



AUSTRALIA

SAI Platform Australia Annual Report 2022/23





SAI
AUSTRALIA

President's Message

Dear Member,

Thank you for your ongoing engagement with SAI Platform Australia. It is a pleasure to present the 2022/23 Annual Report.

With increasing interest in the role sustainable agriculture can play in tackling global issues, SAI Platform Australia has continued to have an outsized impact in driving the conversations and collaborations that matter. This annual report highlights just how much we have packed in to the past 12 months.

We ended the year with a successful field trip to Orange, NSW that created new relationships across the industry, and with a healthy increase in membership enquiries. This was our second field trip for the year and saw participation from many member organisations and we were pleased to invite representatives from potential new member organisations to be part of these visits to different agricultural regions in Australia. These field trips are quickly becoming 'must do' events for members and interested stakeholders alike.

SAI Australia's investment in the Sustainable Sourcing in Food and Fibre Micro Certificate has seen three cohorts participate in the course this year. Further intakes are planned for 2023/24 following positive feedback from participants and the University of Melbourne.

Our 2022 AGM was held as part of the November field trip to Wagga Wagga and marked the end of Jack Holden's stellar stint as President of the Chapter. We all thank Jack for his contribution and appreciate his ongoing involvement on the committee. I'd also like to acknowledge the Committee of Management who lend valuable insights and expertise to our work despite their busy schedules. Members include Heidi Smith (Treasurer), Edwina Clowes (Vice President), Helen Dornom, and Maxie Hanft. Special thanks also to Selwyn Heilbron (Secretary and Co-ordinator) and Carolyn Munckton (communications expert) for their tireless (and patient) support.

It was a pleasure to represent the Chapter at the Global SAI Platform's annual event in Cambridge, UK in October. It was a great opportunity to highlight the areas of focus and progress in Australia while also building stronger links to the global platform.

Yours sincerely,

Mick Anderson, President SAI Platform Australia



*Photo acknowledgements (left to right):
Front cover: Photos from the 2022 and 2023 SAI Platform Field Trips.*

Page 2: Mick Anderson, Jack Holden and Rose Gooding, 2023 Field Trip to Orange.

Page 3: SAI Platform Australia members visit to Gundmain Pastoral Co, 2023 Field Trip.

Page 5: Sheep (© Meat & Livestock Australia Limited 2019–2020); Bread (© GRDC); Dairy cow, (© Dairy Australia).

Page 6: 2022 SAI Field Trip to Charles Sturt University Digital Farm

Page 8: SAI Platform Australia members visit to "Belmont" farm, 2023 Field Trip.

Page 10: Sunflowers (© GRDC); Wheat (© GRDC); Salmon (© Tassal); Crop spraying (© GRDC).

Co-ordinator's Note

The SAI (Sustainable Agriculture Initiative) Platform has a unique value proposition that differentiates it from other sustainability and industry organisations. It provides a 'safe-haven' where members can address key sustainability issues in an open, pre-competitive, trusted environment with peers. The Platform's cross-value chain membership; independence; a focus on achieving tangible sustainability outcomes; and capacity to inform on policy interests are features of the group.

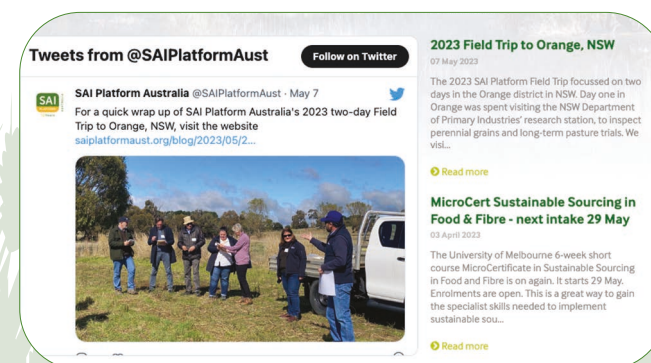
During the COVID lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, the Australian chapter offered a range of events that enabled group participation to remain high. Meeting online had positive advantages for the Chapter as we were better able to leverage knowledge events and communications to achieve all of our strategic priorities. We have continued to hold online sessions but have also undertaken in-person events as these became possible post-COVID. All of these initiatives are done to facilitate learning among members, promote sustainable practices among members, farmers and other stakeholders and build partnerships and alliances to implement sustainable practices along the supply chain.

This past year represented the second in our 2021–24 Strategy, which reflects the need for the Platform to adapt and generate a stronger value proposition for members, by moving from thinking to acting. Members are now implementing, trialing, and engaging directly with an increasing range of farmers, sustainability organisations and service providers with the Platform providing a space for members to interact and learn.

To be valued, a SAI membership needs to give access to tools and people that can accelerate sustainability in our food systems. To do this, our Plan has two focus areas: A Better Toolkit, and New People. A Better Toolkit entails amplifying existing tools like those available from the Global SAI Platform and providing access to new tools – for example those that can be used in assessing the practical realities of the emerging trend towards regenerative agriculture at scale.

A focus on New People reflects the difficulty of recruiting experienced sustainability specialists and the simultaneous increasing interest in "sustainable ag and food" as a career choice. We give members a new audience to share their strategies and experiences through webinars, events and social media, and give professional development opportunities for early careers professionals. A key element of this is through our existing partnership with the University of Melbourne, augmented by exploring wider opportunities based on our networks.

In also contributing to policy debates, the Platform is in a unique position to inform public policy debates as the public interest develops around sustainable agriculture in Australia, especially in relation to our key themes of



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Co-ordinator's note continued

focus for the group, which are: Water and climate; Regenerative agriculture; Customer assurance of sustainability practices and Eco-system services and economic sustainability.

During 2022/23, the Platform continued to provide additional benefits to our members:

- We continued implementing our 2021–24 Strategy focussing on action in key sustainability themes identified by members themselves as being of material significance to their organisations. In the new Strategy we recognised the importance for members of regular engagement, communications, and the need for the Platform to provide effective account management and increased communications impact.
- We held two Field Trips during the year, one in November 2022 to the Wagga area and the other in May 2023 around Orange both focussing on our key themes – practical methods for reducing carbon emissions and undertaking regenerative agriculture. These trips provide a unique opportunity for members to learn about the latest scientific and technical developments in the sustainability space, and learn from each other about the sustainability issues they face and practical solutions thereto.
- In our key peer-learning activities, we continued to rely primarily on virtual internal sessions where members and other experts presented the latest developments in our key themes. We held events

every 4–6 weeks including joint sessions with the Global SAI Platform, member-only Roundtables, and sessions with presentations by Global SAI Platform, technical and policy experts from around the world. A list of the presentations given is provided on pages 7–8. Most sessions are conducted on a confidential “Chatham House” rules basis, and when recorded only members are given access to the recording and copies of the presentations. This provides a unique and valuable resource for members.

- Over the year we had 95 individual participants from 25 organisations in seven face-to-face or online SAI Platform sessions.
- In our ‘New People’ theme, we worked with Melbourne University to design and deliver an online short course (Micro Certificate) on Sustainable Sourcing of Food and Fibre. To-date 30 early and mid-career professionals have enrolled in the course over three intakes, with good feedback resulting. We have been able to offer member organisations a 2-for-1 course fee benefit and this has proved to be an excellent training resource and a vehicle for projecting the SAI Platform Australia and members’ sustainable sourcing initiatives.
- We continued to focus on communicating with members and the broader food, fibre and fisheries production industries, through our Members’ Update e-newsletter and Sustainability Bites e-news.

Interest and engagement with our new LinkedIn profile contains to grow as we share information about our guest speaker sessions, field trip activities and details about the Micro Certificate in Sustainable Sourcing in Food and Fibre, which is driving visitors to find out more about this course.

- We strengthened our relationship with Global SAI Platform, which among other things, provides our local members with access to a truly global suite of sustainable farming and collaborative project tools. Our joint events and initiatives ramped up in 2022–23 with a focus on their new regenerative agriculture module. We are exploring ways of achieving even closer engagement with the Global Platform and easier access to their tools and further support. Finally, our incoming President, Mick Anderson, had the unique opportunity to learn about the Platform’s initiatives and from the world’s leading sustainability professionals by participating in the SAI Annual Event held in Cambridge UK in October 2022.

Finally, I want to thank members for their active participation in the Platform’s activities during 2022/23 and look forward to your continued insights and engagement next year.



Selwyn Heilbron

SAI Platform Australia – Vision and Strategic Priorities

In 2020/21 we developed a new strategy Plan for 2021–24.

The Vision of the Platform is to:

“Implement secure and thriving agricultural supply chains and protect the earth’s resources through widespread adoption of sustainable practices that deliver value to our members, farmers, farming communities and consumers.”

This Vision reflects that of the Global SAI Platform.

The Platform aims to contribute to this goal by being a highly valued two-way gateway for the Australian food and beverage sector on sustainable agriculture.

The Platform has a unique value proposition that differentiates it from other sustainability and industry organisations. This comprises:

- Its cross-value chain membership
- Its independence
- Its focus on achieving tangible sustainability outcomes
- Its capacity to inform policy debates (although not as a lobbyist to advance particular interests).

SAI Platform Australia’s Plan has three strategic priorities:

- Facilitate sustainability learning among members
- Promote sustainability practices among farmers, members and other stakeholders
- Build partnerships and alliances to implement sustainable practices along the supply chain.

Changing environment

Since the Australian Platform was established in 2007, the sustainability agenda has evolved considerably:

1. There was limited acceptance of the need for sustainable agriculture in Australia
2. None of the founding members had full-time sustainability resourcing
3. Representative farm organisations did not recognise the need for a sustainability agenda.

Today, there is universal recognition of the need for Australian agriculture, food, fibre and fishing to be sustainable, and to demonstrate its credentials to customers and consumers, and the peak farm organisation in Australia has fully recognised the need for sustainable agriculture.

The key issue has moved from the ‘why’ sustainable agriculture is necessary to the ‘how’ it can be implemented through practice change. The above strategic priorities remain appropriate at a high level, but the SAI Platform Australia needs to move with the times and create value for its members in this evolved environment.

The Value Proposition

The SAI Platform Australia will continue to have membership spanning the value chain, offering a safe space for learning and implementing improved sustainability practices. However, it also needs to provide the following:

An enhanced level of focus for the Platform’s activities on themes that are important to members’ organisations – to make the best possible use of the resources available to the Platform and maximise the benefits for members.

Access to tools that will help change practices that otherwise would not be available, both through internally generated collaborative projects and through a much closer relationship with the Global SAI Platform.

Leadership in the development of sustainability policy options through closer engagement with policymakers, researchers and other stakeholders, through both internal and commissioned analysis.

Targeted communications appropriate to the post-COVID environment and the most efficient use of secretarial resources.



Key Focus Areas

The Platform's Plan is to focus its strategy on a number of key themes. These are based on:

- The areas in which the Platform has a comparative advantage in the sustainability space
- Members' organisations learning priorities as indicated to the Platform
- The potential for achieving material practice change
- The relevance of these to the broader supply chain.

Based on the above criteria, the Platform's key themes on which it will focus at least initially are:

- **Water and climate** – the Platform will build upon its collaborative project done initially with CSIRO and then with Deloitte in developing a Climate Risk assessment tool. It will leverage this work with the Global SAI Platform to enhance supply chain sustainability outcomes.
- **Regenerative agriculture** – the Platform will build on its field trips and well attended sessions on this area to build tools enabling better definition, objective assessment of the availability, scalability and certification of regenerative agriculture.
- **Customer assurance of sustainability practices** – the Platform will build upon its report on the use of digital agriculture for customer sustainability assurance and session on digital monitoring of aquaculture operations to help build members' capabilities and policy understanding in this area.
- **Eco-system services and economic sustainability** – the Platform will continue its thought leadership in the development of eco-system services policy to give members advance access to potential practice changes along the supply chain that will benefit their organisation.

Future themes will be added based on the abovementioned criteria and the resources available to the Platform.

Governance

The Platform is a registered Incorporated Association under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

The Association has a set of Rules that have been approved under the above Act. Its affairs are managed by a Committee of Management, which meets most months by teleconference. The Committee comprises the elected Office bearers of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary and two additional committee members, all of whom are elected by members. We thank the continuing Committee members for their support. The Committee is profiled on the Platform's website

<http://www.saiplatformaust.org/about-us/team>.

Finances

The Platform was in a sound financial position at 30 June 2022 albeit with a deficit this year offsetting the previous year's surplus, the result stemming from lower membership fee revenue and an increase in expenses, mainly due to resources devoted to communications. The Platform's Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet are contained in Appendix 3.

Full Members during 2022–23

Goodman Fielder
Meat & Livestock Australia
Grains Research & Development Corporation
Dairy Australia
Bayer Crop Science
Fonterra Australia
Inghams Enterprises
Nufarm Ltd
Tassal Ltd
Cotton Research & Development Corporation

Supporters Group Members during 2022–23

University of Melbourne

Individual Supporters during 2022–23

J Seddon

R Dickmann



Appendix 1: List of papers and presentations

List of papers and presentations at SAI Platform meetings and other events 2022–23

	Presentations/papers	Presented/produced by
July 2022	Introduction to the University of Melbourne/SAI Platform Australia Micro certificate short course on Sustainable Sourcing in Food and Fibre	Professor Simon Bell, Head of School at University of Melbourne School of Professional and Continuing Education (MSPACE)
August 2022	Carbon neutrality in agriculture including: 1. Carbon Neutral Commitments and Claims 2. Greenhouse Gas Accounting 3. Emissions from Agriculture 4. Quantifying Farm Emissions and Sequestration 5. Carbon Neutrality by 2050 6. Advice to Landholders	Carly Green, Managing Director of New Zealand based consulting company, Environmental Accounting Services
November 2022 – Australian Chapter Field Trip to Wagga Wagga, NSW	Sustainable seedstock and commercial Angus beef production, as well as cereal cropping program with undertaking carbon accounting and revegetation of a dam area surrounded by deep rooted perennial sub-tropical and Phalaris based pastures	Scotts Angus, primary producer, near Henty NSW
	Holbrook Landcare Network	Dr Alison Southwell and Adam Hewitt
	FLINTpro – an analytics tool that measures land-sector greenhouse gas emissions.	Dr Natalie Doran-Browne, Director of Science – Agricultural Emissions, Mullion Group
	Charles Sturt University farm Digital Farm hub initiative including drones and automated farming technologies	Jon Medway, Charles Sturt University's Gulbali Institute Senior Research Fellow, Spatial Architecture, Director, Global Digital Farm
	Victorian Government's On-farm Emissions Action Planning Pilot	Graeme Anderson and Alison Kelly from Agriculture Victoria
	FarmLink Temora sustainable agriculture initiatives as a not for profit agricultural research and extension organisation in southern NSW owned by growers and involving advisers and researchers	Andrew Bulkeley, CEO and FarmLink
	In-depth presentation about the establishment and progress of the Cool Soil Initiative and the chemistry underpinning healthy soil carbon	Dr Cassandra Schefe, AgriSci
	FarmLink projects and results, including trials of intercropping to improve soil carbon	James Holding, Operations Manager and Hayden Thompson, Senior Research and Extension Officer, FarmLink

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List of papers and presentations at SAI Platform meetings and other events 2022–23 continued

	Presentations/papers	Presented/produced by
February 2023	Development of a common platform for aggregating and digitising emissions information by Agriculture Innovation Australia	Sam Brown, CEO of Agriculture Innovation Australia (AIA), Todd Levine, Senior Investment Officer and Nada Sukkarieh, Innovation and Design Manager
	Roundtable on sustainability issues facing SAI Australia members	SAI Australia members
April 2023	Global SAI Platform Regenerative Agriculture Programme	Dionys Forster, Director General, SAI Platform
May 2023 Australian Chapter Field Trip to Orange NSW	Integration of perennial grasses with livestock production as a sustainable practice	Warwick Badgery, NSW Department of Primary Industries
	Use of microbial fungus for soil carbon sequestration	Tegan Nock, Co-founder LOAM Bio
	Organic wine production	Justin Jarrett, Owner, See Saw Wine
	Market recognition for sustainable agriculture practices	Professor Mark Morrison, Associate Dean, Charles Sturt University
	Sustainable livestock and cropping production	Tess and Andrew Herbert, Gundamain Pastoral, Eugowra
	Integration of livestock and continuous grain production	Stuart McDonald, 'Belmont' farm operation, Canowindra



Appendix 2: Financial Report 2021–22

(Note the financial year end is 30 June 2022 and statements for 2022/23 will be circulated for the 2023 AGM)

Income and Expenditure Statement

SAI Platform (Aust) Inc. For the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Income		
Revenue	101,400	115,000
Total Income	101,400	115,000
Gross Surplus	101,400	115,000
Other Income		
Credit Card Surcharge collected	56	193
Total Other Income	56	193
Expenditure		
Amortisation – Website Design	584	726
Commissioned Project Expenses	1,800	15,000
Contractor Expenses	85,790	73,583
Marketing Expenses & Website Maintenance	4,068	1,998
Professional Fees	5,615	5,515
Other Expenses	8,127	3,489
Unrecoverable Membership Fees Written-Off	8,000	–
Total Expenditure	113,983	100,310
Current Year Surplus/ (Deficit) Before Income Tax Adjustments	(12,527)	14,882
Current Year Surplus/(Deficit) Before Income Tax	(12,527)	14,882
Net Current Year Surplus/(Deficit) After Income Tax	(12,527)	14,882
1. Other Expenses		
General Insurance	2,974	2,678
Registration & Subscriptions	267	615
Stripe Merchant Fees	58	196
Meeting Costs – Travel	1,791	–
Meeting Costs – Accommodation	2,776	–
Meeting Costs – Catering	261	–
Total Other Expenses	8,127	3,489
2. Contractor Expenses		
Contractor – Coordinator	67,129	68,250
Contractor – Communications	18,661	5,333
Total Contractor Expenses	85,790	73,583

Assets and Liabilities Statement

SAI Platform (Aust) Inc. As at 30 June 2022

	Notes	30 June 2022	30 June 2021
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2	56,373	44,537
Trade and Other Receivables	3	–	17,600
GST Receivable		4,563	1,475
Total Current Assets		60,936	63,612
Non-Current Assets			
Computer Software and Equipment	4	3,083	3,667
Total Non-Current Assets		3,083	3,667
Total Assets		64,019	67,278
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Bank Debit Cards		69	69
Trade and Other Payables	5	14,383	5,115
Total Current Liabilities		14,452	5,184
Total Liabilities		14,452	5,184
Net Assets		49,567	62,094
Member's Funds			
Capital Reserve		49,567	62,094
Total Member's Funds		49,567	62,094



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Contact us

To discuss SAI Platform Australia membership, contact
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