



2025

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sugar Research Australia's 2025 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Plan guides our interactions and engagement with the broader industry, as well as individuals and organisations. The Plan seeks to ensure that the engagement and consultation we undertake is meaningful and impactful.

This Plan should be used in conjunction with the SRA Stakeholder Action Plan, which outlines SRA's specific activities and timeframes for each action planned throughout the year.

As Australia's specialist sugarcane research organisation, we invest in evidence-based research, development and adoption (RD&A) activities on behalf of sugarcane growers and millers to meet industry challenges and opportunities. We recognise the importance of effective consultation with all members of the sugarcane industry on decisions that matter most to each of them. We seek input to:

- Identify RD&A priorities, including productivity constraints, to address through future investments.
- Develop and implement grant projects, local activities and events, programs, and services to address productivity constraints, meet the needs of end users, and deliver impacts.
- Manage the release of new varieties and maintaining recommended varieties lists within sugarcane biosecurity zones through our Regional Variety Committees.
- Evaluate current and past RD&A activities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of future activities to maximise benefit to the industry and regional communities.
- Progress other strategic RD&A matters on behalf of industry and government stakeholders such as our Strategic Plan, *Sugar Plus - Fueling the Future of Food, Energy and Fabrication* and investment allocation.

Additionally, we regularly engage with industry and government stakeholders to support growers, milling companies, and industry advisors to adopt R&D outputs funded by SRA that will contribute to improved productivity, profitability, and sustainability. We engage via our key channels including, but not limited to, field days, website, workshops, Cane Matters, and webinars.

Our core responsibilities are to:

- **Invest and coordinate research and development activities:** We manage and support research and development activities for the Australian sugarcane industry, investing in projects to benefit the industry.
- **Share and use research results:** We share the findings from our research to ensure our growers, millers, and the broader sugarcane industry can adopt best practices.
- **Provide research and development services:** We collaborate with others to provide sugarcane growers and millers with cost-effective research and development products and services to become more productive and profitable.
- **Support research skills in the industry:** We help the industry build and improve its research, development, extension and adoption skills.

SRA is funded through a range of sources, primarily the statutory sugarcane levy paid both by sugarcane growers and millers; through co-contributions from the Commonwealth Government; and grants through other government agencies, including the Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

As the declared Industry Services Body for the Australian sugarcane industry, SRA is responsible for the direct provision of RD&A activities and the ongoing management and investment of funds received from industry levy payers and government, for the benefit of the sugarcane industry and for the wider public good.

2. PURPOSE

SRA's Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Plan aims to enhance and guide stakeholder interactions to support our vision, purpose and strategy. SRA is committed to a structured and strategic approach to stakeholder consultation and values input in the development of its annual strategic, investment, and operating priorities.

Our vision is to be a trusted partner, shaping the future prosperity of the Australian sugarcane industry and regional communities through innovation and ingenuity.

Our purpose is to keep the Australian sugarcane industry competitive, productive and sustainable through innovative research and product development.

To fulfil our duty to industry, SRA's interactions are guided by our operating principles:

	We actively engage with industry
	We constantly seek opportunities to innovate and improve
	We take a long-term view
	We create opportunities for collaboration
	We act ethically and responsibly

This comprehensive plan outlines the structured and integrated approach we will employ to communicate, engage, and demonstrate SRA's alignment with our stated goals and activities effectively to stakeholders.

The plan serves as a **roadmap** for SRA's communication and engagement efforts, ensuring **consistency, coherence and accountability**.

3. APPROACH

SRA is committed to a structured and strategic approach to stakeholder consultation and values input in the development of its annual strategic, investment, and operating priorities. We engage with stakeholders to:

- Initiate our consultation process on research prioritisation with our grower and miller surveys annually (in October).
- Consult with stakeholders about priorities and investment allocation via tripartite and other meetings (in December) including with our key investment partner, the Queensland Government's Department of Primary Industries.
- Facilitate a co-design process with stakeholders to identify gaps in our research portfolio (between October and February).
- Consult with stakeholders locally through our District Managers to pinpoint regional productivity constraints and investment priorities (between December and February).

Using this feedback, we prepare our Research & Development Framework, investment plans and Annual Operating Plan, including an indicative portfolio balance. We will present draft plans for further feedback during our annual R&D Showcase and Feedback Session in March, before commencing procurement of new investments and then documenting our approach in our District Productivity Plans in April and the final Annual Operating Plan in July.

Stakeholder Segmentation

SRA will engage with a diverse range of stakeholders across the sugar industry ecosystem:

- **Primary Stakeholders:** Sugarcane growers, millers, researchers, industry associations.
- **Secondary Stakeholders:** Environmental groups, policymakers, regulatory bodies, local communities, investors.
- **Tertiary Stakeholders:** Consumers, academic institutions, media, and the broader agriculture sector.

Effective stakeholder engagement is essential to ensuring that our research aligns with industry needs, incorporates diverse perspectives, and achieves sustainable outcomes. This engagement plan will guide SRA's interactions with stakeholders to support transparency, build trust, and foster collaboration.

Intentional Engagement

The primary purpose of engaging stakeholders is to ensure that SRA's research priorities and outcomes align with the needs of the Australian sugar industry, which includes growers, millers, researchers, policymakers, and consumers. Engaging stakeholders:

- **Improves Relevance:** By actively involving stakeholders, SRA can prioritize research areas that directly address the challenges and opportunities within the sugar industry.
- **Encourages Collaboration:** Engagement creates opportunities for collaboration across the supply chain, fostering an environment of innovation and shared problem-solving; and builds long-term mutually beneficial relationships based on trust across the industry.
- **Facilitates Knowledge Transfer and Adoption:** When stakeholders are actively engaged, they are more likely to adopt research outcomes and promote their widespread use.
- **Promotes Sustainable Practices:** With input from environmental groups, policymakers, and industry bodies, SRA can develop practices that balance productivity with environmental responsibility.
- **Promotes Transparency and Trust:** Through open dialogue and consistent communication, stakeholders gain a better understanding of SRA's research, building confidence and trust in outcomes.
- **Enhances Impact:** With input from stakeholders, SRA can shape research to create practical, scalable solutions, maximizing positive impacts on productivity, sustainability, and profitability.
- **Builds Community Confidence:** Transparent engagement practices improve community trust in SRA and its commitment to the industry's success and sustainability.

4. PROCESS

To ensure effective and meaningful engagement, SRA's stakeholder engagement process will involve several key steps:

Step 1: Stakeholder Mapping

Identify and categorise stakeholders based on their influence, interest, and impact in the sugar industry. This helps tailor engagement approaches to each stakeholder group.

Step 2: Define Objectives for Engagement

Define specific objectives for each stakeholder group to guide the type and level of engagement. For example:

- **Growers and Millers:** Seek input on current challenges and technology needs to shape research priorities.
- **Environmental Groups:** Collaborate to identify practices that minimize environmental impact.
- **Regulators:** Ensure research complies with current standards and contributes to sustainable industry practices.

Step 3: Develop Communication Channels

Establish multiple communication channels to ensure regular and open information exchange. Channels may include:

- **Workshops and Focus Groups:** To gather in-depth insights from growers, millers, and researchers on current industry issues.
- **Advisory Panels and Committees:** Engage key stakeholders in a formal setting to provide ongoing guidance on research and development priorities.
- **Surveys and Feedback Forms:** Collect feedback on specific projects, outcomes, and industry needs.
- **Digital Platforms:** Utilise social media, newsletters, and the SRA website to keep stakeholders updated and provide easy access to resources.

Step 4: Conduct Ongoing Engagement Activities

Engage stakeholders throughout the research cycle, from setting priorities to sharing results. Activities include:

- **Consultation Phases:** Actively consult during the design and planning of research projects to ensure relevance.
- **Collaborative Trials:** Conduct joint trials with growers and millers to test new technologies or practices.
- **Regular Progress Updates:** Share updates on research outcomes and next steps, promoting transparency and accountability.

Step 5: Monitor and Evaluate Engagement

Evaluate the effectiveness of engagement through periodic assessments and feedback from stakeholders. This evaluation will help refine the engagement strategy and ensure it continues to meet stakeholder needs.

5. SUGARCANE INDUSTRY SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Unique to the research and development corporation (RDC) landscape, SRA operates an extensive network of research farms, laboratories and offices. This widespread presence ensures that SRA staff engage and interact with various stakeholders throughout the industry's organisations, regions and districts.

SRA is committed to continuous improvement with the introduction of a new customer relationship management (CRM) system in 2024. This platform enables SRA to efficiently segment, track, analyse, and report on our stakeholder interactions and engagement across our landscape.

All stakeholder interactions are captured, tracked, managed and acted on, including issues, sentiments and actions. This data will enable SRA to monitor lead indicators on current stakeholder trends and respond to concerns and feedback in real-time.

STAKEHOLDERS					
Far Nth Qld	Herbert	Burdekin	Central Qld	Southern Qld	NSW
Sugarcane Growers	Sugarcane Growers	Sugarcane Growers	Sugarcane Growers	Sugarcane Growers	Sugarcane Growers
SRA members	SRA members	SRA members	SRA members	SRA members	SRA members
MSF Sugar Tully Sugar	Wilmar Sugar (McNade Mill and Victoria Mill)	Wilmar Sugar Mills (Invicta, Pioneer, Kalamia, Inkerman)	Mackay Sugar Mills (Proserpine and Plane Creek)	Bundaberg Sugar Isis Mill Rocky Point Mill	Sunshine Sugar
Productivity Services Boards	Herbert Cane Productivity Services Ltd; Tully Cane Productivity Services Ltd; Innisfail/Babinda Cane Productivity Services	Burdekin Productivity Services Ltd; Sugar Services Proserpine	Mackay Area Productivity Services; Plane Creek Productivity Services Ltd	Maryborough Cane Productivity Services Isis Productivity Ltd Rocky Point Productivity Services	Sunshine Sugar Ag Services
Government, Federal, State agencies:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry • Queensland Government – Department of Agriculture and Fisheries • Queensland Government – Department of Environment and Science 					
Industry Representative Organisations, including but not limited to:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CANEGROWERS • Australian Sugar Milling Council (ASMC) • Australian Cane Farmers Association (ACFA) • AgForce – Cane • Queensland Cane Agriculture & Renewables (QCAR) 					
SRA staff across all districts and sites					
Industry services, contractors and productivity providers					
Broader industry – such as equipment and product sales/manufacturers					
Industry and agricultural representatives domestically and internationally					
Rural research and development corporations (RDCs) and agricultural industries					
Research institutions and the broader scientific community					
Funding partners and potential funding partners					
Community groups and environmental organisations					
Regional communities					
General public and media outlets					

6. STATUTORY FUNDING AGREEMENT

SRA's overarching engagement and consultation plan is intended to inform and support consultation methods on specific strategic activities.

The KPI outcome for stakeholder engagement is to "engage stakeholders to identify research, development and extension (RD&E) priorities and activities that provide benefits to portfolio industries."

SRA's Stakeholder Engagement Key Performance Indicators include:

1. Strategy prioritisation and development processes include appropriate consultation plans, based on the *Best Practice Guide to Stakeholder Consultation*.
2. Demonstrated industry stakeholder engagement in the identification of RD&E priorities and activities consistent with the consultation plan in 1.
3. Demonstrated incorporation of industry stakeholder feedback on RD&E priorities and activities. Where incorporation is not possible, demonstration of feedback to a stakeholder/s on why incorporation was not possible.

In line with performance expectations under our DAFF Statutory Funding Agreement, the organisation develops communication plans to prioritise strategic development. These individual plans ensure industry stakeholder input is captured and considered in decisions about SRA's direction and investments. DAFF has provided all Regional Development Corporations (RDC's) with a *Best Practice Guide to Stakeholder Engagement*, designed around six fundamental principles. Throughout this document, we use the term 'consultation' in line with this guide, applying broadly to both engagement and consultation.

Principles of consultation

SRA's stakeholder consultation is designed around the six key principles contained within DAFF's *Best Practice Guide to Stakeholder Engagement* for SRA. These principles underpin our communication and engagement activities in this plan and in all communication and consultation practices we undertake. These principles reinforce our intention for consultation to be conducted in a genuine, frank, and respectful manner, with trust at the core of interactions. We seek to make it easy for stakeholders to be involved in consultation.

1. Transparent

We strive to be transparent about operations and expenditure, and the setting and implementation of research, development and adoption (RD&A) priorities and activities. We understand our responsibility to be accountable and make performance information available to stakeholders. We seek to:

- be upfront about consultation expectations and clearly document and communicate roles and responsibilities of SRA, industry representative bodies, industry participants and other stakeholders, including the degree in which we will consult and when, and how their views will affect the project or activity;
- be open to, and willing to accept feedback
- demonstrate in a timely and respectful manner how stakeholder input has been incorporated
- be clear about stakeholder input that cannot be incorporated and why
- communicate key decisions relating to members and levy payers, including board deliberations, and opportunities for input
- be transparent about why information cannot be shared where details are confidential and cannot be publicly shared
- use platforms and forums such as AgriFutures Australia's grow^{AG} and evoke^{AG} to share and engage.

2. Accessible

We endeavour to provide information in a format that is easy for stakeholders to understand, and through a variety of means that enables consultation in a simple and appropriate way. We seek to:

- use plain English, especially when a matter is complex and detailed
- include summaries in written communication to ensure stakeholders can quickly identify relevant information
- ensure the presentation, format and platform is easy to understand and appropriate

- adapt or modify our approach depending on the stakeholder needs, providing online options where appropriate
- publish key information and research on website or other platforms, which are easily searchable
- strive to ensure that stakeholders are provided an opportunity to contribute
- respond promptly to the queries of stakeholders and show a genuine interest in their input.

3. Straightforward

We consider the needs and competing priorities of stakeholders to consult in the most appropriate and simplest way. We seek to:

- ensure stakeholders are aware of the time commitment expectations and ensure consultation is efficient
- are understanding of demands already on stakeholders, including other consultation processes, and seasonal considerations
- monitor and evaluate where stakeholders rely on and appreciate regular consultation and where stakeholders are feeling over-consulted
- consider targeted or group requests to reduce the burden on stakeholders and improve efficiency
- where possible, consider opportunities to streamline consultation across RDCs, especially where a stakeholder may use mixed farming
- use trusted and established industry pathways to communicate with stakeholders.

4. Well planned

As much as possible, we plan ahead and endeavour to provide advance notice about how we will undertake consultation. We strive to provide adequate time for stakeholders to prepare feedback and advice, to achieve meaningful input. We seek to:

- ensure consultation is purpose-driven, timely, appropriate, and adaptable
- have realistic timeframes, taking account of seasonal pressures, public holidays, the end of financial year and holiday periods, and being aware of competing activities
- engage stakeholders early so stakeholders can plan and prepare their input
- provide stakeholders multiple opportunities to provide feedback for larger projects
- recognise and link into industry events and annual general meetings.

Notwithstanding our commitment to planning ahead, there will be instances where shorter consultation timeframes are necessary – for instance on a critical emerging issue (e.g., biosecurity, international trade, or suddenly emerging management or organisational matters). On these occasions, we will explain why consultation timeframes are short.

5. Fit for purpose

We recognise that different stakeholders have different interests and needs, and we work to balance their varying needs and expectations. We seek to:

- know what their stakeholders want and need to know and ensure consultation is tailored accordingly
- ensure that the consultation approach is adaptable and tailored to the audience and/or levy payers and considers their priorities
- base consultation on the most appropriate methodology (e.g. co-design, seeking comments on options to deliver an outcomes etc) and adjust depending on the issues under consideration, who needs to be consulted and the available time and resources. Examples of ways to consult include, but are not limited to:
 - Discussion papers
 - Surveys
 - Calls for comment/feedback
 - Forums, workshops or networks
 - Extension events/conferences
 - Social media
 - Newsletters/publications
 - Website updates
 - Webinars and podcasts.

6. Responsive

We undertake Monitoring and Evaluation to support improvement in our interactions and consultation, including a commitment to communicate and demonstrate the results of RD&E investments to stakeholders. This means we:

- collect data on what consultation methods are most effective (for example, which type of consultation was successful in what circumstances)
- regularly evaluate and review the ways we consult stakeholders
- look for informal opportunities to seek feedback and review performance
- are evidence-based and accountable to stakeholders
- are aware of stakeholder consultation fatigue and adjust consultation accordingly.

7. CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK

This stakeholder engagement plan is an essential part of SRA's strategy to ensure that its research is collaborative, relevant, and impactful. By engaging proactively and inclusively, SRA can contribute to the long-term viability and competitiveness of the Australian sugar industry. Effective engagement will lead to research outcomes that not only meet industry needs but also support the broader goals of economic growth, environmental sustainability, and community wellbeing.

The Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it aligns with current Strategic Plan and Annual Operating Plan, as well as ensuring it appropriately relates to the content of the Research & Development framework. The process we use includes the following stages:- informing the industry through key stakeholder representatives; consulting with growers and millers; collaborating with industry on ideas and changes; codesigning with relevant stakeholder groups; delivering to growers and/or millers; supporting adoption by the industry



SRA is committed to genuine and timely consultation that leads to improved decision making and better outcomes for the sugar industry. Our consultation activities include:

Strategy development

Our strategy is co-created with industry through a series of regional forums and engagement sessions, with input from external stakeholders and our employees. For example, SRA's Strategic Plan 2021-2026, released in July 2021, was developed from engagement and feedback by 700 industry and research stakeholders. In line with performance expectations under our Statutory Funding Agreement, we develop consultation plans for strategy prioritisation and development processes to ensure industry input is captured and considered in decisions about SRA's direction and investments.

Research investment

Development of our research investment plans involve extensive engagement with industry, including grower, milling, research partner and government stakeholders, as well as SRA employees. We incorporate stakeholder feedback to ensure investment is targeted in the areas of greatest need and on issues that matter most to industry.

We are committed to research that is strategic, collaborative and targeted to improve profitability, productivity, competitiveness and preparedness for future opportunities and challenges through a balanced portfolio. SRA also operates a Board committee to provide independent oversight of the direction of SRA's research investment, portfolio decisions and performance monitoring and evaluation.

District planning

Across each of our five districts, district managers work with local industry and services providers to identify improvement opportunities and develop local productivity plans. SRA district managers provide a direct touch point in each district to build a deep understanding of the challenges and constraints that industry faces in their local area.

The district manager approach seeks to strengthen industry collaboration, moving beyond drawing on industry as interviewees or subjects of research, but involving them in the co-creation of strategies at the local area level.

Plant breeding and variety development

SRA's sugar varieties are central to help make the Australian sugarcane industry more productive, sustainable and competitive. Through our Regional Variety Committees (RVCs), industry is directly involved in managing new variety release and maintaining recommended variety lists within each sugarcane biosecurity zone.

The RVCs are made up of industry representatives of growers, mills and productivity service organisations. Each RVC has formed and agreed on the composition and structure of their committee and determined acceptable voting requirements for progression of clones through the breeding program, for new variety release and to oversee appropriate disease thresholds for their region.

The RVCs make decisions on the final stages of the breeding pipeline, and most importantly the decision about whether a variety is released to be grown commercially. Varieties are first introduced to the committees as Final Assessment Trials and the decision on whether to progress will be made every year until the variety is either released or removed from the program.

Constitutional change

When considering any change to its constitution, SRA consults with the federal Minister, its members and broader industry to explain the rationale for the proposed change, and consider feedback received, ahead of voting at the Annual General Meeting.

Levy payer consultation

SRA undertakes consultation and engagement with levy payers in relation to any levy-related poll or survey it may seek to undertake. Consultation may also occur in relation to significant strategic issues or risks for the industry. The Levy Payer Register enables SRA to identify and consult with the levy payers who fund SRA's activities.

Regular information sharing, updates and communication

SRA's Board and leadership undertake direct engagement with industry and other RDCs to share updates and hear directly about topics of interest, including research outcomes, emerging issues, performance and opportunities for collaboration.

This occurs through regional Board meetings and leadership visits, and both face-to-face and online meetings with representative organisations. These sessions provide a vital opportunity for SRA to connect with sugar and broader agricultural participants and understand issues of importance, as well as synergies, across different regions.

Corporate governance

SRA operates openly and transparently, ensuring proper use and management of funds and meeting legislative requirements. We demonstrate performance against performance principles to levy payers and key stakeholders through our key communications channels including annual reports, website, quarterly publications, newsletters, and information-based emails.

In line with our reporting and performance requirements, we develop the following to inform stakeholders:

- Corporate Governance Statement
- SRA Strategic Plan (5 year cycle) currently 2021 – 2026
- Annual Report by Financial Year
- Annual Operating Plans
- Ten-year R&D Plan
- Supporting corporate policies and documentation (reviewed 3 yearly).

Communications and publications

SRA uses a range of communications channels and publications to support information sharing and consultation with industry. This enables stakeholders to see their input reflected in RD&A activities and projects and receive ongoing invitations to engage on these activities. Current activities include but are not limited to:

Multiple print, electronic and face-to-face channels including:

- quarterly *Cane Matters* magazine
- monthly eNewsletter
- social media –Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, You Tube
- website
- monthly webinars
- podcast series.

Publication of manuals and booklets, as well as variety and plant breeding newsletters through which members can access research reports including:

- eLibrary
- Variety Guides (for each district)

- Soil Management Booklet
- Pest and Weed management resources
- Fallow crop guides
- Variety of field guides and crop manuals
- Annual Reports.

Distribution of tools, products, services and scientific expertise at the district level, through local District Managers and industry extension providers including:

- District Plans
- Productivity Plans
- District knowledge transfer events - including trials, field days, knowledge sharing sessions, shed meetings workshops, participation in shed meetings and agricultural conferences and events
- Board and leader engagement meetings and visits
- Attendance and briefings through industry organisation engagements
- cross-industry collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Attendance at industry conference and events to share research and information, such as:

- Levy payer organisation conferences
- RDC and interagency meetings
- Agricultural forums
- Collaborative projects.

8. RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The overarching Ten-Year Research and Development Plan 2024-2034, aims to steer investment in research on behalf of Australian sugarcane growers and millers and the Australian government. Five key principles guide SRA's approach to implementation: Focus on the long-term, promote adoption, be future-ready, build research capability and collaborate.

To maximise the benefits for the industry, SRA has implemented an integrated approach to direct R&D investments across five R&D programs:

1. Varieties: Create the potential
2. Agronomy and farming systems: Achieve the potential
3. Crop Protection: Safeguard the potential
4. Milling and Processing: Deliver the potential
5. Adoption: Reach the potential

Identification of priorities

Identification of research priorities according to these programs is achieved with the following engagement activities:

- Hosting in-person events across sugar regions, via shed meetings and field days and trials
- Regular CEO and Board engagement at the district level, including holding regional board visits once/year
- Holding research strategy workshops involving representatives from industry, government and the research community on a regular basis
- Continuing engagement with local extension providers, to involve productivity services companies and local private agronomists and advisors
- Conducting an annual grower and miller survey, along with relevant research specific surveys as required
- Maintaining a regional presence, utilising District Managers to work with industry and local productivity services companies, identify district specific productivity constraints and develop a RD&A plan to address these issues, and ensure the plan is delivered.
- Retain translation science capacity to assist industry with the uptake of R&D.

In 2023, SRA commenced delivery of an industry forum held with representatives from industry peak bodies (millers and growers), productivity services, industry service providers and Federal and Queensland Government stakeholders. Feedback was also received from industry stakeholders and research partners via written submissions. This feedback has been incorporated to fine-tune the Plan and ensure it reflects the needs and aspirations of our key stakeholders.

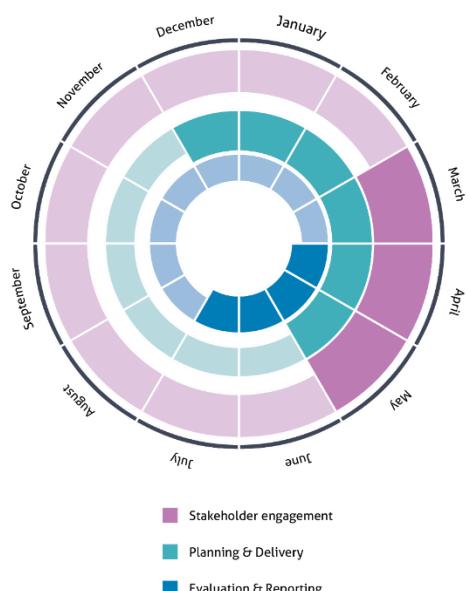


Figure 1. The SRA Research & Development Framework and Calendar of Stakeholder Engagement activities.

9. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

Monitoring and evaluation

SRA monitors its performance and progress towards key objectives in its Strategic Plan and Annual Operational Plan, reporting through performance meetings to government, its annual report and in updates to industry.

We also undertake annual surveys across key stakeholder groups such as growers, millers and research partners, along with event-based surveys to understand perceptions of SRA performance, the value of activities undertaken, and intention to adopt/use the information or practices shared.

Where SRA seeks input, it commits to share outcomes with participants, along with any improvement actions that will be taken as a result of the feedback received.

SRA also monitors and evaluates its performance against performance requirements of its funding partners, including through periodic independent reviews.

Stakeholder Engagement Recommendations

A review of performance was undertaken in April 2024, by external consultant, GHD. The review made a range of recommendations across the organisation where improvement focus could be made. SRA's Response Plan presents an opportunity to deepen engagement with industry and government stakeholders, garnering support to establish more frequent and meaningful engagements with all stakeholder representatives.

Recommendation	SRA Response	Status and Implementation
<p>SRA should seek to implement a more structured and strategic approach to its engagement, including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating its Consultation and Engagement Plan to include the recently approved Stakeholder Action Plan 2024, which provides an annual calendar outlining the 'who, what, why and when' of its key engagement activities as they relate to R&D investment planning and reporting. 	<p>SRA will undertake a more structured and strategic approach to engagement, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An updated Consultation and Engagement Plan will outline SRA's annual engagement cycle and processes that inform investment planning and procurement. Importantly, this plan will detail the activities of all business units in identifying RD&E priorities and document when and how engagement activities with stakeholders will occur. 	<p>Draft 2025 Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan has been updated with this information and should be used in conjunction with this Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Plan.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to facilitate regular tri-partite meetings (e.g. 6 monthly) between industry, DAFF, and SRA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three tripartite meetings will be scheduled each year during April, August, and December, as agreed with the Secretary of DAFF. Meetings will serve as a platform to reach agreements between SRA, growers, millers, and government on key initiatives. 	<p>Tripartite meetings scheduled April, August and December.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to ensure mutually agreed approaches to consultation and engagement with QDAF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an annual engagement cycle that will inform investment planning and procurement as per the Consultation and Engagement Plan including industry surveys, district engagement, engagement with government and industry representatives, and culminating in the R&D Showcase and Feedback Session. This will include redesigning SRA's Grower and Miller Surveys to capture levy payers' feedback on RD&E priorities, amongst other things, and shifting surveys from June to October. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on the back of the success of the SRA Research Update held recently in Brisbane, SRA should continue with plans to make this an annual opportunity for levy payers, research partners and co-investors to interact with the SRA Board, staff, and RFP. 	<p>SRA needs to move to combine the Strategic Plan and R&D Plan into a single, coherent document. Additionally, Key Performance Indicators will be simplified to make them more meaningful and effective.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documenting and publishing in AOPs and Annual Reports the approach to obtaining stakeholder input to inform the development of RD&A priorities and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the AOP to guide industry engagement and investment planning. This will undoubtedly strengthen the process in which investment allocations are made for core and contestable activities demonstrating alignment with industry and government RD&E priorities. 	

Previous review recommendations included the adoption of a more structured and strategic approach to stakeholder consultation as an immediate priority to build trust. SRA's annual stakeholder consultative cycle now includes the following activities:

- Our consultation process on research prioritisation is initiated with an annual grower and miller survey in October.
- We consult with stakeholders about priorities and investment allocation via tripartite three times/year, including with our key investment partner, QDAF.
- We facilitate a co-design process with stakeholders to identify gaps in our research portfolio between October and February hosting an R&D Showcase or Forum annually.
- Consultation with stakeholders is managed locally through our District Managers to pinpoint regional productivity constraints and investment priorities between December and February.

10. CONCLUSION

This stakeholder engagement plan for the sugarcane industry in Australia aims to foster a collaborative and transparent environment among all stakeholders.

By prioritising open communication, mutual respect, and shared goals, this plan seeks to address industry challenges and leverage opportunities for sustainable growth.

Continuous engagement and feedback will be essential to adapt and improve strategies, ensuring the long-term viability and success of the sugarcane industry. Together, we can build a resilient and prosperous future for all involved.



Phone	(07) 3331 3333
Brisbane Office	Level 10, 300 Queen Street, Brisbane QLD, Australia
Postal Address	GPO Box 133, Brisbane QLD 4001 Australia
Web	sugarresearch.com.au
Email	sra@sugarresearch.com.au