

Ag Ex exists to provide leadership, encourage collaboration and independence to the grower groups networks to ensure that they continue to drive profitable farming businesses across South Australia through effective development, extension and adoption. The collective power of groups is a strong force in influencing and driving positive change in the agricultural sector.

Over the past 12 months Ag Ex has continued to support and empower the grower group network across the state. Key initiatives that Ag Ex has led include:

The ongoing development of a strategy to assist the grower group network to thrive into the future has been on the agenda of the grower chairs meetings over the last two years, as well as a topic of discussion with PIRSA executive. This year PIRSA agreed to support Ag Ex to deliver the "Strengthening Grower Group Network in SA to deliver R,D&E" project in collaboration with Ag Bureau SA. The study is identifying the future needs of the grower group network by understanding what the network values most and identifying solutions for those things that could be done more effectively. The project has been rolled out by Jay Cummins, meeting with representatives of 18 grower groups across the state. The findings of the project will be delivered at this year's Ag Ex Forum.

Ag Ex has developed a strong relationship with the Northern & Yorke NRM Board and have been contracted to deliver the Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator over the past 8 years with Michael Richards filling the role. Michael is currently stepping out of the role, with Emma MacInerney being appointed to fill the position starting in January this year for the next five years.

Ag Ex leads a successful collaborative bid to the NLP Smarter Farming Partnerships program for a project titled "Warm and Cool Season Mixed Cover Cropping for Sustainable Farming Systems in south eastern Australia". GRDC and DEW have also come on board to provide significant support to the project. The key partners include the CSIRO and SANTFA and involves six grower groups.

Ag Ex supported the WoTL innovation hub workshop to assist WoTL to develop the best model for WoTL moving forward in the future.

Ag Ex is represented on the Sheep Connect SA Project Advisory Panel. The project is led by Ian MacFarlane. Sheep Connect drive communications and extension for wool grower across the state. They have high quality web site and are active on Twitter.

Ag Ex continues to provide responses to key issues and opportunities affecting the grower group network. This year it included:

- Significant input into the NRM reform process.
- Input into the development of a national approach for agriculture to climate change adaptation.
- Responding to the State and Commonwealth review of drought response.

- Supporting the forum organised by Deanna Lush to discuss practical strategies to build community trust and social licence in organisations and the wider food system.
- Ag Ex met quarterly with the PIRSA executive and Ag Bureau SA in a dialogue to establish two-way communication and trust to support the grower group network.

In the next year Ag Ex has a number of new initiatives in the pipeline including:

- Implement the findings of the “Strengthening Grower Group Network in SA to deliver RD&E” stock take.
- Implementing the Rural Research and Development for Profit project on mixed farming RD&E if the project bid is successful.
- Implementing national approach to more effectively deliver extension that drives the adoption of innovation & sustainable farm practices in broadacre agriculture if the project bid is successful.
- Looking to extending the Mid North Mesonet concept to the Riverland and Mallee if funding bid is successful.

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