



Office Use Only

Project Code	AEA116G
Project Type	Grower

GROWER GROUP FINAL REPORT 2016

Applicants must read the *SAGIT Group Allocation Guidelines 2016* prior to completing this form. These guidelines can be downloaded from www.sagit.com.au

Final reports must be emailed to admin@sagit.com.au as a Microsoft Word document in the format shown **within 2 months** after the completion of the Project Term.

PROJECT CODE	: AEA116G
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EVENT TITLE	Ag Ex Forum
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EVENT DURATION

*These dates **must** be the same as those stated in the Funding Agreement*

Event Start date	April 7, 2016	
Event End date	April 8, 2016	
SAGIT Funding Request		

EVENT SUPERVISOR DETAILS

The project supervisor is the person responsible for the overall project

Title:	First Name:	Surname:
Ms	Kerry	Stockman

ADMINISTRATION CONTACT DETAILS

The Administration Contact is the person responsible for all administrative matters relating to the project

Title:	First Name:	Surname:	
Ms	Kerry	Stockman	
Organisation:			
Ag Excellence Alliance			
Mailing address:			
Telephone:	Facsimile:	Mobile:	Email:

EVENT REPORT

Provide clear description of the following:

Executive Summary (200 words maximum)

A few paragraphs covering what was achieved, written in a manner that is easily understood and relevant to SA growers. Report on the attendance at the event, relevant photos could also be attached. A number of key dot points should be included which can be used in SAGIT communication programs

- A total of 96 delegates attended the forum over the Thursday and Friday. This was made up of a mix of farmer group employees and contractors, farmer committee members, natural resource management and primary industries agency staff and agricultural industry representatives.

- Day one featured guest speakers
 - Tim Hermann, DEWNR
 - Eliza Rieger, SAMDB NRM
 - Nicole Bennett, AML NRM
 - Mark Stanley, Regional Connections
 - Thea Birss, Mellor Olsson
 - Paul Daniels, Ag in Compliance
 - David Evans, Graingrowers Ltd
 - Harm van Rees, Cropfacts

- The Awards dinner featured guest speaker Neville Croke, Swarmfarm Robotics, with the winner of the PIRSA award being Hart Field Site, followed by SPAA taking out the Agbyte Encouragement Award

- Day two featured guest speakers
 - Ruth Sommerville, UNFS
 - Linden Masters, EPARF
 - Judith McArthur, Ag KI
 - Medeline Mole, MSF
 - Krysteen McElroy, MFMG
 - Jeff Braun, MNHRZ
 - Helen Lamont, LEADA
 - Nicole Dimos, SPAA
 - Leighton Pearce, SANTFA
 - Kim Blenkron, PinG
 - Kristin McEvoy, YPASG
 - Brett Nietschke, BIGG
 - Leet Wilsch, NSS
 - Sarah Noak, Hart
 - Andrew Kitto, ABA
 - Dale Grey, Ag VIC
 - Stephen Loss, GRDC
 - Stephen Lee, Blueprint Mgr, Adel Uni

Overall Performance

A concise statement indicating the extent to which the objectives were achieved, a list of personnel who

participated in the Event including co-operators, and any difficulties encountered and the reasons for these difficulties.

The overall Forum was a great success. Assisting the Admin Manager was Exec Officer Mark Stanley with support from the Ag Ex Committee.

Although not a difficulty, the numbers were down on last year. Reasons for this are unclear however the restriction on space at the previous venue may have been an issue. Constant date changes could also be a hindrance, hence the first Friday / Thursday of April are now locked in for the next four years.

Application / Communication of Results

A concise statement describing activities undertaken to communicate the results of the event to the grains industry. This should include:

- *Main findings of the event in a dot point form suitable for use in communications to farmers;*
- *Publications and extension articles delivered as part of the project*

Note that SAGIT may directly extend information from Final reports to growers. If applicable, attach a list of published material.

- Feedback in relation to event proceedings, relevance of presentations to name a few (as per the attached evaluation report), was fairly positive. The committee have taken on board all comments and will plan for the next year accordingly
- Media attended the event, most noteworthy being the Stock Journal, who reported on the proceedings within a fortnight of the event.
- A media release was sent out to media state wide highlighting the award winners with a link to download presentations from the 2 days. This was also distributed to the 16 affiliated grower groups and uploaded to the Ag Ex website. The links are below:
 - <http://agex.org.au/2016-ag-excellence-forum-awards-2/>
 - <http://agex.org.au/2016-ag-excellen...ds-presentations/>

POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENTS

Provide possible future plans of your Group arising from the project including potential for further work and partnerships.

April 6 & 7, 2017

AUTHORISATION

Name: Kerry Stockman

Position: Administration Manager

Signature:

Date: 26th August, 2016

Submit report via email to admin@sagit.com.au as a Microsoft Word document in the format shown **within 2 months** after the completion of the Project Term.



2016 Ag Excellence Alliance Forum & Awards Evaluation

Objectives

The evaluation provides feedback from forum participants to the Ag Excellence Committee, the GRDC, DEWNR, PIRSA, Natural Resources Murray Darling Basin, Natural Resources Adelaide Mount Lofty, SAGIT and Grains Growers Limited, all of who provided financial support for running the forum. This information will be used to inform future forums and initiatives of the Ag Excellence Alliance.

The forum was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

- An increased understanding of the RD&E projects and activities undertaken by farming groups from across the state
- Greater sharing of resources and knowledge between farming groups, industry and government representatives through new and existing contacts and networks
- Learn new skills particularly in relation to communication of project outcomes, collaboration with NRM, leadership in regional communities and developing capacity for delivering RD&E in regional areas.

Participants

A total of 96 delegates attended the forum over the Thursday and Friday. This was made up of a mix of farmer group employees and contractors, farmer committee members, natural resource management and primary industries agency staff and agricultural industry representatives.

Day One - 70

Dinner - 74

Day Two - 64

Evaluation Methodology

Two methods were used to evaluate the forum. These were:

- Comment sheets on flipcharts where participants could use sticky notes to provide feedback to the forum in general as well as the presented draft Strategic Plan
- Two online surveys were posted on Survey Monkey for participants to complete at the end of days one and two of the forum. Participants were able to access the surveys via a QR code as well as hard copies provided on tables at the forum.

Results and Discussion

Day One

Day One featured a number of speakers across various platforms. Tim Hermann, DEWNR, kicked off the proceedings with a presentation on 'Land Management Surveys' with a focus on how farm practices have changed over the past 20 years. Following on, Mark Stanley and the 'Pathways to Grain & NRM' team gave an overview of their project focussing on integrated weed management in both the Northern & Yorke and Mallee regions, and integrated sandy soil management in the Mallee. The presentation also addressed 'Improving production and management on the dune/ swale systems of Upper and Eastern Eyre Peninsula. Further supporting the importance of NRM, presentations were also delivered by Eliza Reiger, NRM MDB and Nicole Bennett, NRM AML. By far the most popular topic of the day with over 60% of the audience rating as 'very valuable', was 'The Importance of Work Health & Safety Practices'. Presented by Thea Birss, Mellor Olsson and Paul Daniels, Ag in Compliance, this important issue generated great debate. David Evans gave delegates a summary of 'How Grain Growers LTD Support Grower Groups' and Harm van Rees gave an insightful presentation on the 'Farm4Prophet project, a guide to managing whole farm business risk in Australia.

Q1. What was the single most valuable thing you learned from the Forum?

Responses:

- WorkHealth Safety with Thea - fabulous presentation
- That with persistence and good organisation an organisation can grow. Ag Ex has developed some really great capacity and capability
- How different advisers/consultants work with farmer groups to keep extension & knowledge relevant
- Robotic farming applications
- Wide range of trials and results conducted across SA in 2015
- Farm 4 Prophet information
- Great refresher on WHS from Thea and Daniel
- Funding is difficult to attain these days.

- For me as an officer of the Commonwealth Dept of Agriculture it was meeting the people involved in NRM in SA
- Role of RLF's
- OHS is serious business
- Diversity of participation across SA and beyond
- Work health and safety presentation
- The land management survey
- The outline of the more simple, but valuable topics that are often overlooked, like workplace health and safety. Which isn't necessarily overlooked, but stills needs more attention and recognition of the importance of implementing safe work practices
- That more collaboration can and will happen
- Re highlighted that development of trust in people delivering info is critical, and to do that requires longevity of people & \$. The greatest impact on practice change is being able to support growers directly with technical info @ the right time
- Work health and safety on farm requires much more attention.

Q2. How will you apply this?

Responses:

- Use checklist: presented facets I'd not considered. Unfortunately, the day 1 program was not inspiring, much of the presentations were not new, or presented on aspects that already should be occurring for the groups, i.e. partnerships. I think Ag Ex could play a strong part in ensuring that it does occur, aka meet with the NRM and advise who may be best in place to help with that. Appears little collaboration really exists between the groups; all talk no action, way too competitive
- I work with many farmer groups and will be much more aware of & sensitive to what drives them and factors affecting their survival & continued relevance
- Not sure yet
- Ability to provide data to peers on latest practices that can be implemented in farming practices on properties
- Utilising some of the modeling when discussing potential land transactions with clients
- Review our current WHS policy and look for areas of improvement
- Look at alternative models
- A relationship with a 'person' is far more productive than with a voice at the end of a phone
- They are inspiring and have great programs - working out how they can be used in other regions
- Review our OHS policies and procedures
- Continue to collaborate and propose partnerships
- Share Ag in Compliance site with members
- Need to get the actual survey and report
- Networking, socialising and keeping in touch with all

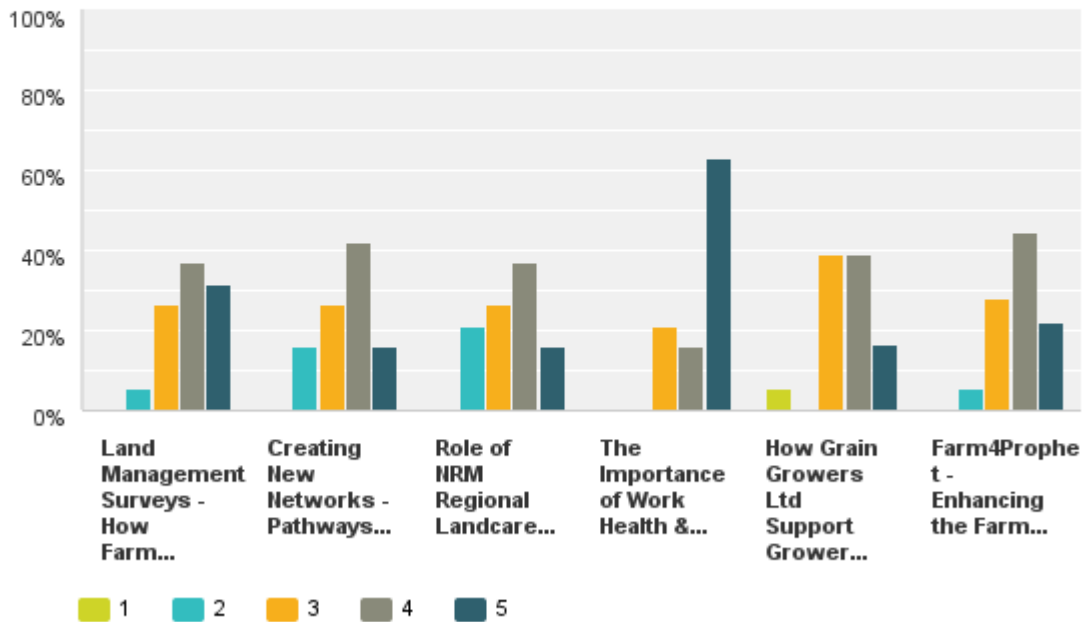
- By aiming to increase and encourage the knowledge of safe work practices in our farming systems
- Try to maintain staff and project funding wherever possible
- Add a learning opportunity to extension workshops to highlight it and encourage follow up.

Q3. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being of little value and 5 being very valuable, rate each of the sessions

Responses:

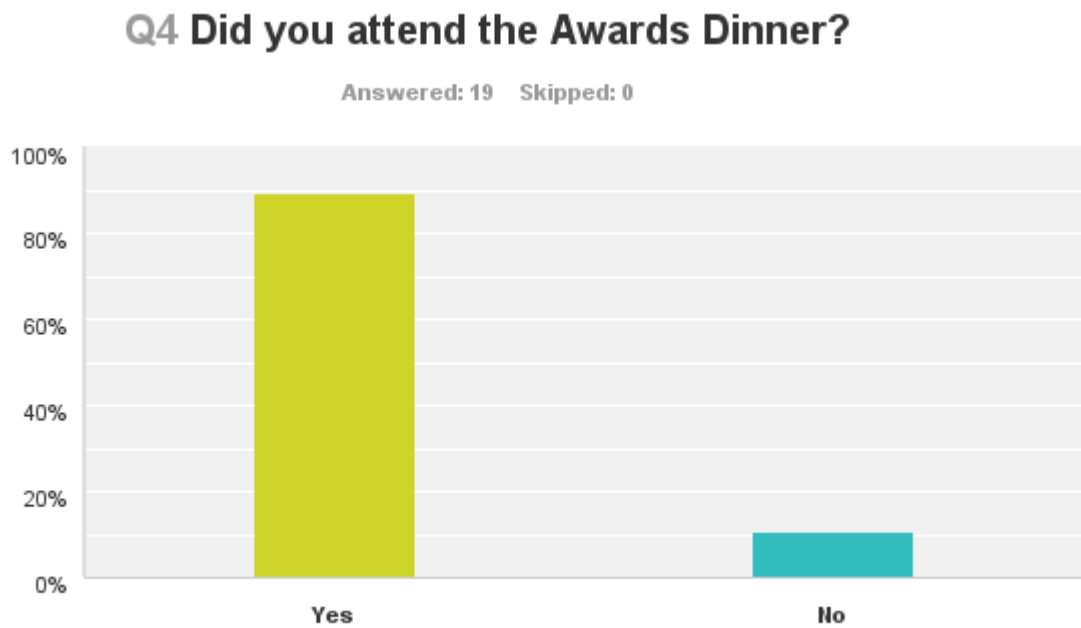
Q3 On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being of little value and 5 being very valuable, rate each of the sessions:

Answered: 19 Skipped: 0



Q4 (a) Did you attend the Awards Dinner?

Responses:



Q4 (b) If not, why not?

Responses:

- Other commitments at the same time
- Had to return to Canberra
- Great Networking event
- I did, but the guest speaker was a bit of a let down after recent years

Day Two

The morning session of day two focussed on presentations from the farming systems groups that make up the Ag Ex network. There was general consensus, with the most popular rating a '4', that the presentations were relevant with most respondents citing over half of the information was new to them.

Ag Ex took a different approach this year, assigning each group with a topic they believed would be relevant to them. These topics were derived from the most recent Southern Region Grower Groups Forum. Groups were generally happy with their allocation and they were as follows:

VOLUNTEER RELIANCE (due to challenges in project design, funder expectations, resourcing)

- Ruth Sommerville, Upper North Farming Systems (UNFS)
- Linden Masters, Eyre Peninsula Ag Research Foundation (EPARF)
- Judith McCarthur, Ag Kangaroo Island (Ag KI)

BEYOND SURVIVAL (balancing in & on the business opportunities, extending our reach, developing and managing projects, depth & breadth of activity, dedicating time for collaboration)

- Madeline Mole, Mallee Sustainable Farming (MSF)
- Krysteen McElroy, Mackillop Farm Management Group (MFMG)
- Jeff Braun, Mid North High Rainfall Zone (MNHRZ)

SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL MODELLING (costs of administration, governance & reporting, securing long term project funding, costs of scientific & technical expertise, growing our membership base)

- Helen Lamont, Lower Eyre Peninsula Ag Development Assoc. (LEADA)
- Nicole Dimos, Society of Precision Ag Australia (SPAA)

REMAINING RELEVANT (remaining local and member focused, who leads who follows: service sector vs farmer led issues)

- Leighton Pearce, South Australian No Till Assoc (SANTFA)
- Kim Blenkron, Partners in Grain (PinG)
- Kristin McEvoy, Yorke Peninsula Alkaline Soils Group (YPASG)
- Brett Nietschke, Barossa Improved Grazing Group (BIGG)

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT (attracting members to the Board, succession planning, building capacity of current staff and organisation as a whole)

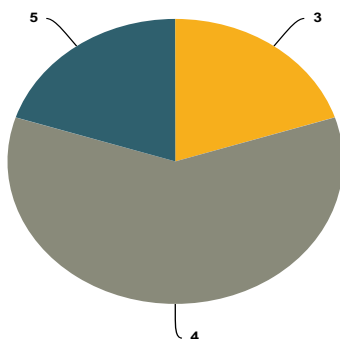
- Leet Wilksch, Northern Sustainable Soils (NSS)
- Sarah Noak, Hart Field Site Group
- Andrew Kitto, Ag Bureau of SA (ABA)

Q 1. The topics addressed by Grower Groups today were The topics addressed by Grower Groups today were derived from the most recent Southern Region Grower Groups Forum. In terms of delivering interesting and relevant information to the audience, how would you rate this approach on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent?

Ag Excellence 2016 Annual Forum - Day Two

Q1 The topics addressed by Grower Groups today were derived from the most recent Southern Region Grower Groups Forum. In terms of delivering interesting and relevant information to the audience, how would you rate this approach on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent?

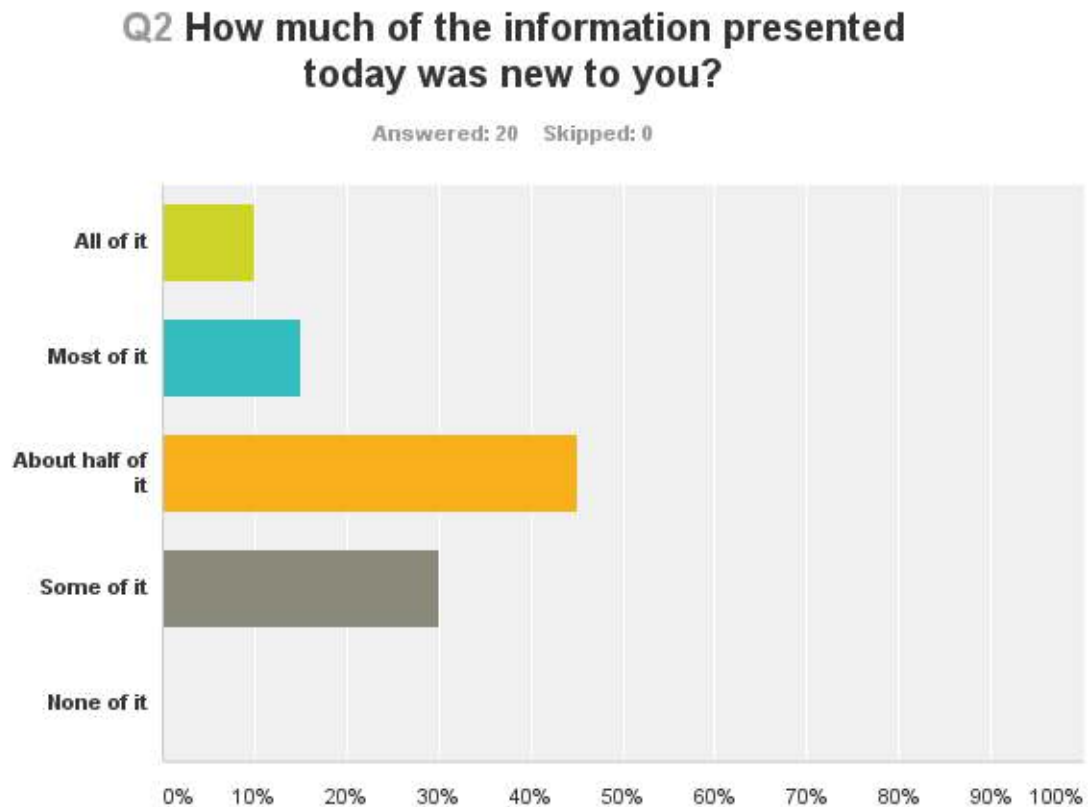
Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
1	0.00%	0
2	0.00%	0
3	20.00%	4
4	60.00%	12
5	20.00%	4
Total		20

Q2. How much of the information presented today was new to you?

Reponses:



Q3. Can you suggest another topic important to Grower Groups not addressed today?

Responses:

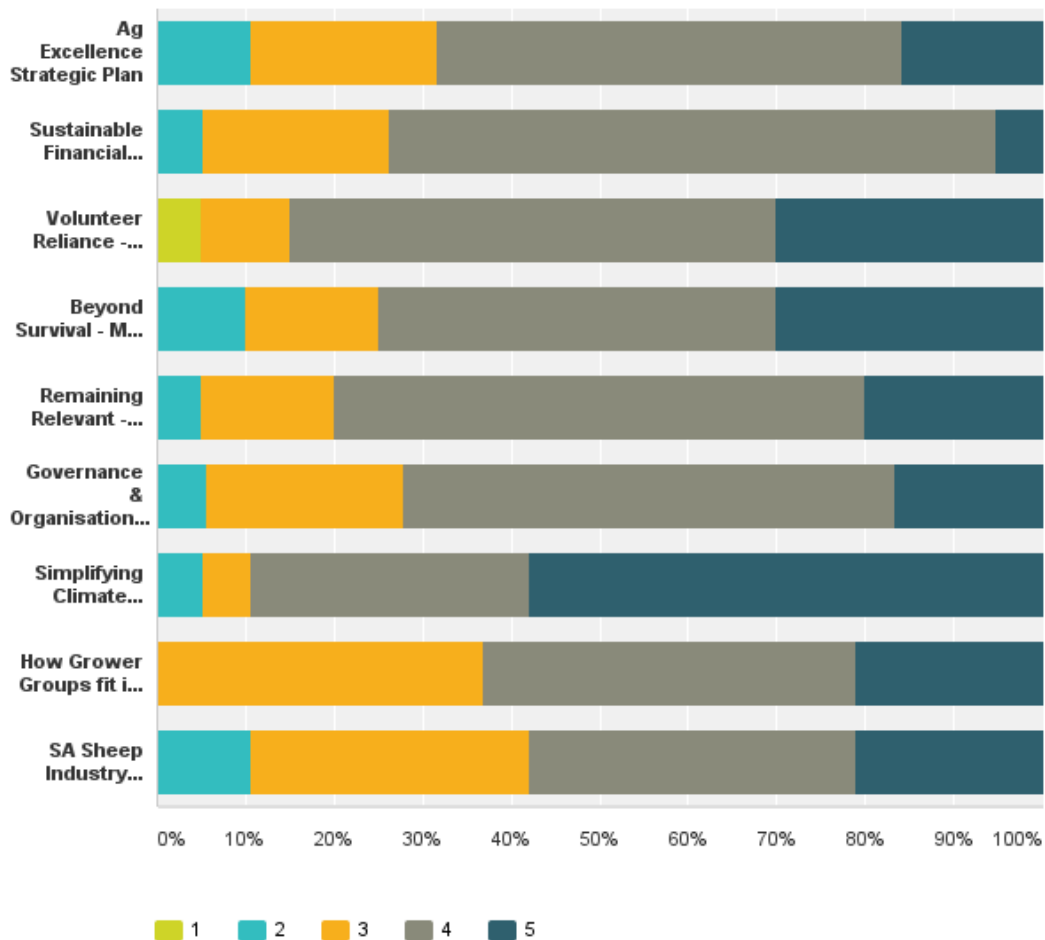
- The reality of collaboration; how to do it! Making effective agreements so we don't feel like the one that misses out on the collaboration; all parties need to benefit
- Survival methods alternative to standard funding
- Australian Government representation regarding what is their priorities for Sustainable Ag and how will they support.
- Working in partnerships with other grower groups
- How grower groups in SA can collaborate better. Opportunities to share staff/skill sets between groups
- Is Ag Ex providing relevance to grower groups
- How to get succession planning working for the groups
- Capacity building.
- Many similar topics researched between groups? Why and what's the different processes and findings.

Q4. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being of little value and 5 being very valuable, rate each of the sessions.

Both 'Volunteer Reliance' and 'Beyond Survival' were perceived as the most valuable grower group topics / presentations. The afternoon session had a clear favourite in Ag Victoria's, Dale Grey. Dale's presentation focussed on 'Simplifying Climate Change' with both a serious-minded and comical point of view. Both GRDC's Stephen Loss, and University of Adelaide Blueprint Manager, Stephen Lee also delivered relevant and well presented sessions. Their topics focussed on 'How Grower Groups fit in to the new GRDC Regional Model' and the 'SA Sheep Industry Blueprint and new MLA Regional Engagement Program', respectively.

Q4 On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being of little value and 5 being very valuable, rate each of the sessions:

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

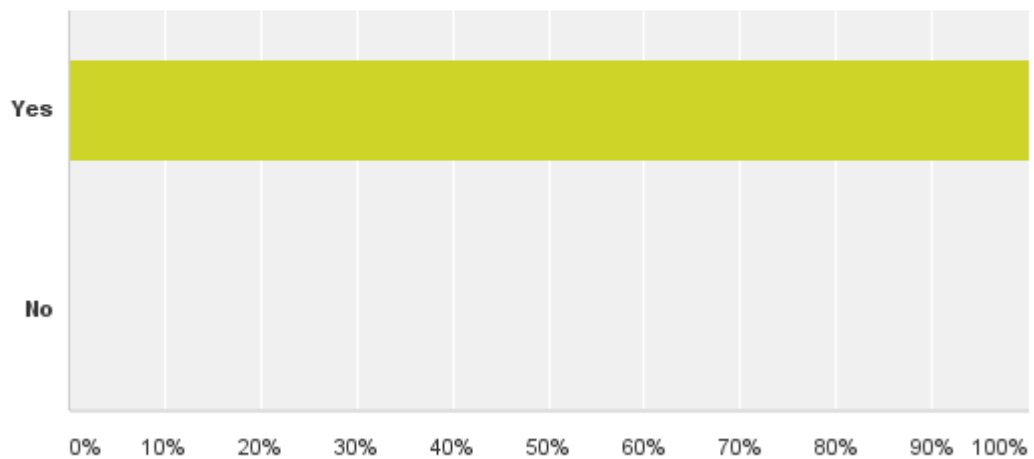


Q5. The Ag Ex Forum & Awards are locked in on the first Thursday and Friday of April (i.e. April 6 & 7, 2016) for the next 4 years. Time permitting, do you intend on attending in future.

The Forum dates have changed each time in previous years due to the changing nature of Easter. This year the Ag Ex Committee decided to set the date to ensure repeat and potential delegates are able to pencil in the date well in advance. This date is on the cusp of seeding for some regions however the benefits of consistency is critical for many with very busy diaries. As per the below table, 100% of respondents intend on attending next year.

Q5 The Ag Ex Forum & Awards are locked in on the first Thursday and Friday of April (i.e. April 6 & 7, 2016) for the next 4 years. Time permitting, do you intend on attending in the future?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



Q6. Any other Comments on the Forum?

Responses:

- Ag Ex should be commended for what it wants to do, but needs to convince the groups its worthy of being a member. What do I or my group get, not much, we aren't included in any projects, Ag Ex needs to be that avenue to assist projects collaborating

- Apart from the cost of parking, I thought the venue was very good. Catering was good and the pre-dinner networking drinks were very worthwhile. Thanks to Kerry and all those involved in organising
- Great venue, easily found and simple to attend the full day. Great two days. Well done all
- I love catching up with friends and fellow work mates at the forum but as I have been coming for a number of years find that I am learning less each year. I acknowledge it is an important annual event to get together and build relationships and share etc. but wonder if there could be a different program for people that have been around for such a long time so we can continue to learn. Some of the sessions I did not attend as I had to leave early
- Could Ag Ex consider bringing the date forward to the end of March? In seasons when we get an early break the first week of April is hard for many people involved on farm or trials.
- Well done again! Fills an important gap for grower group collaboration and networking which is often overlooked as being important by funders
- Great catering and venue. Great social interaction opportunities but drinks after dinner for better opportunity to mingle (program in the evening didn't encourage seat movement)
- Very well done

Responses from sticky notes flip charts

As Ag Ex is in the process of developing its next Strategic Plan, participants were asked to respond in general on the future direction of Ag Ex. This will also be further supported by a Grower Group Survey Monkey to be distributed in May 2016.

Responses:

- Ag Ex as the peak farmer organisation to attract funding on behalf of other groups
- Umbrella over all groups – works with upcoming projects
- Bring FSG's together somehow
- Chairs?
- Interested aspirants?
- Link farming groups to other farming groups
- Focus on the forum that has more relevant topics to more people. Current subject topics are not that thrilling to lots of Ag Industry
- Clarify respective 'space' with Ag Bureau and opportunity to do it differently
- Professional development for Groups – leaderships and governance
- Professional development and training facilitated for extension governance, project writing and reporting, plus M&E
- Helping groups to work better together
- Ag Ex as a central portal can get across many grower groups
- Collaborate together, up skill farmers, deliver extension to farming groups
- Does it still have a place
- Try and build relationship with PIRSA

- Greater involvement from growers in grower groups and ask them what focus questions
- Has been seen as competition for limited funding opportunities when partnerships and transparency was wanted
- Less drive on Ag ex projects, concentrate on unity and deliverance of outcomes from groups
- Relationships with Ag Bureau networks? How many different levels of Ag groups are there?
- Farmer engagement
- Grower group governance
- Communication
- Concentrate on collaboration of the groups
- Thinkers forum
- Identifying and addressing industry shortfalls / gaps
- Partnerships: Beyond Blue; SA Health; NRM; and Greening Australia
- Lead and support innovation
- Support ongoing shift in values: women in Ag; NRM involvement; environmental contribution
- Increase awareness of unique grower groups / industry bodies etc.
- More training for Grower Groups in areas that aren't traditional regions
- Developing Champions for each Region
- Networking
- Ag Ex should focus on involving farming groups in projects rather than being the primary group involved in a project. Perhaps tender projects to groups?
- Combined delivery of outcomes from Grower Groups
- Sustainability of Farmers – health, safety, well being, life balance, family
- Calendar management
- Use social media for information sharing and encourage online community to engage and join in the conversation
- One portal – contact details, understanding current work of groups

Ag Excellence Alliance

Acknowledge our generous Sponsors



**Government
of South Australia**

Proudly supported by

Primary Industries & Regions SA

Department of Environment, Water & Natural Resources

Natural Resources Murray Darling Basin and Adelaide &

Mount Lofty Ranges



