



STRATEGIC PLAN

UPDATE

2021–2026



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND INTERIM CEO

The development of Sugar Research Australia’s Strategic Plan 2021-2026 was a collaborative effort with Australian sugarcane growers, millers, and key industry stakeholders to provide a solid foundation and direction for our industry’s future. Twelve months on from the plan’s implementation and in line with best practice, SRA’s Board has undertaken a review of the plan’s efficacy to ensure we are driving the greatest impact for our industry.

Our aim is to provide our stakeholders with a refreshed strategic roadmap that is easy to navigate, yet comprehensive in addressing the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

To achieve this aim, we have sharpened our focus and refined our strategic pillars, initiatives, and research missions, while remaining robust in our vision and intent. This updated plan should be read in conjunction with SRA’s existing *Strategic Plan 2021-2026*.

A significant factor in our plan update, was the industry’s co-development of Sugar Plus, the industry-wide vision and roadmap for the sugarcane industry. Sugar Plus is

aimed at strengthening and expanding the sugar industry by unlocking opportunities in the bioeconomy while charting a path focused on better business-as-usual and adding value to operations.

We are committed to continuing to work closely with our growers and millers, and key industry stakeholders to drive the adoption of our high-impact research and delivery investment for the industry’s benefit. This approach will allow us to improve our collaboration with government and the private sector to secure investment and grow our research spend.

By fostering strong partnerships and promoting collaboration, the industry aims to address current challenges while exploring opportunities for profitability, sustainability, and resilience into the future. Together, these efforts will pave the way for a prosperous future for the Australian sugarcane industry and the communities where we live and operate.



Rowena McNally, Board Chair



Shaun Coffey, Interim CEO

ABOUT US

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) is the specialist research organisation for the Australian sugar industry established in 2013 as a company owned by sugarcane growers and millers. SRA serves as the declared Industry Services Body for the Australian sugarcane industry under the *Sugar Research and Development Services Act 2013 (Cth)*.

SRA was formed through the merger of two previous entities, the Sugar Research and Development Corporation (SRDC) and the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations (BSES) which had individually made significant contributions to the Australian sugar industry. By combining their experience, expertise, resources, and knowledge, SRA was created to drive innovation and sustainability in the industry.

Unique to the research and development corporation (RDC) landscape, SRA operates an extensive network of research farms, laboratories, and offices throughout the industry’s regions. This widespread presence ensures that SRA staff, and our research and adoption efforts, are accessible to all growers and millers.

The primary source of funding for SRA’s activities is the statutory sugarcane levy, which is paid equally by sugarcane growers and millers to support research and development initiatives. SRA also receives matching funding and grants for eligible research and development activities from Commonwealth and Queensland government departments and agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

The strategic direction and governance of SRA are overseen by a skills-based board. The Board is selected by an Independent Director Selection Committee, and endorsed by Members at an Annual General Meeting, ensuring a high level of expertise and accountability in guiding the organisation.

This revised Strategic Plan 2023-2026 builds upon SRA’s legacy of research, innovation, and partnership development, outlining the next steps to ensure the continuous evolution and value-add to the sugar industry and regional communities.



Scan to view
SRA Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026

OUR CAPABILITY INCLUDES:

- Agricultural economics
- Agronomy
- Biosecurity
- Digital and data agriculture science
- Entomology
- Environmental science
- Farming systems and machinery
- Geo-spatial and data science
- Milling technology
- Plant pathology
- Pre-breeding and sugarcane variety development
- Research and development management
- Sustainability science
- Weed science



*Please read this plan update in conjunction with *Sugar Research Australia Strategic Plan 2021-2026*

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PURPOSE:

We assist the Australian sugarcane industry to be competitive, productive and sustainable through innovative research and product development.

VISION

Delivering Industry Benefit

A trusted partner shaping the future prosperity of the Australian sugarcane industry and regional communities through innovation and ingenuity.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

1

A High-Performing Research Portfolio

- Deliver higher impact for industry
- Informed research investments
 - Advanced crop protection
 - Sustainable farming and milling practices and supply chain optimisation
 - Future uses for sugarcane.

2

Translation Capability

- Continue to refresh service delivery model
- Make it easier and cost effective for industry to adopt research
- Build industry participation in district planning process.

3

World-class Sugarcane Varieties

- Achieve yield and quality improvement in the variety development program
- Leverage science and innovation in breeding technologies
- Leverage plant-breeding rights and plan for future uses of high-fibre varieties.

4

Growing Research and Delivery Capacity

- Deliver value from our research capability, intellectual property facilities and delivery services
- Create new products and service opportunities from research
- Form research and delivery partnerships and ventures into new markets.

RESEARCH MISSIONS

RESEARCH MISSION 1

Profitable and Productive



RESEARCH MISSION 2

Resilient and Enduring



RESEARCH MISSION 3

Diversified and Adaptable



RESEARCH MISSION 4

Sustainable and Efficient



RESEARCH MISSION 5

Resourced and Skilled



FOUNDATION

Continue to evolve SRA to keep pace with the changing industry landscape by developing a capable, engaged, and safe workforce and an agile and entrepreneurial organisation with an efficient cost base.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

1. A HIGH-PERFORMING RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

OBJECTIVE: Design and deliver a focused, balanced and collaborative portfolio of Research, Development & Adoption (RD&A) investments and initiatives that deliver tangible solutions and options to advance the productivity, sustainability, profitability and long-term growth prospects for the Australian sugarcane industry.

KEY FOCUS AREAS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Deliver higher returns	Achievement of success criteria for research missions Delivery performance (time, cost, and quality)
Make more informed research investments across: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Advanced crop protectionSustainable farming and milling practices and supply chain optimisationFuture uses for sugarcane	Stakeholder/Investor satisfaction with research portfolio balance measured by survey results Return on investment (ROI) of RD&A spend
Make bolder investments	% portfolio involving collaboration (excluding investments in plant breeding)
Involve industry	Industry satisfaction and awareness (survey measures)

2. TRANSLATION CAPABILITY

OBJECTIVE: Translate research findings into tools, products and services that save industry time and money, and improve environmental performance.

KEY FOCUS AREAS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Continue to refresh SRA's service delivery model	Overall satisfaction with SRA by levy payers Levy payer satisfaction with district support Lower service costs and lower production costs for SRA screening and testing services
Make it easier and cost-effective for industry to adopt research	Number of extension and adoption packages delivered to industry Grower preparedness for biosecurity threats, levy payer take up of online resources and self service options
Build a deeper understanding of industry	District productivity growth – measured as tonnes of cane and tonnes sugar per hectare Participation in district planning process
Improve adoption of clean seed	New varieties as a % total commercial production

3. WORLD-CLASS SUGARCANE VARIETIES

OBJECTIVE: Accelerate innovation in variety development to offer innovative, high-performing varieties that consistently underpin the success of the industry's crop production and protection while lowering development costs and shortening cycle-times.

KEY FOCUS AREAS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Achieve operational excellence and sustainable improvement in the variety development programs	New varieties as a % total commercial production
Leverage advances in science and technology including monitoring game-changing breeding technologies	Genetic gain 2% per annum Number and value of elite clones in aggregate and per regional breeding program Proportion of Final Assessment Trial (FAT) clones resistant to Pachymetra and smut
Build innovation into the supply and distribution channels	Grower satisfaction with quality of varieties, distribution mechanisms and information support
Leverage plant-breeding rights and plan for future uses of high-fibre cane varieties	Revenue derived from variety development (alternate revenue opportunities) - \$ per annum

4. GROWING RESEARCH AND DELIVERY CAPACITY

OBJECTIVE: Take our research work and investments to the next level by securing investors and funding and extracting commercial value from our intellectual property, research capacity, facilities and strategic partnerships.

KEY FOCUS AREAS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Deliver value from our research expertise, intellectual property, facilities and delivery services	Industry adoption and estimation of impact
Create new products and service opportunities from research discoveries	Increased number of innovations and technology available to industry
Form research and delivery partnerships and ventures	Positive change in research leverage
Expand into new domestic and international markets	Achievement of specific targets

SUGAR RESEARCH AUSTRALIA'S RESEARCH MISSIONS

We strive to achieve five research missions to deliver benefits to our industry.

RESEARCH MISSION 1

Profitable and Productive

Overcome the challenges to improve yields sufficiently to outpace rising input costs.

- 1.1 Expanding pre-breeding research
- 1.2 Expanding international and commercial partnerships
- 1.3 Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the breeding program
- 1.4 Leveraging data for actionable insights for growers and millers
- 1.5 Incorporating new technologies into smart farming and milling

RESEARCH MISSION 2

Resilient and Enduring

Mitigate and minimise production risks due to biosecurity and climate threats, and endemic pests, diseases, and weeds.

- 2.1 Minimising risks due to endemic and exotic threats
- 2.2 Developing climate-resilient farming systems

RESEARCH MISSION 3

Diversified and Adaptable

Support the objectives of the Sugar Plus Roadmap to develop diversification opportunities.

- 3.1 Developing complementary biofutures and circular economy opportunities
- 3.2 Developing varieties and complementary farming systems to support the bioeconomy

RESEARCH MISSION 4

Sustainable and Efficient

Position the Australian sugarcane industry as leaders in profitability, environmental sustainability, and resource-use efficiency.

- 4.1 Supporting the industry to demonstrate sustainability credentials
- 4.2 Creating opportunities to reduce emissions
- 4.3 Increasing the use of sustainable crop inputs

RESEARCH MISSION 5

Resourced and Skilled

Support the development of people, partnerships and infrastructure required for effective research and development delivery.

- 5.1 Creating relevant and accessible training and development opportunities
- 5.2 Creating opportunities and pathways to attract and retain early and mid-career researchers
- 5.3 Strong industry connection to scientists and research outcomes
- 5.4 Improving extension pathways



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