

STIRLINGS TO COAST



23-26

**Strategic Plan &
Research, Development and
Extension Plan**



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STRATEGIC AND RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & EXTENSION PLAN 2022 - 2025

Stirlings to Coast Farmers (SCF) exists to support its farmer members by providing high quality research outcomes that are credible and relevant to the local region.

This Strategic Plan, which also includes the Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Plan, sets out the direction for SCF activities from 2023 to 2026. It will see SCF continue to develop a values-based culture with the team continuing to work in-line with the organisation's commitment to build on the past and improve on strategies, culture, projects, services, processes, and outcomes over time.

ROLE OF STIRLINGS TO COAST FARMERS

Stirlings to Coast Farmers is a farmer group based in the lower Great Southern region of Western Australia, covering predominately high rainfall areas across the shires of Cranbrook, Plantagenet, and Denmark, and the City of Albany. Broadacre agriculture predominates, with grain and livestock being the main focus of production.

The main purpose of the group is to support our members through the delivery of credible and locally relevant, high-quality research, development, and extension (RD&E) activities to ensure resilience, prosperity, and sustainability, particularly in a changing environment. As a small industry association operating on limited resources, SCF is committed to ensuring its efforts are focused on delivering the best benefits for its farming members.

SCF VISION

Stirlings to Coast Farmers is a vibrant group driven by members' priorities for research and knowledge to improve farming systems.

SCF PURPOSE

SCF delivers relevant and credible research, development, and extension to facilitate adoption for our members to be resilient and prosperous in a sustainable agricultural community.

SCF VALUES

- **Relevant:** Supporting SCF members by providing relevant and timely RD&E outcomes.
- **Credible:** Conducting high quality RD&E in an effective and efficient manner.
- **Enthusiastic:** The encouragement of creative and innovative ideas for positive change in the industry and enthusiastic leadership to implement them.
- **Collaborative:** Interdependent collaboration and cooperation, both within SCF and with the industry, in response to diverse and changing issues.

SCF STRUCTURE & MEMBERSHIP

SCF is an Incorporated Association governed by a Management Board, which is elected each year at the Association’s Annual General Meeting. The SCF Board comprises of up to 12 fully elected members and a Chief Executive Officer. SCF also has a number of sub-committees and sub-groups.

Finance & Governance Committee	BOARD	
Commodities Committee	Chief Executive Officer	
R&D Committee	RESEARCH	ADMINISTRATION
Eastern Committee	Smart Farms Co-ordinator	Communications Manager
Western Committee	Research & Development Co-ordinator	Marketing Officer
	Trials and Technical Officer	Project Administrator
	Memberships & Project Officer	Finance Officer

SCF members are any farming business or individual involved in a farming business within the lower Great Southern Region of Western Australia, irrespective of whether they are cropping, livestock or engaged in other farming operations.

SCF remains committed to ensuring:

- The community feel of the organisation is maintained, the grass-roots beginnings are honoured, and members feel valued.
- The research is farmer-driven so that members are actively involved and interested in SCF activities.



SCF INCOME STREAMS

Income to support the core activities undertaken by SCF is obtained from:

- Membership subscriptions
- In-kind support from project partners
- Industry Sponsorship
- Project Funding
- Event Funding

The SCF team and Board will continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that investment in SCF is secure. SCF continues to maintain good working relationships with sponsors and funding bodies. The quality of SCF project work and the delivery of impactful events has been noted by numerous funding bodies (including GRDC and MLA), and it is important that our highly-regarded reputation is maintained and built upon.

SCF COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

In developing the Strategic and RD&E Plans through consultation with members, it is evident that strong engagement with the network of farmers within SCF and other similar neighbouring groups is the key to the on-going success of SCF. Thus, collaboration with our members and other farmer groups is central to the success of our Strategy and research projects.

The Fitzgerald Biosphere Group, the Gillamii Centre, North Stirlings Pallinup Natural Resources and Southern DIRT are the closest grower groups in our region and we actively collaborate with these groups to undertake RD&E activities when possible, and will continue to do so. SCF is also committed to working closely with government agencies (at all levels) and research institutions to implement the Strategy and RD&E Plan. We recognise that our project partners and sponsors are also very important to our future success.

BEGINNINGS OF THE 2023-26 STRATEGY – REVIEW AND ENGAGEMENT

A REVIEW

In November 2020, 25 people were interviewed about the Stirlings to Coast Farmers grower group's activities and performance to assist in reviewing the group's strategic plan and to identify future opportunities for the group. The results outlined in the 'Stakeholder Review and Analysis Report' were used to help SCF understand how it can provide maximum value to growers, including what types of services and outcomes members are looking for.

Survey participants included members, board members, non-members/potential members, sponsors, research and development partners and other grower group representatives. Based on the feedback from respondents, SCF plays a valuable role within the region in terms of locally based research, development and extension and is leading the way with its focus on technology (Figure 1).

Respondents were excited about SCF's direction and wanted to see SCF continue to be at the forefront and provide independent advice to farmers. Areas of improvement, as noted by respondents, included more focus on livestock research/activities, more engagement with stakeholders, and the adoption of new technologies to assist with extension and communication activities. Overall, the respondents had a good understanding of what the group does and how it provides for its members, which includes research, development, and extension of information through publications and events (Figure 2). They clearly understood that the group is driven by members and focuses on research and issues that are relevant to farmers in the region.

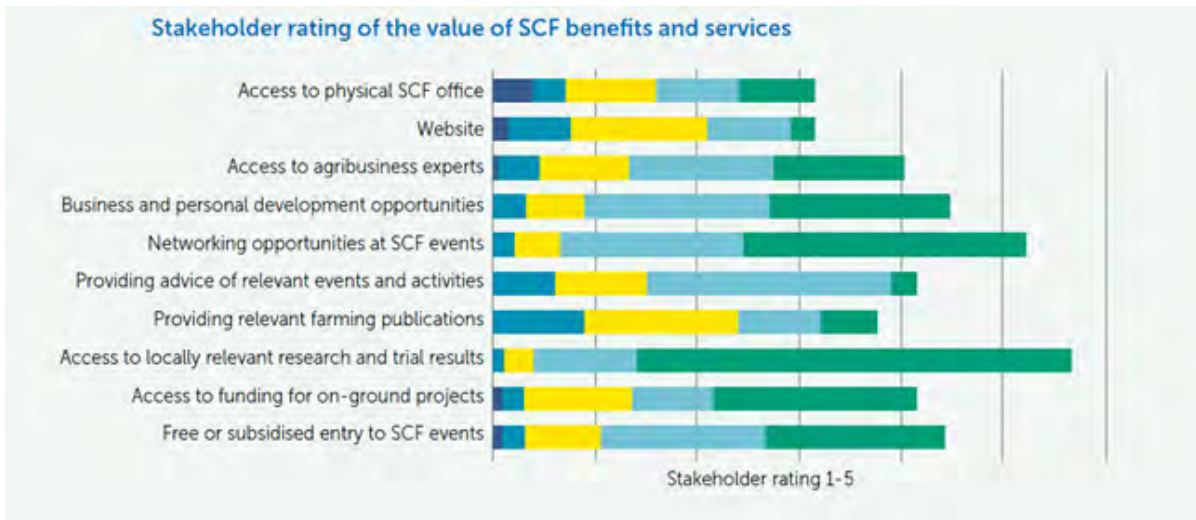


Figure 1: Stakeholder rating of the value of the SCF benefits and services.

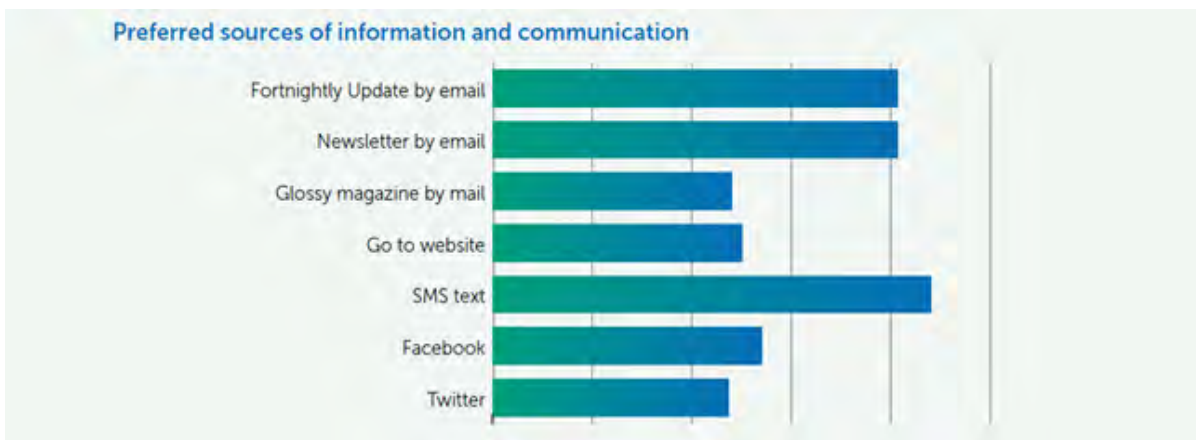


Figure 2: Preferred sources of information and communication from SCF.

ENGAGEMENT

A strategic planning workshop, led by AgKnowledge, in February 2021, was attended by SCF staff, Board and Committee, members, sponsors and industry. During the workshop, the following was undertaken:

- Evaluation of performance against the previous strategic plan (Stakeholder Review Report).
- Review of risks for the organisation in the next 5 years.
- Review of the SCF Vision and Mission Statements.
- Discussion and development of financial, social and environmental business objectives.
- Development of strategies for:
 - o Research, development and extension.
 - o Business activities including management and training.
 - o Partnerships and collaboration.
 - o Sales and marketing.

After this workshop, AgKnowledge, in collaboration with the SCF Team and Board, developed a report that has contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan.

SCF STRATEGY OBJECTIVES 2023-2026

- 1. Drive greater value from research made relevant for our members to adopt.**
- 2. SCF activities will service our membership needs.**
- 3. Promote a positive profile for progressive agriculture and promote a sense of community.**
- 4. The group will be financially secure and efficiently run.**

SCF STRATEGIES TO DELIVER ON PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

Four strategies have been developed to deliver on the SCF Purpose and the abovementioned Objectives. Each strategy lists a number of tactics that SCF will undertake to ensure successful delivery of this Strategic Plan on behalf of its members. In addition, each strategy includes Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) which will be reviewed and presented to members annually at each Annual General Meeting.

DELIVER RELEVANT, CREDIBLE, LOCAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION THAT IS HIGHLY VALUED BY OUR MEMBERS

TACTICS:

- The R&D committee will review and rebuild the RD&E Plan with a 5-year horizon and annual review.
- Deliver outcomes focused research that creates member engagement and keeps our research program dynamic with an aim for a 75:25 crop: livestock balance.
- Ensure research credibility (quality) is a primary focus including an induction for farmers, checklists against contract requirements, contact log etc.
- Professionally manage the R&D program projects with accountability and on time acquittals.
- Deliver effective extension activities to maximise adoption of R&D, technology, skills and resources.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Documented annual review by R&D Committee of the RD&E Plan.
- 75:25 crop:livestock balance of projects (number of projects).
- All contract commitments met and successfully acquitted in a timely manner.
- An above 70% attendee satisfaction rating at major SCF events.
- Delivery of monthly e-news, quarterly newsletters and project events.
- A year-on-year increase in email opening rates and social media following.



ATTRACT RELEVANT OPPORTUNITIES AND INFORMATION THAT DELIVERS VALUE TO ITS MEMBERS

TACTICS

- Develop a Marketing and Communications Plan to retain and grow membership.
- Accumulate knowledge for and about our members. Build a profile of who they are, what they want, how they use information.
- Implement an engagement program with members to build the understanding of member's research and project priorities and include member professional development.
- Leadership – build the internal knowledge base on emerging issues like carbon, technology to inform decisions on pursuing opportunities as they arise.
- Diversify events to cover emerging issues and trial new ways to increase participation by all members and potential new members i.e., inclusion of farm business and OHS components.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Achievement of 100 farming business members.
- Completion of annual membership satisfaction and priorities survey –20 farming businesses/year.
- Regular Sub-Committee meetings, with each Sub-Committee meeting at least biannually.
- At least two SCF events held annually that incorporate delivery of information on emerging issues. i.e., emissions, OHS, new technology.

TO INCREASE ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

TACTICS:

- Professionally manage the business of SCF with sound systems and corporate governance, and review the Constitution.
- Ensure sound financial management through budget and reporting disciplines.
- Develop and support the Executive and Board using technology and modern systems, and a succession process.
- Foster a values-based culture which emphasises collaboration, fun, professionalism, innovation and continual improvement.
- Implement objectives and review key performance indicators within the SCF strategic plan.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Corporate Governance training completed by CEO and Board members.
- Board approval of annual budget and quarterly reporting to Board against the budget.
- OH&S – Development, implementation and communications of OH&S/HR Policies, staff inductions, risk register, and emergency management plan.
- No issues identified in the annual independent financial audit.
- Annual staff satisfaction survey – Year-in-year out staff retention of at least 90%.
- Annual review of SCF performance against Strategic Plan – presented at AGM.



BUILD COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

TACTICS:

- Promote a positive profile for progressive agriculture in the region and promote a sense of community.
- Build an interactive partnership with DPIRD, industry bodies, research institutions and R&D funders.
- Grow the sponsorship portfolio by building on relationships with sponsors and view them as members.
- Provide advocacy, influence and leadership on locally relevant issues and be relevant to key decision makers, funders and stakeholders.
- Identify external networking opportunities with research organisations, other grower groups, sponsors, funding bodies, regional agronomy groups.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Over 50% of projects include formalised collaboration with either DPIRD, CSIRO or other grower groups and/or research organisations.
- Actively promote neighbouring grower group events.
- Maintain current sponsorship partnerships.
- Increase sponsorship by one (1) sponsor per year.
- Invite State Agriculture Minister, local Member for Parliament MP and Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) to all major SCF events.
- CEO and/or Board to meet with the State Agriculture Minister and/or local MP annually.



“As a Gold Sponsor, we have been fortunate to work with many of the group’s forwardthinking and progressive farmers through mutual learning opportunities and partnerships. We believe the Stirlings to Coast Farmers group has a strong future that will benefit agriculture in the region and we look forward to our continued relationship with the group.”

Rabobank, SCF Gold sponsor since 2012



STIRLINGS TO COAST

FARMERS