Role Description

General Information

Title:	Research Officer – Ecophysiology			**Classification:**	PO2
Division:	SARDI	**Branch:**	Crop Sciences	**Business unit:**	Crop and Pasture Science
Type of appointment:	Term contract	**Hours of Duty:**	Full time (37.5)	**Location:**	Waite Campus, Urrbrae

About Us

South Australia is internationally recognised for the quality of its agriculture, food, and wine. Our regions are the backbone of our state and the economic powerhouse that drives prosperity for all South Australians.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) is a key economic development agency working in partnership with our primary industries, regional stakeholders and across all levels of government to advance the prosperity and sustainability of South Australia's primary industries and regional communities.

We are a passionate team of around 800 people working across metropolitan and regional South Australia to develop and protect our state's regions and food, wine, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, grains, livestock, dairy and horticulture industries.

Purpose

The purpose of this role is to contribute to research on crop ecophysiology in a pre-breeding context, supporting the South Australian pulse industry with a focus on a $6 M investment "Reducing Pod Drop in Lentil". The role contributes delivering the agency's priorities through improved crop yield and productivity outcomes for growers.

The Research Officer - Ecophysiology will be responsible for providing technical and operational research support in field experiments measuring phenology, canopy development, and yield formation traits with emphasis on pod drop. The role supports efficient delivery of research milestones, data quality, and engagement with industry and research partners across organisations. At key times, assistance will be provided across research teams within Crop Sciences to ensure successful project delivery.

Key Accountabilities

- Establish and maintain field experiments in accordance with agreed protocols, usually under reduced professional direction with the quality of output monitored
- Coordinate research activities with scientists, breeders, growers, and agronomists.
- Operates independently on established tasks and contributes professional expertise in one or more areas of the discipline.
- Measure soil attributes and crop traits with emphasis on reproductive growth and development.
- Document accurately methods, relevant events, results and metadata.
- Assist with data collation, statistical analysis, writing reports and scientific and industry papers.
- Participate in logistical planning, communication and operational support across research activities.
- Operate and maintain scientific equipment (e.g. multispectral sensors, weather and soil instrumentation).

Key Deliverables / Results

The Research Officer – Ecophysiology contributes to the successful delivery of high-quality ecophysiology research by ensuring:

- Reliable and timely development and implementation of experimental protocols.
- Thorough documentation of procedures, observations, measurements and outcomes.
- Accurate and well-managed samples, datasets, and instrument records.
- Effective support for reporting, including partner communication and milestone submission.
- Operational continuity and coordination across research teams to ensure project outcomes are met.
- Performs tasks that may involve moderately complex professional problems, addressed by applying established methodologies and sound technical judgement.
- Contributes to the induction and on-the-job training of technical staff in research protocols and field procedures, as directed by the supervising scientist.
- Supports colleagues through knowledge sharing and may assist in the professional development of technical officers within the research team.

Relationships

Role Description

- This role reports to the Principal Scientist - Crop Ecophysiology.
- Involves close collaboration with researchers, technical officers, and staff across SARDI business units, and active engagement with growers, breeders, agronomists, and research collaborators - including state agencies, universities, and commercial providers.

- Exercises initiative in the application of professional practices as a contributing member of a multidisciplinary research team, operating with reduced professional direction. May act as a technical lead for defined field activities or experiments.
- May provide day-to-day guidance to technical officers and paraprofessionals on defined research tasks, within the scope of established project protocols.

Requirements

- Possession of a current driver's licence and willingness to drive.
- Out of hours work and inter / intrastate travel may be required.
- Australian residency or current works permit is required (responsibility of applicant to provide evidence of a current work permit).
- You acknowledge your work, health and safety obligations and our expectations when applying for a role.
- The incumbent will be required to undertake emergency management training and must be willing to participate in emergency preparedness, response and recovery activities required by government agencies.

Qualifications

- Essential: PhD in Agricultural Science, Applied Biology, Environmental Science or related field (or equivalent experience).
- Desirable: (Experience working with pulse crops; proficiency in advanced statistical analysis, including R and/or Python; and a record of scientific publications commensurate with career stage.

Capabilities

Capability	Behaviours
Professional and Technical Knowledge Professional and Technical Knowledge	• Demonstrates specialised knowledge and professional expertise in crop physiology, agronomy and/or plant science, applying sound judgement to deliver outcomes with reduced professional direction and performing standard professional tasks with competence and experience. • Demonstrated experience in establishing and maintain field experiments, collecting quality data, data analysis, and writing and interpreting results. • Track record of establishing, protecting, sampling and phenotyping crops implementing agreed protocols. • Evidence of reliability in collecting and interpreting data. • Flexibility to respond to unexpected events. • Actively seek personal professional development which includes an ability to effectively articulate concepts and theories
Attention to Detail Ensuring that work and or information is complete and accurate; paying attention to detail to ensure work is timely, accurate and reliable	• Uses professional judgement to select and apply new and existing methods and techniques. • Maintains accurate research records and field notes and works carefully and understands downstream implications of errors. • Follows protocols and verifies results.
Communication Communicates effectively in both verbal and written forms, engaging others through clear exchange of information and ideas.	• Communicates clearly verbally, adjusting message to audiences including researchers and growers. • Demonstrates writing skills in their record of scientific and industry publications. • May report investigations directly to the client.

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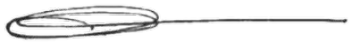
Collaborative Approach Adopts collaborative work that values the input of others, engages formally and informally to achieve shared objectives, and fosters shared ownership.	• Works cooperatively within research teams • Shares information and supports collective delivery of outcomes • Adapts to working with different collaborators, disciplines and environments.

HRMS no.:		**ANZCO Code:**		**Objective ID:**	qA271066
Delegate approval:	Prof. Mike Steer, Executive Director SARDI 			**Date:**	27/07/2026
Approved and classified by People and Culture:	Acting HR Business Partner – 23/6/26				

Prof. Mike Steer, Executive Director SARDI

Updated on 27 July 2026