# Social network analysis and Primary Innovation Benchmark social network benchmark 2014

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# What is Social Network Analysis?

- A way of modelling and analysing relationships and connections between people, organisations or other specified entities

- Applies a specified relational question e.g. 'who do you talk to about...?'

- Focuses on the type(s)of relational qualities that enable sharing of resources

# How is SNA useful for project teams?

- Maps connections between network members to show how relationships enable and constrain network goals and resource sharing

- Provides a diagnostic tool to map change in the network (longitudinal SNA)

- Can help identify whether a network has an appropriate complement of functions, participants and expertise

- Can indicate whether a network has an appropriate complement of relational roles e.g. brokers, central connectors

# What does SNA mapping show?

- Who is present in the network (nodes)
- How are participants connected (lines between nodes)
- Gaps between network clusters or individuals (lack of lines between groups/people)
- Participants who may be overly connected (too many lines connect them to others)
- Interactions between network clusters
- Structural insights about collaboration, communication, reach and impact capacity of the network

# Project teams can use SNA data to address different questions…

According to the network boundary and stage of process:

- Where is the network weak/strong?

- Can we achieve our goals with the current structure?

- Are there sufficient connections between participants to ensure collaboration and communication?

- Can we identify gatekeepers who may limit sharing of resources?

- How can network reach be extended?

- How does the network change over time?

# Network insights and new questions about the role of the CoP within Primary Innovation

- Benchmark network shows early connectivity of CoP members within Primary Innovation

- Some CoP members have strong connections – why have they been willing and able to engage?

- Some CoP members have weak connections – what may be preventing them from engaging more fully in the network?

- Re-mapping the Primary Innovation network in 2015 and 2016 will show how CoP involvement changes over time

- CoP members individually and collectively are critical for extending case study findings and benefits of co-innovation practice

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# SNA model of Primary Innovation CoP (July 2014)

**Relational question: Who do you talk to about the Primary Innovation Programme**
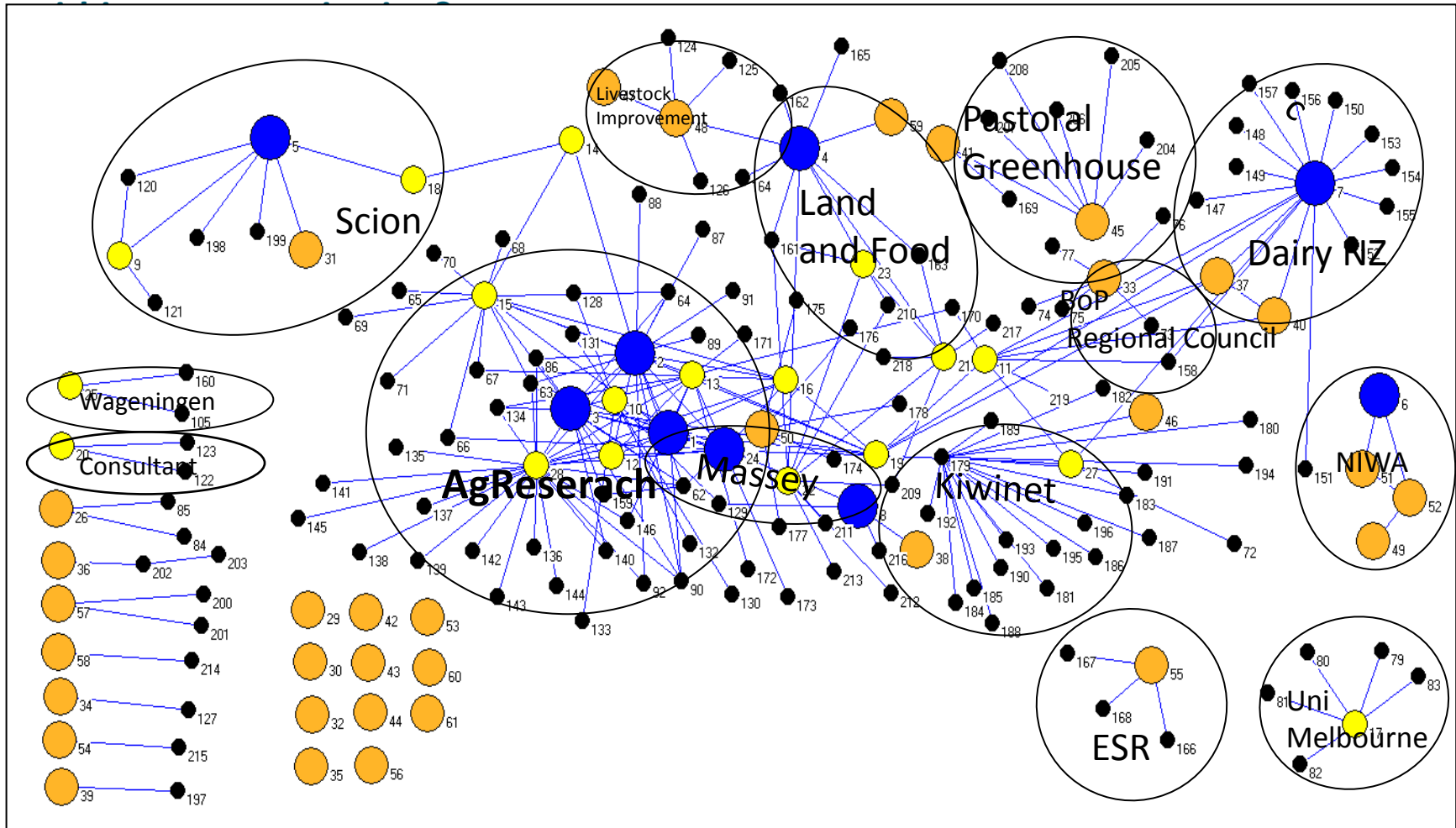


CoP Member   Research+CoP   Researcher   Outside Primary Innovation

# Overall findings from the benchmark Primary Innovation SNA

- Strongest relational connections are currently between research members

- This reflects processes involved in the establishment phase over the last 18 months

- Now need to anticipate structural changes in the network to develop  the reach and impact over the next three years

- Strengthen engagement with all CoP members and ensure they are aware that success of the programme depends on their ongoing leadership and support

# Practical recommendations

- Ensure timely sharing of information about case studies and other programme findings with all researchers and CoP members

- Develop strategic communication potential by setting up an inventory of information requests, discussion themes

- Set up a skills profile ( who's who) of all Primary Innovation members to facilitate making connections

- Identify and plan life cycle stages of the programme and identify who will inherit its legacy

# Other suggestions for using SNA to support co-innovation in New Zealand's primary industry sector

- Map connections within and between industries/value chains to identify industry specific enablers and constraints to achieving specified goals

- Target strategic points across the wider primary industry network by mapping current patterns of connectivity and evaluate how to leverage innovation opportunities

- Map and support communities of practice within and across industries

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