



A foundation for the future

2026-2031
Strategic Plan

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Sugar Research
Australia

Delivering a 10% productivity uplift

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation, SRA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country and their unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

A message from our Chair

I am pleased to present Sugar Research Australia's Strategic Plan for 2026-2031. It is grounded in a shared purpose and a clear focus: delivering world class research, development and adoption outcomes for Australia's sugarcane industry. This strategy sets our direction and reflects the organisation we continue to build, one that is collaborative, innovative and closely connected to the growing and milling communities we serve.

Throughout the past year, we've spoken with growers, millers, researchers, industry organisations, government and regional stakeholders across Queensland and New South Wales. What we heard shaped this plan, significantly sharpening our focus.

We are not only focused on developing higher-performing varieties but also on releasing varieties that have significantly more detailed and broader trial data in order to improve the reliability of their performance on farm, thereby reducing risk for growers and providing a platform for the faster adoption of new varieties.

We want to deploy the cutting-edge learnings of years of previous SRA research to lift our Variety Development Program to be the global leader.

This Plan sets a clear path to a productive, profitable and sustainable future for Australia's sugarcane industry. It positions SRA to partner with stakeholders through scientific excellence, accelerate innovation and adoption, and support the industry to navigate both challenges and emerging opportunities. The role of stakeholders in delivery of this Plan cannot be understated. The Plan outlines what we will do and why, how we will deliver the actions outlined with the help of our partners - including how SRA will contribute in lifting performance across the industry by 10 percent.

Our priorities for 2026-2031 focus on the work that will make the biggest difference: stronger varieties, smarter decisions in the paddock and faster adoption of what we know works.

Transforming breeding and variety improvement will upgrade SRA's variety pipeline by building genomics-led breeding, expanding remote sensing phenotyping, tissue culture production and improving trials to accelerate selection and deployment.

Lifting productivity through targeted Research and Development (R&D) and faster adoption will focus on the biggest constraints and drive uptake of proven practices, delivering practical solutions for growers.

There is exciting work ahead. We are backing it with additional expertise on the ground and a sharper focus on ensuring the organisation's operational foundations are set up for success. This plan brings together the two essential elements we need: innovative strategies and the organisational enablers to deliver them consistently, and at scale.

Transparency and accountability will guide how we track progress and report outcomes. We will keep listening, learning and adapting as the needs of growers, millers and partners evolve. The valued partnerships we have formed over many decades of working with the industry have been pivotal in the development of this Plan and will continue to be, providing essential guidance at every stage of its implementation.

The priorities raised, the challenges identified and the opportunities highlighted have all informed our direction. We sincerely thank everyone who contributed their time, experience and expertise.

This plan is a living document. We encourage growers, millers and partners to use it as an accountability tool and to help us bring it to life. Your feedback will continue to shape our direction as we move forward with confidence and purpose.

I look forward to the journey ahead.



Mike Barry
Chair

Genetic improvement ensures future varieties have materially better performance.



We are Sugar Research Australia

SRA is the sugar industry's research partner, combining grower and miller owned governance, levy-based funding, deep regional capability, and a network of research facilities across Queensland and northern New South Wales to drive a more profitable, resilient, and future ready sugarcane industry.

SRA is the specialist research organisation for the Australian sugarcane industry, established in 2013 and owned by the growers and millers it serves. As the declared Industry Services Body under the *Sugar Research and Development Services Act 2013*, SRA exists to deliver high impact research, development, and adoption outcomes that strengthen productivity, profitability, and sustainability across the value chain.

Structure

SRA operates as an industry owned company with governance aligned to statutory requirements and performance principles set by the Commonwealth. Its structure integrates research, adoption, variety development, and service delivery, ensuring that innovation moves efficiently from laboratory to paddock to mill. This integrated model is rare among RDCs, and means SRA conducts research internally and with partners externally, giving the industry a single, coordinated engine for innovation.

Funding Model

SRA's funding is built on a stable, co-investment model:

- Levy contributions from growers and millers
- Matching payments from the Commonwealth Government, and
- Additional investment from the Queensland Government and strategic partners.

This diversified model ensures long term continuity and the capacity to invest in transformational research that delivers commercial and on-farm impact.

Capability

SRA's capability spans world class plant breeding, agronomy, crop protection, and adoption expertise. Its research is practical, applied, and focused on measurable outcomes, such as improved varieties, pest and disease resistance, and farming systems innovation. SRA's staff are embedded in cane growing regions, ensuring local relevance and strong relationships with growers, millers and other industry stakeholders.

Network of Services and Facilities

SRA operates ten research farms, laboratories, and regional offices across Queensland and New South Wales, anchored by its state-of-the-art laboratory precinct and support offices in Brisbane. This network ensures that research reflects the diversity of Australia's cane growing environments and that services, such as disease screening and milling payment support are accessible and responsive.

Positioning the Industry for 2026–2031

Looking ahead, SRA's role is to help the industry seize new opportunities in advanced genetics, digital agriculture, sustainability and supply chain optimisation, while strengthening the fundamentals of yield, CCS and milling.

For growers and millers, the plan forward is simple:

- Stronger varieties that lift productivity and withstand emerging threats
- Sharper agronomy and farming systems that reduce cost and improve resilience
- Enhanced productivity, extracting more value from every tonne
- Faster adoption so research becomes real world practice sooner.

By maximising its trans-state research footprint, industry-owned governance and scientific capability, SRA is positioned to support the industry as its key research partner and the organisation growers and millers trust to turn innovation into prosperity.

On-farm adoption turns proven solutions into increased productivity for the whole industry



Sugar industry snapshot

Challenges

The Australian sugar industry is under considerable pressure. A rising Australian dollar, strong inflationary pressure on input costs, a reduction in area under cane, relatively flat yields and low world sugar price are having a serious impact on industry profitability.

The opportunity for SRA is to help shift the trajectory by focusing on varieties, crop protection and adoption via targeted, stronger district-level delivery, working closer with partners to reduce input costs and promote productivity.

Opportunities and strategic response

This context means SRA must focus on the areas where it can most directly influence productivity: varieties, crop protection, and adoption, via a partnership-led delivery model.

Lift adoption of proven practices

SRA can use its position across research, growers and millers to turn proven practices into broader on-farm adoption.

- There is underused value in existing research, technologies and farming management practices.
- SRA's 100+ year research legacy provides a strong base to identify what works.
- The focus must be on practices with clear productivity and / or profitability benefits.
- Adoption needs local validation, practical economics and trusted delivery partners.

Optimise existing varieties through better selection, management and decision support

SRA's breeding capability, trial data and industry knowledge position it to help growers extract more value from current and future varieties.

- SRA's variety development program reflects a distinctive strategic capability.
- SRA must demonstrate that new varieties perform under commercial conditions.
- New varieties remain critical, but near-term gains can also come from better selection and management of existing varieties, optimising what is already available. Growers need clearer, local information on which varieties perform best under their farm conditions.
- Variety decisions should be supported by commercial validation, local trial data, and practical digital decision tools.

Strengthen crop protection and biosecurity

SRA's sugar-specific research capability is a critical advantage in protecting crops from pests, diseases, weeds and biosecurity threats.

- Crop protection remains a core productivity lever (avoiding production losses).
- Regulatory pressure on existing tools increases the need for alternatives, for example the withdrawal of imidacloprid and paraquat.
- Biosecurity preparedness requires coordinated effort between SRA, industry and government.
- SRA's deep technical expertise and field knowledge can help accelerate practical solutions.
- Protecting productivity is essential to protecting cane supply and regional viability.

Deliver through districts

SRA's grower and miller relationships give it a platform to align national and local priorities, partners and delivery.

- District Impact Plans will target national and local priorities. Local delivery will target the specific constraints affecting each region.
- District Impact Plans will help address adoption barriers and cane supply risk.
- District Impact Plans also enable local consultation to identify new R&D needs aligned to industry priorities. This creates a clear line of sight from strategy to local action and measurable impact.

Partner to scale impact

SRA's role at the centre of industry, government and research networks gives it a platform to align effort and scale impact.

- Growers, millers, productivity services, representative organisations and government share an interest in stabilising cane supply.
- SRA will collaborate with Queensland and Australian Governments on shared priorities and public-good outcomes.
- SRA will partner with other RDCs, research organisations and commercial providers where common problems already have emerging solutions.
- Partnerships will increase reach, reduce duplication and accelerate adoption.
- Co-investment will focus on fewer, higher-impact priorities.

Scale data and digital solutions

Trusted data and practical digital tools can improve grower decisions, accelerate R&D and strengthen accountability.

- Convert SRA's variety, crop protection and adoption data into practical decision support.
- Build trusted data governance, integration and secure access.
- Help growers and advisors select varieties, apply proven practices and track performance.
- Use analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve research, development and deployment of varieties and technologies.
- Improve reporting and transparency to industry and government.

Enable bioeconomy opportunities carefully

SRA can help assess future bioeconomy opportunities while keeping investment focused on productivity.

- Biofuels, sustainable aviation fuel, renewables and cogeneration may create future value for the industry.
- SRA's role should be targeted: evidence, feedstock productivity (through growing more cane), farming system implications and partner support.

Improving cane productivity, reliability and profitability is SRA's most important near-term contribution to future bioeconomy options.



Listening and acting

SRA undertook extensive stakeholder consultation to ensure industry and government priorities were heard, understood and responded to.

- Industry surveys including more than 430 growers and millers
- 7 stakeholder engagement workshops with 220 industry and government stakeholders

to ensure priorities reflect broad industry representation and the voice of levy payers

- Consultation with Australian Federal Government and Queensland State Government
- SRA staff engagement workshops
- SRA Board engagement workshops.

What we heard

Focus on productivity and profitability.

Do fewer things well.

Improve varieties with better yield, CCS, ratoonability, disease resistance and regional adaptation, supported by commercial trials and clearer performance data.

Act urgently on pests and diseases including exotic threats to manage productivity losses.

Adoption is the gap.

SRA cannot deliver alone.

Be transparent and show progress.

Public benefit.

Act with urgency.

Focus on practical productivity gains, not more activity.

Optimise internal analysis and resourcing.

How the plan responds

An ambitious target of a 10% increase in productivity by 2031.

Three key focus areas, with only the most fundamental priorities to address productivity and clearer trade-offs.

Dedicated key focus area to varieties, with four priorities focused on genomics, phenotyping, trial optimisation and genetic modification.

Crop protection elevated as a key focus area, with four priorities including pests, diseases, weeds and exotics.

Adoption is a key focus area. District Impact Plans will enable adoption via demonstrations, benchmarking, decision tools, simple guides and partner delivery.

Partnerships elevated as a priority in our district model.

Measures, milestones, reporting and accountability are embedded in the Plan.

The Plan clearly reflects government priorities and public-good focused research.

Enable faster adoption of current research and create efficiencies that waste no time in delivering outcomes across all regions.

Optimise what is already available by identifying the best opportunities for productivity increases for growers.

Internal analysis to assist in identification of highest priorities and to ascertain best use of resources.

Crop protection is an urgent priority

[VIEW](#) a summary of feedback from the stakeholder engagement sessions and SRA's response

We are the Sugar Tech organisation

Purpose

We're here to partner with industry & government to lift productivity through being the science leader.

What we do

World-leading Variety Development
Transformational Research
Targeted Adoption

Aim

Support the Australian sugar industry to lift productivity by 10% by 2031.

How we showcase

- Protect the industry from major pest and disease losses; for example through breeding smut-resistant varieties
- SIX EASY STEPS™ nutrient management program, reducing environmental impacts whilst maintaining yield
- Long-term 10.3 to 1 return on investment driven by crop protection R&D
- Delivered global R&D firsts, including advances in plant breeding and harvesting best practice.

Our Culture

BEHAVIOURS

Building mutual trust, going above and beyond, being innovative, thinking big picture, better decision making, constructively passionate

SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

State of art equipment, leadership & mentoring, AI and decision support tools, robust performance dashboard, on-ground demonstration of research.

We live by our values

BE BRAVE

We show courage and integrity every day by speaking up, showing up, doing what's right, holding ourselves and each other accountable. We treat everyone with empathy, fairness, and respect.

OWN IT

We take full ownership of outcomes, not just tasks, and deliver what we commit to, fix what isn't working, and don't wait to be told when something matters.

LISTEN HARD

We listen to understand, not to respond. We respect different perspectives, challenge assumptions and make better decisions as a result.

THINK BIG

We're not afraid to challenge the status quo, think long-term, and design solutions that create real impact, not just short-term wins.

Focussing on productivity & profitability

SRA will strive to lift the productivity of the Australian sugar industry by 10% by 2031 with a focus on three key areas - Varieties, Crop Protection, and Adoption - that can make the greatest impact.

Historical productivity growth has been slow to deliver the step-change the industry needs, increasing by approximately 0.2% per year since 1975. Over the past 5 years, average cane yield has been approximately 89 t/ha¹. Reaching 98 t/ha by 2031 would represent a 10% uplift from this baseline.

Our ambition is clear – we will focus investment, partnerships and accountability on the industry priorities most likely to improve productivity and profitability.

The 10% uplift to 98 t/ha will be pursued across three pathways:

- 1 Near-term gains from adoption of proven practices and better use of existing varieties
- 2 Mid-term avoided losses from crop protection solutions
- 3 Longer-term genetic gain from a modernised variety development pipeline.



¹ (Source: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (2026): Agricultural commodities and trade data: *Agricultural Commodities Report*, accessed 30 June 2026.



Our ambition to increase productivity for the industry is clear

Delivering a 10% productivity uplift by 2031

SRA will strive to lift the productivity of the Australian sugar industry by 10% over this five year period focusing on high-impact variety development, research, adoption and partnerships – accelerating the shift from proven knowledge to real gains in yield, profitability and resilience.

The graphic below summarises the productivity pathway. It shows three connected levers: varieties, crop protection and adoption. They must operate as one system, with national priorities translated into district action and local constraints informing future R&D.

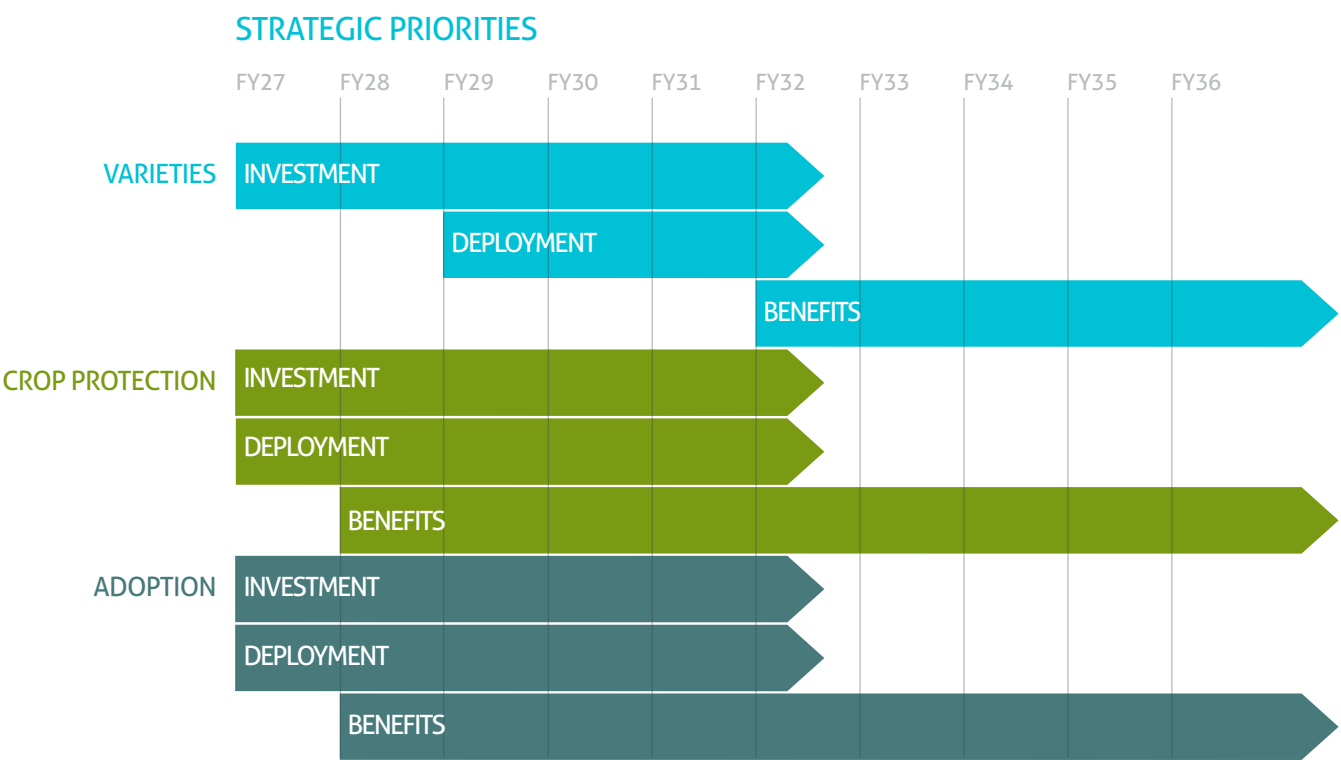
Adoption will drive the main near-term gains. There is no shortage of available practices to lift productivity. The issue is building grower confidence that they are commercially sound, locally workable and worth adopting at scale. That comes through working in the paddock with growers to test and refine new practices and systems, solving the practical issues and proving that using these new options stack up financially.

A national adoption priority is to enable better use of existing and new varieties through commercial validation and determining what is required to make each variety perform at its best across each district. Other work will involve improving access to approved disease-free planting material and tissue culture where viable; harvester best practice to reduce cane

loss; and practical nutrient, irrigation, weed, RSD hygiene and crop protection practices. These are the kinds of changes that can lift performance without waiting for a new generation of research to mature.

SRA will deliver this work through District Impact Plans. These plans will identify the greatest constraints in each mill area, set clear priorities, and align demonstrations, local validation, grower engagement and partner activity to achieve measurable productivity outcomes. The focus will be on integrated farm solutions, not isolated messages. A variety recommendation, for example, is more useful when it is linked to soil type, disease risk, nutrient requirements, irrigation, ratooning, maturity, CCS and harvest timing. Growers need clear economic evidence, simple guides, trusted advisers and local proof before changing practice.

Crop protection will reduce avoidable losses in the near to mid-term and strengthen our resilience to future incursions or outbreaks. SRA will focus on the threats that matter most to cane supply and grower returns, including canegrubs, soldier fly, Pachymetra, RSD, nematodes, weeds and high-risk exotic threats. The pathway is practical: earlier detection, better diagnostics, validated control options, alternatives to at-risk chemicals, and deployment through district partners where the solution is relevant and commercially ready.



10% uplift by 2031

Measured through improved tonnes cane/ha



Improved varieties will build stronger long-term productivity. SRA will modernise the variety development pipeline through better trial design, deeper commercial validation, genomics, phenotyping, digital tools and stronger release decisions. The immediate opportunity in the adoption pathway is to help growers extract more value from existing and near-release varieties. The longer-term opportunity is to increase the probability that future varieties outperform benchmarks for yield, CCS, ratoonability, disease resistance and regional adaptation under commercial conditions.

The timeline above shows why delivery must be staged. Adoption investment, deployment and benefits begin early because many solutions already exist and our need for productivity improvement is immediate. Crop protection benefits build as research moves through validation and deployment. Variety benefits take longer because breeding, trialling and commercial confidence require time, but they create the foundation for sustained gains beyond 2031.

SRA cannot deliver the uplift alone. Growers, millers, productivity boards, advisers, harvesting contractors, government, research organisations, technology providers and co-operative growers all have essential roles. SRA's role is to coordinate effort, focus investment, provide science leadership, support trusted local delivery, measure progress and report honestly on what is working. Through disciplined partnerships and practical district delivery, the 10% uplift becomes a shared industry pathway, not just an organisational target.



SRA will deliver this strategy with a partnership mindset.

VARIETIES: Driving the evolution of Australian sugar

SRA will modernise the variety development pipeline to develop varieties that outperform benchmark standards for productivity and resilience traits under commercial conditions.

Why it matters

Varieties remain one of SRA's most important contributions to long-term industry productivity. Stakeholders were clear that SRA must deliver varieties that perform commercially, not just progress through the breeding pipeline.

The issue is not only developing new varieties. It is developing better varieties, proving they work under commercial conditions, and helping growers select and manage the right varieties for their farms to optimise what is already available and achieve yield potential.

The immediate opportunity is to improve confidence in existing and near-release varieties through better local data and commercial validation, and through clearer decision-support tools. Longer-term gains will come from a modernised breeding pipeline that improves genetic gain, strengthens release decisions and reduces the risk of poor-performing varieties reaching industry.

KEY PRIORITIES

1 Implement genomic-based breeding

SRA will use genomics, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and prediction tools to make better breeding decisions earlier. By combining DNA information, field performance data and predictive analytics, SRA can identify promising parent combinations and select seedlings for key traits much earlier in the breeding cycle.

This priority improves the speed, accuracy and efficiency of selection for multiple traits at once, including yield, CCS, fibre, ratoonnability and disease resistance. Genomic tools can help reduce the age of parents used in crossing from 18 years to as little as five years.

GOAL

By June 2031, implement genomic selection across the variety development pipeline with prediction tools for at least 10 priority traits, 10,000 clones genotyped annually, and progress tracked through reducing the average age of parents in the crossing cycle, modelling improvements in potential yield and trait combinations in progeny.

IMPACT

The expected impact is improved speed, accuracy and efficiency of selecting for high-value traits, including yield, CCS, fibre, ratoonnability and disease resistance. It will enable SRA to identify the best parents much earlier, reducing reliance on traditional selection cycles that can currently take 18 years, down to two years. Based on a 30-year assessment, the expected value is estimated at \$77.1 million and 43.1:1 return on investment¹.

2 Improve phenotyping through remote sensing and AI

SRA will use drones, handheld sensors, NIR and AI-assisted tools to collect better trait data earlier and more efficiently. Better data is essential for better breeding decisions. It will improve the scale, consistency and quality of trait data used for selection, including productivity traits and disease resistance. It will also reduce reliance on manual assessments and improve safety and efficiency.

GOAL

By June 2031, deploy remote sensing, NIR and AI-assisted phenotyping across priority field and glasshouse trials to collect annual data on key offensive and defensive traits, including TCH, CCS, fibre, lodging, red rot and Pachymetra.

IMPACT

The expected impact is improved quality, scale and consistency of trait data used in the breeding program. This will reduce reliance on manual assessments, improve trial safety and efficiency, and provide better data to support genomic prediction and variety selection decisions.

3 Optimise trials for commercial performance

SRA will improve the trial system so varieties are tested in ways that better reflect agroecological regions, commercial growing conditions, ratoon performance and genotype × environment × management (G × E × M) interactions.

This priority is included because growers need confidence that new varieties will perform under local commercial conditions. A revised trial system will improve evidence for release decisions, support regional adaptation trials and reduce the risk of poor-performing varieties reaching industry.

GOAL

Design a revised variety trialling system by December 2028 and implement it across priority trial regions by June 2031 to improve assessment of G × E × M interactions and genetic gain per unit cost.

IMPACT

The expected outcome is stronger evidence on how varieties perform under commercial conditions, including regional adaptation and ratoon performance. This will support better release decisions and reduce the risk of poor-performing releases. The impact will be increased adoption of varieties that lift productivity.

4 Assess genetic modification potential through due diligence

SRA will complete due diligence on genetic modification (GM), including export market acceptance, regulatory requirements, intellectual property, freedom-to-operate, delivery options, processing implications, social licence and grower value proposition.

This priority is included because GM may offer future opportunities for traits such as pest resistance or herbicide tolerance, but further investment should only proceed if there is a clear technical, commercial, regulatory and market case. This work will support a clear proceed, pause or stop decision by June 2028.

GOAL

By June 2028, complete due diligence review of genetically modified sugarcane covering export market acceptance, regulatory requirements, intellectual property and freedom-to-operate, delivery options, processing implications, social licence and grower value proposition.

IMPACT

The expected impact is clear evidence to decide whether GM sugarcane is viable in Australia. This will help SRA focus only on GM opportunities with a strong grower value proposition and make an informed decision on whether future investment should proceed, pause or stop.



¹Marsden Jacob Associates. (2026). Impact assessment of SRA-DPI projects ending 2023-24 and 2024-25: Report for Sugar Research Australia and Queensland DPI.



How it contributes to productivity

Variety development contributes to productivity in two ways:

- 1 In the mid-term, growers will get more value from clones and varieties in the current pipeline approaching the final stages through better local performance data and commercial validation, reducing the risk of poor-performing releases.
- 2 In the long-term, it strengthens the breeding pipeline so future varieties have a higher probability of outperforming benchmark varieties under commercial conditions.

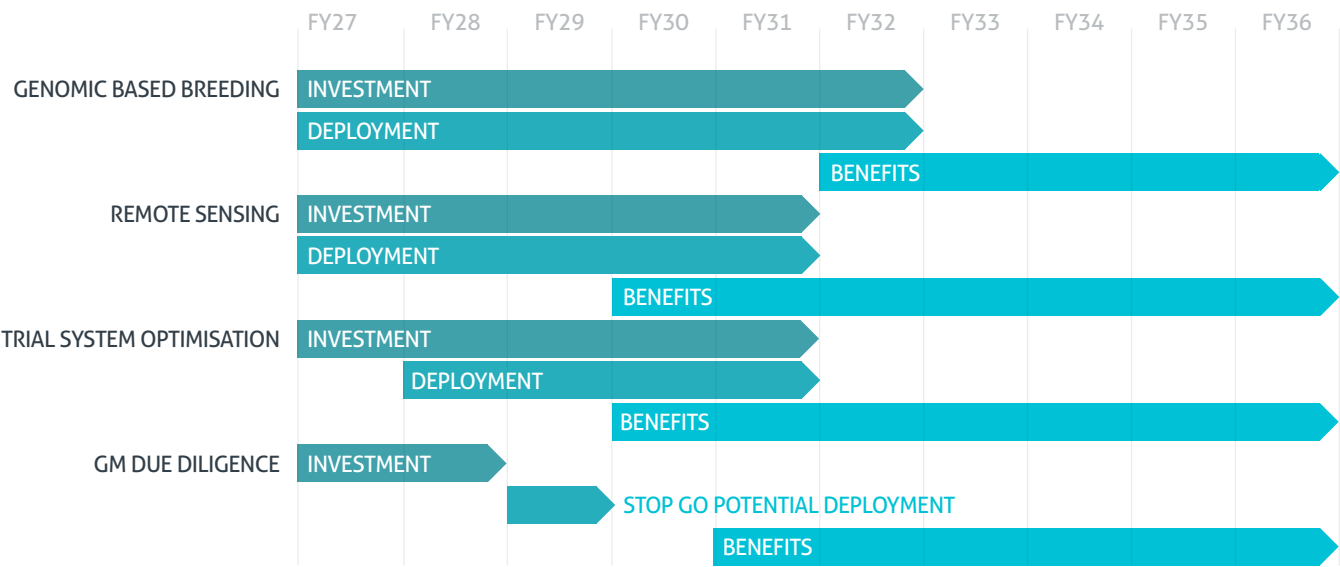
Productivity benefits are expected through improved TCH, TSH, CCS, fibre, ratoonability, crop longevity, disease resistance, regional adaptation and better matching of varieties to farm conditions.

How it will be delivered with partners

SRA will deliver this work with:

- Growers and productivity services to validate varieties under local commercial conditions
- Millers to use cane quality, CCS and production data to strengthen performance analysis
- Universities and research partners to develop technologies such as genomics, statistics, phenotyping and AI
- The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to support co-investment and deliver public-good outcomes
- Regional Variety Committees to strengthen data-driven release decisions
- Productivity services and other industry stakeholders to help growers select and manage varieties to maximise yield potential.

VARIETIES



DELIVERY ROADMAP

Key priority	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31
Genomic-based breeding	Genotype 5,000 clones	Expand genotyping and prediction equations	Embed genomic values in selection decisions	Genotype 9,000 clones	Genotype 10,000 clones annually; track progress toward doubling genetic gain
Remote sensing and AI phenotyping	Validate drone, NIR and AI tools for priority traits	Expand data collection across priority trials	Use AI tools for red rot and Pachymetra assessment	Integrate trait data into genomic prediction	Routine use across priority field and glasshouse trials
Trial system optimisation	Develop trial costing model and assess trial scenarios	Design revised trialling system	Start transition to revised trial system	Expand regional adaptation and 4-ratoon evidence	Implement across priority trial regions
GM due diligence	Assess export market acceptance, regulation, IP and value proposition	Complete GM due diligence review by June 2028	Decision gate by SRA Board, proceed, pause or stop	Next-stage work only if approved	Next-stage work only if approved

What we will measure and report annually

SRA will report progress annually against a focused set of measures that show whether the variety program is being delivered, whether the breeding system is improving, and whether the work is strengthening the pathway to productivity uplift.

Delivery progress

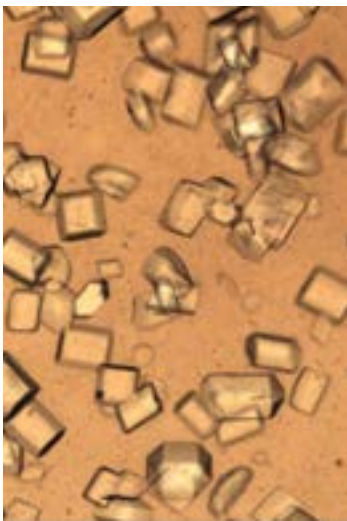
- Genomic selection implemented, with scaling of genotyping from 5,000 clones in 2027 to 10,000 by 2031.
- Remote sensing, NIR and AI-assisted phenotyping deployed across priority trials.
- Revised trial system designed by December 2028 and implemented by June 2031.

Outcome progress

- Progress tracked against the target of reducing average parental age from 18 to five years, and demonstrating improvements in yield, disease reaction levels and trait combinations of new populations of clones against historical levels (up to 2026).
- Prediction tools developed and updated for at least 10 priority traits.

Impact pathway

- Results from new data analytic methods presented to industry participants and used to fast-track potential releases.
- New and existing varieties tracked by district for commercial performance, adoption and benchmark outperformance.



[VIEW THE VARIETY PROGRAM ACTION PLANS HERE](#)

CROP PROTECTION: Minimising threats and reducing losses

SRA will focus crop protection research on the most significant endemic and exotic threats to the Australian sugar industry, developing practical solutions that reduce production losses and strengthen biosecurity preparedness.

Why it matters

Pests, diseases and weeds are major causes of avoidable production losses. Some existing controls are at risk, and serious exotic threats are present in nearby countries. Protecting crops from these threats is critical to improving productivity, maintaining cane supply and supporting national biosecurity preparedness.

KEY PRIORITIES

5 Develop solutions for priority endemic pests, diseases and weeds

Develop and deploy practical management options for threats already affecting Australian sugarcane production, including canegrubs, soldier fly, Pachymetra, ratoon stunting disease, nematodes and weeds. SRA will also consider other emerging threats that are rated extreme or high risk as required.

GOAL

By June 2031, develop and validate at least three commercially ready solutions for priority threats and support deployment through District Impact Plans.

IMPACT

The expected outcome is practical tools that help growers manage priority threats and reduce avoidable losses. For deployed solutions, SRA will target uptake across at least 25% of affected or priority hectares within three years of release and aim for a 10% reduction in losses from priority threats.

This priority targets established pests, diseases, and weeds affecting sugarcane.

Key initiatives:

- Canegrubs: Virus-based biopesticides
- Soldier fly: New insecticide options
- Pachymetra: Lower-cost soil assays, fallow control and soil spore reduction methods
- Ratoon stunting disease (RSD): Detection using NIR spectroscopy and decontamination harvester systems
- Nematodes: Genomics and RNA sequencing to identify resistance
- Weeds: Management guidelines (e.g. mill mud use).

6 Fast-track alternatives to at-risk controls

Prioritise alternatives for critical controls that may become unavailable or restricted, particularly canegrub and weed control options.

Key initiatives:

- Canegrub control: Development of new insecticide alternatives to imidacloprid
- Grass weeds control: Integrated weed management approaches to reduce reliance on paraquat.

GOAL

By June 2030, develop and validate at least one cane grub control option and one integrated weed management option to reduce reliance on at-risk controls. Cane grub control products will be progressed with commercial partners for registration and market availability; weed management options will be deployed through District Impact Plans.

IMPACT

The expected outcome is a stronger pipeline of practical alternatives where key controls are at risk of restriction or withdrawal. For deployed solutions, SRA will target uptake across at least 75% of affected or priority hectares within three years of release and aim for a 30% reduction in losses from cane grubs and grass weeds in the absence of controls.

This priority focusses on replacing high-risk or restricted chemicals.

7 Strengthen preparedness for exotic threats

Improve diagnostics, surveillance, and preparedness for high-risk threats such as moth borers, phytoplasmas, sugarcane streak mosaic virus. This priority enhances biosecurity and rapid response capability.

Key initiatives:

- Phytoplasmas: Vector management strategies
- Sugarcane streak mosaic virus: Development of management options
- Exotic moth borers: Insecticide options for incursion response and Conservation biological control
- Surveillance & diagnostics: Biosecurity Trakka platform to share high throughput sequencing data between jurisdictions and regional surveillance partnerships.

GOAL

By June 2031, develop and validate at least one data sharing system to support diagnostics and surveillance, and advance improved diagnostics and surveillance approaches, and response ready management options for high-risk threats.

IMPACT

The expected outcome is stronger industry and government readiness to detect, assess and respond to priority exotic and emerging threats. The expected impact is faster detection, better response capability, and reduced risk of severe production losses if a priority threat enters or spreads in Australia.

How crop protection contributes to productivity

SRA will focus on priority threats where better detection, practical control options and adoption in affected areas can protect yield, returns and cane supply and reduce production by up to 40% in affected areas. This includes endemic threats already affecting production, at-risk chemical controls, and exotic threats that could disrupt cane supply and reduce production by up to 40% in affected areas.

The productivity pathway is clear: earlier detection, practical controls, stronger adoption and fewer avoidable losses. This will help growers protect yield and contribute to SRA's 10% productivity uplift ambition.

How it will be delivered with partners

SRA will deliver crop protection research with partners including:

- Australian Government and DPI for biosecurity alignment, regulatory pathways, and co-investment
- Growers and productivity services for field validation and local deployment
- Millers for cane supply priorities and data
- Other RDCs and plant health networks for shared risks and co-investment
- Universities and research organisations for technical capability
- Agrichemical and technology companies for product development and commercial pathways.

Partnerships are essential because many crop protection solutions require regulatory pathways, commercial partners, field validation, co-investment and trusted local delivery.

Delivery roadmap

SRA will manage crop protection as a coordinated portfolio, with each priority threat managed from research through to validation, deployment and adoption.

Projects will move through a clear stage-gate pathway: preliminary evaluation, experimental testing, pre-commercial assessment, commercial deployment and availability to industry. At each stage, SRA will assess industry value, technical feasibility, cost, partner commitment, regulatory requirements, pathway to adoption, and time to impact before deciding whether to proceed, pause, redesign, partner or stop.

This will help SRA focus investment on the threats that matter most, deliver near-ready solutions faster, and build medium and long-term options for endemic, emerging and exotic threats. SRA will work with research, commercial, government and district partners so solutions are developed with a clear pathway to registration, deployment and adoption.



IMPACT
OF CROP
PROTECTION
PRIORITIES
=2.5%



What we will measure and report annually

SRA will report annually on whether crop protection research is progressing, whether priority threats have practical solution pathways, and whether the work is reducing risk for growers and industry.

Delivery progress

- Priority threats with defined solution pathways
- Projects progressing through stage gates on time and within scope
- Co-investment and delivery partnerships established for priority threats.

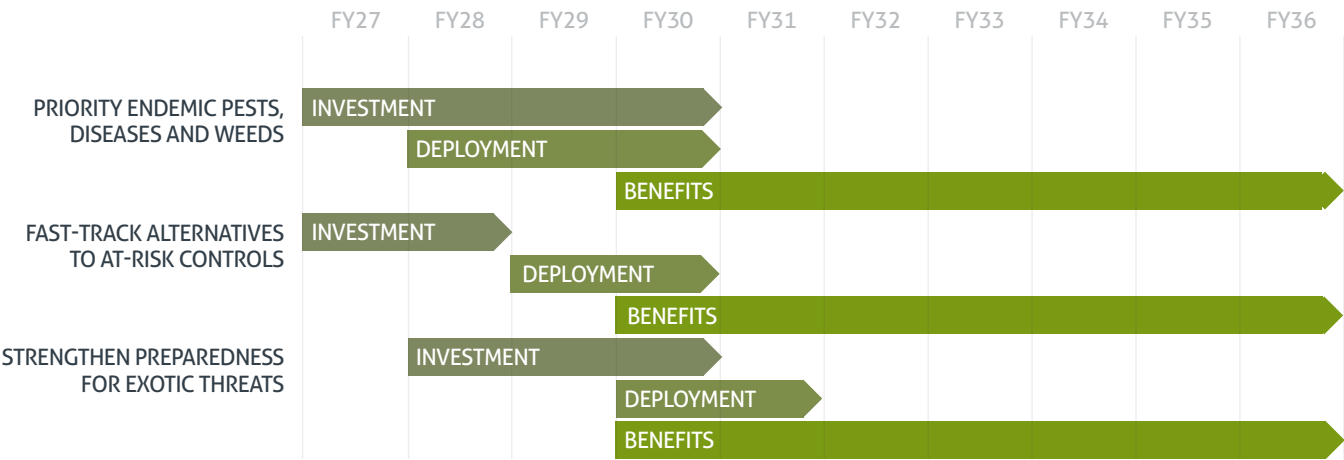
Outcome progress

- Practical control options validated for priority endemic threats
- Alternatives progressed for at-risk controls including canegrub and weed management options
- Diagnostics, surveillance or preparedness tools developed for priority exotic and emerging threats.

Impact pathway

- Adoption of deployed crop protection solutions in affected / priority areas
- Estimated avoidable losses reduced where solutions are adopted.

CROP PROTECTION



[VIEW THE CROP PROTECTION ACTION PLANS HERE](#)

DELIVERY ROADMAP LEGEND

Preliminary evaluation: test whether the idea is worth progressing.
Experimental testing: test whether the solution works.
Pre-commercial assessment: validate in commercial / operational setting, feasibility and adoption pathway.
Commercial deployment: prepare for industry use with delivery or commercial partners.
Available to industry: ready for growers, advisors or partners to use.

DELIVERY ROADMAP

Threat	Solution	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31
Develop solutions for priority endemic pests, diseases and weeds						
Canegrubs	Virus biopesticide		Experimental testing			
Soldier fly	Novel insecticide options	Experimental testing		Pre-commercial assessment		Commercial deployment
Pachymetra	Lower-cost soil assays		Experimental testing		Pre-commercial assessment	
Pachymetra	Fallow control methods	Commercial deployment			Available to industry	
Pachymetra	Methods to reduce spore persistence in soil		Experimental testing			Pre-commercial assessment
Ratoon stunting disease	NIR spectroscopy to detect RSD in mill cane supply	Pre-commercial assessment	Commercial deployment	Available to industry		
Ratoon stunting disease	On-board harvester decontamination unit		Pre-commercial assessment		Commercial deployment	
Nematodes	Improved diagnosis of parasitic nematode using AI assisted technology	Experimental testing		Pre-commercial assessment		Commercial deployment
Nematodes	Genomic tools and spatial RNA-seq to identify resistance genes	Experimental testing			Pre-commercial assessment	
Weeds	Weed management guidelines for mill mud users	Pre-commercial assessment		Commercial deployment	Available to industry	
Fast-track alternatives to at-risk controls						
Canegrubs	Insecticide option to replace imidacloprid	Pre-commercial assessment		Commercial development	Available to industry, subject to partner registration and supply	Adoption support
Weeds	Integrated weed management without paraquat	Pre-commercial assessment		Commercial deployment	Available to industry	Adoption support
Strengthen preparedness for exotic threats						
Exotic moth borers	Conservation biological control	Experimental testing				
Phytoplasmas	White leaf disease vector management	Preliminary evaluation		Experimental testing		
Sugarcane streak mosaic virus	Management options	Preliminary evaluation		Experimental testing		Pre-commercial assessment
Surveillance and diagnostics	Biosecurity Trakka	Pre-commercial assessment				Commercial deployment
Surveillance and diagnostics	Regional surveillance with cross-sector partners		Experimental testing			

Footnote: This roadmap shows a portfolio of near-term, medium-term and longer-term crop protection solutions. Projects will only progress where evidence supports continued investment and there is a clear pathway to deployment.

ADOPTION: Accelerating adoption of proven solutions

SRA will help growers take up proven, practical tools and practices that lift yield, reduce losses and improve returns, while supporting increased cane supply for mills.

Why it matters

Adoption of improved practices at scale is the fastest practical pathway to lift productivity over the next five years. The industry already has varieties and practices that can improve performance. The task is to test them locally, explain them clearly and support growers to use them through trusted district partners.

Growers have been clear that they want practical solutions, not more activity. SRA will therefore focus on turning research into practices and systems that are ready to use on farm and supported by clear evidence of value.

Adoption is also where SRA's partnership model becomes real. National partnerships will reduce duplication, lower delivery cost and improve service quality. District Impact Plans will then focus effort on the main local constraints in each mill area and coordinate delivery with productivity boards, growers, mills, advisers and other partners.

What we will do

SRA will use a practical adoption model that brings growers, advisers, mills, productivity boards and researchers together to identify constraints, co-design solutions and test them under commercial farming conditions. This is not a simple technology-transfer model. It is a disciplined extension model: identify the problem, select proven options, adapt them locally, demonstrate commercial value, build partner capability and scale through trusted channels.

SRA's role is to facilitate the process of turning research into practical tools, guides, products and management practices by working alongside industry partners and growers. Solutions will be developed, tested, refined and scaled through evidence generated in real farming systems, so implementation teams can build confidence steadily, avoid over-promising and focus on practices with clear value.

KEY PRIORITIES

8 Accelerate adoption of proven profitable practices and technologies

SRA's focus is to help achieve a 10% uplift in productivity by 2031 through disciplined development, demonstration and delivery of profitable commercial practices.

SRA will package and deploy proven practices that can lift yield, reduce losses and improve returns at national and local scales. Practical initiatives include:

- Enable growers to optimise variety selection and management by developing clear agronomic packages for priority varieties, including soils, nutrition, irrigation, disease risk, ratooning, harvest timing and expected performance under district conditions.
- Build adviser capability through practical training and field-based learning so district partners can help growers test, adapt and adopt new practices.
- Implement District Impact Plans at the local level to identify and resolve those issues that are holding back productivity and profitability.

GOAL

By June 2031, SRA will have implemented national and local adoption initiatives that support uptake of validated solutions across at least 15% of total farming hectares. Reporting will focus on uptake where practices are adopted and on evidence of improvement in farm profitability and/or tonnes of sugar per hectare.

IMPACT

The intended impact is faster, more confident uptake of practical solutions that help growers improve yield, reduce losses and lift returns. This will contribute to the 10% productivity uplift by focusing on practices and technologies that are already proven, close to deployment or able to be validated locally. Based on an internal cost-benefit analysis, the estimated economic value is \$22M over 20 years, with a 12:1 return on investment.

9 Assess tissue culture expansion potential through due diligence and scale if viable

Tissue culture has potential to multiply priority varieties faster and support cleaner planting material. However, demand, cost and delivery risks must be resolved before major investment. SRA will test whether tissue culture can provide a better pathway for approved disease-free planting material without disrupting existing clean seed systems.

Scale-up will only proceed if pilot evidence demonstrates grower demand, cost-effective supply, plant quality, survival, logistics, disease-management value and sustainable delivery through trusted district partners.

Any future model will be developed with productivity boards and nursery partners and will complement, not replace, existing district systems.

GOAL

By June 2029, SRA will complete due diligence and pilot testing of tissue culture delivery models with growers, productivity services, nurseries and other partners. Scale-up will only proceed if the model demonstrates clear grower demand, cost-effective supply, quality-assured plant material and financially sustainable delivery through trusted district partners. If proven viable, by June 2031 SRA will establish a district-based delivery model that supports increased use of approved disease-free planting material for priority varieties.

IMPACT

The intended outcome is a clear decision on whether tissue culture can be scaled through a cost-effective, quality-assured delivery model that works with productivity services and existing clean seed partners.

If viable, tissue culture will help multiply and distribute approved disease-free planting material faster. The expected impact is reduced disease-related production losses, including from RSD, stronger grower confidence in clean planting material and a delivery model that complements existing clean seed systems rather than replacing them.

How it contributes to productivity

Adoption contributes to productivity by shortening the path from proven research to practice change on farm.

SRA will contribute to productivity at two levels.

At a national level, the priority agronomic focus will be the development and implementation of packages that inform growers how new and existing varieties can be best managed, with clear guidance on soils, nutrition, irrigation, disease risk, ratooning and harvest timing. Expected yield and profitability benefits will be tested and reported as packages validated under commercial conditions.

At a local level, District Impact Plans will focus effort on the highest-value constraints in each mill area and drive practical, locally specific outcomes for the industry.

SRA will develop District Impact Plans with local partners each year, focused on the adoption priorities most likely to increase productivity and returns.



IMPACT OF
ADOPTION
PRIORITIES
=4%



How it will be delivered with partners

SRA will deliver adoption through District Impact Plans and partner-led deployment, not through isolated one-off activities.

Productivity boards will be central delivery partners because they have trusted local relationships, district knowledge, and established clean seed and extension networks. SRA will work with them to identify local priorities, test solutions, engage growers and deploy practices through existing district systems.

Implementation will be steady and staged: agree priorities, define roles, establish demonstration sites, develop guides, train advisers, measure grower response and adapt. This will allow local teams to maintain momentum without overloading growers, partners or staff.

For tissue culture and approved disease-free planting material, SRA will work with productivity boards and clean seed partners to test models that complement, rather than replace, current systems. This may include roles in distribution,

grower engagement, quality assurance, local demonstrations and demand feedback.

Other partners will include:

- growers and grower groups
- millers
- industry representative organisations
- harvesting contractors
- tissue culture providers and nurseries
- technology suppliers
- the Australian and Queensland Governments
- other research organisations and RDCs.

Delivery roadmap

SRA will track adoption delivery through a five year roadmap and regular progress reporting to show whether priority solutions are moving through a practical pipeline: design, validation, partner readiness, grower engagement, uptake and measurable impact.

The roadmap is deliberately staged so implementation teams can work steadily, learn from evidence and adjust delivery before scaling.

DELIVERY ROADMAP

Priority	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31
Agronomic packages	Identify priority varieties and develop templates	Validate locally	Expand across districts data	Update using performance impact	Review commercial evidence (adding evidence)
District Impact Plans	Establish governance and first plans	Refine and implement	Refine and implement	Refine and implement	Complete five-year review
Commercial validation	Select sites and hosts	Expand sites	Compare performance	Maintain validation	Consolidate evidence
Partner capability	Confirm roles and channels	Collaborate with partners	Expand rollout	Strengthen accountability	Confirm long-term model
Tissue culture due diligence	Assess models and design pilot	Run pilot and test demand, cost and quality	Decision gate: stop, redesign or scale	Scale only if viable	Embed proven model

What we will measure and report annually

SRA will report progress against a focused set of adoption measures. The measures are practical and the list is short enough to maintain while being useful to guide management decisions. Early reporting will focus more on reach, readiness, trial and confidence; later reporting will place increasing weight on hectares, productivity and profitability as adoption evidence matures.

Delivery pipeline

District Impact Plan delivery

Report the number and percentage of agreed District Impact Plan actions completed on schedule and to a suitable quality, by district.

Validation and demonstration activity

Report the number of local demonstration sites, commercial validation sites and grower groups established, including the practices being tested, the evidence collected and the next decision point.

Partner capability and delivery readiness

Report the number of productivity boards, advisers, mills and delivery partners engaged or trained, and whether partner roles, delivery channels and accountabilities are clear.

Tissue-culture stage gates

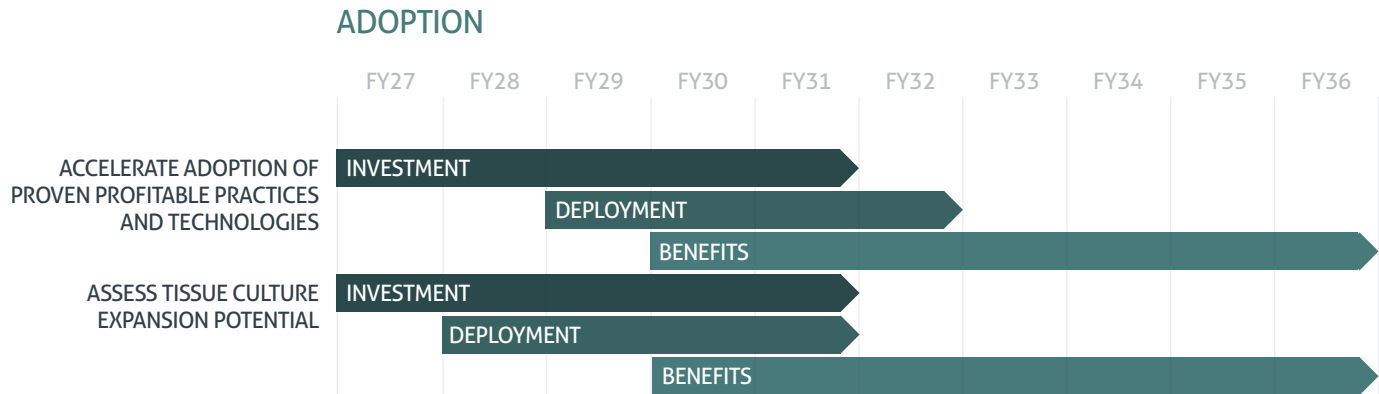
For tissue culture, report due diligence, pilot progress and decision gates required to stop, redesign or scale.

Outcome progress

- Grower awareness, confidence and intent to adopt. Report benchmark survey results showing grower awareness, confidence, intent to trial and willingness to adopt each priority practice.
- Practice uptake across target hectares or grower segments. Report uptake of validated solutions by target hectares, grower segments or districts, with progress toward the 2031 goal of adoption across at least 15% of total farming hectares.
- Measured productivity and profitability signals. Report evidence of productivity or profitability improvement where practices have been adopted, including changes in yield, CCS, tonnes of sugar per hectare, harvest losses, disease losses, gross margin or input costs where data is available.

Impact pathway

- Estimated productivity and/or profitability benefit from adopted practices, reported with clear assumptions and the level of confidence in the available evidence.
- Grower and partner confidence in the relevance, practicality and value of adoption support, tracked through regular feedback and used to improve delivery.



A partnership mindset

SRA will deliver this strategy with a partnership mindset. Lifting industry productivity cannot be achieved by SRA alone. It requires growers, millers, productivity services, Federal and State Government departments, research organisations, RDCs, and commercial partners to work together on the highest-priority industry problems.

SRA will help coordinate action around shared industry priorities. Where science leadership is required, particularly in varieties and crop protection, SRA will lead the technical direction. Delivery will be planned and implemented with partners so solutions are tested, validated and deployed in ways that work locally.

Delivery will be structured through two linked streams:

- National adoption priorities: High-value opportunities that apply across the industry and can be demonstrated, adapted and scaled in each district. SRA's adoption team will work with researchers, district staff and partners to turn research into practical tools, guides, demonstrations and management practices growers can use.
- Local district priorities: Local constraints and opportunities identified through District Impact Plans. These plans will guide practical action in each cane-growing region and ensure SRA's R&D and adoption effort is focused on what matters most locally.

District Impact Plans will turn priorities into action by setting out agreed actions, roles, timing and measures. They will be developed with local stakeholders and reviewed each year, with local feedback helping shape future R&D, adoption activity and partner support.

Productivity boards will be central delivery partners because they have trusted grower relationships, local knowledge, clean seed systems and extension networks. SRA will work with them to test solutions, engage growers, train advisers and deploy practices through existing district systems.

SRA will also work with:

- Millers on cane supply, data, harvest timing and district priorities
- DAFF on co-investment, biosecurity, extension, and regulatory matters
- RDCs and research organisations on shared R&D challenges
- Commercial partners on product development, supply and commercial pathways
- Industry representatives on grower engagement and adoption.

SRA will also take a more strategic approach to attracting investment from outside the industry. We will package priority problems into clear investment cases, identify the partners best placed to contribute funding or capability, and pursue co-investment with government, RDCs, research organisations and commercial partners where it can accelerate delivery, reduce duplication and increase value for the industry.

To make this work, District Impact Plans will set out agreed annual actions, roles, timing and measures. SRA and partners will use joint planning forums, train-the-trainer activities, regular check-ins and grower feedback to keep delivery aligned and resolve issues early.

For research and commercial partnerships, SRA will build clear milestones, decision gates, partner roles, data arrangements and delivery pathways into project design from the start.

SRA's aim is simple: align effort around the most important problems, deliver practical solutions locally, and report transparently on progress, outcomes and what needs to change.

Partnerships reduce duplication, lower costs and improve service quality



Disciplined investment

SRA will align investment to the priorities most likely to improve productivity and deliver value to growers, millers and government investors.

Investment will focus on three strategic focus areas: developing better varieties, reducing losses from disease, pests and weeds, and accelerating adoption. These priorities will be supported by district delivery and partnerships, organisational enablers and core services.

SRA will apply a disciplined investment approach by:

- Prioritising work with a clear pathway to productivity uplift
- Using partnerships and co-investment to increase reach, capability and value for money, applying decision gates to major R&D and deployment investments
- Balancing near-term impact with longer-term delivery.

The forecast below shows expenditure aligned to the strategic focus areas. During the transition to the new strategy, some expenditure will continue in existing commitments outside the three focus areas. This is most relevant to the Crop Protection and other R&D line, which includes existing R&D commitments in areas such as agronomy and farming systems. Over time, SRA will shift more R&D investment toward crop protection, while maintaining targeted investment in other areas where there is strong co-investment, partner leadership or clear strategic need.

Forecast expenditure and income may change over the plan period as the Board makes annual investment decisions, priorities are staged or deferred, co-investment is secured, and activities progress through decision gates.

SRA will report annually on income and expenditure against strategic priorities through the Annual Operating Plan and will report actual expenditure and progress in the Annual Report at the end of each financial year.

INCOME FORECAST

	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31
Levy and Australian Government Matching Contributions	28.6	29.9	30.2	31.4	31.7
Queensland Government Co-Investment	4.5	4.6	4.7	3.3	3.3
Business Income	4.0	4.0	3.3	3.4	3.5
Total Income	37.1	38.5	38.2	38.1	38.5

OPERATING EXPENDITURE FORECAST

	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31
Varieties	13.6	14.1	14.5	14.5	14.5
Crop protection and other R&D	11.1	11.5	10.8	9.6	9.4
Adoption	6.1	6.4	6.6	6.6	6.8
Total Operational Expenditure	30.8	32.0	31.9	30.7	30.7
Enablers	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1
General and Administrative	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.4
Total Overhead Expenditure	6.6	6.8	7.0	7.2	7.5
Total Expenditure	37.4	38.8	38.9	37.9	38.2

ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Key Focus Areas	Strategic Priority	National Agricultural Innovation Priorities	National Science and Research Priorities
Varieties	Implement genomic-based breeding	Priority 1	Priority 5
	Improve phenotyping through remote sensing and AI	Priority 1, Priority 4	Priority 5
	Optimise trials for commercial performance	Priority 1, Priority 2	Priority 5
	Assess genetic modification potential through due diligence	Priority 1	Priority 2, Priority 5
Crop protection	Develop solutions for priority endemic pests, diseases and weeds	Priority 3	Priority 5
	Fast-track alternatives to at-risk controls	Priority 3	Priority 5
	Strengthen preparedness for exotic threats	Priority 3	Priority 5
Adoption	Accelerate adoption of proven profitable practices and technologies	Priority 1, Priority 2, Priority 4	Priority 1, Priority 2, Priority 4, Priority 5
	Assess tissue culture expansion potential through due diligence and scale if viable	Priority 1	Priority 2, Priority 5

National Agriculture Innovation Priorities

- Priority 1** Trusted exporter of premium food and agricultural products
- Priority 2** Champion climate resilience to increase productivity, profitability and sustainability
- Priority 3** World leader in preventing and responding to pests and diseases through future-proofing biosecurity
- Priority 4** Mature adopter, developer and exporter of digital agriculture

National Science and Research Priorities

- Priority 1** Transitioning to a net zero future
- Priority 2** Supporting healthy and thriving communities
- Priority 3** Elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems
- Priority 4** Protecting and restoring Australia's environment
- Priority 5** Building a secure and resilient nation

Our R&D portfolio



SRA will manage Research and Development (R&D) through a disciplined stage-gate model. Projects will move from early evaluation to experimental testing, pre-commercial assessment, commercial deployment and adoption only where evidence supports continued investment.

This will help SRA focus resources on the highest-impact opportunities, stop or redesign work that is not progressing, and ensure R&D is connected to practical outcomes for growers and millers.

R&D investment approach

SRA's program-based delivery model integrates research, development, and extension, ensuring innovations move efficiently from concept to on-farm and industry adoption. Strong partnerships with growers, millers, government, and research organisations are central to maximising impact, avoiding duplication, and building a resilient innovation system.

As both a funder and a research provider, SRA applies a disciplined investment approach to ensure value for money, balanced portfolio outcomes, and strong accountability.

SRA maintains a deliberate balance between:

- Contestable R&D: Competitive funding, partnerships, and co-investment to access the best science, leverage capability, and avoid duplication.
- Core R&D: Targeted in-house investment where SRA provides unique national capability (e.g. breeding and biosecurity readiness).

All investments are assessed using consistent criteria (industry relevance, impact, feasibility, adoption pathways, and value for money) and overseen through structured prioritisation, independent review, and Board oversight. To manage the risk of internal bias, SRA separates funding decisions from delivery, uses external expertise, and prioritises co-investment and clear adoption pathways.

SRA uses robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems to guide decisions and demonstrate value. Investments are designed with clear adoption pathways, measurable outcomes and benefits, and stop/go decision points along the delivery pathway.

Focus on late-stage R&D and trade-offs

SRA is prioritising late-stage R&D and deployment, where benefits can be realised quickly and at scale. This includes validation under commercial conditions, deployment ready solutions, and removing adoption barriers.

This requires trade-offs:

- Varieties and crop protection: SRA will continue to invest across the full R&D pipeline because these are core priorities and critical to long-term productivity, cane supply and biosecurity
- Agronomy, farming systems, milling and processing: SRA will maintain a targeted level of investment in these areas to support a balanced portfolio. However, most funding will shift to adoption-ready solutions that can be validated and deployed through District Impact Plans. Early to mid-stage research will generally only proceed where there is strong co-investment, partner leadership or clear strategic need
- Longer-term industry opportunities: SRA will support areas such as diversification where there is a clear industry value proposition, market opportunity and co-investment pathway.

Alignment with government priorities and public benefit

SRA's portfolio aligns with national science and rural R&D priorities and delivers public benefit through:

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation, including resilient varieties, emissions reduction, and resource efficiency
- Environmental outcomes, such as soil health, water quality, and biodiversity
- Biosecurity preparedness for endemic and emerging threats
- Regional economic development and resilience.

We will align effort around the most important problems



ENABLERS: Capabilities for successful implementation

IMPACT OF
ENABLERS
= 1.0%

10 To deliver these priorities, SRA will strengthen the organisational capabilities we will need with discipline, focus and accountability.

- Communications – provide clear, targeted and practical information that supports adoption and builds confidence
- Digital support – use digital tools and analytics to support grower and advisor decision-making and accelerate R&D
- Talent – capability needed to deliver world-class research, adoption and industry impact
- Transparency and accountability – report clearly on progress, investment, delivery and impact
- Financial sustainability – focus on the high impact priorities and strengthen co-investment, commercial and funding opportunities.

Communications

Deliver a coordinated extension program of annual engagement to lift grower capability.

SRA will operate a coordinated extension, awareness and education system aligned to district impact priorities. This will deliver annual field engagement and practical digital content across all priority districts so that at least 70% of targeted growers are reached each year and at least 50% of participating growers report increased capability or confidence to implement promoted practices. This will include resources to generate dedicated local communications content, with local communications contact points in each district.

Digital support

Develop digital tools and analytics to support grower and advisor decision-making and accelerate R&D.

Growers can use SRA digital decision support tools to compare varieties, understand farm management implications and access recommendations aligned to district plan

priorities. These tools are trusted because they are underpinned by governed, high-quality data that is routinely updated as new research emerges.

SRA staff have fit-for-purpose Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Project Management systems to capture and manage data, along with data warehouse capabilities to effectively extract and integrate data, enabling better support for growers, clearer identification of adoption barriers, and more targeted future R&D and extension planning, ensuring adoption and commercialisation strategies are considered upon commencement of projects.

Talent

Build and retain the capability needed to deliver world-class research, adoption and industry impact.

Increasing employee engagement to 4.3 / 5 by 2031 will maximise the performance needed to deliver the actions outlined within this Plan. Improved employee engagement will result in increased organisational performance, employee wellbeing, customer engagement and reduced organisational turnover, safety incidents and absenteeism.

Transparency and accountability

Report clearly on progress, investment, delivery and impact so industry and government can see what is being achieved.

The Board, levy payers, co-investors, and government can clearly see whether investments are on track, what outcomes they are expected to deliver, and how they contribute to the 10% productivity target.

Financial sustainability

Focus resources on the highest-impact priorities and strengthen co-investment, commercial and funding opportunities.

By reducing overhead spending and lowering priority research outcomes SRA will not only better support the impacts growers and millers need, but also ensure the organisation remains financially sustainable. The priorities listed in this Plan have been carefully aligned to that of all stakeholder consultation, incorporating the needs of growers and millers, industry partners, and Federal and State Governments.

Delivering world-class research, adoption & industry impact



REPORTING: Transforming potential into progress



Measuring success and reporting progress

SRA will take a disciplined and transparent approach to measuring success, ensuring that progress is visible, credible and tied directly to outcomes for industry. Our performance framework is built across three levels:

- 1 Industry outcome measures will track the big-picture shifts we are working towards: productivity uplift, reduced losses from priority threats, and improved system resilience at a district and regional level. These measures will draw on industry datasets, benchmarking and longitudinal analysis.
- 2 Focus area measures will assess progress within each strategic priority, ensuring that research and extension activities are contributing to clearly defined outcomes, including adoption, practice change and performance improvements.
- 3 Investment and delivery measures will monitor how effectively we are deploying levy and co-investment funding - tracking milestones, timelines, portfolio balance and return on investment.

SRA will report regularly to industry, combining multiple methods to provide a clear and accessible picture of progress. This will include:

- public progress reports aligned to the Strategic Plan
- updates through industry publications and digital channels
- district-level reporting via District Impact Plans
- stakeholder briefings and grower engagement activities.

Reporting will cover both delivery progress (what has been done) and outcome progress (what has changed as a result). We will also

articulate the impact pathway – linking investment to outputs, adoption and measurable industry benefit – so that levy payers can clearly see how research translates into real-world outcomes.

Risks, assumptions and dependencies

Delivering this plan requires a shared commitment across the industry. SRA does not deliver productivity uplift alone. Success depends on strong partnerships, aligned priorities and joint accountability with growers, millers, service providers and government.

Key risks and dependencies include:

- adoption relies on grower and partner action
- technical and regulatory uncertainty may affect solution pathways
- funding constraints require careful prioritisation and focus
- partner and industry delivery capacity may vary across regions
- seasonal and market conditions can influence outcomes
- data quality and availability may limit measurement precision
- SRA's own delivery capacity must remain aligned to priorities.

These risks will be actively managed through a set of practical mitigations. District Impact Plans will localise delivery and strengthen accountability at a regional level. Decision gates will ensure that investments continue only where there is a clear pathway to impact. Annual reviews will allow for reprioritisation in response to emerging challenges and opportunities. Strong partner governance will support alignment and shared ownership, while transparent reporting will maintain trust and visibility of both progress and constraints.

ENABLERS

	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	FY33	FY34	FY35	FY36
STRENGTHEN ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITIES	INVESTMENT									
	DEPLOYMENT									
	BENEFITS									

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the valuable contribution of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), State Government partners, in particular the Queensland Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) and all industry stakeholders who generously shared their time, insights and expertise throughout the consultation process.

This input has been instrumental in shaping this Strategic Plan, ensuring it reflects shared priorities, practical realities and a collective commitment to delivering meaningful outcomes for the Australian sugar industry.

SRA acknowledges and thanks its investors, including levy payers (sugarcane growers and millers), the Commonwealth Government and the Queensland Government.





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