

Agricultural Bureau
of South Australia Inc.
PATHWAY TO IMPROVEMENT



2016 Annual Report

2015-2016 Highlights

The Annual General Meeting was held in the heart of the Murraylands at Karoonda in August, followed by a tour of local producers and lunch by the magnificent Murray River.

The 2015 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards Dinner held in October celebrated past and future leaders of agriculture in SA.

The Rural Youth Bursary was awarded to Rachel Chirgwin to progress knowledge of the use of eIDs to boost livestock production and profitability

James Smith was awarded the Peter Olsen Fellowship to assist his further study in Agricultural Business Management

Barmera Agricultural Bureau member Barrymore Mudge was recognised for his Service to Primary Production and contribution to the Riverland Field Days

The Bureau managed project funding of \$171k to increase the adoption of evidence based sustainable production methods

Sponsorship of \$39k was received towards Bureau member projects including the “Crossville Ag Bureau Goes West” tour of WA cropping regions

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The Agricultural Bureau of SA

The Agricultural Bureau of South Australia (the Bureau) is a not-for-profit organisation run by farmers for farmers.

With a proud history in South Australia, the Bureau has assisted primary producers since 1888 and is the only farmer network group of its kind remaining in Australia.

Membership is open to anyone who is associated with or has an interest in farming, agricultural development and education and an annual membership fee is charged.

The Bureau supports agricultural development through the provision of information and expertise to producers and the wider community via an extensive network and works in close co-operation with the Government of South Australia, namely Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) and Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR).

Ag Bureau SA:

bridging the gap between scientist, agribusinesses and primary producers by supporting current projects in regional South Australia.

Branches meet regularly usually on a monthly basis to exchange ideas and information, discuss farming practices and issues and work on common issues and challenges together.

History

In 1887, an English-born printer named Albert Molineux suggested establishing an Agricultural Bureau in South Australia.

On the 27th of February 1888, the Government adopted his suggestion and the inaugural meeting of the Central Agricultural Bureau of South Australia was held on the 10th of April 1888.

There had been a number of local agricultural associations and farmers' clubs in South Australia since soon after settlement in 1836. When the Central Agricultural Bureau was created, it set about encouraging the establishment of local Bureau Branches.

In its first 12 months, it supported the founding of branches in a dozen rural areas, including Mannum, Millicent, Nuriootpa, Stansbury, Burra and Gumeracha. Gumeracha, Millicent and Nuriootpa (now known as Angaston) are all still operating and are just three of around 75 active branches across the state with nearly 1400 members.

In 2013 the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia celebrated 125 years of serving agriculture.

Governing Body

The Board of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia comprises representatives from each of the Bureau regions, augmented with members from government, agricultural education and research bodies.

The Board represents the interests of South Australia's farmers to government and contributes to the extension of agricultural research and development through the management of projects.

On behalf of its members, the Board manages the Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards which comprises four awards which recognise achievements in the agricultural field. The Awards provide opportunities to young people to pursue a career of excellence in agriculture and are an avenue to promote Bureau membership to a younger audience.

As the governing body the Board is responsible for the following:

- Managing and administering finances, insurance, awards and projects;
- Preparing and distribution of submissions on industry relevant issues;
- Facilitating the implementation of research, extension and training programs that enhance agriculture, business management and sustainable natural resource management;
- Promoting the aims, objectives and achievements of The Ag Bureau and the importance of agriculture and sustainable resource management to the broader community; and
- Providing a view forward to industry bodies and Government Departments on behalf of members.

Bureau Members

There are over 1300 members of the Bureau across 60 branches throughout South Australia. Membership of an Ag Bureau branch provides opportunities for professional development, growth and a chance to network and fellowship with local farmers.

In particular the Bureau provides opportunities for young farmers to be mentored and encouraged as they learn from the experience of other members.

**Ag Bureau SA:
valuing knowledge, friendship,
understanding and leadership**



Long Standing Member Awards

The Board is pleased to recognise the following milestones and long serving members.

70 YEARS

Bruce Heinrich, Monarto

60 YEARS

Colin Kurtz, Koounga
Charles Day, Mt Barker
Allen Meissner, Meadows
Geoffrey Nezdner, Long Pine Tanunda

50 YEARS

Domenico D'Angelo, Mt Barker
Rex Bormann, Mt Barker
Geoff Gale, Mt Barker

40 YEARS

Glen Schillerm Koonunga
Brian Graetz, Koonunga
Ray Altmann, Mt Barker
Arthur Crompton, Mt Barker
Graham Correll, Paskeville
Peter Royal, Mt Barker
Colin Wegener, Mt Barker
Maurice Wegener, Mt Barker

30 YEARS

Egon Pedersen, Mt Barker
Trevor Neumann, Mt Barker
Eric Moule, Mt Barker
Martin Liebelt, Mt Barker
Maxwell Green, Mt Barker
Peter Giles, Monarto
Richard Hein, Monarto
Keith Paech, Monarto
David Mills, Monarto
Robert Thiele, Monarto
Rex Bormann, Monarto
Geoff Gale, Monarto
Peter Royal, Monarto
Colin Wegener, Monarto
Bruce Heinrich, Monarto
Trevor Paech, Monarto
Geoff Page, Meadows
Coral Jean Page, Meadows
Milton Howard Page, Meadows

20 YEARS

Neil Neumann, Angaston
Pam Allen, Mt Barker
Phil Steer, Mt Barker
Anton Mencil, Mt Barker
Elizabeth Hunkin, Mt Barker
Max Daniel, Paskeville
Geoff Pridham, Paskeville
Peter Giles, Monarto
Richard Hein, Monarto
Keith Paech, Monarto
David Mills, Monarto
Robert Thiele, Monarto
Brett Wegener, Monarto
Rex Bormann, Monarto
Geoff Gale, Monarto
Peter Royal, Monarto
Bruce Heinrich, Monarto
Tyson Paech, Monarto
Dean Pearson, Monarto

Chair's Report

On behalf of the Board I am pleased to present this report of our Bureau's achievements for the 2015/16 financial year.

Every year has challenges for our primary producers and this year has been no different. However a good start to the cropping season set things up for above average yields although the hot and dry spring and some frost damage had some impacts on quality. Cattle prices provided some good returns, although pasture growth had been inhibited. We certainly empathise with dairy farmers who have to work through the Murray Goulburn / Fonterra pricing shock. At the time of writing this report we are optimistic for the 2016 season.

The value of the Ag Bureau network has never been more evident than this past year where the Pinery bushfires had a devastating impact on the communities of Mallala and surrounding townships. The efforts of emergency services personnel have been well recognised, while in the background Bureau branches and members worked quietly and tirelessly for the benefit of their community. There were 5 Bureau branches with members who were affected by the fires: Freeling, Stockport, Mallala, Owen and Tarlee. Members from as far away as Melrose, Orroroo and Willowie and a contingent from the Yorke Peninsula travelled to support their Ag Bureau colleagues who were affected by the fire.

Specifically we recognise the devastating loss to the Tiller family with Owen Ag Bureau life member, Allan Tiller losing his life while fighting the fire. Our thoughts have been with the Tiller family and those who lost so much to the fires.

The Ag Bureau board has operated with fewer members this year, but has still managed some significant achievements. Board Members Karen Baines from the EP and Andrew Kitto from the Yorke/Mid-North region contributed to the changes to regulations to allow night movement of traffic under permit. The Bureau has also taken an active role in raising awareness of the impact the Backpacker tax will have on our irrigated and horticultural industries.

The Board has also advocated on behalf of members on issues including the proposed heritage listing of the Mt Lofty Ranges region and contributing to the Productivity Commission review of agricultural red-tape.

The Board maintains regular contact with PIRSA and DEWNR and the input from Greg Cock and Tim Hermann at our board meetings is gratefully appreciated.



Three board members will be leaving the board at this year's AGM, Karen Baines, Alex Milner-Smyth and Andrew Kitto.

Karen has been a vocal advocate for the branches on the Eyre Peninsula and is recognised by EP members for her efforts to bring in sponsorships for Bureau member projects – a highlight being sponsorship by GRDC for the Crossville Ag Bureau Goes West tour of WA cropping regions.

While Alex has only been with the board for a short period, she has brought a high level of expertise in graphic design and work towards modernising the image of the Bureau.

Andrew has encouraged collaboration between branches in his region – particularly following the Bangor fires of 2014. In 2016 the Laura Ag Bureau built 3 hydraulic wire rollers with funding from the EW Stevens Trust for use in the fire recovery. We will miss their contribution to the Board.

The Bureau has continued its strong role in promoting the extension of research and development through crop trials, demonstrations and field walks. A range of research projects were undertaken by branches through Bureau sponsored projects. I commend those branches actively involved and the report of the RD&E working group later in this report.

As we continue or work in the agricultural industry, representing our members in providing an independent voice to government departments, agencies and partners, whilst providing opportunity for information to be conveyed back to our members, we need to ensure that as a Board, we are providing the services as required by Bureau members.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the retiring board members and wish them well in their endeavours. Further, I welcome new and returning board members and look forward to working with them in the coming year.

In closing I would like to thank all Ag Bureau members for their ongoing support.



Mark Grossman
Chair

Ag Bureau SA:

Vibrant rural community and ag-industry networks

Advocate for excellence in agriculture, business management and sustainable resource management

Partnering with government agencies, agribusinesses and regional organisations

Representing Bureau members interests

Working Group Reports

Bureau Branch Support

Convenor: Karen Baines

The Bureau Branch Support working group was convened following the 2015 AGM and Board strategic review. The working group aims to provide practical support to branches that facilitates growth in branch membership.

Support to branches includes:

- Sourcing sponsorship funds for projects, farm tours, sticky-beak days and crop walks
- A register of grant funding available for branches
- Sharing ideas, resources and opportunities for collaboration between branches
- Mentoring and advice to new grower groups wanting to become an Ag Bureau branch

This year the working group has:

- Assisted branches to obtain funding for branch projects
 - The Crossville Ag Bureau Goes West tour received \$15k towards the cost of the tour from the GRDC
 - EP NRM and the EP Agricultural Research Foundation provided funds to pay for speaker events, bus trips and for two young members to attend the Innovation Generation conference interstate
- Discussed options and sourced quotes for membership platform for online payments
- Promoted free speakers available to branches



Crossville Agricultural Bureau Goes West
Member Ben Ranford purchased a pink chaser bin after \$10k was raised for the National Breast Cancer Foundation

Projects

Convenor: Andrew Kitto

The Projects working group oversees state-wide Bureau projects and seeks opportunities for extension of research and development in agriculture. The group works to connect scientists, extension officers, funding bodies and Ag Bureau members.

In FY2016 the Bureau managed project funding of \$171k to increase the adoption of evidence based sustainable production methods. A full list of projects follows later in this report.

Communications and Promotions

Convenor: Alex Milner-Smyth

The Communications working group seeks opportunities to promote the value of the Agricultural Bureau to new and existing members.

Bureau communications and promotions include:

- Quarterly e-news to members
- Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards
 - Peter Olsen Fellowship
 - Rural Youth Bursary
 - Lois Harris Scholarship
 - Service to Primary Production
- Website and Facebook
- Promotional brochures

This year the working group has:

- Updated the promotional materials for the Spirit of Excellence Awards
- Distributed a new Bureau strategy and promotional brochure
- Disseminated September, December, March and June editions of the Ag Bureau Bulletin, the Bureau's e-news of events and activities
- Shared regular updates and posts on social media

Since 1888,

The Ag Bureau of South Australia has provided farmers and landowners with a meeting place to discuss subjects common to their local region. Over the years, branch activities have developed to include hosting technical and extension trials, organising grower bus trips and supporting communities affected by flood, fire and drought.

Through branch meetings, members are able to exchange ideas, discuss farming practices and work together to identify inventive solutions to a range of issues. Association of one of our 76 branches provides members with the opportunity to attend branch events and activities and contribute to the sustainability of the industry by participating in cutting-edge projects and trials.

The Agricultural Bureau of South Australia also provides to two-way communication avenue with government departments, regularly advocating for the needs of Australian farming communities.

We also support the next generation of landowners through the annual Spirit of Excellence Awards which provide three young people with a financial contribution towards their career goals. The Services to Primary Production Award recognise those who have contributed significantly to the industry through their branch.

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IF YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT THE FUTURE
OF YOUR LOCAL FARMING COMMUNITY,
AG BUREAU IS THE PLACE FOR YOU.

FIND OUT MORE ON OUR WEBSITE
AGBUREAU.COM.AU

WHERE WOULD AN AG BUREAU BURSARY TAKE YOU?

From the fisheries of Norway to the mountains of Montana, our Spirit of Excellence award recipients have travelled the globe to experience the latest trends in primary production.

Each year, our awards provide two young people with the opportunity to open doors, chase an idea or follow their dreams.

The Peter Olsen Fellowship is open to primary producers ages 18-35. The successful applicant is given \$8,000 to take a study trip or undertake a special project.

Anyone aged 18-30 and living in a rural area can apply for the Rural Youth Bursary. The winner receives \$5,000 to spend on a project or study tour to further their career opportunities.

Projects are limited only by your imagination, so consider applying this year.

Applications open in July – find out more information including an application form at agbureau.com.au/awards or contact our Awards Coordinator – Karen Baines on 0421 677 860 or Garry.Karen@activ8.net.au

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Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards

The Awards provide significant opportunities for promotion of the Bureau through both traditional and social media. The Awards are promoted to a younger audience through Facebook, while the Stock Journal provides coverage of the Awards presentation dinner.

Peter Olsen Fellowship for Young Farmers provides an \$8000 bursary for a farmer aged between 18 and 35 to pursue further study, undertake a study tour or run a special project.

There were 3 applicants for this award in 2015

2015 recipient: James Smith

James has worked as a farmhand in his family's onion growing farm business, Bowhill Produce since 2006. He will use the \$8000 fellowship to contribute towards his Bachelor of Agricultural Business Management degree at Charles Sturt University.



Rural Youth Bursary is a \$5000 grant for young rural people aged 18-30 years in all types of employment to learn more about their chosen career which was **sponsored by Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA)**.

There were 3 applicants for this award in 2015



2015 recipient – Rachel Chirgwin

Rachel Chirgwin, is currently a Lambplan service provider for Advanced Livestock Services, a Rural Skills Training lecturer in animal health, a part-time shearer and a regional sales rep for Compass Feeds as well as managing her own livestock property. Her future vision is to breed superior Suffolk genetics by using leading edge technology through genetics and streamlining on-farm management. She hopes this will have a significant impact on the sheep meat industry by increasing productivity and profitability.

Lois Harris Scholarship is a \$2000 scholarship for a first year student studying the Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Adelaide.



2016 recipient – Jana Dixon
Tertiary Entrance Score (TER) 99.15

Jana is third generation in the family farming business in the Clare Valley which is located half way between Farrell Flat and Mintaro. She helps out on the farm which is predominantly cropping with the addition of sheep over the summer months.

The much appreciated scholarship money will go towards costs such as textbooks, traveling expenses and university trips, the first being to the South East in second semester

Service to Primary Production recognises the achievements of people who have provided exceptional service to primary productions.

There were 3 nominations for this award in 2015.

2015 recipient – Barrymore Mudge

Barry has been a member of the Barmera Ag Bureau for 48 years and has been instrumental in changing the face of viticulture and horticulture in the Riverland and further afield.



Ag Bureau Projects 2015/16

The Bureau has a long and proud history of managing projects that benefit members from state to local level. Funding is from a variety of sources including the Australian Government and the Government of South Australia.

Projects Completed in 2015/16

25th Anniversary Landcare Grants (Australian Government \$19,650)
Laura SA – Improved soil cover, biodiversity and weed management
Laura Agricultural Bureau

Develop and implement native vegetation and weed management plans to improve soil health, biodiversity, ground cover, fire and weed management in the Laura/Wirrabara districts of SA. The project will increase adoption of practices that will improve ecosystem function over 1500 ha and the quality of the natural resource base over 1200 ha.

Precision pasture management (Natural Resources Murray Darling Basin \$24,000)
Monarto Agricultural Bureau

Demonstrate and promote the 'Pastures from Space' technology as a means of receiving estimates of pasture growth (PGR) and feed on offer (FOO) using a Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) satellite sensor to provide resolution and measurement of PGR and FOO at 250m².

Point Pass Soil Constraints Investigation (Natural Resources Murray Darling Basin \$24,750)
Point Pass Agricultural Bureau

Investigate the soil constraints that limit productivity and sustainability within the area of Point Pass. Constraints include soil sodicity and heavy textured clay layers affecting plant root growth and water infiltration, the limiting nutritional effects of salinity and boron with the lower rootzone, acidity on the slopes and alkalinity on the flats.

Innovative and cost effective solutions to the treatment of soil acidity in the North-Western agricultural areas of the SAMDB NRM region (Natural Resources Murray Darling Basin \$22,000)
Agricultural Bureau of SA

Demonstrate and promote the on-the-go soil pH machine to measure and map the spatial variability of soil pH across paddocks and use the zoned maps to apply targeted variable rates of lime (engagement with 20 properties).

Innovative and cost-effective solutions to the treatment of acid soils in SA
(Australian Government \$414,990) 1/2/2014 - 31/3/2016
Agricultural Bureau of SA

Over 1.9 million hectares of SA agricultural land is susceptible to soil acidification. Addressing the issues of soil acidification which can significantly affect potential crop production and pastures. Liming is the most effective and economical method for treatment however it is not always readily available and can be cost prohibitive. New lime sources are also being evaluated. Farmer groups from seven Ag Bureau's around the State have taken part to date.

Projects Commenced in 2015/16

**Fleurieu Forward Farming – Innovative approaches to managing soil health and fertility
(Adelaide Mt Lofty Ranges NRM \$20,350)
*Parawa Agricultural Bureau***

Stage 1

Consolidate current and past research and development work and producer knowledge in the topics of interest (see below) carried out on Fleurieu peninsula, as a means of identifying priorities for further evaluation and/or demonstration work in any future stage 2 project. Topics of interest include productivity and sustainability of existing production systems, the management of soil health and fertility, improved management of pastures and options for better management of increased climate variability.

**Fleurieu Forward Farming – Innovative approaches to managing soil health and fertility
(Adelaide Mt Lofty Ranges NRM \$33,825)
*Parawa Agricultural Bureau***

Stage 2

Expand on and further develop the knowledge gained in stage 1. Evaluate and/or demonstrate potential solutions to a number of current challenges affecting the long term sustainability of farm business and the region's natural resource base.

**Soil recovery post Pinery fire – (Adelaide Mt Lofty Ranges NRM \$126,000)
Stage 1 stabilizing highly eroding sandy soils
Stage 2 monitoring soil recovery post Pinery fire
*Agricultural Bureau of SA***

The Pinery fire came through mid-harvest in 2015 and burnt crops and stubble across 82,500 ha in ~5 hours. Consequently, one of the biggest land management issues was soil stabilisation. With no groundcover in the area, loss of top soil and sand drift became of significant concern. Natural Resources AMLR addressed this with PIRSA and local agricultural bureaus, by spreading clay onto sandier areas across the landscape.

**Real time weather monitoring
(Adelaide Mt Lofty Ranges NRM \$13,990)
*Mallala Agricultural Bureau***

Real time weather monitoring to reduce fire risk and spray drift and improve crop management Phase II.

Board Members

Mark Grossman, Chair

Mark Grossman represents the Barossa and Light region and has been a Bureau member of the Angaston branch since 1982 where he held all office positions. He operates a family primary production partnership with enterprises including sheep (self-replacing merinos, 1st cross ewes, prime lambs and operating Koonawarra white suffolk and border leicester studs), cattle, cropping and viticulture. The farming properties are situated in the Angaston and Sedan regions. Other community involvement includes board member of Australian White Suffolk Association, elected member of the Barossa Council and President of Angaston AH&F Show Society.

Geoff Page, Deputy Chair

Geoff Page represents the Hills & Fleurieu region on the Agricultural Bureau of SA Board which is where he resides and has his own farming business that produces cut flowers, certified organic vegetable and herb seedlings which are sold at farmers markets. The farm also produces prime lambs and hay for sale. Geoff works part-time at the University of South Australia as the student Ombudsman. Geoff has academic qualifications in education, agriculture, agricultural economics and land valuation.

Karen Baines

Representing the Eyre Peninsula, Karen farms with her husband on 1200 Ha north west of Ungarra cropping Wheat, Barley, Canola and Lupins. Karen loves the farm life and is also a mother of two. She is a passionate Advocate, volunteer on several committees, treasurer, grant writer and farm safety and compliance consultant in her spare time. Karen brings to the Board a variety of business qualifications and experience, information, communication technology skills and a no nonsense approach to dealing with issues affecting agriculture. She has a Diploma in Rural Business Management and Occupational Health and Safety and is the administrator of the farm business including their heavy vehicle accreditation in the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme.

Andrew Kitto

Andrew represents the Upper North region and is a farmer himself. He is a current member of the Laura Branch and with Nelshaby being the only other Branch in his region his Board duties are somewhat reduced compared to other regional representatives. Andrew is a practical board member and since commencing on the Board in February 2013 he has helped organise a successful interstate bus tour for our region; organised a practical farm machinery/transport demonstration to DPTI representatives; represented the ABA at the Australian Government Ag White Paper meeting and established links with other representatives, eg NRM, GPSA, DPTI and Government of South Australia.

Alexandra Milner-Smyth

Representing the Riverland and Murraylands, Alex, a member of the Barmera Ag Bureau branch has more than ten years' experience in agriculture and agribusiness having worked at Elders, Landmark and SANTFA [South Australian No-Till Farmer's Association]. Alex is currently a Director of the Ag Institute of Australia, Chairs two sub-committees and was recently appointed the Secretary of Business Riverland. She is currently completing a degree in Ecological Agricultural Systems through Charles Sturt University distance education. Alex lives on a 50-acre vineyard in the South Australian Riverland with her partner Richard and three unemployed working dogs.

BOARD MEMBERS

Chairman

Mark Grossman
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Vacant
South East

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Board Meeting Attendance

	From	To	BOARD MEETINGS Face to face		BOARD MEETINGS Teleconference	
			Eligible to attend	Meetings attended	Eligible to attend	Meetings attended
Mark Grossman	Jul-15	Jun-16	2	2	9	9
Geoff Page	Jul-15	Jun-16	2	2	9	9
Andrew Kitto	Jul-15	Jun-16	2	2	9	8
Karen Baines	Jul-15	Jun-16	2	2	9	8
Alex Milner-Smyth	Jul-15	Jun-16	2	2	9	6
Brett Smith	Jul-15	Jun-16	2	2	9	7
Tim Herrmann	Jul-15	Jun-16	2	1	9	2
Greg Cock	Jul-15	Jun-16	2	2	9	6
Phil Davies	Jul-15	Jun-16	2	0	9	1
Jason Able*	Jul-15	Jun-16	2	0	9	0

*Note- Dr Jason Able was unable to attend teleconferences due to lecturing commitments



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