



AUSTRALIA

SAI Platform Australia Annual Report 2023/24





AUSTRALIA

President's Message

Dear Members

Over the past 12 months I'm very proud that SAI Platform Australia has offered a range of opportunities for members to learn, share and deepen their interest and commitment to sustainable agriculture, and I thank you all for your contributions.

The highlight for me this year was the Carbon Practice Change in the Supply Chain Forum held in Canberra in October 2023. The one-day event was the opportunity for members and guests to hear experiences and challenges from right across the supply chain on actions being taken to measure, mitigate and reduce carbon emissions. Many thanks to SAI members who presented – each presentation provided valuable information and was a powerful demonstration of your passion and expertise. One of the key outcomes of the discussions was that other stakeholders gained a deeper understanding that the complexity of the issues increases as one moves along the supply chain. It was rewarding to have so many representatives from Federal Government departments attend and present around current policy and roadmaps. Other valuable presentations were from the Australian Farm Institute and National Farmers Federation, and the expertise and insights of Professor Mark Howden from ANU's Institute for Climate Change, Energy & Disaster Solutions and Dr Stephen Weidemann from Integrity Ag and Environment were invaluable.

We finished the year with a three-day field trip to Tasmania where the ongoing dry conditions provided context for the role of regenerative agriculture in resilience and biodiversity conservation. Like other recent field trips this one had a great mix of getting out in paddocks with innovative farmers, hearing about interesting research and trials, meeting people committed to sustainable agriculture and food production, as well as the opportunity to engage with other SAI members. We thank the farmers who so warmly welcomed us to their properties and shared with us their approaches to achieving sustainable production, productivity and profitability. We had a lively dinner panel conversation with Sandra Knowles and Hannah Lewis of the Tasmanian Farm Innovation Hub (both have hands-on farming expertise), Kate Petrie from Ingelby Farms and Sam Bye from farmer group Soil First Tasmania that generated much discussion.

This year, to further our understanding of what is happening around regenerative agriculture, SAI Platform Australia partnered with Agriculture Innovation Australia (AIA) to commission a 'State of Play for Regenerative Agriculture in Australia' report. This piece of work entailed a desktop review and interviews with key organisations involved with regenerative agriculture and we hope will be a valuable resource for any organisation or person trying to navigate the definitions and impacts of regenerative agriculture in Australia. A summary of the research will be publicly available shortly, and we will use the outcome of this initiative to assess further action by the Platform in this arena.

Our usual monthly online meetings have been a mix of presentations from experts in different fields and also roundtables for members to present and share what's going on in their organisations around a specific topic.

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President's Message continued

The Sustainable Sourcing in Food and Fibre Micro-Certificate has now been run six times with nearly 60 learners, with many staff from member organisations completing the course as well as non-members attracted to its online format and practical approach. The feedback about this six-week course has been very positive and the 2-for-1 offer for SAI Platform members is another significant benefit available through the Platform.

We continue to deepen our relationship with the Global SAI Platform, particularly through the Regenerating Together Programme, which this year released tools that some of our members and their stakeholders have trialled.

Our 2023 AGM was held on 9th October in Canberra on the eve of the Carbon Forum. The following office bearers and Management Committee members were elected to support me as President:

- Edwina Clowes, Vice President
- Heidi Smith, Treasurer
- Selwyn Heilbron, Secretary
- Helen Dornom, Management Committee Member
- Jack Holden, Management Committee Member

Subsequent to the AGM, Jess Loughland from Greenham and Adam Blight from Nufarm joined the committee; I thank everyone for their contributions and collegiate approach to steering SAI Platform Australia for the benefit of member organisations.

After the AGM a dinner was held with guest speaker, Stephen Annells, CEO of Fertilizer Australia, who outlined the role of Fertilizer Australia (FA), how fertilizer has contributed to increasing agricultural production over the past few decades, the actions being taken by FA and producers to achieve 'nutrient use efficiency' and the practice changes that are occurring and new technologies to achieve efficient fertilizer use. This was another interesting contribution to the discussion and understanding of reducing carbon emissions and pushing towards sustainable food and fibre production.

We move into an exciting phase in coming months with stakeholders increasingly looking to engage with SAI Platform Australia and the opportunity to refresh our strategic and operational plans for the years ahead.

A big thank you goes, again, to Selwyn Heilbron (Secretary and Co-ordinator) and Carolyn Munckton (Communications and Member Services Manager), who make so many great things happen for the Platform and its members.

Yours sincerely,

Mick Anderson, President SAI Platform

Co-ordinator's Note

The SAI Platform Australia plays an important role in supporting sustainable food, fibre and fisheries production. The Platform is different from other industry organisations by providing a learning and sharing forum where members can discuss and address sustainability issues in an open, pre-competitive, and trusted environment with peers. The Platform's cross-value chain membership, independence, focus on achieving tangible sustainability outcomes, and influence on informing policy are key features.

Our online meetings, events and field trips contribute to building capacity among members and foster partnerships and alliances that support and encourage sustainable practices along the supply chain.

We are now in the final year of our four-year 2021–24 Strategy, which focuses on moving from *thinking* to *acting*. Through our events and initiatives, members are now implementing, trialing, and engaging directly with an increasing range of farmers, sustainability organisations and service providers. The Platform's pre-competitive approach offers members the opportunity to learn and share. We will be developing our new Strategy later this year and all members will have an opportunity to have a say in driving the strategic direction of the group.

SAI membership provides access to tools and people that can accelerate sustainability in our food systems. 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.

The 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. Through the partnership with the University of Melbourne and the co-development and delivery of the six week online MicroCertificate in Sustainable Sourcing in Food & Fibre, SAI Platform is contributing to the development of sustainability professionals and providing benefit to member organisations.

The Platform continues to contribute to public policy as public interest grows around sustainable agriculture in Australia, especially our key themes of: Water and Climate; Regenerative Agriculture; Customer Assurance of Sustainability Practices; and Ecosystem Services and Economic Sustainability.

During 2023/24, the Platform continued to provide additional benefits to our members:

- We held eight online meetings with guest speakers and experts and also held roundtables for members to share their organisation's approach to sustainability which facilitate conversation and learning.
- We held a Field Trip to Tasmania in May 2024 focussed on regenerative agriculture and research. This was the first time we have offered a three day/two night field trip which was not as easy for some members to participate in than a shorter trip, but due to the destination, was necessary. On this trip was visited five



noteworthy properties that provided a unique opportunity to interact with innovative farmers focussed on sustainable production and profitability.

- We continued to hold online meetings where members hear from experts, share information and sustainability experiences through member roundtables, and engage with the Global SAI Platform. A list of the presentations given is provided on pages 8–9. 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 127 individual participants from 42 member or external organisations in nine face-to-face or online SAI Platform sessions.
- To-date, 59 early and mid-career professionals have participated in the online MicroCertificate in Sustainable Sourcing of Food and Fibre over six intakes. The feedback from participants has been very positive and 40 staff from member organisations have completed the course. Members continued to benefit from the 2-for-1 course fee offer.
- The open rates of our *Members' Update* e-newsletter and *Sustainability Bites* e-news is solid, meaning good interest and engagement by members and subscribers. We share information about our meetings, field trip and events via our LinkedIn page and promote enrolment of the MicroCertificate in Sustainable Sourcing in Food & Fibre.
- Over the past 2–3 years, we have significantly strengthened our connection to the Global SAI Platform, which has provides our local members with access to the suite of sustainable farming and collaborative project tools.

Finally, I want to thank members for their active participation in the Platform's activities during 2023/24 and acknowledge the leadership of the Management Committee. I look forward to the continued insights and participation of members in 2024/25.



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:

1. Facilitate sustainability learning among members
2. Promote sustainability practices among farmers, members and other stakeholders
3. 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:

- There was limited acceptance of the need for sustainable agriculture in Australia
- None of the founding members had full-time sustainability resourcing
- 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.

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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 the theme 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 visit and well attended session 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 above mentioned 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 2023 with a small net deficit this year compared with the previous year on the basis of increased income and expenditure. The Platform's Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet are provided below.

Full Members during 2023–24

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

Supporters Group Members during 2023–24

University of Melbourne

Individual Supporters during 2023–24

R Dickmann



Appendix 1: List of papers and presentations at SAI Platform meetings and other events 2023–24

August 2023	State of the Art in Regenerative Agriculture in Australia project	Meeting and presentation from Point Advisory/ERM consultants who undertook this scoping project.
October 2023	2023 AGM Dinner Speaker	Stephen Annells, CEO Fertilizer Australia
	Carbon Practice Change Opportunities in the Supply Chain Forum Canberra	
	Overview of current carbon practice change opportunities and challenges	Professor Mark Howden, Institute for Climate Change, Energy & Disaster Solutions, ANU
	Production sectors – what is being done; what challenges exist?	<i>Industry examples</i> Dairy – Elissa McNamara, National Climate and Energy Lead, Dairy Australia Meat and livestock – Edwina Clowes, Manager, Sustainability Frameworks and Stakeholders, Meat and Livestock Australia and Darryl Savage, General Manager, Programs and Innovation, NAPCo Grains – Dr Cristina Martinez, Manager Sustainable Cropping Systems (North), GRDC Cotton – Allan Williams, Acting Executive Director, Cotton RDC
	The role of carbon offsets, insets and validation	Dr Stephen Wiedemann, Principal Scientist and Managing Director, Integrity Ag and Environment
	Policies and Opportunities	
	<i>Government policy directions</i>	Heather McGilvray, Principal Climate Adviser, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Penny Reyenga, Acting Manager, Agriculture and Livestock Emissions Reduction, Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water
	<i>Industry initiatives</i>	Warwick Ragg, General Manager, Natural Resource Management, National Farmers’ Federation Richard Heath, Executive Director, Australian Farm Institute

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October 2023 <i>Continued</i>	Examples of supply chain participants' initiatives to realize opportunities	
	<i>Meat processing perspective</i>	Jessica Loughland, Livestock Supply Chain Manager, Greenhams Nick Mitrevski, Head of Sustainability and Environment, Inghams Enterprises
	<i>Dairy processing perspective</i>	Richard Rawnsley, Area Manager – Paddock Specialist, Fonterra Australia
	<i>Grain processing perspective</i>	Rose Gooding, Sustainability Manager, Goodman Fielder
	<i>Retailer perspective</i>	Troy Nixon, Sustainable Agriculture Manager, Woolworths Group
December 2023	Australian Conservation Foundation's Save Our Big Backyard Campaign	Nathaniel Pelle, Acting Nature Program Manager & Business and Nature Lead, Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)
January 2024	Nuffield Scholarship	Joana Mendes, ESG & Community Partner, Tassal
February 2024	Members Roundtable – Sustainability Reporting	
March 2024	Global SAI Platform Regenerative Agriculture Programme Update	Dominik Klauser, Director Regenerative Agriculture Programme, SAI Platform
April 2024	Members Roundtable – Nature positive sustainable agriculture	
May 2024	Australian Chapter Field Trip to Tasmania Panel Conversation: “What does sustainable agriculture look like in 2050 in Tasmania?”	Sandra Knowles, Director, Tasmanian Farm Innovation Hub Kate Petrie, Environmental & Sustainable Production Officer, Ingelby Farms Sam Bye, President, Soil First Hannah Lewis, Project Officer, Tasmanian Farm Innovation Hub
June 2024	Nature Positive Farming	Dr Liz Heagney, Research Director, Farming for the Future

Appendix 2: Financial Report 2022–23

Income and Expenditure Statement

SAI Platform (Aust) Inc.

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
Income		
Revenue		
Membership Fees Renewals	91,400	101,400
Project Receipt	25,000	–
Field Trip Receipts	1,909	–
Total Revenue	118,309	101,400
Total Income	118,309	101,400
Gross Surplus	118,309	101,400
Other Income		
Credit Card Surcharge collected	207	56
Total Other Income	207	56
Expenditure		
Amortisation – Website Design	479	584
Audit Fees	2,500	–
Commissioned Project Expenses	–	1,800
Contractor Expenses	93,976	85,790
Field Trip Expenditures	3,691	–
Marketing Expenses & Website Maintenance	1,659	4,068
Other Expenses	12,646	8,127
Professional Fees	5,668	5,615
Unrecoverable Membership Fees Written-Off	–	8,000
Total Expenditure	120,618	113,983
Current Year Surplus/(Deficit) Before Income Tax Adjustments	(2,102)	(12,527)
Current Year Surplus/(Deficit) Before Income Tax	(2,102)	(12,527)
Net Current Year Surplus/(Deficit) After Income Tax	(2,102)	(12,527)

	2023	2022
1. Other Expenses		
Bank Fees	8	–
General Insurance	2,508	2,974
Meeting Costs – Travel	2,244	1,791
Meeting Costs – Accommodation	966	2,776
Meeting Costs – Catering	3,989	261
Meeting Costs – Room Hire	790	–
Registration Fees	61	–
Printing and Stationery	77	–
Software Subscriptions	1,790	267
Stripe Merchant fees	212	58
Total Other Expenses	12,646	8,127
2. Contractor Expenses		
Contractor – Coordinator	65,850	67,129
Contractor – Communications	21,126	18,661
Total Contractor Expenses	93,976	85,790



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Assets and Liabilities Statement

SAI Platform (Aust) Inc.

As at 30 June 2023

	Notes	30 Jun 2023	30 Jun 2022
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2	60,748	56,373
Trade and Other Receivables	3	700	–
GST Receivable		626	4,563
Non-Current Assets			
Computer Software and Equipment		2,604	3,083
Total Non-Current Assets		2,604	3,083
Total Assets		64,678	64,019
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Bank Debit Cards		–	69
Trade and Other Payables	5	5,097	14,383
Prepayment of Membership Fees		12,100	–
Total Current Liabilities		17,197	14,452
Other Current Liabilities		–	–
Total Liabilities		17,197	14,452
Net Assets		47,481	49,567
Member's Funds			
Capital Reserve		47,481	49,567
Total Member's Funds		47,431	49,567





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Contact us

To discuss SAI Platform Australia membership, contact
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