Role Description

General Information

Title:	Program Leader, Agronomy			**Classification:**	PO5
Division:	SARDI	**Branch:**	Crop Sciences	**Business unit:**	Agronomy
Type of appointment:	Ongoing	**Hours of duty:**	37.5 hours per week	**Location:**	Negotiable, any SARDI Crop Sciences site

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 Program Leader, Agronomy will lead the Agronomy Program in the Crop Sciences research division within the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI). The primary purpose of the role is to
provide specialist expertise in agronomy to oversee the scientific direction and delivery of research projects and management of professional and technical staff in the Agronomy program.
The role contributes to delivering SARDI's priority of leading and conducting innovative research to increase productivity of our primary industries for the benefit of South Australia. The role will foster and enhance
research and development outcomes for SARDI by leading a statewide regionally based Agronomy Program focused on enhancing agronomic management practices for cereals, oilseeds, and pulses to meet the key needs of South Australian farming systems. The Program Leader will ensure alignment of the SARDI Agronomy Program with relevant international trends, national strategic plans and state-based
industry blueprints and strategies.

Key Accountabilities

- Managing, overseeing, and implementing a statewide Agronomy program with a regional focus for SARDI and PIRSA.
- Delivering leadership of a team of agronomic professional and technical staff including sub-program decisions, line management for direct reports, training and mentoring of staff, career planning and development and conducting performance assessments and review.
- Attracting and delivering on major multidisciplinary research projects across science programs and research divisions involving international, national and state collaborators.
- Ensuring Program alignment to Government, Industry and State objectives and strategies are planned to deliver effective end results.
- Representing SARDI as a science expert at committees, boards, industry meetings and working parties at an international, national and state level.
- Partnerships are formed and maintained with funding agencies and other RD&E institutions including participation in industry events.
- Developing strategic and business plans for current and future research priorities.
- Overseeing the management of SARDI Agronomy program assets with a strategic, forward-looking replacement plan.
- Independently oversee major agronomy research initiatives, such as the SA Drought Hub and the Long Term Trials Program in collaboration with other parts of the Department.

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Key Deliverables / Results

- Developing and delivering significant research programs with resources and finance priorities aligned with strategic priorities.
- Providing expert advice and serving as a leading spokesperson on agronomy research to key industry, state, and federal government stakeholders.
- Providing leadership and delivers high quality research that is multidisciplinary and adopts a system approach to achieve practice change.
- Facilitating personal and professional development of self and others through the provision of professional support, feedback, direction, mentoring and training opportunities.
- Key international, national and state-wide networks, collaborators and alliances with an agronomy research focus and potential funding partners are established and maintained.
- Actively collaborates with fellow Program Leaders and staff, both within and outside the Crop Sciences research division.
- Opportunities for attracting external funding are identified and pursued.

Relationships

- This position reports to the Research Director, Crop Sciences, and contributes significantly to the Crop Sciences Leadership Team,
- Roles reporting to this role include the SARDI Agronomy Program staff.
- Works collaboratively with other SARDI staff, public and private research providers and farming system groups
- Membership of relevant agronomic committees.
- Works collaboratively with funders of breeding and agronomy RDEA&C.

Requirements

- Possession of a current driver's license and willingness to drive.
- Out of hours work and inter / intrastate travel may be required.
- 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 or related field, and extensive research experience in agronomy is highly regarded.

Capabilities

Capability	Behaviours
Professional and Technical Knowledge Demonstrates expert knowledge in cropping systems relevant to south eastern	• Maintains in-depth knowledge in crop agronomy and physiology; including experimental approaches used in broad-acre agricultural research and development; as well as broader related industry issues, e.g. crop protection, soil nutrition and weed management. • Experience in engagement with stakeholders at all levels, displaying high levels of people management skills. • Provides high level expert professional/technical advice & mentoring. • Contributes intelligently outside specific area of expertise and reviews the work of others.

Updated on 2 November 2026

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Australia.	• Demonstrated ability to use a full range of PC applications, including Excel, Word, Outlook and statistics software. • Proven ability to attract research funding and a track record of publication industry reports and/or high impact, peer reviewed journals.
Team Work and Team Building Provides effective leadership for team; motivates team members to achieve goals.	• Develops a team culture where individual members are valued, recognising and appreciating different skill sets. • Provides specific feedback to team members on their performance and develops action plans to improve performance. • Ensures that important information from management is shared with the team.
Planning and Organising (Work Management) Develops and manages efficient work plans for complex projects or activities involving a number of elements or groups.	• Identifies capabilities and resources needed to get the job done. • Gets buy-in (ownership) from staff by involving them in planning and decision making. • Ensures own work and the work of group is aligned with the group goals and with PIRSA's strategic imperatives.
Communication Communicating with people effectively both verbally and in writing; connecting with others through exchanging information and ideas.	• Selects content and style of the communication to gain greatest leverage. • Builds a climate of trust to facilitate open communications between people. • Builds rapport, develops and maintains productive working relationships with others that are recognised by involved parties as mutually beneficial.

HRMS no.:	A789131	**ANZCO Code:**		**Objective ID:**	
Delegate approval:	Prof Tim Sutton, SARDI Deputy Executive Director			**Date:**	11 March 2026
Approved and classified by People and Culture:	Reviewed by People and Culture – 27/10/26				

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