



**AGRICULTURAL  
BUREAU**  
of South Australia



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

*Connecting sustainable communities*

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# About Us

**Helping to bridge the gap between scientists and farmers, the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia (Ag Bureau) encourages 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 the government and other agencies on issues that affect the farming community, including research and development, farming practices and education.

This includes the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), the Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA), Rural Business Support (RBS), South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and the University of Adelaide (UoA).

A not-for-profit organisation with more than 1000 members and 50 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 South Australia's agricultural industries.

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 Ag 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 grants 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)

## Governing Body

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

Representing the interests of South Australia's farmers to the 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 Ag 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 Ag 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.



*Mt Barker Branch - Pasture Competition*



*Petersville Branch*



*Echunga Field Days*



*Rowland Flat Branch*



*Clarendon Branch*



*Parawa Branch*



*Sherwood Branch*



*Monarto Branch*



*Owen Branch - Spring Crop Tour*



*Laura Branch - Sticky Beak*

# Chair's Report

**I am pleased to present our annual report, summarising the key activities and developments of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia over the past year. In the face of challenges, we have made significant progress in fulfilling our mission to support and empower our agricultural community.**

Our journey, which began in 1888, is a testament to our enduring commitment to sharing knowledge and supporting one another. Today, we look forward to enhancing these principles through our new website and member portal.

We thank all our members, especially our group leadership teams, for their tireless volunteer efforts. You play a pivotal role in creating opportunities for our members to come together, learn, exchange ideas, and strengthen our bonds.

In 2022, the standout event in our calendar was the Spirit of Excellence Awards Dinner, held at The Function Centre, Evanston. This occasion allowed us to celebrate the exceptional accomplishments and innovations of our young rural individuals and farmers. We proudly awarded the Sustainable Ag Scholarship and the Rural Youth Bursary, offering financial support to deserving recipients.

One notable addition was the 'Where are they now?' presentation, featuring Russell Zwar, the 2011 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship winner. The journey for Russell and his family was an inspiration and an acknowledgement of the contribution that the award gives to the individual, their family, business and the community, reaffirming the Ag Bureau's commitment to enabling these awards.

We are grateful for the support from our sponsors, the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA), for making these opportunities accessible.

In preparation for the year ahead, the Board convened a face-to-face meeting for the first time since 2021. Over two days, we engaged in a strategy meeting, a board meeting, and our Annual General Meeting (AGM). We discussed issues of relevance to our members and branches, and set priorities for the coming year. Our commitment



to improving communication at both the local and board levels remains unwavering.

Recognising the pivotal role of communication, we have revitalised our quarterly newsletter, 'Ag Chat'. This effort seeks to encourage greater participation by our branches, providing a platform for sharing events, activities, and insights, thereby fostering collaboration and idea exchange among branches. We invite members to contribute to their branch's activities and engage with our support staff to facilitate this sharing process. The new website and portal will make this all possible.

We express our gratitude to our sponsors, Australian Grain Technologies (AGT), Incitec Pivot Easy Liquids, Rural Business Support (RBS), South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), and the University of Adelaide. Collaborating with representatives has added significant value to our organisation and membership.

Looking ahead, we are in the final stages of launching a new Ag Bureau website and membership portal. This innovative platform will provide tailored information, 24/7 access to resources, and streamlined membership fee payments. Despite a delay in membership renewals, we are dedicated to ensuring a seamless transition to this modern system and encourage you to explore and contribute.

On behalf of the Board of Agricultural Bureau of South Australia, we thank all our members, stakeholders and sponsors. We remain committed to our mission of supporting sustainable agriculture and rural communities, we look forward to the continued collaboration and growth of our organisation in the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janette Ridgway".

Janette Ridgway  
**Chair - Agricultural Bureau of South Australia**

# 2022-2023 Region & Branch Round Up

## SEPTEMBER 2022

**Parawa Branch President, Samantha (Sammy) McIntyre** is awarded a 2023 Nuffield Scholarship.

Members of the **Mount Barker, Meadows and Longwood Branches** participated and assisted in the first Small Acreage Field Days in South Australia in Echunga, Adelaide Hills.

Approximately 50 farmers and sponsors attended the **Owen Branch** Spring Crop Tour. The day included looking at canola varieties, frost management in vineyards with frost fans and helicopters, as well as showcasing the features of a new 802 Air Tractor and a crop with three different varieties of wheat to try to combat frost damage.

The **Milang Branch** welcomed guest speaker, Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (RFDS) Executive General Manager for Marketing and Stakeholder Relations, Charlie Paterson to its Annual General Meeting and pasture walk.



*Owen Branch Spring Crop Tour*

## OCTOBER 2022

**Mount Barker Branch** held its Annual Pasture Competition with members competing for the best Pasture in the Hills.

**Laura Branch's** Annual Sticky Beak Tour included a range of crops; Lucerne, Lentils, GM Canola, Wheat and Beans. A BBQ lunch was held in the new grain storage shed, with a drone spraying demonstration after.

**Milang Branch** held their Annual Crop Crawl which included the district's first genetically modified (GM) canola crops. Tours also of Samira & Bendoc faba beans, a paddock of InVigor canola, standard 44Y94 canola growing alongside TT Blazer, as well as Hammer and Scepter wheat crops.

**Parawa Branch** held a Spring Field Day, to have a sticky beak at what local producers are up to on their farms, including livestock, pastures and marketing.



*Wolseley Branch meeting*

The **Koonunga Branch** hosted a meeting at the Barossa Valley Machinery Preservation Society.

## NOVEMBER 2022

20 members of **Wolseley Branch** visited the local stockfeed pellet production plant and Blue Lake Milling's recently completed digester. There was a lot of reflection on the season during the BBQ which was generously provided by Viterra.

**Sherwood Branch** viewed trials and shared farmer experiences on modified soils, crop nutrition, analysing the cost of inputs and the need to manage costs against production.

The **Lochaber Branch** Spring Crop Walk focused on farm examples of experimentation with varying management practices to improve the outcome from the soil and the production of grain and pasture.

Feedback from the **Lowbank & Districts Branch** was that a lot of croppers started the season by planting in dry soil. Winter remained reasonably dry and it wasn't until November that they achieved their yearly average. A few had lost parts of their crops due to hail damage, others dealt with an influx of summer weeds.



*Laura Branch Annual Sticky Beak Tour*

The **Mount Barker Branch** announced the winners of their 2022 Annual Pasture Competition. Best Perennial Pasture 3 yrs or older – Shane Meiglich, Mt Torrens, “I’m doing something different” – Graeme Schoell, Lenswood, Best Perennial Pasture 1-2 yrs old – Matt and Sandy Henderson, Brukunga, Best Annual Crop or Pasture – Anthony Schoell, Lenswood. The winner of the Les Jacobs Perpetual Trophy for the overall winner was Matt and Sandy Henderson.

The Crop Walk and Harvest meetings held at the **Petersville Branch** focused on the new technologies available to members in the region.

## DECEMBER 2022

Within days of unseasonal downpours, **Milang Branch’s** meeting focused on fire precautions during the oncoming harvest.

The Vine Inn, Nuriootpa was the venue for the **Koonunga Branch** Christmas Function.

**Riverland & Murrayland Branches** battled outbreak after outbreak of fruit fly throughout the year, then diseases like downy mildew caused by the late spring rains. Specifically, some red wine grape growers were facing a tough 2023 vintage, with oversupply issues, the ongoing impact of China’s wine trade tariff and market values dropping. On top of this came the threat to low-lying farmers along the Murray River due to the slowly rising flood waters.



*Mount Barker Branch Final Meeting for 2022*

**Mount Barker Branch** held their final meeting for the year. Branch President Richard Ball, hosted a terrific evening at their property at Blakiston. Following the tour, the members enjoyed a BBQ tea and some Christmas cheer.

The **Angaston Branch** held their Christmas Dinner at the Greenock Hotel and was attended by 40 members and partners.

The **Meadows Branch** held their Christmas Dinner at the Meadows Hotel.



*‘Summer of Weeds’ participants*

## FEBRUARY 2023

**Angaston Branch** began the new year by visiting Barossa 4X4 & Outdoor in Nuriootpa. There was a lot of interest in suspension upgrades, particularly from farmers who own utes and tow heavy trailers and equipment. The evening ended with members reflecting on the 2022 season, and shared their early thoughts on the 2023 season ahead.

**Laura Branch** recognised the rapid development of spraying and weed control technology in agriculture, so in a short five weeks, they organised a very successful information afternoon and field day. ‘Summer of Weeds’ was held in Gladstone in conjunction with the Upper Northern Farming Systems and was attended by over 70 farmers.

## MARCH 2023

**Mount Barker Branch** held their Annual Dinner, at the German Arms Hotel, Hahndorf. 38 branch members and guests enjoyed an evening celebrating the past year and looking forward to greener pastures this year.

**Parawa Branch** and **Fleurieu Farming Systems** supported the inaugural Fleurieu AgFest.

Members from the **Freeling, Laura, Mount Barker and Owen Branches** joined 38 other SA farmers on three day tour of Kangaroo Island visiting fire impacted farms and farmers. The aim was for farmers to continue healing by sharing their unique challenges and recovery following significant bushfire events.

The **Owen Branch** took a tour of the Mark Lee Fish Farm at St Kilda. This family run business grows barramundi for local and interstate sale along with rock lobster. They also stopped in on Cameron Lowe’s sunflower crop.

The **Bute Branch** held their Wheat Crop competition, and the trophy was presented to winner Colin Hewett.

# 2022-2023 Region & Branch Round Up

## APRIL 2023

The **Clarendon Branch** had the Ag Bureau's Hills, Fleurieu & KI Board Member Richard Williams, speak at their meeting.

**Monarto Branch** visited the Coopers Brewery at their Regency Park facilities.

The latest local spray technology was showcased at **Milang Branch's** meeting, demonstrating how farming is being revolutionised by microelectronics.

## MAY 2023

Members of **Mount Barker Branch** took time out to visit Sidewood Estate, Nairne. They viewed an array of stainless steel tanks, packing and bottling equipment with storage areas mainly off-site. The evening was topped off with cheese and wine tasting.



Rowland Flat Branch at Barritt Vineyards

**Koonunga Branch** took a look at New Commander Ag Sheep Yards and Ewe Ultrasound Technology.

## JUNE 2023

The **Rowland Flat Branch** meeting was held at Barritt Vineyards, Bethany. Greg Barritt showed members a selection of wines made from vintage 2023, pointing out ripening times and challenges in harvesting and fermentation.

**Koonunga Branch** held their Annual General Meeting and Year In Review. Members discussed crop reports, what problems they had encountered and their learnings from them.

Anthea Rice, Fundraising Manager from the Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) was guest speaker at the **Clarendon Branch** meeting.

The **Ag Bureau of South Australia** launched its new logo.



Koonunga Branch Annual Social

## JULY 2023

**Petersville Branch** members supported the YP Vintage and Classic Tractor Pull Club with The Price Tractor Pull community event.

The **Milang Branch** meeting featured four recent-model air seeders used by individual members to plant this season's crops. The aim was to provide bureau members with feedback on proven experience.

The **Koonunga Branch's** Annual Social had a thought provoking guest speaker in Megan McLoughlin from Herd for Hope, a charity that advocates for rural and regional people affected by organ donation.

Over 65 members attended the **Angaston Branch's** Annual Social Dinner, also in attendance was Ashton Hurn MP - Member for Schubert and Corbin Schuster Agricultural Bureau of SA Board Member for Barossa & Light. Among the presenters for the event were recipients of the 2023 SA Sheep Expo / Angaston Ag Bureau Bursary.

Monarto Branch's meeting focussed on the Ag Industry Outlook 2023, looking at sheep and wool prices, cropping and chemicals, grain prices and machinery.

**Fleurieu Farming Systems** held a Carbon Market Caution Workshop.

## AUGUST 2023

**Owen Branch** held its Annual General Meeting (AGM), followed by Chris Heinjus from Pinion Advisory talking on world grain markets. Derryn Stringer also spoke about fertiliser including Agferts NShield (blue Urea).

**Mallala Branch's** guest speaker was Ben Davies - Assistant Livestock Manager, Thomas Foods International.

Eight of the **Yorke Peninsula Branches** begin the mammoth task of preparing for the 2023 YP Field Days at Paskeville. Members from **Arthurton, Arthurton Women, Boor's Plain, Bute, Moonta, Paskeville, Petersville** and **South Kilkerran Branches** volunteer their time to set up for the largest field day on the South Australian calendar.

# Long Serving Members Awards

August 2022 - August 2023

The Board recognises and congratulates the following long-serving members and thanks them for their ongoing contribution to the Ag Bureau of South Australia.



**Angaston**  
Leonard Koch  
Rex Koch

**Lone Pine Tanunda**  
Wayne Tschirpigg

**Mil Lel**  
Gavin Johns

**Moonta**  
D Geoffrey Smith

**Parawa**  
Ian Williams



**Angaston**  
Ricky Steicke  
Mark Grossman  
Geoffrey Linke

**Nelshaby**  
Raymond Haldane  
Philip Johns  
Malcolm Sargent

**Parawa**  
Dean Whitford  
Peter Filsell

**South Kilkerran**  
Lynton Wakefield  
Ashley Wakefield  
Greg Schulz  
Lyll Schulz  
Graham Mattschoss



**Angaston**  
Fiona Koch

**Nelshaby**  
Darren Button  
Neville Ferme  
Graham Johns  
Robert Joyce  
Brian Leue  
Neville Leue  
Kym Reid  
Damien Tiller  
Wayne Young

**Parawa**  
Stephen Rogers

**South Kilkerran**  
Gregory Klopp  
Paul Schulz  
Robert Gerschwitz  
Jane Greenslade  
Greg Hean  
Kenneth Klopp



**Nelshaby**  
Robert Dennis  
Steven Lane  
Brett Reid  
Gary Robers  
Heath Tiller  
Brenton Vanstone

**South Kilkerran**  
James Heinrich  
Paul Jarrett  
Stephen Matschoss  
Ben Francis  
Ian Koch  
Scott Schulz  
Dylan Schulz  
Evan Kakoschke  
Matthew Schulz  
Brett Schulz



**Lone Pine Tanunda**  
Kenneth Schliebs

**Mil Lel**  
Geoffrey Paltridge

**Nelshaby**  
Leslie Afford  
Brian Tiller

**Parawa**  
Victor Walter  
Graeme Golding

**Rowland Flat**  
Leon Koch  
Kym Lindner  
Rob Schiller



Angaston Branch Long Serving Members Awards: Ricky Steicke, Geoffrey Linke, Fiona Koch Mark Grossman, Len Koch, Rex Koch with Ag Bureau Board Member for Barossa & Light Corbin Schuster



# 2022 Spirit of Excellence Awards

**A Clare Valley man’s vision for sustainable vineyard production, and plans by a Limestone Coast animal health specialist to expand his skillset to help educate local producers in best practice nutrition and animal management strategies, were recognised at the Ag Bureau’s 2022 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards announced on Friday, September 2, 2022.**

The Honorable Claire Scriven, Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Acting Director of Landscape Services, for the Department for Environment and Water, Mr Saravan Peacock, presented the awards at a dinner, attended by over 80 dignitaries, guests and Ag Bureau members.

I congratulate all of the award winners for their achievements, and also the finalists who made the judges’ job so difficult with quality candidates across the categories.

*Hon. Minister Claire Scriven MLC,*

Generously supported by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA), and Rural Business Support the Ag Bureau is committed to promoting excellence in agriculture, encouraging young farmers and rural youth to pursue opportunities for personal and professional development to benefit their local communities.

Chair of the Ag Bureau, Janette Ridgway, said the total number of applications received increased from the previous year and covered a broad range of primary production industries and projects, demonstrating an increase in opportunities in agriculture.

“The quality of the finalist’s applications was of a high standard, highlighting the tough decision for the judges in choosing just one winner for each award,” Janette said. “But it showed that the challenges of including sustainability into on-farm practices are being addressed by the younger generations.”

“Actively pursuing and introducing new practices was at the forefront of the Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship entries,” Janette continued. “While the enthusiasm of the Rural Youth Bursary applicants to raise the bar of their knowledge and skills for themselves, their businesses and their local communities was exceptional.”



*The Honorable Claire Scriven MLC, Ag Bureau Chair, Janette Ridgway and Rural Business Support CEO, Brett Smith.*



(L): Rural Youth Bursary Winner Nicholas Dawes being congratulated by The Honorable Clare Scriven MLC. (R) Acting Director of Landscape Services, for the Department for Environment and Water, Mr Saravan Peacock, presenting Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship winner Ben Castine with his award. Ben was unable to attend the Awards Dinner on the night.

**2022 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship Winner: Ben Castine - Watervale (Clare Valley)**

Sponsored by The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and presented by Saravan Peacock, Acting Director of Landscape Services.

The \$10,000 scholarship enables a farmer (aged 18-40) to pursue further study, take a study tour or run a special project. The scholarship is in memory of the late Peter and Wendy Olsen recognising their collective contribution to agriculture and landcare in South Australia.

**2022 Rural Youth Bursary Winner: Nicholas Dawes - Kingston SE (Limestone Coast)**

Sponsored by The Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) and presented by the Honourable Clare Scriven, Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development.

The \$5000 Rural Youth Bursary is open to South Australians (aged 18-30) employed in any rural capacity and not restricted to primary production. It provides the opportunity to pursue further study, undertake a study tour or develop a special project, which will ultimately benefit the rural community.

**2022 Lois Harris Scholarship Winner: Aleah Bakota - Adelaide**

Sponsored by the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia and presented by Corbin Schuster, Ag Bureau Board Member for Barossa.

The \$2000 Lois Harris Scholarship is awarded to a first-year student studying the Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Adelaide. The scholarship is named in memory of Lois Harris, a member of the Advisory Board of Agriculture from 1995 to 1998.



Guests mingle at the at the Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards Dinner

# Ben's Vision for a Sustainable Future

**2022 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship winner Ben Castine and his wife Jess manage a fourth generation vineyard, grazing, and cropping property near Watervale, Clare Valley. They have been living on the family farm since December 2019 where their focus on viticulture has allowed them to transition the vineyard to more sustainable practices.**

In Ben's scholarship application, he outlined his research into sustainable vineyard production and had begun implementing sustainable management practices; including an under-vine straw mulching program, and planting native insectary plants around his vineyards.

Ben has diligently pursued his goal. "I initiated my research by consulting experts in native revegetation, both within and beyond the vineyard setting," Ben explains.

**No matter how big or small an idea may seem, it is worth applying for the scholarship to nurture these ideas.** ”

*Ben Castine,  
2022 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship Winner*

Utilising some of the scholarship's funds, Ben was able to acquire 2200 native tube stock plants, fencing, and weed matting to established his own native seedbank. He is already focused on expansion, and plans to directly seed a vacant portion of the seedbank, creating a blend of wallaby grasses in the coming year.

The scholarship has impacted Ben on both personal and business fronts. "I've gained valuable insights into the implementation of native plants in vineyards and the challenges associated with their successful establishment," says Ben.



*Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship winner Ben Castine.*

He highlights the competitive disadvantage native plants face against typical vineyard 'weeds' like annual ryegrass. Ben has learned the critical role of preparatory work in the seed bank planting area and vineyard mid-rows, emphasising the reduction of weed seed loads for successful native plant establishment.

From a business perspective, the scholarship has yielded cost-saving opportunities and opened doors to potential diversification. Ben explains, "Harvesting native seed from the seed bank for vineyard planting will eliminate the expense of purchasing native seed." Additionally, his business may explore selling native seeds to other enterprises.

In November 2023, Ben plans to host a field day where industry and community members can learn about the seedbank's significance. He aims to educate attendees on how incorporating native plants in and around vineyards can enhance soil and vine health, bolster pest resilience, and reduce herbicide reliance. He plans to share his knowledge through case studies distributed at local and national levels.

Ben passionately encourages young individuals to apply for the Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship. He emphasises that the scholarship fosters idea development, facilitates valuable connections, and provides support that can turn dreams into reality.

Ben's journey exemplifies the potential for positive change within the agricultural community, showcasing how scholarships like these can empower individuals to drive transformation towards a greener, more sustainable future in agriculture.

# Empowering the Future of Agriculture

**2022 Rural Youth Bursary Winner Nicholas Dawes lives and works in the Kingston/Millicent area of the South-East as an animal health specialist with Nutrien Ag Solutions. Having grown up with a passion for animals, Nicholas studied Animal Science at the University of Adelaide and completed his Honours in Ruminant Nutrition in 2021.**

Nicholas's driving motivation to apply for the 2022 Rural Youth Bursary was to fund his participation in a Lifetime Ewe Management course (LTEM), that would equip him with the skills to optimize on-farm management through condition scoring.

In the past year, Nicholas undertook a LTEM Group Program led by Daniel Schuppan. The program spanned six sessions across 12 months, exploring four different production systems.

Nicholas expressed how the program enhanced his knowledge, especially in areas like nutrition and feeding. "Learning to condition score and analyse individual mobs has been invaluable," he shared. He also plans to participate in a "Heifers for Profit" program in the near future.

The bursary has also played a pivotal role in strengthening relationships with local farmers in the Millicent area. "It has contributed to improving the knowledge base of the new generational farmers taking over their family farms," he explained.

Enhanced knowledge of condition score management translates to increased value within each production system, making farms more profitable. Additionally, improved production yields lead to higher animal welfare standards, benefiting the entire community.

Nicholas has actively shared the knowledge gained through the Rural Youth Bursary with his community and industry. "The bursary has contributed to me improving the knowledge base of the new generational farmers taking over their family farms,"



*2022 Rural Youth Bursary winner Nicholas Dawes*

Nicholas has also organised animal health nights in Kingston SE and Millicent, providing platforms for producers to stay updated on current issues.

Nicholas encourages young people to apply for the Rural Youth Bursary. "This opportunity provides exposure to industry leaders and the chance to enhance oneself to the best possible version," he asserted. He emphasised that this experience not only accelerates personal development but also contributes to the betterment of rural communities.

**This opportunity provides exposure to industry leaders and a chance to enhance oneself to the best possible version.**

*Nicholas Dawes,  
2022 Rural Youth Bursary Winner*

Nicholas reflected on the numerous benefits from winning the Rural Youth Bursary. "I had the privilege of meeting remarkable individuals involved in the Ag Bureau and PIRSA," he shared. "I up-skilled my knowledge, which has provided me with added confidence when advising on farms.

Nicholas' journey exemplifies how scholarships like the Rural Youth Bursary empower young minds to drive positive change, not only within themselves but also throughout their communities and the agricultural industry as a whole.



*Agricultural Bureau of South Australia Board Member for Barossa, Corbin Schuster congratulates 2022 Lois Harris Scholarship winner Aleah Bakota.*

## Internship for Lois Harris Winner

**Former Nazareth Catholic College student Aleah Bakota was the 2022 recipient of the Lois Harris Scholarship. Aleah received the highest Tertiary Entrance Score (TER) for a student entering the Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences course in 2022.**

Aleah's family originated from Croatia, and she has always had an interest in agriculture. She would like to help build farming sustainability and develop ideas to help farmers understand and work to minimise the effects of climate change.

"I have always been interested in Biology, particularly plant breeding, I'm hoping to specialise in fruits and/or cropping," said Aleah when asked about her career ambitions.

Aleah is keen to maintain a 'hands-on' approach to agriculture ensuring a flexible career with plenty of variety and job satisfaction. "Agriculture continues to offer amazing opportunities," she said.

This year Aleah was one of three students to join the Ag Institute's 2023 Student Compendium team, on an internship funded by SAGIT. She was instrumental in designing the new cover for the compendium.

## Thank You to our Sponsors

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

We thank the sponsors and supporters who have assisted us to bridge the gap between scientists, farmers and the wider agricultural community.

In particular, we extend our gratitude to our two major sponsors, **Australian Grain Technologies (AGT)** and **Incitec Pivot Easy Liquids**, for their unwavering commitment to the Ag Bureau.

AGT has been a steadfast supporter for several years, and their ongoing dedication has significantly contributed to the success of our organisation.

We also want to express our sincere appreciation to **Incitec Pivot Easy Liquids**, who joined Ag Bureau as a sponsor in the last year. Their generous support, including the provision of Daryl Higginson and his BBQ trailer, has united Ag Bureau members over a meal and drinks.

We are grateful to the **The Department for Environment and Water (DEW)** who have kindly allocated **\$10,000** funding towards the **Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship**.

The continued support from **The Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA)** who have again generously funded the **Rural Youth Bursary** for **\$5,000**.

We would also like to acknowledge the dedicated team at **Rural Business Support** for their support during our Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards dinner and providing ongoing administrative support.



# Tomahawk CL Plus closes the yield gap



(L-R) Tomahawk CL Plus. Brad Koster, Manager of Variety Support for SA, AGT

## **A new wheat variety has been launched that is set to replace currently grown Clearfield® wheat varieties.**

Having been in development by Australian Grain Technologies (AGT) over the past seven years, the new variety, named Tomahawk CL Plus, is set to become a landmark variety in the Clearfield® wheat space.

“We have been striving to reduce the yield gap between Clearfield® and conventional wheats for a long time now and have finally made a breakthrough with Tomahawk CL Plus, which has yielded towards the top of the pack, a little above Scepter”, explains AGT wheat breeder Dr James Edwards.

“Tomahawk CL Plus is derived from Scepter and carries a lot of similarities. Other than holding an APW quality classification rather than AH, it’s extremely similar. If you’ve grown Scepter before, you will be very comfortable with Tomahawk CL Plus”.

“Think of Scepter’s high and stable grain size and test weight, good sprouting tolerance, wide adaptation,

mid season maturity and disease resistance package. These are traits that Tomahawk CL Plus holds, plus Clearfield® tolerance and a nice yield bump”.

AGT’s Manager of Variety Support for SA, Brad Koster, expects a wide application of the variety.

“There’s no doubt growers will be interested in Tomahawk CL Plus as a direct replacement for varieties like Razor CL Plus, Chief CL Plus, Sheriff CL Plus, Grenade CL Plus and Kord CL Plus, but I can also see it being treated as a ‘conventional’ wheat too, due to its high grain yield and other agronomic advantages”.

“If you grow a paddock of Tomahawk CL Plus and don’t need to use the Clearfield® herbicide in-crop, then you won’t be wishing you grew a non-Clearfield® variety instead. There is no yield penalty by choosing to grow Tomahawk CL Plus instead of a variety like Scepter”.

Tomahawk CL Plus seeds are available for the 2024 season through AGT affiliates or local retailers.

# BBQ Trailer coming to a Branch near you



**Over the past year, Incitec Pivot's Easy Liquids' Daryl Higginson's visits to Ag Bureau branches have proven to be a resounding success. Bringing along his BBQ trailer to meetings, Daryl cooked up a storm for those in attendance, adding a personal touch to his presentations.**

His travels have been defined by networking, gaining valuable insights from members and the strengthening of partnerships with Ag Bureau branches.

Through engaging interactions and compelling presentations, Daryl effectively communicated Easy Liquids' commitment to delivering innovative solutions tailored to the ever-evolving needs of modern agriculture.

This not only highlighted the brand's unwavering dedication but also positioned it as an indispensable collaborator in elevating crop yields and promoting sustainable farming practices among its members.

Daryl prioritised actively listening to the challenges and aspirations of local farmers, engaging in meaningful discussions about how Easy Liquids could further enhance their already successful operations. This responsive approach solidified the brand's reputation as a customer-centric entity genuinely dedicated to addressing the specific concerns of farmers.

"In the course of my visits to branches, my goal was to strengthen existing partnerships and establish new ones," Daryl commented. His personal approach and commitment to visiting various branches underscored the brand's sincerity, resulting in strong connections that went beyond mere business transactions.

Easy Liquids emerges from this endeavor not only as a provider of high-quality agricultural solutions but also as a trusted ally in the shared pursuit of a more productive and sustainable farming industry.

If you would like to arrange for Daryl to visit your Ag Bureau Branch or schedule a visit to your property, please don't hesitate to contact him directly

**M: 0487 419 513**

**E: [daryl.higginson@incitecpivot.com.au](mailto:daryl.higginson@incitecpivot.com.au)**



*(Top L-R): The Easy Liquids BBQ Trailer. Parawa Branch Meeting. (Bottom L-R) Laura Branch Meeting. Mallala Branch Meeting.*

# DEW on our Land and Soil



Government of South Australia  
Department for Environment  
and Water



*Soil Pit Workshop on the Yorke Peninsula.*

**Soil plays a pivotal role in ensuring our food security and serves as a vital habitat for biodiversity. Improving the sustainability of our natural resources and farming systems are shared common goals of the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and the Agricultural Bureau of SA – a partnership we both value. DEW recognises the crucial role that farmers and land managers play in managing our environment.**

DEW helps South Australians to conserve and sustain our environment and guide the sustainable use of our natural resources and heritage, to deliver economic prosperity, health and wellbeing.

DEW supports land managers to achieve sustainable and environmentally sound management of the soil and land resource in both the agricultural and broader landscape. DEW also recognises the increasing significance of building resilience in the face of a changing climate.

DEW's focus is to ensure our soils, vegetation and landscapes are healthy, productive and resilient and recognises there are a number of challenges such as wind and water erosion, soil acidification, soil salinisation, soil structure decline, low soil fertility and water repellence.

DEW is committed to delivery of the National Soil Strategy and the South Australian government's commitment to develop a SA Soils Knowledge Network and SA Soils Data and Information Bank with partner the Department of Primary Industries and Regions, South Australia (PIRSA).

**General public soils enquiry**  
**E: [DEWSOilsInfo@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEWSOilsInfo@sa.gov.au)**

**Soils Team Leader, Tim Herrmann**  
**E: [tim.herrmann@sa.gov.au](mailto:tim.herrmann@sa.gov.au)**

# Branches involved in Drought Project



**As part of the Future Drought Fund: Natural Resources Management Drought Resilience Program, the Ag Bureau successfully obtained a grant to work with branches and community groups to examine soil improvement and water supply methods to assist farmers to manage drought.**

Several branches and groups have been involved in the soil improvement component. They have focussed on initial discussions identifying issues, field investigations and demonstrations. These were followed up with a soils workshop going through the results from the field activities.

Field research and demonstrations have included:

- soil testing, including techniques to identify subsoil constraints and magnesia areas
- comparisons of Phosphorus soil tests, including the new DGT available P tests after dry years
- assessment of drought and erosion affected soils, in-comparison with better areas
- assessment of soils with several years of manuring application
- deep N and S testing
- presentations on the latest soil carbon information
- identification of acid areas and comparing lime sources.



*Soil sampling at Robertstown.*

Fact sheets have been written on managing dry saline land, subsoil constraints, dealing poor sandy areas, drought impacts on soils and comparing Phosphorus tests in lower rainfall cropping areas- these are available on the Ag Bureau website project area.

Branch and community groups involved in this component included Lowbank, Wunkar, Mallee-Coomandook, Robertstown/Point Pass, Laura, Western Eyre Peninsula and Franklin Harbour. Mallala has also been involved in a soils day funded from joint projects.

In the water component workshops have been run at Angaston and Robertstown. The Laura Ag Bureau visited an example of a low-cost catchment for the supply of good quality water on their sticky beak day. A manual, Planning Water Supplies for the Farm, has been developed in partnership with the Barossa Improved Grazing Group (BIGG). The manual can assist in determining property water requirements, sources, how to capture and store for farm use.

**For more information, please contact Brian Hughes at [brian.hughes@sa.gov.au](mailto:brian.hughes@sa.gov.au)**



*Dry saline sand, Robertstown.*

# Hearing rumours about Exploration?



(L-R) Sue-Ellen Cordon and Brett Klau



## **With more landowners being approached by exploration companies across South Australia, local whispers and rumours are escalating the uncertainty around mineral exploration, causing stress and impacting landowners' decision-making processes.**

It can be problematic to rely on information gathered from neighbours or landowners that have had experiences (good or bad) in the past, as your situation or the intended exploration program will potentially be different.

Local insights and shared experiences are valuable, but they can add to your concerns and fears about how this will affect your farming enterprise, especially during lambing, seeding or vintage. Being informed of the facts regarding land access requirements will allow you to weigh up your options with perspective.

Rural Business Support's (RBS) free, confidential and independent Landowner Information Service (LIS) can help you to understand the often complex technical and legal processes involved. Our factual and impartial service can alleviate uncertainty and stress.

RBS's two LIS Officers, Brett Klau, based in Port Lincoln, and Sue-Ellen Cordon, based in Murray Bridge, cover South Australia and are committed to supporting individual landowners and community groups who feel anxious or unsure about the exploration process.

"Some landowners feel overwhelmed and pressured when contacted regarding interest in exploration on their land," explains LIS Officer Brett Klau,

"especially where they perceive this will pose a risk to the productivity of their farm, as they don't really understand the rigorous Exploration License or Mining Application process."

"We outline the stages involved," continues LIS officer Sue-Ellen Cordon, "like any new topic it takes time to learn and understand, if you have accurate information to start with you can make decisions based on facts rather than assumptions."

An independent LIS Officer helps you to understand and empowers you to make your own informed decisions. If you would like Brett or Sue-Ellen to speak at your next branch meeting, please contact RBS.

The RBS Landowner Information Service supports you by:

- Providing easy-to-understand information about the processes and consultation required by the resources industry around land access.
- Helping facilitate respectful and open conversations between the resources industry and landowners.
- Explaining landowner options, responsibilities and rights and those of the resources industry.
- Empowering landowners to make informed decisions.

If you or someone you know has concerns about exploration, mining or quarrying in your region, please contact us on **FREECALL 1800 836 211**

For more information, please visit:  
**[www.ruralbusinesssupport.org.au](http://www.ruralbusinesssupport.org.au)**

# Ag Bureau Projects 2022-23

## Regenerative Agriculture Program Soil Carbon Demonstration Grants

### National Landcare Program – Streaky Bay

*Increasing available root depth and overcoming pH constraints on calcareous soil through application of machinery and organic matter.*

#### January 2020 to April 2023 – \$10,000

The aim of the demonstration is to trial two different machines (Reefinator and FAE Rock Grinder) to break up profile stones and the rocky subsurface layer to increase usable root depth and increase available nutrients within such stony rises.

Treatments will also subsequently include application of organic matter, such as sowing of medic or applying pelletised lucerne, to treat the currently highly alkaline soil, improve phosphorus availability for crops and enable the stony rises to become productive farming land.

This project will measure the increased production that can be obtained and the financial viability of undertaking this demonstration on a large and small scale.

### National Landcare Program – Franklin Harbour

*Trial different treatments to improve phosphorus availability and cropping option to increase production and improve soil cover.*

#### January 2020 to April 2023 – \$10,000

Phosphorous availability in highly calcareous soils and production of dry matter is of concern.

The project will evaluate how effective deep ripping and injecting liquid P can improve the availability of Phosphorous to plants and which cereals will utilise the phosphorous to produce better biomass for soil protection.

The demonstration will use ripping with inclusion plates, normal fertiliser applications and liquid P. The site will be crosshatched with a range of cereal that will be assessed for biomass production.

### National Landcare Program – Buckleboo

*Undertake a cropping trial using biological farming techniques to address key soil constraints across our soil types that have subsoil boron and heavy greyish salt scalded low productive areas known locally as “magnesia” patches.*

#### January 2020 to April 2023 – \$10,000

Due to a combination of heavy textured topsoils and low soil cover, our soils are biologically inactive for long periods of time due to low and variable rainfall and high levels of evaporation.

The trial will evaluate the use of biological fertilisers, high grade worm liquid and compost extract to increase soil health, enhance microbial activity within the soil, and increase root system growth enabling the plant to explore the soil for moisture and nutrition.

### National Landcare Program – Buckleboo and Kimba

*Ameliorating red and white sandy soils with high soil strength.*

#### April 2019 to April 2023 – \$11,000

This project will assist the Buckleboo Farm Improvement Group (BFIG) to meet grower demands for development of knowledge and capability to implement the most appropriate strategic tillage practices.

The project is designed to improve soil health through improved soil carbon, soil biology, better nutrient use and management of soil structure leading to increased profitability, while reducing negative environmental impacts (soil acidity, nutrient leaching etc).

This project will allow BFIG to investigate effects of nutrition applied in deep ripping through an existing Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) project on Buckleboo’s Red Sands, and replicate the trial south of Kimba on a white salacious sand.

# Ag Bureau Projects 2022-23

## Regenerative Agriculture Program Soil Carbon Demonstration Grants

### National Landcare Program – Roberts-Veran

*Soil compaction and bleach layer that is preventing roots from accessing deep moisture and nutrients.*

#### April 2020 to April 2023 – \$11,000

Sandy soils are very common in this area and improving crop germination and biomass will improve these soils and reduce erosion risk. The soil organic carbon content of these soils is low and the aim is to increase these levels.

The trial will compare different types of deep rippers that are currently in this area. These range from homemade deep rippers to the latest technology coming from WA. The trial will also compare with and without inclusion plates, spader treatments and a plozza plough treatment.

The farmers in the Roberts Veran district will be able to assess the effectiveness of a range of machinery on sandy soils by measuring plant growth on the different machinery demonstrations.

## Yorke Peninsula & Mid North Soil Acidity Project

*Increasing farmers' knowledge and skills to manage 'emerging' soil acidity to improve soil health, crop and pasture production.*

#### June 2021 to October 2023 – \$63,175

The Ag Bureau has contracted Rural Solutions to carry out the requirements of this funding agreement.

The growth of high-value crops such as lentils and chickpeas are highly sensitive to low pH (acid) soils. Due to acid soils, these crops are going yellow, not nodulating well and dying in patches.

This project will work with two Ag Bureau groups to demonstrate innovative technologies such as the Veris® soil pH mapping machine to show the spatial variation of soil pH across paddocks.

The soil pH mapping work and decision support tools will be used in workshops to increase farmers' awareness, knowledge, understanding, skills and management to treat acid soils. After the workshop farmers will have the capacity and capability to make informed decisions to improve soil health, crop production and profitability.

## Natural Resource Management (NRM) Drought Resilience Program

*Support organisations, farmer groups and individuals to undertake projects that contribute to improved drought resilience of agricultural landscapes.*

#### July 2021 to March 2023 – \$178,000

The project has two objectives, the first is to increase adoption of innovative practices to improve the productive capacity of underperforming soils by improvements in water use efficiency in low and medium rainfall areas of SA, resulting in reductions in soil erosion, acidity and salinity.

The second is to increase the adoption of innovative farm water collection, storage and reticulation techniques improving water security, and reducing the pressure and reliance of natural systems including watercourses.

### Soil Improvement Component

This project will focus on a two-stage approach for the soil component:

- Healthy Soils Check – identification and assessment of limiting soil factors
- Innovative Practices – exposure to opportunities to overcome limitations using new and innovative practices.

### Innovative Water Component

Develop and run a series of four workshops in regional areas to discuss and assess future alternative water supply, storage and reticulation options.

Landholders will then go through a water planning process for their property including examining the water requirements, opportunities for less invasive water supply, storage, reticulation and costing options.

# Meet Our Board Members



**Janette Ridgway  
Chair**

**Board Member  
for South East**

**M:** 0427 532 338  
**E:** [ejr@duneven.com.au](mailto:ejr@duneven.com.au)

Janette works with her family on their farm, east of Bordertown, a mixed enterprise of broad acre crops, sheep, and horticulture. Member of the Wolseley branch, Janette has a passion for agriculture, community and family, she brings these skills and understanding to the Board, along with a desire for learning and sharing of information.



**Bevan Oster  
Vice Chair**

**Board Member  
for Yorke Peninsula**

**M:** 0408 824 790  
**E:** [oster5@bigpond.com](mailto:oster5@bigpond.com)

Bevan has been part of the Petersville Ag Bureau since 1980. He spent many of his early years shearing in the area and later farming. In 2012 he returned to farm at Dowlingville. He is passionate about the history of the Ag Bureau in his region and is confident the Petersville branch has a strong future.



**Darren Kennedy  
Treasurer**

**Board Member  
for Riverland & Murray**

**M:** 0438 339 837  
**E:** [djmakennedy@bigpond.com](mailto:djmakennedy@bigpond.com)

Darren is a second-generation farmer in the Glossop region, managing wine grape and dried sultana properties. A member of the Barmera branch, Darren 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, giving voice to the non-activists within the rural community.



**Corbin Schuster**

**Board Member  
for Barossa & Light**

**M:** 0429 939 582  
**E:** [corbinschuster@msn.com](mailto:corbinschuster@msn.com)

Growing up on a diverse farm producing hay (domestic and export), grain, straw and pigs, Corbin is passionate about growing high-quality products and value-adding on farm produce. He has attended Freeling Ag Bureau meetings for over 15 years, and sees Ag Bureau as an important social network for SA farmers.





### Jasmin Piggott

#### Board Member for Eyre Peninsula

**M:** 0427 527 646  
**E:** jgalerana@hotmail.com

Jasmin runs the family farm with her husband, a mixed farming enterprise including cropping, sheep and cattle. A member of the Franklin Harbour branch, Jasmin won the 2021 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship after starting a native flower farm on their property to use land less suited to cropping and provide another form of income during dry times.



### Richard Williams

#### Board Member for Hills, Fleurieu & KI

**M:** 0418 845 073  
**E:** rmwilliamsagb@gmail.com

Richard and his wife farm a smallholding in the Adelaide Hills near Echunga. He has a very successful business background in marketing, sales and management from his career in real estate and has been actively involved as a member and office bearer of the Mount Barker Branch for 13 years.



# Ex Officios

## Department for Environment and Water (DEW)

### Tim Herrmann / Giles Forward

Conservation and Land Management  
Sustainable Soils  
**E:** tim.herrmann@sa.gov.au

## Rural Business Support (RBS)

### Brett Smith

Chief Executive Officer  
**E:** b.smith@ruralbusinesssupport.org.au

## Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA)

### Brian Hughes

Senior Soil and Land Management Consultant  
**E:** brian.hughes@sa.gov.au

## South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI)

### Dr Rhiannon Schilling

Program Leader - Agronomist  
**E:** rhiannon.schilling@sa.gov.au

## University of Adelaide

### Dr Ashlea Doolette

School of Agriculture, Food and Wine  
Waite Research Institute  
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### Dr Jenna Malone

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