

SUGAR INDUSTRY RESEARCH AWARDS 2021 APPLICATION KIT

INTRODUCTION

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) invests in and manages a portfolio of research, development and adoption (RD&A) projects that drive productivity, profitability and sustainability for the Australian sugarcane industry.

SRA was established in 2013 as a sugarcane grower and miller owned company and the declared industry services body for the Australian sugarcane industry. The SRA vision is to deliver valued solutions for a growing Australian sugar industry. To achieve this vision, SRA collaborates with levy payers, industry representative bodies, government, productivity services, extension providers, other industry stakeholders, researchers and international peers and partners. SRA works to facilitate and deliver innovative technology and best practice to the sugar industry through a disciplined RD&A investment program and practical and effective knowledge exchange that translates our research activities into practice.

The [SRA Strategic Plan 2017/18-2021/22](#) describes the future direction for sugar industry investment in RD&A activities and is available on the SRA website. The Strategic Plan was developed through consultation within the industry and is aligned with the National Sugarcane Industry Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Strategy, the Commonwealth Government's Science and Research Priorities and Rural RD&E Priorities, and the Queensland Government's Strategic Objectives for investment in the sugarcane industry.

As a component of SRA investment in industry capability, SRA provides opportunities for researchers who provide services to the Australian sugar industry via Research Awards. These awards are intended to encourage innovative thinking and permit the conduct of small projects which can clearly demonstrate benefits to the Australian sugarcane industry. These projects may be used to develop research skills and/or explore new and innovative ideas.

These guidelines are provided to assist applicants in preparing their Research Award application. This document provides:

- research award information and eligibility criteria
- selection criteria
- a guide to completing the application
- closing dates and selection timelines
- contact details.

1. Research Award information and eligibility criteria

The purpose of the Research Awards is to support the professional development of researchers who provide services to our industry, and develop and evaluate innovative project ideas which may lead to future significant industry benefit. Anyone with a research concept that aligns to the purpose of these awards may apply for support.

SRA will support up to two Research Awards per year with individual project support capped at a maximum of \$20,000 per award. An individual will be restricted to one successful Research Award every three years. Research Award funding can be used to support:

- seed funding for a proof-of-concept activity
- development of local and international collaborations
- study opportunities through laboratory visits and work in overseas/national laboratories to acquire new skills.

Outcomes expected from the Research Awards include:

- researchers with the ability to think independently and create innovative solutions for our industry
- new skills, capabilities and strong research collaborations with high quality research teams in areas of long-term industry benefit.

More specific outputs, dependent on the nature of the successful Research Awards could include:

- future RD&A proposals in areas explored or initiated within successful Research Awards
- incorporation of new skills in current or future projects
- communication of project activities and outcomes to relevant industry researchers and potential future partners
- formation of new collaborative and research networks while strengthening existing networks.

Funds cannot be spent on capital items, conference attendance or workshops.

In the current context capital items are defined as any buildings, plant and equipment, regardless of the cost of the item.

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Funds can be used to support project operating expenses and essential travel, but not for conference attendance. All successful applicants will be required to submit a financial acquittal at the end of the activity.

Funds can be used for salaries, but not for organisational overheads. Funds used for salaries will be capped to a maximum of 50% of the total requested SRA investment.

Applicants are encouraged to consult the [SRA Strategic Plan](#) (available on the SRA website) and focus on innovative projects aligned with at least one of the eight Key Focus Areas of investment.

2. Selection criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the intellectual merit and innovation of the proposed project and the quality of the research proposed or the rationale for the skills acquisition proposed.

Research Awards are competitive and applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- degree of innovation of the project/activity proposed. Proposals should have an innovative approach to trial or solve an industry problem or develop new techniques or skills
- potential of project activities to identify new research and significant future industry opportunities
- quality of the applicants' work and their commitment to the Australian sugar industry as demonstrated by a high level of proficiency in research activities undertaken to date
- degree to which the project activities will enhance the current and future skills and capacity of the applicant.

3. Guide to completing the application

The Research Award application form is available from the [SRA website](#). The application must be concise, and the form when completed must not exceed five pages. Do not change the formatting within the form (font size, layout borders, etc.).

The following points should be noted when completing the application form:

- Research Awards will usually have two or three milestones during the course of the project. Milestone 1 will be the signing of the project agreement.

- The last milestone will be the submission of a Final Report which must report on the outputs generated, set out the key findings and implications for the industry and any potential application of project outcomes. A financial acquittal of expenditure will also be required. SRA funding for the final report milestone should be approximately 20% of the total SRA funding requested.
- An intermediate milestone may be required if there are several significant activities across the life of the project. If an intermediate milestone is used, you should allocate a suitable amount of SRA funding and you will need to complete a milestone report.
- The Project Contact and Administrative Contact may be the same person. The Project Contact will be responsible for managing the conduct of the project and reporting. The Administrative Contact will receive correspondence from SRA about the project agreement, including in relation to invoicing and payments.
- No other additional information or attachments (e.g. images, diagrams, flow-charts and tables) should be included unless a prior arrangement has been made with SRA.
- All participants in the project must be listed in the application form. If support for the project is being provided by other organisations in addition to the signatory organisation, SRA will require confirmation of that support by letter or email before the Project Agreement is finalised.

4. Closing dates and selection timelines

Research Award applications must be submitted to fundingunit@sugarresearch.com.au by the closing date.

Successful projects may begin as soon as possible after 1 February 2022. The Award must be completed within 12 months from the approval date.

ACTIVITY	DATE
Research Award applications due	31 August 2021
Notification of outcome	1 November 2021
Earliest project commencement	1 February 2022

5. Contact details

For any queries related to Research Awards, please contact the SRA Research Funding Unit on **(07) 3331 3333** or by email at fundingunit@sugarresearch.com.au