being a percentage of the model based on your land, or water assets that you bring in.

**Oli Le Lievre** 38:42

Okay.

**Stuart Tighe** 38:44

And so that you are then a percentage of everybody's commodity that's growing on on all the different land around.

**Lyndall Tighe** 38:52

And so for example, you could be managing a farm just down the road here that gets a hail, and the crop gets wiped out. And so ordinarily, in the old ways, the simple terms, no income, but if that's getting spread between all those, the risk is everyone's taking that risk on.

**Oli Le Lievre** 39:13

Gotcha.

**Lyndall Tighe** 39:13

So could get a bumper crop in the south.

**Oli Le Lievre** 39:16

So it's more it is also smaller landholders, but

**Stuart Tighe** 39:20

Nah just absentee. We got some very large landholders.

**Lyndall Tighe** 39:23

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 39:23

It's a way of getting their land managed, because once you invest in that land, you're either going to lease it, or put on your own management.

**Oli Le Lievre** 39:30

Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 39:31

And so

**Oli Le Lievre** 39:32

Oh because people are trying to land bankers, as in purchasing the asset to hold

**Stuart Tighe** 39:36

Yep they're either purchasing the land or they've inherited land, or they might want to go to a different land area.

**Oli Le Lievre** 39:43

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 39:43

How did they get it man and how do they get it run? Are they going to pay someone to do it? Or lease it out? Whereas this provides a way of still being part of the growing of the whatever the commodity?

**Oli Le Lievre** 39:55

Yeah

**Stuart Tighe** 39:56

We're always end user focus so you'll get a relationship immediately if you want to get that far into it?

**Oli Le Lievre** 40:03

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 40:04

As in the owner of the land can come and meet all the different end users that we're dealing directly with and you're part of a lot larger community of growers that and that have a like minded, I suppose, reason that why they're invested in land.

**Oli Le Lievre** 40:22

Yeah, gotcha.

**Stuart Tighe** 40:24

The management group gets paid, it's predominantly gets paid off the percentage of profit. So it's in their incentive to, to do it to make this make profitable decisions, because that's how they're getting paid. And, yeah, I think the growth of this will grow. So that CO farming venture will be what will you really focusing over the next few years. That's because the bigger you get the geographical spread, The more consistent you can get the return. Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 40:54

Yeah. And so so if I was to come in. So us and another, I come in, and I've got a large cattle herd, you guys come in as a grain operators, but based off, I'll say, my land, I might end up with 50% of the units myself. And then we have this. Gotcha that's genius.

**Stuart Tighe** 41:14

So currently, there's nine, nine entities?

**Oli Le Lievre** 41:17

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 41:18

400, 408 million. of land under management.

**Oli Le Lievre** 41:23

Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 41:24

And which is around 26,500 hectares. And it's in both irrigation. Rainford. Sort of British Creek to North Star.

**Oli Le Lievre** 41:36

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 41:37

But yeah, hopefully. Expanding that a lot. A long way further, soon.

**Oli Le Lievre** 41:42

Wow. That's cool is this is the ideas and things that you guys do are they, I said, concocted from other parts of the world or the industries that you see things like this working go, how can we apply that in to ag and into our area?

**Stuart Tighe** 41:59

Not not not so much. It's more what is the more efficient or better way of doing it? As much as anything?

**Lyndall Tighe** 42:06

And in some cases, some of that we were doing in a minor way, very

**Stuart Tighe** 42:12

Small way, then you make a lot larger and commercial

**Lyndall Tighe** 42:14

Commercialised. Yeah. But then, I mean, you have great mentors that throw around ideas and, and great staff throw around ideas. It doesn't comes overnight. It's a lot of a lot of

**Oli Le Lievre** 42:31

That's genius, though.

**Stuart Tighe** 42:32

What's a better way of doing it? You know, how do you and so where did this really come from was the 18 19 drought, you know, our our diversity and geographical spread, etc, was, what one could say was not big enough to handle that level of drought. And that that was probably the question on the discussion point on the board paper would have been how do we mitigate the risk, and that's where it starts, and then morphs into the cofarm model. After a long, long time. I'm getting it getting better and better, but and then once you get it to a commercial, like, then then you can really roll it out. And along that journey you bring you bring along the people who who else is really keen to see a more sustainable way of absentee running of land as an Yeah. And I Yeah, narrowed into it and say, right, you come along, and they help drive and be part of forming it be part of the furniture then the venture.

**Oli Le Lievre** 43:34

And so for you, I'm one that is just so interesting and cool. How do you and I'm guessing it's coming back, but how do you split your time between the things that are demanding both of your attention and family is obviously part of that as well?

**Stuart Tighe** 43:54

Family's, number one, but then it's just where the where you're focusing growth for that particular period is where I'll put more attention to.

**Lyndall Tighe** 44:05

And probably back in the day where you're doing the physical hours now it's just office hours and you do get up exceptionally early most mornings and so yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 44:19

When we say exceptionally early?

**Lyndall Tighe** 44:20

Not that early but.

**Stuart Tighe** 44:22

I'm a 4, 430 starter.

**Lyndall Tighe** 44:23

I'm not.

**Oli Le Lievre** 44:26

And straight into it.

**Stuart Tighe** 44:28

Yeah I do till till six and do some exercise and then have breakfast for the family and that's that's my day but I'm shot duck by about nine o'clock.

**Lyndall Tighe** 44:37

I think you just driven and you when you're going you're going and like we were talking about over lunch we have specific family things that we like doing where we can turn off and and we do enjoy that, but we're not Very good at turning off.

**Stuart Tighe** 45:03

Some of that growth has been around your customers issues right, take that 18 19 drought that that discussion I just had around where cofarming came after the drought. The first part was, well, how are we going to get, you know, malt barley to our customers. And that's where we started doing coastal shipping, where we sourced it in different parts of Australia and then facilitated the unloading of the vessels into Brisbane and that started to do to two vessels 60,000 tonne that that would have seen our customer there. But as the drought continued on and more people heard and you want to do more, you know, once they get it going commercialised we ended up doing just under 1.2 million tonne.

**Oli Le Lievre** 45:51

Wow.

**Stuart Tighe** 45:52

What started as one one phone call about how do we go about.

**Lyndall Tighe** 45:57

And we ended up with five, five sites,

**Stuart Tighe** 46:00

Yeah five sites

**Lyndall Tighe** 46:00

Five sites out in Cubine and Brisbane.

**Stuart Tighe** 46:05

And a big team of people, which a lot of them came from the areas around where we live that didn't have any work

**Lyndall Tighe** 46:11

Provided relief for the drought as well

**Stuart Tighe** 46:12

Kept the beer going, kept people employed.

**Oli Le Lievre** 46:15

Because was it you guys that loaded the train? Directly?

**Stuart Tighe** 46:18

Yeah. So once again, that was a customer thing, because that particular end user could couldn't really take it in by road. It was it was a train delivery system. And yet, lots of other things were doing we really wanted they really wanted the product. So it was then Surely it can't be that hard to do it.

**Lyndall Tighe** 46:41

So then you go and figure out how to get a train loading licence in different locations. And yeah, and work around all the loopholes and get there.

**Stuart Tighe** 46:51

So that became a great instil is today very beneficial learnings both that and the coastal shipping, which build off of IP, industry knowledge and etc, to allow you to benefit in a lot of ways and this is were attracting people because look what these guys have done, or Yeah, the ability to work in this part and that part different parts?

**Oli Le Lievre** 47:22

Yep. If there was, I guess, 111 thing that you could change or implement that would give you guys overnight, I guess, opportunity to leapfrog ahead. Is there? Is there one thing if you had a magic wand that you could do anything that comes to mind?

**Stuart Tighe** 47:40

No, no other than predict the future?

**Oli Le Lievre** 47:44

Done.

**Stuart Tighe** 47:47

No, I don't spend a lot of time thinking about that type of thing.

**Oli Le Lievre** 47:53

Yep.

**Lyndall Tighe** 47:53

I think I think and two Stuart's very much a person, if, if that option doesn't work, he might be down for a day, but you just pick yourself up and you work on the next option, like so. I mean, there would you'd love for some of those things to have come off. But I think they're not going to happen. Like not every

**Stuart Tighe** 48:13

I think trying to set trying to unset trying to guess next trend cycle. I mean. The data is around the ESG and environmental reporting, etc. I think that has been coming for a while.

**Oli Le Lievre** 48:31

Yeah

**Stuart Tighe** 48:32

As an example. So how do you get your business and get everything ready to be able to give what your customers are going to need there in time as an example that's going to take probably the most amount of our time, energy and effort. For something that, Can Can I my hand my heart and say I'm getting extra dollars today verse, what we've spent on it? And I'd say no, but that's, that's a belief that the group feels is going to be needed. And how do you say get yourself everywhere else there? How are you gonna meet your customers demands? And in a time backing? What do you think will be trends, I suppose and you'd definitely call that a mega trend. No, I would anyway.

**Oli Le Lievre** 49:15

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 49:15

And so moving pretty early on those to put yourself and business in a better position.

**Oli Le Lievre** 49:22

Yeah

**Stuart Tighe** 49:23

I think it's quite important.

**Oli Le Lievre** 49:25

And one of those trends areas obviously in and around carbon and with you guys dealing with customers, especially close to the consumer would be fascinating. But what like what's your I guess, feeling take on it at the moment in terms of the whole I'll say the carbon neutrality piece, but then actually how farmers are going to be rewarded and have that, I guess. Yeah, if the.

**Stuart Tighe** 49:51

If you take the super long term view, I'd say pretty difficult on our fragile Australian soils to have make monoculture work longer term. So that's at a very high level. So you're gonna have to be doing something, I believe, in time somewhere down the track to enable that sustainable practice of farming to continue. So I've been saying we've had no livestock here since the 70s. Do I think there'll be no livestock here or no pasture phase or no something different to the way we're doing it today? Even in 10 years time, I'd suggest not. I just don't think it's sustainable the way we're doing. And I'd suggest that's on the majority of monoculture farms around Australia and country, our land and weather and everything is not. I just don't think it's conducive enough.

**Oli Le Lievre** 50:48

Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 50:48

To it, and will it be along the way, there'll be super great things that will come along, that'll help probably prolong that. You know, just like the natural farming. No one would no one would say that the way we were farming in the 70s and 80s. Was sustainable. No till farming has bought us an extra buncha years. But I don't believe that's the be all and end all. It's not, we're going to can do it like this forever. So I think land usage change in different parts will be the key well down the track?

**Oli Le Lievre** 51:07

Yeah. Yeah. And I think I think it's such an interesting point that, like the utopia and there's no endpoint really in, yeah, agricultural practices. It's like what we, as the beauty of learning, it's what we did as like, well, how on earth? Do we ever do that? And that's the beauty of history. But it's like, you know, the way we farm and do things today is definitely going to be different in the future is

**Stuart Tighe** 51:49

Definitely gonna be different.

**Lyndall Tighe** 51:50

I was just gonna say in on along that learning and different paths. This farm, particularly here, with pure we're turned into like a trial farm. And are dealing with about five different parties, doing lots of different trials with non synthetics and different rates and all those sorts of things, but doing it in a way that it's commercial trials. They're real. A large scale. It's not just in a lab or in a little plot. Yeah, so that's another path that we've gone down just recently, which is really interesting. And we're probably a third year.

**Oli Le Lievre** 52:31

Third year into it.

**Lyndall Tighe** 52:32

Yeah, yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 52:33

420 hectares dedicated 100% large scale trials. Okay. And with both production parties involved, people that have got productivity benefits or, but also end users trying to understand as well.

**Oli Le Lievre** 52:52

Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 52:53

We've always had that type of vendor, I believe. And you know, for a long time, we had our own in house, in house and r&d.

**Oli Le Lievre** 53:01

Person?

**Stuart Tighe** 53:02

Yep. We've had and really that's what other people have been along the way. And we've had that thing, at least for 10 years now.

**Oli Le Lievre** 53:10

Yeah wow.

**Stuart Tighe** 53:11

Because A I too understand ourselves have a better understanding of B to be able to promote that to others.

**Oli Le Lievre** 53:19

Yep.

**Stuart Tighe** 53:20

I think it's quite important.

**Oli Le Lievre** 53:22

So if we were to say like through the sustainability lens, how far out are you guys? How far do you looking into kinda the, the future of what you guys are trying to achieve?

**Stuart Tighe** 53:32

I think, at least five five to 10 year range?

**Oli Le Lievre** 53:35

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 53:37

We spend most of the time.

**Oli Le Lievre** 53:39

So. And this is far easier. What's your favourite grain based dish?

**Lyndall Tighe** 53:44

What was that

**Oli Le Lievre** 53:45

Grain based dish?

**Lyndall Tighe** 53:48

Oh, gosh.Can I can I say bread? I like bread.

**Oli Le Lievre** 53:53

Absolutely you can. Someone said beer.

**Lyndall Tighe** 53:56

Yeah, that was my other thought. Because we produce

**Oli Le Lievre** 54:00

And another person said grain fed beef and I was like oh well yeah we can.

**Stuart Tighe** 54:03

I was just gonna go straight for beer.

**Lyndall Tighe** 54:06

Pasta.

**Oli Le Lievre** 54:07

Yeah. Okay.

**Oli Le Lievre** 56:56

Well, I don't think Well, I don't really have a whole lot else. One question I do ask people. And I think it's on the humans of ag podcast, but it's around advice to 10 students, and I'd be really interested in each of yours. Like, you. You both have come from such. You've both come from ag background, but have gone down such an interesting journey. What would you guys say to people about the opportunities in agriculture today?

**Lyndall Tighe** 57:20

Oh, firstly, I think the opportunities are endless, because virtually any career can be tuned in to Ag. And you can be located anywhere doing that. I mean, okay, if you want to be hands on, maybe not, but, and that sort of is true, even with our business, because we have people from Victoria to Queensland to wherever working for us. And I think I don't know what else, I sort of think that options are endless. Don't sweat, getting the marks, if you want to get somewhere and you have a plan and a drive and a goal, you will get there no matter what might be the long way around. I mean, we've got four kids, we've got one left school, one going into year 11. And they're all going to do different parts, I'm sure. But I'm sure they'll get to wherever they want to be, no matter what.

**Stuart Tighe** 58:25

I think education is about learning how to learn. And once. Once you've done that, then it's about where you want to get to how you want to get there when you want to get there. A lot of people don't know that. So stay in the education system until they're working that out. Do you have that fully planned? I'd say get into it.

**Oli Le Lievre** 58:51

I've got one question just on that. Because you're I'd say absolutely a learner for life. How did you go convincing your parents and others that you are ready to that you are ready to move on to the next style of learnings?

**Stuart Tighe** 59:04

It was not a challenge at all.

**Oli Le Lievre** 59:06

Yeah

**Stuart Tighe** 59:07

Absolutely not. Because Because if you are driven enough, then they could just see where you passion and they could see it. And it's the same as bring them along the journey. Not just get up one day and say hey

**Lyndall Tighe** 59:22

Oh, but you did. Your school was surprised that you were leaving

**Stuart Tighe** 59:26

I didn't have to commit to bloody teachers. But the decision makers, they my parents and you know others they were the ones you know it was always going to be.

**Oli Le Lievre** 59:38

Yeah.

**Stuart Tighe** 59:39

So they they it wasn't a surprise to them.

**Oli Le Lievre** 59:41

Yeah, wow.

**Stuart Tighe** 59:42

Just convinced them. Good numbers, budgets, plans,

**Lyndall Tighe** 59:47

Know how to do your maths. Can't spell still. But I mean, and it's that growth and drive to learn. When I first met Stuart, he didn't know one end of tax return or knew how to budget, new Excel. But now you probably know more about corporate business than I do. So, and it's through not not doing any courses.

**Stuart Tighe** 1:00:13

Yeah. Because you've learned how to learn so you can pick it up for the rest of your life.

**Lyndall Tighe** 1:00:20

So it's very hard for us then to tell our children that they have to go to uni or do a course or they have to have

**Oli Le Lievre** 1:00:27

Times have changed. Yeah. Fundamental Principles are still the same.

**Stuart Tighe** 1:00:31

And I learnt. And I don't have an issue facing it. They'll be they'll know when they're ready.

**Oli Le Lievre** 1:00:38

Yeah great. Well, thank you so much for sitting down for this chat. Well, I think I'm just sitting here just going well anything's possible, really, and the mindset and how you guys have gone about achieving, it's incredible. And I think we so interesting to watch and see what happens over the next few years and into the future as well. So thank you so much for sitting down.

**Stuart Tighe** 1:00:56

Thanks Oli.

**Lyndall Tighe** 1:00:57

Thanks Oli.

**Stuart Tighe** 1:00:57

And thanks for doing what Humans Of Agriculture do, try and get the message out there I think it's a very important part of it.

**Lyndall Tighe** 1:01:03

And always, they're always stimulating chats that you have. Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 1:01:07

No, well I think it was very cool sitting around the table at lunch and have you guys rattling off episodes, it's cool. Thank you.

**Stuart Tighe** 1:01:14

Thanks.

**Lyndall Tighe** 1:01:14

Thank you.