



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2009 / 2010**

## ADVISORY BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

2009 - 2010

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	<i>Name</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Appointed to ABA</i>
Chairman	Neville Ferme	Upper North	2004
Deputy Chairman	Richard Murdoch	Yorke Peninsula	2006
Treasurer	Heather Baldock	Eastern Eyre Peninsula	2006
Executive	Mark Dennis	Lower Eyre Peninsula	2003
Executive	Janette Ridgway	Upper South East	2006
Executive	Amy Williams	Fleurieu Peninsula / Murray Plains	2009
Treasurer Elect	Yvonne Correll	Mid and Lower South East	2006
	Helen Colliver	Women in Agriculture & Business	2008
	Richard Konzag	Lower North / Hummocks - Adelaide Plains	2005
	Tony Loffler	Riverland / Northern Mallee	2006
	Geoff Page	Adelaide Hills	2009
	Lynette Pinder	Barossa Valley	2009
	Peter Rose	Murraylands	2007
	Philip Wheaton	Far West Coast / Central Eyre Peninsula	2003
	Ros Willson	Kangaroo Island	2009
<i>Agency staff</i>	Glenn Gale	DWLBC	2008
	Geoff Knight	PIRSA	2006
	Rob Lewis	SARDI	1993–08 2008-2010
	Don Plowman	PIRSA	2005
<i>University of Adelaide</i>	Tony Rathjen		2003
<i>Support Team</i>	Annie Madden	PIRSA	1991
	Paul Erkelenz	Rural Solutions SA	2008
	Samantha Johnson	PIRSA	2008

## Chairman's Report 2009 - 2010

I was honoured to be elected Chairman at the 2009 AGM. It has been a very challenging 12 months with many issues to deal with.

We welcomed four new Board members at the AGM in 2009: Geoff Page (Adelaide Hills), Amy Williams (Fleurieu / Murray Plains) and Ros Willson (KI). Lynette Pinder was later appointed the Barossa Valley representative. I wish them an enjoyable and challenging time on the ABA and their contribution has been invaluable. Amy Williams has proved to be a valuable contribution to the executive as well.

We welcomed a new Minister following the March election: Hon Michael O'Brien MP. The Board was and is keen to establish and maintain a good relationship with the Minister and his advisers. Minister O'Brien and Ministerial Adviser, Dr. Paul Tsoundarou, were able to attend the June 2010 ABA meeting. Arrangements have been made for him to attend further meetings and briefings to follow all Board meetings by the Chair. Minister Caica is thanked for his contribution and in his short time as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. We were pleased to meet and work with him and we are optimistic that the relationships will continue in his new portfolio.

The Advisory Board of Agriculture is the peak body of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia and the conduit of information for the government and agencies of government for grass roots practical advice. The diversity of the Board's membership gives the Board the upper hand on practical information for our democracy to forge ahead in the ever changing circumstances of agriculture in South Australia. We South Australians have a modern and vibrant rural economy which sits amongst the leaders of the world: this does not mean our rural economy is not up to increased scrutiny: believe me rural South Australia is not perfect. We, the Board, recognise some of its shortcomings and convey the messages and possible solutions to government and government agencies.

The Drought Recovery Program is one of the communicative and consultation processes the Board was involved in. The business plan re-visit is one of the successes. One may be justified in saying a business involved in agricultural production should have a business plan, but we convinced a number of Public Servants and the Minister that the South Australian Government could and did lead by example. A practical outcome with a positive result. Why was this a success?: because it was grass roots driven.

Trade is one of the hard political topics to reconcile with. The debate and discussion by consumers of South Australia voicing their opinions about imported apples treated with antibiotics to overcome fire blight in the grown country, and piggery sow stalls issues has also stirred consumers on a radio talk show. Minister Michael O'Brien went into bat for the pig producers stating that all food should be marketed on a level playing field and Australian ethical / moral standards should be applied to all suppliers regardless of the geographical location of its production. Full marks to the Minister. The talkback radio discussion moved to food labelling and the lack of information of the origin of the produce. The Board with prompting from a **grassroots** member Philip Wheaton has been quietly promoting that very subject for some time. The Board has intimate knowledge of the needs, and for the producer, for the benefit of the consumer - giving food security and South Australian agriculture long term benefits to the State's economy.

Rural people need to be treated with equity. They don't need to be treated as second rate citizens.

Mice are one of the issues in agriculture and regional South Australia.

You maybe disappointed if you fail but you are doomed if you don't try.

We see in the press a resident in Balaklava catching 30 mice a night in her home. We, I mean 1.6 million South Australians, failed in keeping our community safe and clean.

We hear of tourists sleeping in their cars on Western Eyre Peninsula. We failed to keep our regional economy protected from outside forces beyond their control.

We hear in the last fortnight of wheat crops being re-sown at Warrambo and at Kyancutta wheat crops coming out in head and mice taking the heads off as they emerge. We, 1.6 million South Australia failed to take the risk of soil erosion and food security seriously. We failed 1.6 million South Australians.

The end of the plague will come one day and the breeding frenzy of the feral cats, wild dogs and foxes will only have one thing left to eat! Our native flora and fauna. We fail we fail to protect natural recourses.

The Board was informed by Professor Tony Rathjen of the statistical risk of a mouse plague at the October 2009 meeting. We, the Board, have the diversity of membership to give practical, sound advice on strategies to help Regional South Australia.

If you think I am criticising the government, you are wrong, if you think I am challenging it, you are right. We, ie. 1.6 million South Australians, have a cultural problem in our democracy. We have a good idea, we have a think tank, a draft plan, a consulting process, a final plan and then we do nothing. As you can appreciate, challenges with agriculture and regional areas like the invasion of mice, our democratic process as is fails us. We South Australia need to acquire new skills to protect food security. We need people of action not procrastination.

The Board gives high level of support to the Mental Health Program during drought, and still the Riverland challenging times. We the Board must commend the Government's initiatives in mental health and support in rural counselling and rural financial counselling. The challenge in the future will be relationship counselling post drought. Statistically this is the next challenge for Regional and Rural South Australia.

One of the great initiatives by government of the Drought Program was and still is, the Drought Task Force. The Board has participated in the most of the Drought Task force committee's and this would be one of the most efficient and cost effective ways to co-ordinate the South Australia's Government programs to Rural and Regional Areas.

The Board recognizes the excellent work done by regional drought co-ordinators: Liz Connell, Brenton Parsons, Jim Cawthorne, Barb Cowey, Marie Patterson and Bill Davies.

ABA is within the Sustainable Systems Group of Agriculture and Wine in PIRSA. Thanks to Helen Lamont, as Director, Sustainable Systems. Thanks to her for attending Board meetings and providing support in this role, as and when time permits. Thanks also to Don Plowman, as Deputy Chief Executive [Executive Director, Ag, Food and Wine] who has attended Board meetings and provided support and input for which the Board is appreciative. Don's Public Service Medal in the Australia Day Honour's was most deserved and we the Board experienced that service first hand.

In fact a second Board member steps down this year – Rob Lewis. He has been the SARDI representative to the Board since 1993 and his contribution to and support of the Board, and therefore to the Bureau movement, has been outstanding. On behalf of all those Board members who have served with Rob, it has been a pleasure and we wish him

well in his future endeavours. Rob, we hope you stay in touch with agriculture, particularly with South Australia agriculture.

The Executive support structure has, and is always going to be a challenge to the Board, with its diversities and multitude of functions within the Board's jurisdiction. This will be a continuing issue for the Board and agriculture with the cutbacks in the PIRSA agricultural budget. All Board members are most appreciative of the efforts and support of the team. It is:

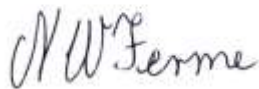
- Paul Erkelenz: worked at the strategic level, to identify priorities and where the Board wants to go. He works on high profile issues and brings much experience to the role. Many thanks to him for his support personally and to the rest of the Board.
- The media team was a mix of Samantha Johnson, Georgia Gowing and Tania Bawden. Thank you to all three for your help and support. They have worked tirelessly to improve the profile of both the ABA and the Bureau. They have worked on the key messages we want to "present to the world". Sam has taken off overseas to live and work for two years. Thank you for all your efforts Sam and all the best in your new venture.

Thank you Annie Madden, from all ABA members, for the tireless effort you have put into the Advisory Board of Agriculture and the Ag Bureau of South Australia. The historical information you recall is invaluable to us. She has continued in her administrative support role for the Board and Bureau and provides support to both Paul and media team.

ABA held a workshop with Dr. Ian Plowman on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2009. Covered strategic type issues and Board members believed it was a most valuable day. The Board has, and must, be targeted with ABA business and make efficient use of member's time and energy.

Thank you to all the members of the Board, both past and present, in my six years on the Board. As you would be aware I am standing down as from the 2010 AGM. I have enjoyed my time on the Board and engaging with the Government and various agencies of Government I recommend the experience with the Board. I thank you all, and wish the new Board, all Agricultural Bureau members, and friends and supporters the best for the future.

Thank you



Neville Ferme  
**Chairman, Advisory Board of Agriculture**  
**2009 / 2010**

## Listed Commitments of the Board

- Ministers Caica, and then O'Brien made visits to Eyre Peninsula, with Heather Baldock hosting them both and bringing issues of importance to their attention.
- Continued monthly column in the *Stock Journal* throughout the year. This is being reviewed and working to get best value for money and Bureau members.
- Received funding from PIRSA for rollout of the *Cost of Production Tool*. Very exciting concept which is available and is being circulated to Ag Bureau members. Thanks to Richard Murdoch, Janette and Kate Ridgway, and Paul Erkelenz for their time and efforts.
- Letters of support from the ABA were sent to appropriate NRM Boards for the Landcare Facilitator positions.
- The Board has representation at Ag Excellence Alliance, Bureau of Meteorology Agricultural Consultative Committee, ChemCert, Farm Safe SA, National Livestock Identification Scheme and Wooltag. Also invited to / attendance at briefing sessions for Standing Committee for NRM and Primary Industries and Letter / invitation and information to attend the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Workshop. Board representatives have provided feedback as appropriate which keeps other Board members, and Bureau members in turn, in touch with a range of industry activities.
- Board representation at the ABA Regional Update in Clare, Transport Forum and GRDC Updates. Again valuable to keep Board and Bureau members up to date on a range of issues.
- Met PIRSA Executive on the district tour at the 2009 AGM. An excellent chance to meet and network in an informal environment.
- Commonwealth Caring for Our Country Projects: the Soil Acidity and Resilient Farming Systems projects are continuing: the Climate Variability project has been completed and account closed. A new Projects account has also been opened which operates a number of other projects that are being run.
- Board also involved with Heather Baldock addressing the NRM Research Forum. Had representation at the COAG Review of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals, National Landcare Forum and Wheat Export Innovation Forum among many. Board representative also invited to the Heavy Vehicle Industry Forum.
- ABA invited to make submission on a Proposed National Competency Framework for Heavy Vehicle Drivers; received information on SAMDB NRM Board regarding Regional NRM Plan Release and its release; received information from SAMDB NRM Board about public consultations of their Business Plan; received information from Northern and Yorke NRM Board; letter and information regarding Consultation on Draft NRM Business Plan 2010; received information from SE NRM Board: letter re advance notice of final round of public consultation - Draft NRM Plan for the South East Region
- New Minister O'Brien met with ABA Executive delegation on a couple of occasions throughout the year
- Former ABA Chair Carol Schofield AM is on the selection panel for the RIRDC Rural Women of the Year. It was very pleasing and good promotion for the Bureau Movement when Ulli Spranz from the Biodynamic and Organic Ag Bureau [BOAB] was announced as this year's winner.
- Board had two representatives on the *Ignite* Advisory Group (Janette Ridgway and Shirley Pledge). *Ignite* was a entrepreneurial program for young people in the agri-food industry with workshops, field days and mentor sessions. 40 participants and 30 mentors were involved with cluster sessions held on KI, Clare, Naracoorte and Murray Bridge. The program completed with lectures and a dinner on 3<sup>rd</sup> May at the Adelaide Pavilion Conference and Function Centre. Jason Schulz from Coonalpyn was an Igniter and won the Peter Olsen Fellowship.

- A delegation met with the Vice Chancellor Professor James A. McWha of the University of Adelaide with concerns about the sale of agricultural land which was owned by the university. The board is and has built a relationship with the University of Adelaide from this meeting.

### **Awards and the Acknowledgement of Excellence**

Announcement and presentation of **Agricultural Bureau Services to Primary Production Award 2009** was made to *Phil Roberts from Coomandook* at the Awards Night Dinner on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The outstanding nominees were invited to the dinner and presented with commemorative plaques. A perpetual trophy has also been established which the winner holds for the ensuing year.

Announcement and presentation of **Peter Olsen Fellowship for Young Farmers 2009** made to *Jason Schulz from Coonalpyn* at the Presentation Dinner in October 2009. Again, the Board is most appreciative of PIRSA's continued support and contribution to the Fellowship and again in 2010. A grant from PIRSA has enabled the bursary to be lifted from 2009 to \$8 000. The ABA is very keen to maintain the Fellowship's prestige and is pleased to commit the Bureau to a greater contribution.

**Lois Harris Agricultural Bureau Scholarship 2010** was won by *John Swincer*, the first city winner. Congratulations to John and he is wished well in his tertiary studies. The ABA lifted the bursary in 2008 to \$2 000 and is pleased to be able to further support young people entering our industry.

It was pleasing to receive funding from the wind up of the former Rural Youth Movement. This enabled the establishment of the **Rural Youth Bursary**. *Abbey McKenna from Naracoorte* was announced as the first winner at the Awards and Presentation dinner in October 2009.

It is the calibre of young people such as Jason, John and Abbey that is needed in agriculture, for they are the future of primary industries. The ABA and Bureau is proud to be a part of both initiatives.

### **How the ABA works**

Board and Agricultural Bureau finances were again extremely tight this financial year. Many thanks to Treasurer Heather Baldock and Treasurer-elect, Yvonne Correll, for their tireless efforts in keeping the Bureau's finances on track.

Working groups, based upon the Board's strategic plan, generating outputs for the Board along the path of its future directions. The three working groups continue to meet during, and sometimes between, Board meetings. Thanks to all members for their commitment and work throughout the year.

#### *"Achieving an Informed and Supportive Government"*

- goal is to provide relevant information and develop and foster relationships with the Minister's office and government agencies

#### *"Foster Innovation and Adoption of Best Practice"*

- goal is to foster the innovation and adoption of "best practice" by the rural sector

#### *"Promotion, Partnerships and Alliances / Maintaining and Active and Strong Bureau Network" - these 2 working groups merged.*

- goal is the promotion of the Bureau's aims across all sectors
- goal to promote an active and informed rural sector

## **Projects**

The ABA has been able to run several funded projects, working with agency project leaders and grassroots members through Branches. The work and support of all those involved and ensured the success of the projects, providing valued knowledge and information.

The agency project leaders are thanked for their commitment and support:

- David Davenport (Land Management Consultant) and Brian Hughes (Senior Soil and Land Management Consultant): *Caring for Our Country*
- Tim Herrmann, Principal Technical Adviser, NRM, (the former) DWLBC
- Simon Goodhand, Caring for Our Country SA Facilitator

## **Communications**

The ever-increasing use of electronic communications has enabled financial members to be kept in touch. *Board Monthly* (the former Board Bis) and other practical information were emailed to financial members. This is in line with the Board's desire to bring the latest information in a timely and efficient manner to Bureau members. Bureau members are encouraged to provide their email addresses.

The e-newsletter *Primary Interest*, first produced in December 2007, has continued to be produced on a quarterly basis. Excellent feedback has been received and thanks all those involved for this excellent publication, particularly Sam Johnson, Georgia Gowing, and Tania Bawden from PIRSA Communications and Marketing, to keep Bureau members informed.

## **Agricultural Bureau Service to Primary Production Nominees 2009**

Those nominated and the Branches who nominated for the Award in 2009:

Neil Cordon	Nominated by Charra Branch
Phil Roberts	Nominated by Karoonda and Districts Branch

## **Board meetings – 2009 / 2010**

- |                                     |                      |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| - Monday 17th / Tuesday 18 Aug 2009 | February 2 / 3, 2010 |
| - AGM in Victor Harbor              | April 21 / 22, 2010  |
| - October 13 / 14, 2009             | June 15 / 16, 2010   |

## **Bureau Project Funds**

- |                      |  |         |
|----------------------|--|---------|
| - Lowbank & District | 2009 Mallee Sustainable Farming Field Day  | \$1 000 |
| - Kangaroo Island    | The Inaugural KI Conference: Looking Forward -the place of KI agriculture in the world | \$1 000 |
| - Yorke Peninsula    | Support for YP Ag Bureaux and Alkaline Soils Updates 2009                              | \$1 000 |
| - Buckleboo FIG      | Buckleboo Bus Trip to the Upper North Farming Systems area                             | \$250   |

-	Southern Mallee [joint with Geranium]	Zinc Application Trials	\$2 000
-	Monarto	Yield Prophet and Climate Science	\$800
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6 050</b>

### **Displays**

- Riverland Field Days (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2009)
- Yorke Peninsula Field Days (29<sup>th</sup> Sept to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009)

### **Board / Bureau Functions**

- Waite Open Day, conducted by the University and in liaison with SARDI, held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2009. An enjoyable and valuable event, though slightly disappointing attendance. An Open Day is again planned for September 2010.
- Dinner, attended by about 80 people, on the evening of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Most enjoyable and informative night. Announcement and presentations of the Peter Olsen Fellowship, the Agricultural Bureau Services to Primary Production and first Rural Youth Bursary were made. Also the second presentation to the winner of the 2009 Lois Harris Scholarship. The Awards and Presentation Dinner this year is on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October at the Royal Coach Motor Inn and again anticipated it will be most successful.
- Continued cooperation with Ag Excellence Alliance (an ABA initiative) with Board members attending forum and dinner in March 2010. Eastern Eyre Rep Heather Baldock is the Project Officer, taking over from former ABA Chair, Michael Richards (formerly from Yorke Peninsula)

### **Membership Awards 2009 / 2010**

#### **20 years**

Richard Anusz	Barmera
Richard Brooke	Barmera
Jim Finn	Barmera
Rob Graetz	Barmera
Joe Gropler	Barmera
Keven Clonan	Geranium
Robert Finn	Geranium
Michael Jacob	Geranium
Neville Pfeiffer	Geranium
Kevin Schulz	Geranium
John Williams Snr	Geranium
John Gersch	Light Pass
Kevin Rohrlach	Light Pass
M.D. Heinrich	Rowland Flat
K.L. Jenke	Rowland Flat

#### **40 years**

Des Green	Barmera
Andrew Jericho	Barmera
Stan Jericho	Barmera
Barry Mudge	Barmera
John Reed	Barmera

Lindsay Howard	Geranium
Trevor Purdie	Geranium
Glen Noack	Lone Pine Tanunda
Cyril J. Scott	Mt. Barker
Bill Pearce	Parawa
Ian Williams	Parawa
T.L. Braunack	Rowland Flat
G.W. Hoffmann	Rowland Flat
D.N. Lindner	Rowland Flat
J.A. Mattner	Rowland Flat

#### **50 years**

Lindsay Howard	Geranium
Lawrence Jericho	Light Pass
Ross Allen	Mt. Barker
Ralph Hurrell	Parawa
Tony Philp	Parawa
K.J. Jenke	Rowland Flat

#### **60 years**

Brian Landseer	Milang
Wilf Crompton	Mt. Barker
Robert Rankine	Mt. Barker
Bob Fairchild	Parawa

#### **70 years**

Alan Sargent	Mt. Barker
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#### **Those who have attended ABA meetings and / or addressed Board members in 2009 / 2010:**

ABA members have been pleased to welcome a variety of Government / industry personnel throughout the year. Their time has been appreciated and contribution welcome and valuable:

- SA Strategic Food Plan: Simon Gierke, Acting Director, Livestock Industries, PIRSA and Vicki Mavrakis, Executive Officer, SA Food Council - October 2009
- Strategic Planning following AGM: Greg Cock, Manager Drought Response and NRM - October 2009
- Nigel Austin, Rural Editor, "The Advertiser" - February 2010
- Planning for Recovery: Evelyn Poole, Senior Consultant, Rural Solutions SA
- Plant Biosecurity: Dr. Pat Collins, CRC for National Plant Biosecurity [CRC NPB]: Grain storage / Insect resistance to insecticides and phosphine - April 2010
- Robyn McLeod, Water Commissioner: Role of the Water Commissioner - April 2010
- Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Hon Michael O'Brien MP - June 2010
- Grains Roundtable: Dave Lewis (Manager, Grains Industry Development, (PIRSA) and Trudy Huckzo (Manager, Market Intelligence and Value Chains, PIRSA - June 2010
- SA Grains Market Overview: Matthew Palmer (Senior Market Development Analyst, PIRSA) - June 2010

**Agency attendees on a regular basis throughout 2009 / 2010:**

The ABA appreciates the valuable support and contribution from agency staff who have regularly attended Board meetings:

- Don Plowman, Deputy Chief Executive, PIRSA
- Helen Lamont, Director, Sustainable Systems, PIRSA
- Glenn Gale, Manager, Land Management Unit, (the former) DWLBC
- Rob Lewis, Executive Director, SARDI
- Tony Rathjen, University of Adelaide