

AIR EP Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026



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Vision

A professional, farmer driven organisation that leads RD&E of agricultural technologies and innovations for farmers on the Eyre Peninsula.

Purpose

The AIR EP Board will provide leadership and direction to deliver relevant and innovative, farmer driven RD&E to advance agriculture on Eyre Peninsula.

Core values

Relevance, independence, creativity, respect.

Key priorities

- Effective partnerships
- Investment attraction
- Outcome focussed
- Farmer driven
- Demonstrate leadership
- Capacity and capability building

Definitions

AIR EP	Agricultural Innovation and Research Eyre Peninsula
EP	Eyre Peninsula
Farmers	Producers, graziers, growers, farmer groups
Industry	Organisations that support or are associated with agricultural production, including but not limited to: Australian and State Governments, Research & Development Corporations (RDC's), universities, consultants, advisors, agricultural suppliers and resellers, grower groups, schools, regional bodies including EP Landscapes Board and Regional Development Australia Eyre Peninsula.
RD&E	Research Development and Extension

Strategic priorities and targets

	Priority	Strategies	Measures	Targets	Responsibility
1	Effective partnerships	Lead the coordination of trusted partnerships between farmers, researchers and industry both within and outside EP developing and delivering projects for mutual value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and number of service providers Number of partnerships within and outside the region Number of joint projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase annual project values by 20% Through partner survey in 5 years, partnerships maintained and strengthened on 2021 results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board EO
2	Investment attraction	Attract significant investment from farmers, industry, government and funding bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of projects funded Resources available \$ value of projects 		
3	Outcome focussed	Deliver innovative, practical, adoptable and value adding on farm solutions based on sound research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of adoption 		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investor satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through investor survey in 5 years, 100% of milestones and outputs delivered on time 	
4	Farmer driven	Engage with farmers to develop a strong network to direct investment in RD&E.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of farmer involvement and attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through a farmer survey in 5 years, 75% of farmers actively involved in AIREP activities and projects RD&E Committees maintain 50% farmer representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EO Board RDE committees
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership numbers 		
5	Demonstrate leadership	Building an organisation with strong vision that leads the way to success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board attendance Strategic plan reflecting needs of RD&E on EP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% attendance at Board meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board EO
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic plan reviewed annually and adjusted as required 	
6	Capacity and capability building	Attract and build the skills and expertise to deliver on the RD&E needs of EP farmers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technical expertise available and delivering Training delivered for Board and staff meets project and staffs needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of RD&E projects are adequately resourced to deliver high quality RD&E Annual skills audit undertaken and high priority gaps addressed annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board EO RD&E Committees

Environmental context

Overview of AIR EP

Agricultural Innovation & Research Eyre Peninsula (AIR EP) was officially incorporated on 26 May 2020, with the aim of creating a single entity for farmer driven applied research, local validation and extension of agricultural technologies and innovations on the Eyre Peninsula.

AIR EP, a not-for-profit incorporated association, is the result of a merger between the Eyre Peninsula Agricultural Research Foundation (EPARF) and the Lower Eyre Ag Development Association (LEADA) farming systems groups, who were very effective in providing local RD&E outcomes for upper and lower Eyre Peninsula respectively over the prior 15 years. By joining forces, AIR EP will create efficiencies in administration and operations, and provide a stronger face for regional RD&E to future funders, partners, members and supporters.

AIR EP is governed by a Board and RD&E activities are driven by members of the Low and Medium Rainfall RD&E Committees and other grower groups across Eyre Peninsula.

AIR EP attracts investment from a range of sources including the Australian Government, Research & Development Corporations, SA Grains Industry Trust plus annual sponsorship and membership fees to facilitate agricultural RD&E activities on Eyre Peninsula.

The geographic region

Agriculture was the Eyre Peninsula's third largest employer in 2013-14, providing 2,910 (11.0%) of jobs. Agriculture was the largest employer in the District Councils of Lower Eyre Peninsula (538 jobs); Tumby Bay (410); Cleve (378), Elliston (332); Kimba (306) and Wudinna (275).

The region produces high quality lamb, beef and pork, and is renowned for high quality and niche grains. On average, the region produces 40% of the State's wheat crop, 24% of the barley crop, and 22% of canola. Approximately 97% of the region's grain crop is exported and was valued at \$643 million in 2013-14.

The agriculture industry contributes approximately 12.0% of GRP, valued at \$502 million, and total agricultural exports are valued at \$882 million per annum.

The Eyre Peninsula region covers a significant area of South Australia (80,000 square km/8 million ha) and includes part of the upper Spencer Gulf, the City of Whyalla, across the southern boundaries of the Gawler Ranges, past Ceduna to the edge of the Nullarbor Plain and south to the fishing hub of Port Lincoln. The region supports a population of about 55,000 people.

The region has a Mediterranean climate with warm to dry summers and cool, wet winters. Average maximum temperatures range from 25-29°C near the coast to 34°C inland. During winter, the average maximum temperatures range from 15°C to 18°C.

Mean annual rainfall varies from 250mm in the north and northwest to more than 500mm in the south.

A large proportion of the land has been cleared for agricultural production; however, substantial areas of native vegetation remain. Vegetation clearance for agricultural purposes ranges from 14% in the far west to 72% in the south. About 15% of the region's grazing area is covered with scattered vegetation.

Approximately 7.5 million hectares of land is contained in about 100 national parks, conservation parks and reserves.

Source: <https://www.rdawep.org.au/our-region/our-environment/>
<https://landscape.sa.gov.au/ep/about-us/our-region>

Stakeholders

Communication plan

Audience	Organisation/Group	Engagement method	Frequency	Details
Primary				
	AIR EP Board	Email Meetings	As required 4 per year	Meetings located around the region where possible.
	AIR EP RD&E Committees	Email Meetings	As required 3-4 per year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-sowing meeting (prioritization and event planning, project development) 2. Mid-season meeting (guest speaker, crop walk, event planning) 3. Late season meeting (project review)
	AIR EP Members	Technical newsletters Member Day events Direct email Website	4 per year 2 per year As required	Members only agronomic news via mailchimp Member Days (one on upper EP, one on lower EP (Ag Expo)) on specific technical topics Tax invoices sent upon membership expiry Members only section on website
	EP Grower groups (Ag Bureau groups, Buckleboo Farm Improvement Group, other farmer groups)	Harvest report farmer meetings* Lower EP crop walk Sticky Beak Days Project hosting	March annually September annually Aug/Sep/Oct annually	*Support SARDI MAC meetings facilitated by AIR EP (RALF) x 8 each year on upper EP Feature AIR EP projects Feature AIR EP projects, coordinated by RALF
	AIR EP Sponsors	Member Day events e-newsletter Twitter	2 per year	Member Days (one on upper EP, one on lower EP (Ag Expo)) on specific technical topics – invitation to sponsors to introduce speakers, provide advertising content for booklets, display space Sponsorship package Re-tweets of sponsor content
	Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board	Regen Ag Advisory Group Virtual meetings Email Joint meetings	2 per year Monthly Quarterly Annually	RAP team meetings with Susan Stovell, Sus Ag Officer, RSSA soil consultants, AIR EP staff (planning and reporting) Delivery review Reporting (NLP MERIT reports and EPLB Board reports) Joint meeting with EPLB and AIR EP Board members

Audience	Organisation/Group	Engagement method	Frequency	Details
Secondary				
Government	SARDI – MAC and Waite	Contracts Email e-newsletter		Invitation to AIR EP Board and RD&E Committee meetings Membership on LRC and MRC Hosting of projects
	PIRSA – Rural Solutions and Exec	Contracts Email e-newsletter		Invitation to AIR EP Board and RD&E Committee meetings Membership on LRC and MRC Hosting of projects
	Local members of Govt (Peter Treloar, Rowan Ramsey)	Email		
	DEW - Exec	Email		
Funders/ Partners	GRDC SAGIT MLA AWI Australian Govt - NLP CSIRO Soil CRC University of Adelaide Rural R&D for Profit	Contracts Email		Reports Invitation to AIR EP Board and RD&E Committee meetings as appropriate Delivery of projects/hosting of projects
EP Ag Bureau Groups	Agriculture Bureaus South Australia (18 groups including Minnipa, Streaky Bay, Wurrulla, Charra, Goode, Mt Cooper, Elliston, Lock, Crossville, Tuckey, Roberts/Verran, Franklin Harbour, Buckleboo Farm Improvement Group, Tumby Bay, Wangary, Ungarra, Yeelanna and Central Eyre)	Harvest report farmer meetings* Sticky Beak Days	March annually Aug/Sep/Oct annually	*Support SARDI MAC meetings facilitated by AIR EP (RALF) x 8 each year on upper EP Feature AIR EP projects, coordinated by RALF Support from RALF and Sustainable Ag Officer
EP based groups	RDAEP Non-member EP agronomists / consultants Non-member EP farmers	e-newsletter website twitter direct email		EO membership on RDAEP Ag Advisory Group Support from RALF and Sustainable Ag Officer

Audience	Organisation/Group	Engagement method	Frequency	Details
	EP Ag Retailers EPCBH Free Eyre T-Ports			
EP Women in Ag Groups	Women Together Learning (WoTL) (2 groups Eastern Eyre and Minnipa) Women in Agriculture and Business (WAB) Charlton Gully branch	Events		Support from RALF and Sustainable Ag Officer Advertising events Speaker at events
EP Landcare Groups	Louth Bay Landcare Group Driver River Catchment Group Cockaleeche Landcare Group Wudinna, Yaninee and Mt Damper Sustainable Agriculture Group Cummins Wanilla Catchment Group Eastern Lower Eyre Peninsula Landcare Management Committee Darke Peak Eastern Hills Landcare Group	e-newsletter website twitter		Support from RALF and Sustainable Ag Officer
Statewide	Ag Ex Alliance Primary Producers SA Grain Producers SA Livestock SA SANTFA SheepConnect SA Advisory group Landcare SA	e-newsletter website twitter direct email		
National groups	Society for Precision Agriculture Australia (SPAA)	Direct email		

Communication methods

Method	Contacts	Cost	Frequency	Details
Website	Subscribers	Website established, costs incurred to add new functionality, ongoing cost for domain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	www.airep.com.au Word press Designed & tech support by WOOF
Mailchimp	All members plus website subscribers plus other interested parties. Can group. <i>487 contacts, 390 subscribers as at 27/7/20</i> <i>421 subscribers 11/12/20</i> <i>448 subscribers as at 28/5/21</i>	Your audience currently has 475 total contacts. When your entire audience has fewer than 2,000 contacts, you can send up to 12,000 emails per month absolutely free. No expiring trial, contract, or credit card required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly update during growing season to full subscriber list. e-newsletters to Members only technical newsletter Resilient EP newsletters 	Linked to AIR EP website
Twitter	Followers <i>200 at 27/7/20</i> <i>491 at 11/12/20</i> <i>575 at 28/5/21</i>	Free	Ad hoc events and activities, news	@ag_eyre #Resilient_EP Started 3 June 2020.
SMS Broadcast	Import contacts from excel. Can be grouped.	Pre-purchase credits (the more purchased, the cheaper cost per SMS). Credits do not expire.	Event based.	https://www.smsbroadcast.com.au/ Each credit buys a single text message of up to 160 characters. You can also write longer messages (up to five messages joined together) for additional credits. The maximum length of a message is 765 characters - five joined messages costing 5 credits.
Facebook	Friends	Free, but can do paid events to 'boost' visibility (\$25-100). Cheaper than print adverts.	Event based.	@aginnovationep

Resources

AIR EP is not for profit incorporated body, directed by the AIR EP Board, who are responsible for setting the strategy, policies and governance of the organisation. AIR EP has a full-time executive officer who supports the board and manages the operations of AIR EP and a part time finance officer who manages the budget and finances of AIR EP.

AIR EP will seek out the best expertise to deliver projects for advancement of agriculture on the EP.

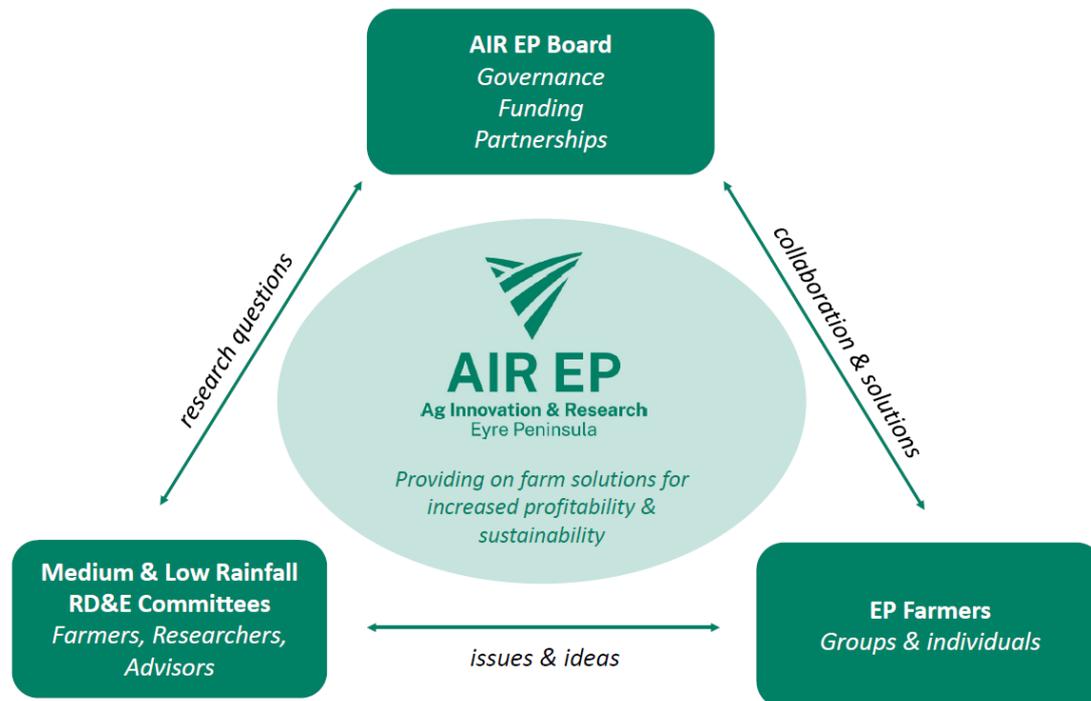


Figure 1. AIR EP organisation chart

AIR EP will employ other staff on a needs basis. Current examples are the Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator and the Regional Sustainable Agriculture program delivered by AIR EP staff on behalf of Landscapes EP.

There are a range of organisations that can support the delivery of RD&E on the EP. These include organisations based on the EP and those external to the region. Organisations can be approached directly by AIR EP or open tenders called for the delivery of projects. For delivery of projects, organisations sign standard contracts with AIR EP that cover deliverables, milestone timelines, payment schedule and reporting requirements.

Current contracted organisations:

Eyre Peninsula	External to EP
SARDI MAC EP Ag Research Rural Solutions SA Private farm consultants: George Pedler, Josh Hollitt, Ed Hunt, Bates Ag Cummins Ag Ag Consulting Co Lamont Connections Regional Connections Davenport Soil Consulting	University of Adelaide CSIRO Waite Square V Coutts J&R Alpha Consulting AgByte SARDI Waite

AIR EP funds its operations and activities through a range of measures, including membership, sponsorship and project funding. Project funders can be local, state and national. AIR EP covers funding risk by having projects funded by a range of organisations.

Current funding organisations:

Local	State	National
EP Landscape Board	SAGIT Landscapes SA PIRSA Livestock SA DEW	GRDC Soils CRC National Landcare Program Future Drought Fund Rural R&D for Profit MLA AWI

AIR EP will consult widely to ensure its RD&E projects and activities are focussed for the benefit of agriculture in the regions. AIR EP has low and medium RD&E committees that are represented by local farmers and industry experts that set the RD&E priorities for EP (Figure 1). In addition, the broader membership of AIR EP are regularly consulted on issues and opportunities for RD&E in the region.

SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Industry experience & engagement Geographic spread Great operations resources/staff Independence Existing projects Existing reputation Board members Great networks \$ Clear direction/vision Not limited to a specific research location	Geographic spread <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage groups and develop relationships • gaps identified Cowell, Cleve, Lock, Tooligie, Tumby Bay, Kimba • develop RD&E representation in these gaps and target key drivers • attract new members & farmer groups Independence Reliable statistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact trusted advisors & develop a report Dependent on external funding sources/cycles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • menu of options • feeding of ideas to funders • active engagement with funders • job security No local focus point/research site Internal governance Isolation/staff Lack of communication strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop one Membership transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • membership drive Dates & rates trials not done <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear procedure in engaging chemical and fertiliser companies
Opportunities	Threats
Build strong networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RD&E, farmer groups, uni's • RALF • Engage industry leaders to speak at board meetings • Develop communication strategy being proactive rather than reactive Capture new funding opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being funding & project ready • scoping ideas prior to funding becoming available • involvement of RD&E committees • Feedback from harvest meeting/sticky beak days to identify topical issues. Identify & capture blue sky research ideas Strengthen relations with Government bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SARDI, PIRSA, CSIRO, EP Landscapes, RDA Developing new opportunities with existing expertise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g. livestock RD&E 	Staff movements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a good working environment • Value contribution COVID 19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual meetings & communication • Follow government protocols Local RD&E capability Board succession Funding opportunities Government policy Lack of farmer support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make sure RD&E Committees are functioning and representative of regions • performance indicators for groups? • instil good communication and demonstrate value to the farmer • analysis of engagement and act accordingly