



Agricultural Bureau of South Australia  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2018-19**



# 2018-19 highlights

The Annual General Meeting was held in Adelaide on October 18, 2018, followed by the Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards presentation dinner.

The **2018 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship** was awarded to Ruth Sommerville, from Spalding, for her vision of productive agriculture and functioning ecosystems to co-exist in a sustainable and viable partnership. *Read more about Ruth's yearlong learnings and her plans for the year ahead on page 12.*

Luke Ramsay from Kimba, on the Eyre Peninsula, was awarded the **2018 Rural Youth Bursary**. A stud operations manager at Karawatha Park Merinos, Luke has a vision to see precision livestock become common practice to improve genetics and profits.

Grain farmer and industry advocate Tristan Baldock, of Kimba, was honoured with the **2018 Services to Primary Production Award**. Tristan is manager of the Buckleboo Farm Improvement Group's research, development and extension program.

In its 20th year, the **2019 Lois Harris Scholarship** recognises high achieving students entering their first year of tertiary education.

Nicholas Riddell received the highest Tertiary

Entrance Score (TER) for a student entering the Agricultural Science course in 2019, with an outstanding 99.65.

Nicholas plans to pursue career options in plant biology or agronomy after his studies and will use the scholarship to help cover his HECS loan, as well as fund work experience trips over the duration of his degree.

The connections with Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) and Ag Ex Alliance have

been ongoing this past year. In conjunction with funding from PIRSA, Ag Ex and the Ag Bureau initiated a survey of all grower groups in SA.

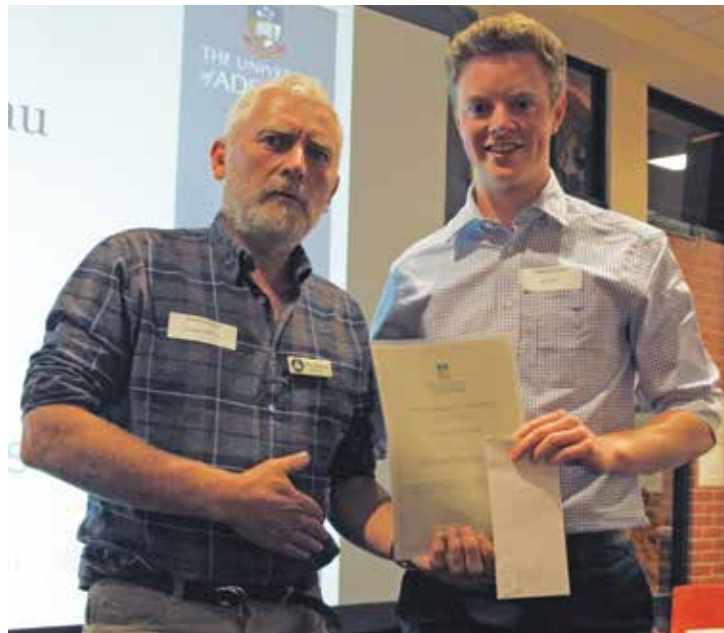
Dr Jay Cummins released a report titled 'Strengthening the Grower Group Network in South Australia to deliver RD&E' which emphasised the importance of local farming systems groups.

He highlighted the support local communities can provide their farmers

as they learn adaptive processes for the benefit of agriculture production.

The Bureau managed project funding of \$270,371 to increase the adoption of evidence based sustainable production methods.

Sponsorship of \$18,636 was received towards Bureau member projects.



Pictured left to right: Ag Bureau Chair Mark Grossman with Lois Harris scholarship winner Nicholas Riddell

# About us

Helping to bridge the gap between scientists and farmers, the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia (Ag Bureau) is encouraging excellence in agriculture, business management and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Representing the interests of South Australian farmers, the Ag Bureau communicates regularly with government and other agencies on issues that affect the farming community, including research and development, farming practices and education.

This includes PIRSA, the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), the University of Adelaide and the SA Research and Development Institute (SARDI).

A not-for-profit organisation with more than 1300 members across 60 branches across the State, the Ag Bureau was established in 1888 and is the only farmer network group of its kind remaining in Australia.

Membership is open to primary producers and those with an interest in the State's agriculture industry. Members are provided opportunities for professional development, collaboration on common challenges, project funding, application support, knowledge exchange and crucial local community support.

Young farmers are mentored by experienced Bureau members and the annual **Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards** recognises, encourages and supports young farmers and rural youth who are pursuing careers that will sustain rural communities, with prestigious and generous scholarships.

**Ag Bureau branches** foster the development of vibrant communities and industry networks and provide resources to branch members including relevant Codes of Practice, local, state and federal grant and project funding opportunities, agricultural related articles by farmers and industry advocates.

**For more information or to locate your nearest branch visit [agbureau.com.au](http://agbureau.com.au).**

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# Chair's report

**On behalf of our enthusiastic board, I am thrilled to present this report and share with you the Ag Bureau's achievements for 2018/19.**

Members of our 60 branches attend branch events and activities and contribute to the sustainability of the industry by taking part in the latest projects and trials.

Historically Ag Bureau shared a strong connection with government and was supported financially to be a key conduit of information flow from government to farmers.

This year has seen some significant milestones including the momentous 90th birthday celebration of the Koonunga Branch. With a diverse membership mix, the 60-strong branch members are especially proud to have three generations from the same families regularly attending meetings together!

Ron Fromm was one of the "15 interested and keen men" who came together to form the Rowland Flat Ag Bureau branch on December 5, 1928 and he recently clocked up 70 years of membership. He recalled how rubber tyres on tractors and hydraulics in farming were, at that time, brand new technology but he also noted that knowledge-sharing between farmers as the primary method for learning new methods and techniques hasn't changed.

After a four year break, the relaunch of Lenswood Forest Range Ag Bureau was well supported with a crowd of 80 enthusiastic locals. The last few years have been particularly challenging for these growers and it heartening to see them banding together

for social support, technical and professional development

Our AGM was held in October and the new board for 2018/19 was announced allowing the opportunity to appoint, and welcome, Peter O'Neil and Darren Kennedy.

Janette Ridgway continues to represent the South East and I remain as the Chair and representative for the Barossa/Light region, while David Edwards is still representing the Yorke Peninsula and Allan Zerna, the Eyre Peninsula.

Geoff Page officially retired from the board at the AGM and I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the board and Ag Bureau branches and member to publicly thank him for his tireless efforts in representing the Bureau members within the Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island region.

We also extend our sincere thanks to ex-officio member Ashlea Doolette from University of Adelaide for her valuable time and support.

The connections with PIRSA and Ag Ex Alliance have been ongoing this past year. In conjunction with funding from PIRSA, Ag Ex and the Ag Bureau initiated a survey of all grower groups in SA.

Dr Jay Cummins was engaged to conduct research and his report, 'Strengthening the grower group network in South Australia to deliver RD&E', highlighted the importance of local farming systems groups actively supporting their local communities.

The Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards has become a calendar highlight for the Ag Bureau. The prestigious annual awards are identifying and supporting inspirational rural youth who are working in primary production or have careers that will sustain rural communities in the years to come.

For the first time we welcomed Minister for Environment and Water David Speirs to the awards to present our 2018 winners Ruth Sommerville and Luke Ramsay with their certificates. Both Ruth and Luke have made the most of their bursaries and are excited to share their extensive learnings with Ag Bureau members and the wider community. *Read more on pages 8-13.*

The Spirit of Excellence awards would not be possible without the support of our generous sponsors and we thank SA Water, the Department of Environment and Water (DEW) and PIRSA for enabling us to present these valuable scholarships to such inspirational and motivated individuals.

SA Water also sponsors the Ag Bureau's Regional Bus Tours, enabling branches to facilitate educational tours of related industries and organisations in their local area. There are many exciting projects being supported by the Ag Bureau which will benefit growers. Among them is a project utilising new tools, methods and technologies to identify and manage soil variability in vineyards within the Clare Valley.

Meanwhile farmers in the Mid North and upper Yorke Peninsula will benefit from a new project

offering innovative and cost effective solutions for managing and treating acid soils. *Read more on pages 14-18.*

Our board and members are passionate about creating a sustainable and profitable agricultural industry for South Australia. We remain committed to refining and progressing our Regional Support Network in 2019-20 to ensure we can work together on meeting this shared goal.

We share your love for community and we are proud to be working to support your family, business and the future of the rural sector.

We look forward to representing our members with an independent voice to government departments, agencies and partners and seek to advancing the agricultural industry in 2019/20.

**Mark Grossman**

Chair - Agricultural Bureau of SA

# Long-standing member awards

The Board recognises and congratulates the following long-standing members on reaching their milestones. Thank you for your continuing contributions to our work.

## ~ 70 years ~

**Rowland Flat**  
Ronald Fromm

**Halbury/Whitwarta**  
Esmond Hoepner

**Nelshaby**  
Ross Roberts

**Point Pass**  
Gordon Schutz  
Ross Schutz

## ~ 60 years ~

**Moonta**  
Donald Bagshaw

**Boors Plains**  
Graham Cross

**Lowbank and Districts**  
Denis Paschke

**Point Pass**  
Geoff Schutz

## ~ 50 years ~

**Koonunga**  
Glen Becker

**Rowland Flat**  
Trevor Braunack  
Glen Hoffman  
Dean Lindner  
Rodney Zerk

**Moonta**  
Roger Day

**Lowbank and Districts**  
Wesley Kalisch

## ~ 40 years ~

**Boors Plains**  
Bronte Baker

**Moonta**  
Andrew Mill  
Scott Ferguson

**Point Pass**  
Ronald Milde

## ~ 30 years ~

**Halbury/Whitwarta**  
Ray Cook  
Murray Kirkland  
Victor Marriott

**Koonunga**  
Dudley Dittrich  
Stephen Riebke  
Kevin Rohrlach

**Rowland Flat**  
Michael Heinrich  
Dave Materne

**Point Pass**  
Malcolm Schutz

**Mount Barker**  
Phillip Steer

## ~ 20 years ~

**Moonta**  
Michael Barker

**Halbury/Whitwarta**  
Wilf Gregor

**Koonunga**  
Adrian Hoffman

**Lowbank and Districts**  
Chris Kuchel  
Anthony Schmidt

**Point Pass**  
Tim Grosser  
Sheldon Keller  
Anthony Pfitzner

**Mount Barker**  
Alan Vickers

**Rowland Flat**  
John Adams  
Trevor Wilksch



# Thank you to our sponsors

Generous sponsorship and support has enabled the Ag Bureau to continue delivering educational activities and events to support its branches and members throughout the year.

We are grateful to the **Department for Environment and Water (DEW)** who, again, kindly allocated funding towards our Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards.

**SA Water's Bronze sponsorship** of the Ag Bureau has enabled branches to apply for funding to run educational bus tours for their members. *Read about Lenswood branch bus tour on page 6.*

**The DEW Sustainable Agriculture scholarship (\$8000)** was presented to Ruth Sommerville

at the 2018 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards. Ruth's research is helping farmers implement adaptive, profitable and sustainable production systems. *Read more on page 12.*

The ongoing sponsorship of **Primary Industries SA (PIRSA)** enables us to offer the **Rural Youth Bursary (\$5000)** to inspirational young farmers like Luke Ramsay, who is developing a precision guide to enable sheep farmers to improve genetics and profits. *Read more on page 10.*

We would also like to acknowledge the team at **Rural Business Support** for their ongoing contributions towards our annual Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards dinner.



## Governing body

Comprising representatives from each of the Bureau's regions, the Ag Bureau Board is strengthened with members from government, research bodies and agriculture education.

Representing the interests of South Australia's farmers to government, the Board contributes to the extension of emerging agricultural research and development by managing innovative projects.

The Board also manages the annual Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards which

recognises and celebrates the achievements of young people. It provides winners with financial support to pursue a career of excellence in agriculture and helps promote Bureau membership to a young and vibrant audience.

As a governing body, the Board is responsible for:

- Managing/administering finances, insurance, awards and projects
- Preparation/distribution of submissions on industry relevant issues

- Facilitating the implementation of research, extension and training programs to enhance agriculture, business and management
- Promoting the Bureau's aims, objectives and achievements and the importance of sustainable resource management to the broader community
- Providing a view forward to industry bodies and government departments on behalf of members.



## Lenswood Ag Bureau branch revitalised with inclusive program

After a four year hiatus, more than 80 people attended the re-launch of the Lenswood Forest Range Agricultural Bureau.

A 12-strong committee including past president, Justin Tiller and new president Luke Simpson, are motivated to create a social and inclusive branch that appeals to the multi-generations of apple, cherry, pear, grape and vegetable producers.

Justin said the catalyst for getting the branch up and running again were the hail storms in 2017/18 which devastated fruit crops and farming families throughout the Adelaide Hills.

"The group provides farmers with the opportunity to get out of their patch and socialise with other growers," said Justin. "It's not just about technical agriculture, but social support in terms of general wellbeing and emotional support during times of crisis."

The committee has delivered two successful events, engaging members in activities that offer social support, leadership skills, professional development and experiences they can use in their businesses or on boards.

The first was a scholarship night to fire-up and

assist members in preparing and submitting applications for scholarship opportunities.

A bus tour, generously sponsored by SA Water, to the Adelaide Plains was well supported by members and included tours of glass houses, viewing new crops and lunch at Virginia.

"Just by virtue of being in the room with others in agriculture we can get a lot out of that,

including supporting each other through industry challenges," said Justin.

An upcoming bonfire evening and a dinner at Lenswood Beihaus will bring the growers together again before the end of the year.

President Luke Simpson says they are looking to

hold workshops on various management tools to help the growers get the most out of their crops as well as tutorials on how to use them.

"The past few years have been hard for many," said Luke. "With this sort of system, we'll become an even more supportive group and get through the hard years together."

For more information on the Lenswood Forest Range Ag Bureau branch contact secretary Cheree Reichl on 0411 281 852 or email [lenswoodab@gmail.com](mailto:lenswoodab@gmail.com).



# Spirit of Excellence Awards 2018

A Mid North visionary focused on the sustainable co-existence of productive agriculture and functioning ecosystems and a Kimba stud operations manager keen to see precision livestock become common practice took out the 2018 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards.

Generously supported by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA), the Awards offer young farmers and rural youth the opportunity to pursue personal and professional development to benefit their local communities.

Minister for Environment and Water David Speirs, and Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) Chief Executive Scott Ashby, presented our annual Awards.

Chair of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia, Mark Grossman, says the Bureau

is proud to encourage and support rural youth who are working not only in primary production but in careers that sustain rural communities.

“Going by how challenging it was for the judges to decide on the winners this year, the future of agriculture in our state could not be brighter,” Mark said. “The standard of applications was the highest we’ve seen and we heartily congratulate all the finalists.”

A few of the standout projects and ideas from this year’s finalists included the hosting of a local sustainable agriculture conference; building up a pasture raised poultry business to enhance a cattle grazing enterprise; and growing industrial hemp in rotations between crops and pastures to help boost organic material and soil health.



2018 winners: Luke Ramsay, Ruth Sommerville and Tristan Baldock. Image: Stock Journal



## One year on with 2018 Bursary winner Luke Ramsay

**Karawatha Park Merinos stud operations manager, Luke Ramsay, is developing a precision guide for sheep farmers to improve genetics and profit by selecting ewes on their pedigree and performance.**

From Kimba on the Eyre Peninsula, Luke was awarded the 2018 Rural Youth Bursary, and he has used his \$5000 to develop solid evidence of the benefits of recording profit-driving traits, including fleece, micron and body weight measurements.

"Of the 850 ewe hogget replacements at my current job, I was able to identify the top 500 which will become next year's replacements and they each averaged fleece value of +\$12 in comparison to the flock's average," Luke said.

With a vision to see precision livestock become common practice, Luke is building his own data management business and working with a few local farmers to help them record and manage their sheep flocks with objective measurements.

Luke says this valuable data can then be made available by sellers to prospective purchasers and this will complement the stud rams with Australian Sheep Breeding Value (ASBV), an

estimated breeding value for an animal based on its pedigree and performance records.

Luke's bursary win enabled him to take a trip east to observe and learn from existing practices, proving extremely important for his development.

"All the businesses I visited in NSW during the two weeks were accommodating and I was able to see the whole cycle of data collecting and analysis together with the results of 40 years' worth of data," said Luke. "I was immersed in the bench marking of wether trials which are scarce in SA."

Luke admits he'd still be pondering the idea of starting his business and upskilling, if it wasn't for the bursary.

"The money was fantastic to fund my trip and business aspirations, but the community support and the contacts that I have gained through the bursary have been invaluable," he said.

"All that I have achieved so far would have been very difficult."

The biggest surprise to Luke has been the support in his pursuit for precision livestock, with his whole trip revolving around visiting people he'd never met as a direct result of the bursary and six months on, Luke is still in contact



*“The money was fantastic to fund my trip and business aspirations, but the community support and the contacts that I have gained through the bursary have been invaluable.”* **Luke Ramsay**

Image credit: Stock Journal

with those he visited.

Luke says his project has taken a few turns since winning the bursary and this win led to his recommendation for another bursary, which he was fortunate to be a runner up in.

“I have perused areas I didn’t know existed prior to receiving the Rural Youth Bursary,” he said.

“The submission process is extremely easy... I feel like as long as your project ticks the box of benefiting agriculture and the community, also if you have the passion to push the project, then you should apply!”

With plenty of ideas from his trip to NSW including new ways to record fleece weights, through to setting up a South Australian wether trial “so the South Aussies can give the NSW teams a shake-up”, Luke highlights helping farmers through their transition into the collation and interpretation of profit driving data as his biggest motivator.

“There has been plenty of interest in the space of precision agriculture for livestock and the

farms of scale would be happy to invest, yet they don’t believe they are of scale to invest in all the necessary gear,” Luke said.

“This is where I see the opportunity to be able to lend the gear, assist in use and on-ground tech support.”



Luke has now given several talks on precision livestock to local farming groups, has a live website and has received inquiries into personal data management which he plans to peruse and this is what he considers as his ultimate outcome from winning the bursary.

“As farmers we should always be changing and evolving. My father made massive changes and I’m

sure I’ll do the same when the time comes,” said Luke.

“Growing food demands, limited land expansion and more efficient farm practices will all work in our favour going forward and the future looks bright for farmers if we can all get through this dry spell.”

*“The ability to manage our farming landscapes will impact profitability, sustainability and the wellbeing of our families and communities.”*

**Ruth Sommerville**



**Building a sound knowledge bank to support her scientific expertise, Ruth Sommerville is confident the Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship has provided her with a solid platform to help farmers implement adaptive, profitable and sustainable production systems.**

A winner at the 2018 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards, Ruth has spent the last 12 months getting a grasp of current wildlife management and productive landscape ecological conditions and connecting with researchers, industry and farmers to better understand the research and decision-making that links agriculture and sustainable and regenerative landscape management.

The \$8000 scholarship allowed Ruth to attend the 2018 Australian Wildlife Management Society Conference in Tasmania in December, where the theme was 'Integrating wildlife management, nature conservation and production in land, river and seascapes'.

Another aspect of Ruth's scholarship win was the opportunity to learn firsthand from NSW based farmers, researchers and decision support consultants working on improving the sustainability of agriculture across Australia, with a particular focus on regenerative and holistic farming practices.

Ruth says the scholarship made her 'look inwards', broadening her perspective from the production/landscape focused system and its implementation, to include and address the complex human elements of psychology and sociology in order to implement and facilitate regenerative agriculture.

"I didn't expect to have discussions around why people may change, but the big thing to come out of my meetings with farmers was that it was about their personal journey to achieve the long term outcomes," Ruth said.

# Developing resilient farms with open discussions, diversity and data

## Ruth Sommerville better understands the psychological and sociological elements involved in regenerative agriculture

"Each person had their reason for challenging the norm in how they managed their land, and many were pretty gut-wrenching – from a fire, to the death of a loved one. But what resonated was that an opportunity for change came out of a significant crisis. As scientists we can neglect the people-side that is often the impetus required for significant change."

At the conference Ruth met with researchers and academics and built a network of cross-university relationships.

Ruth's travels across NSW and discussions with various consultants, scientists and local farmers who had implemented sustainable farming, gave her deep insight into the holistic management systems required to achieve regenerative agriculture and sustainability in farming as well as the huge gains for ecological function and the health of communities.

"Data is helping us quantify the many benefits of sustainability in terms of the huge production gains from the right amount of shade in a paddock or, how healthy grassy woodland or grassland systems improve surface water quality, in particular in dams, which in turn improves the health and weight conversation ratios of livestock," Ruth said.

With huge respect for the knowledge of farmers and understanding that their livelihood is both their history and their future, Ruth is excited that the scholarship has reaffirmed her love of the landscape and helped her in developing the confidence to write a

business plan to fill a niche in the market.

In March 2020 Ruth plans to launch her new business and work one-on-one with farmers, supporting them to develop adaptive holistic farming systems which can be more productive, profitable and sustainable.

Ruth has written a number of articles stemming from her literature review, which articulate her yearlong learnings. She now presents regularly to interested groups and farmers who are seeking information and advice on making their business and production system more resilient.

"I feel there's a tide of change happening and believe that farmers are looking at their enterprise across the board and how to make their business and production system more resilient," Ruth said.

"Resilience comes from complexity and diversity and this is where a simple system can fall over easily but a diverse one can adapt and change. The ability to manage our farming landscapes will impact profitability, sustainability and the wellbeing of our families and communities."

Ruth lives with husband Damien and their three children (aged 7, 5 and 2) at Spalding in the Mid North. With two other families they farm over 3000 hectares of mainly arable land, growing wheat, barley, canola and oats.

Off farm, Ruth runs a consulting business that provides technical support and management services to projects and groups working on environmental and agricultural research, restoration or management activities. She also volunteers her expertise with local landholders and landcare groups to help scope landscape restoration processes, source funding and implement successful projects.



# Ag Bureau projects 2018-19

## Projects commenced and continuing

### Improved Control of Exotic Pest Snails in the Yorke Peninsula Region of SA

Australian Government National Landcare Program – Smart Farms Small Grants

\$52,250 (July 2018 to June 2020)

The project is evaluating new techniques to improve snail control and meet new market demands for low numbers of snails in grain.

The use of time lapse cameras, together with collection and analysis of snail species throughout the season has improved snail control, through increasing understanding of snail behaviour and snail bait efficacy. Increasing snail mortality to 85 percent has reduced crop damage and harvesting issues.

However snails are still a major problem in many areas in SA due to high snail reproduction rates in favourable conditions (one snail producing 200 to 400 offspring).

Achieving 85 percent control of snails will not ensure farmers can meet forecast standards of "less than one snail per 0.5 litres".

There is concern farmers may revert to increased use of bare earth treatments to meet tighter grain snail tolerances. Bare earth treatments will reduce plant soil cover and significantly increase erosion risk in loam soils.

### National Landcare Project – Fleurieu Peninsula

Increasing profit by managing climate variability through soil health

\$99,812 (September 2018 to April 2020)

Livestock producers in the Fleurieu region are being supported to better manage soil and pasture health, climate variability and improve profit. To achieve targeted outcomes, the project will:

- Innovatively measure pasture quality, soil moisture and rainfall at six soil health sites, and 15 farm sites and continue to measure soil health at two of the replicated soil health sites.
- Utilise and build upon decision support tools for our region incorporating data collected on feed quality, nutrition, productivity, soil moisture and soil health to support decisions for N & P scheduling, optimal hay and silage cutting, grazing management, and supplementary feeding.
- Produce a fact sheet that helps producers to understand how build soil health.
- Conduct a field day demonstrating the tools and key project outcomes.
- Develop a one-day workshop to train producers on building soil health, using the tools developed.
- Deliver outcomes via newsletters and web site.



# Ag Bureau projects 2018-19

## Projects commenced and continuing

### National Landcare Project – Clare Valley

**Innovative NDVI, pH and EC mapping in the Clare Valley vineyards and investigation and management of soil constraints to improve soil health, production and profitability**

**\$98,734 (September 2018 to April 2020)**

The Clare Valley of South Australia is renowned for its Riesling wines as well as its premium red varieties including Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon.

In 2017, the total value of wine grapes was worth approximately \$32M. Within the vineyards there can be considerable soil variability that can have a serious impact on grape quality as well as yield. This can be due to variation in soil type and soil qualities such as low soil pH, salt, sodic soils etc.

This project is to develop and extend new and innovative tools, methods and technologies such as NDVI (normalised difference vegetation index) with UAV (drones), pH and EC (Electrical conductivity) mapping to identify variability within vineyards. From this, management zones can be identified and zone soil pits will be dug to look at soil constraints.

Workshops will be held with grape growers to improve their knowledge of soil and to better manage soils to improve production and profitability.

### National Landcare Project – Mid-north and Yorke Peninsula

**Innovative and cost-effective methods to manage 'emerging' soil acidity to improve soil health, crop and pasture production**

**\$91,080 (September 2018 to April 2020)**

With more intensive and productive farming systems in the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula of SA there are now areas with emerging issues of soil acidity that have been regarded as traditionally non-acid soil areas.

The growth of high value crops such as lentils and beans that are highly sensitive to low pH soils are not growing well in some areas due to increasing areas of soil acidity.

The project will work with six farmer groups. It will trial and implement new and innovative technologies of soil pH mapping to show the spatial variation of soil pH across paddocks.

The soil pH mapping demonstration work will be ground-truthed and will be used with decision support tools with farmer workshops to increase farmers awareness, understanding, management and treatment of acid soils.

The increased knowledge and facilitation of the new technology will allow farmers to better manage soil acidity to improve soil health, production and profitability. Case studies will be prepared.

Drones helped to produce elevation and contour maps for a Clare Valley soil variability project funded by the National Landcare Program.



# Ag Bureau projects 2018-19

## Projects completed

### Sustainable Agriculture industry Support – Adel Mt Lofty Ranges NRM

**Benchmarking soil health under alternative systems, monitoring biochar trial, and group support**

**December 2016 to August 2018**

**\$118,287**

This project aims to provide a regional understanding of the impact of alternative and chemical fertilisers on soils moisture holding capacity, growing season length, soil acidity and other soil health parameters such as active microbial biomass (mainly bacteria and fungi), fungi: bacteria ratio, free living nematodes and organic carbon and pasture production by using six case study sites and one replicated trial.

### Sustainable Agriculture industry Support – Pinery

**Soil recovery post Pinery fire**

**July 2016 to August 2018**

**\$41,000**

A project to demonstrate the benefits of clay spreading to protect sandy soils, including technical advice and coordinating claying contractors to treat badly eroding areas following the Pinery fire.



Clay being distributed across a burnt paddock at Barabba  
Image credit: NRM Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges

# Ag Bureau projects 2018-19

## Projects completed

### **National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Community Benefit Programme – Buckleboo**

#### **Feasibility Study for Multi-user Grain Accumulation Centre**

**\$69,300 (July 2018 to August 2019)**

A feasibility study explored the technical and financial feasibility of establishing a facility for aggregating and adding value to locally produced grain.

Funding was used to hire a consultant to undertake the following activities:

- market consultation to study requirements and determine viability of - establishing the infrastructure, including calculating capital expenditure required
- identify location for planned facility, if the study is positive producing information memorandum
- seeking expressions of interest, which will be evaluated
- negotiating an agreement with preferred parties if expressions of interest are acceptable

The outcome of the activities is to determine the viability of developing infrastructure to store and process grain.

### **National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Community Benefit Programme – Buckleboo**

#### **Export hay trials**

**\$17,500 (July 2018 to August 2019)**

Minnipa Research Centre undertook export hay trials in the Kimba district, on oaten hay in relation to yield and feed test standards to allow producers to make better informed decisions when planting and managing hay crops.

Activities included: planting, managing and harvesting trial plots, undertaking an oat rotation study, and compilation and reporting of trial and study data.

Funding was used for:

- planting of trial plots in 2018 and 2019
- managing the crops
- having a field day to demonstrate the trial
- harvesting each plot on two occasions
- undertaking an oat rotation study including interviewing farmers
- compiling data to produce economic and risk analysis

The outcome of the activities is to improve hay crop yields for the local farming community.

**These projects are located within the Local Government Area of the District Council of Kimba.**

### **National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Community Benefit Programme – Buckleboo**

#### **Moisture probe and weather station network**

**\$19,721 (July 2018 to August 2019)**

The establishment of a moisture probe and weather station network across the region, to improve data availability and quality, and agronomic decision-making and grain yield.

Funding supported the following:

- site selection and installation of probe network (six probes in representative soil types), data collection/internet upload
- running grower education workshops on data interpretation and better agronomic decisions

The outcome of the activities will be to better match water inputs to seasonal conditions and maximise final grain yield.



## Our Board Members

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# Meet our Board Members

## **Mark Grossman, Chair**

Mark represents the Barossa and Light region and has been an Angaston Ag Bureau member since 1982 where he held all office positions.

He operates a family primary production partnership in the Angaston and Sedan regions with enterprise including sheep (self-replacing merinos, 1st cross ewes, prime lambs and operating Koonawarra white suffolk, border Leicester and Poll Dorest studs, cattle, cropping and viticulture.

Other community involvement includes board member of Australian White Suffolk Association and Vice President of Angaston AH&F Show Society.

## **Janette Ridgway, Treasurer**

Janette is Treasurer and representative for the South East Ag Bureau branches.

As a farmer, Janette works on a mixed farming enterprise with her husband and son.

Their farm is east of Bordertown, and they grow broad acre crops, have sheep enterprise as well as a horticulture business growing gladiolus bulbs.

Janette has a passion for agriculture, community and family and brings these skills and understanding to the Board along with a desire for learning and sharing of information.

## **Allan Zerna, Board Member**

Allan's involvement in the Ag Bureau began in 1983 and he has served as president, secretary, and more recently, as 'Beer and Barby' manager.

Allan abandoned an engineering cadetship at BHP for a surfing lifestyle in NSW, Qld, Tasmania and SA. He then took a job on an uncle's farm at Mitchellville near Cowell.

After 16 years, Allan and his wife Jan bought 1600ha north of Cowell, where they ran merino ewes, grew hard wheat, feed barley, oats and triticale. They now live in semi-retirement on the farm.

Dry seasons and wind erosion convinced Allan to join the No Till movement and he enjoys assisting fellow farmers to become more productive and sustainable.

## **Peter O'Neil, Board Member**

Peter has been farming beef cattle in the Parawa district for 30 years. Peter is a councillor on the Yankalilla Council, and has been a Rotary volunteer for more than 30 years, also serving as President during that time.

Peter has an extensive history of corporate governance as a previous Director and Board member for Weber Barbecues, Real Estate Institute of SA and Blaik O'Neil P/L.

Peter sees the Ag Bureau as an opportunity to advocate for a better relationship between Government and frontline producers.

## **Darren Kennedy, Board Member**

Darren became a member of the Ag Bureau in 2010 and his enthusiasm for the organisation led him to stand for President in 2013 - a position he still holds.

Darren is a second generation farmer in the Glossop region, managing wine grape and dried sultana properties.

He believes the Ag Bureau's history and standing make it the ideal vehicle for moving information and ideas from legislation to grassroots farmers and back, in an informal setting that "gives voice to the non-activist within the rural community."

## **David Edwards, Board Member**

David is a fifth generation farmer at Minlaton. He has been an active member of his local Ag Bureau branch since 1983, serving on the committee as well as President, holding many meetings in his famous man cave!

His cropping rotations have changed over the last 15 years from barley pasture rotations working the land five to seven times, to no till farming, sowing 300 hectares each of wheat, barley and canola.

David has seen the significant changes in farming over the past 10 years and is very positive and optimistic about the future of farming.

**Agricultural Bureau**  
of South Australia Inc.  
**PATHWAY TO IMPROVEMENT**



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