



ANNUAL REPORT

2007 / 2008



From left: Tony Rathjen, Allen Meissner, Richard Murdoch, Janette Ridgway, Trevor Wolksch, Lyn Teakle, Mark Dennis, Neville Ferme, Yvonne Correll, Richard Konzag, Shirley Pledge, Vic Walter, Tony Loffler

Absent: Peter Rose, Philip Wheaton; Annie Madden and Fontella Koleff

ADVISORY BOARD OF AGRICULTURE 2007 - 2008

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Appointed to ABA</i>
Chairman	Mark Dennis	Lower Eyre Peninsula	2003
Deputy Chairman	Neville Ferme	Upper North	2004
Treasurer	Shirley Pledge	Kangaroo Island	2005
Executive	Richard Konzag	Lower North	2005
Executive	Philip Wheaton	Far West Coast / Central Eyre Peninsula	2003
Treasurer Elect	Heather Baldock	Eastern Eyre Peninsula	2006
Board members	Yvonne Correll	Mid and Lower South East	2006
	Tony Loffler	Riverland	2006
	Allen Meissner	Adelaide Hills	2005
	Richard Murdoch	Yorke Peninsula	2006
	Janette Ridgway	Upper South East	2006
	Peter Rose	Murraylands	2007
	Lyn Teakle	Women in Agriculture & Business	2005
	Vic Walter	Fleurieu / Murray Plains	2005
	Trevor Wilksch	Barossa Valley	1999
<i>Agency staff</i>	Bill Davies	DWLBC	2006
	Geoff Knight	PIRSA	2006
	Rob Lewis	SARDI	1993 – 2008
	Simon Maddocks	SARDI	2008
	Don Plowman	PIRSA	2005
<i>University of Adelaide</i>	Tony Rathjen		2003
<i>Support Team</i>	Anne Madden	PIRSA	1991
	Georgia Gowing	PIRSA	2007
	Tim Boord	PIRSA	2007
	Fontella Koleff	PIRSA	2008
	Helen Lamont	Rural Solutions SA	2007

2007/2008
Advisory Board of Agriculture Chairman's Report
President of Agricultural Bureau of South Australia

This year the Agriculture Bureau movement celebrates its 120th birthday. What a wonderful achievement. I wonder what our founding fore fathers would think about the way we do things today. The basics are the same, grow a product and sell it. That is probably where the similarities end. The livestock and grain we produce have many different characteristics to what they had 120 years ago, some of these have even changed quite dramatically in the last 20 years. As a broad-acre cropper, our farming practices are completely different to when I started work on the family farm in 1980. In this relative short period of time, rural South Australia has under gone a lot of social, environmental and economic changes. Farming enterprises have adjusted and adapted and survived. I believe the family farm will survive into the future. We will cope with climate change and climate variability, if commodity prices continue to rise, we can handle higher input costs, and one thing is for sure, the farm of 30 years time will be different to what it is today.

Once again after such a promising start for the cropping regions last year, some areas around the State were missing out on much need rain by mid season. This trend followed through to yields, with many farm business having another year of no or low income. The challenge for everyone will be how to assist these businesses & areas, and to find farming systems that will allow business to operate profitably: walking away is not an option.

Producers that use Murray River water to produce crops have had another tough year. The prospect of an increase in water allocations this year does not look good, with low in-flows so far this year. There are no answers that will suit everyone but decisions need to be made before this area is damaged beyond repair, both in production and environmental terms.

It is organisations like the Agricultural Bureau movement, with assistance from governments and research bodies, that will help and assist farmers through change and there will be farmers out their pushing the boundaries, modifying machinery, and trying anything and everything to survive and grow there business.

The Board has conducted two surveys and a Think Tank to gather information from Bureau members to find out the things they think will help them to continue farming into the future. Research came out as the main area where farmers want more done, followed by extension. The Board is currently looking at ways to achieve better out comes in both of these areas.

The changes that were made in support structure of the Advisory Board last year have worked very well. Helen Lamont, providing strategic support, has done a fantastic job, enabling us to present information gathered at Board meetings and through our surveys and Think Tank in a form that is usable for all. This has greatly enhanced the quality of information and advice we have been able to deliver, to both the government and our members.

We have had three people assist us with the media and communications role during the year and they have all brought different ideas and skills, lifting our profile to get the message out to our members. We have had two editions of *Primary Interest* produced, with a 3rd on the way. This e-newsletter is aimed at our membership. As well we have continued with *Board Monthly* (formerly *Board Bis*) for updates on Board members' activities. We now have a monthly column in the *Stock Journal* to get the message out wider. Press releases about Advisory Board activities have been widely used by much of the rural media. Thank you to Georgia Gowing, Tim Boord and Fontella Koleff for providing this support over the last twelve months.

Annie Madden has again continued to provide administrative support and do all the smaller things that keep a Board like ours operating successfully, with members spread across the whole state and various communication difficulties and forms. Thank you Annie. Thank you to Don Plowman and Ben Bruce within PIRSA for their ongoing support, assistance and commitment to the Advisory Board of Agriculture and the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia. David Davenport from Rural Solutions SA has provided us with project writing and management support that has enabled us to receive funding from the National Landcare Program. These projects provide an important link for Agricultural Bureaus to be involved with research and extension at a local level and across regions within the state, and are greatly supported and appreciated by our members. Thank you David. There are numerous other people, agencies and businesses that provide our network with support that to thank you individually would be impossible, thank you all.

Our annual awards night in October is an ever growing success with David Verner from Mallala receiving the Services to Primary Production Award, and the first handing over of the perpetual trophy. All farmers owe the winner and nominees of this award a great deal for the work they have put in to improving agriculture over many years. The Peter Olsen Fellowship Award went to Steven Newman from Gumeracha. Steven plans to spend the \$7 000 bursary on ways to improve water use and monitoring in his vegetable growing business. Jessica Crettenden from Lock received this year's Lois Harris Agriculture Scholarship. It is people of this calibre that will be future winners of the Services to Primary Award, and they will drive agriculture into the future and it is of vital importance that they be given support and assistance where ever possible.

The Board meetings this year have been hectic with more things to discuss than time will permit. We have had a wide range of people give presentations to us. Thank you to all Board members for the time and commitment they have given over the past twelve months. The professionalism they show when dealing with issues that are having devastating effects in their local community, and in some cases their own business, is fantastic. Shirley Pledge has done a terrific job in sorting out the bureau finances and record keeping and will make the treasurers position easier in years to come. Thank you Shirley. This year we farewell Lyn Teakle who has been on the Board for three years representing Women in Agriculture and Business. Thank you Lyn for the input and enthusiasm during your time on the Board. Lyn's replacement is Helen Colliver: welcome Helen and I hope that your time on the Board is enjoyable.

The next twelve months are going to be challenging for agriculture and rural communities. I am sure the members of the Board will meet these head on and continue to seek and provide information and possible solutions in an attempt to see the rural community come through. There will be change and hurt, the Agricultural Bureau movement has been helping farmers for the last 120 years and we will continue to do so for many more.

Thank You

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Dennis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Dennis
Chairman Advisory Board of Agriculture
President of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia

Board meetings – 2007 - 2008

- Monday 13th / Tuesday 14th Aug 2007 AGM in Barossa Valley
- Sept 11 / 12, 2007
- October 23 / 24, 2007
- January 29 / 30, 2008
- April 1 / 2, 2008
- June 10 / 11 2008

Bureau Project Funds

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| - | Butler | Butler Branch Centenary | \$500 |
| - | Through Minlaton | NYP and SYP Combined Grower Updates | \$1 030 |
| | | | <i>Total</i> \$1 530 |

Membership Awards 07 / 08

20 years

Philip Steer	Mount Barker
Gary Lock	Mundulla
Peter Bishop	Nelshaby
Graeme Crouch	Nelshaby

40 years

Murray Klemm	Angaston
Geoffrey Kelvin Prime	Butler
Elmore Alfred Braunack	Koonunga
Jeffrey Gordon Hoffmann	Koonunga
Daryle Johns	Nelshaby
Henry Mudge	Nelshaby

50 years

Lyall Bates	Butler
Desmond Richard Nietschke	Koonunga
Ron Johns	Nelshaby
Brian Parker	Owen

60 years

Hurtle Wegener	Angaston
Ray Fisher	Mundulla
Clem Obst	Mundulla
Ross Roberts	Nelshaby
Ron Fromm	Rowland Flat
Cliff Lindner	Rowland Flat

Boards submissions / activities / involvement

- Meteorology Climate Change Forum
- Representation at the Heavy Vehicle Forum and follow up on Driver Fatigue Issue

- Think Tank held at the Waite on 31st January 2008: The Face of Tomorrow's Primary Production in Low Rainfall Regions in South Australia. 50 attended this successful day and the ABA is working to action the outcomes
- Agri Business Conference in July 2007 Advisory Board of Agriculture ran a break out session titled The Future of Extension
- *The History of Agriculture website* was launched on 30th July. A section on the Agricultural Bureau: www.pir.sa.gov.au/aghistory
- PIRSA executive met regionally and Board members were able to attend this opportunity to meet and speak with Executive.
- Sandy Soils project continued to run well and closed 30th June 2008
- Precision Ag Project, NLP funded, also now up and running
- Risk Management project is now up and running well
- ABA provided numerous letters of support for NLP projects
- Minister McEwen attended Board meeting on 11th June
- Masters of Climate Change Forum
- Waite Open Day, conducted by the University and in liaison with SARDI and the Advisory Board of Agriculture held on 10th September 2007.
- Awards Dinner, attended by about 80 people, on the evening of 24th October. Announcement and presentations of the Peter Olsen Fellowship and the Agricultural Bureau Services to Primary Production were made. Also the second presentation to the winner of the 2007 Lois Harris Scholarship
- Board linking and meeting with the regional membership: visited the Fleurieu / Murray Plains
- Ag Excellence Alliance dinner in April 2008.
- Riverland Field Days 19th and 20th September, 2007
- YP Field Days, Paskeville 25th to 27th September 2007
- Karoonda Field Days 4th and 5th April 2008
- Letters of Introduction of Board members to NRM presiding members
- Launch of the bronze sculpture ' Day Off, Peter' at Angaston
- Butler Branch 100 years' celebrations: August 24, 2007

This is sample of the things Board / Board Members have been involved in, with many more at both local and State level.

Projects fund by National Landcare Program

- Sandy Soils
- Precision Agriculture
- Risk Management
- Soil Sodidity