



Overview



Dynamic, profitable
and sustainable
farming



Mallee Sustainable Farming thanks the following
Corporate Partners for their support

Platinum Level Partner



GrainCorp

Supporting Communities
Bringing People Together

Gold Level Partners



AGRICULTURAL INPUTS
MARKETING
CROP INSURANCE

Silver Level Partners



Bronze Level Partners



Overview

Mallee Sustainable Farming (MSF) Inc. is a farmer driven organisation servicing the < 350mm rainfall Mallee cropping regions of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. MSF operates within a region of over 7 million hectares extending beyond Balranald in the east to Murray Bridge in the west.



The Mallee has approximately 1500 dryland farming families whose farming activities include cropping (wheat, barley, vetch, lupins and canola) and livestock (sheep for wool, lambs and cattle for meat).

MSF delivers research and extension services for low rainfall dryland farmers. MSF was established in 1997 to investigate and assist farmers in implementing technological advances towards best management practice. Since then, the profitability of dryland farming in the Mallee has also increased significantly as have many environmental and social gains.



MSF Milestones

<p>1997 to 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased adoption of No Till farming methods • Increased continuous cropping and decreased fallow • Increased groundcover and consequently less dust and wind erosion • Increased yields including for decile 2 years 	1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In February, farmers from SA, NSW and Victoria met in Werrimull to discuss setting up a conservation farming project. • Waikerie, Werrimull and Euston were established as MSF's first Core Sites.
	1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mallee Sustainable Farming is incorporated on 14th January. • Gary Doyle is appointed first Mallee Sustainable Farming Chairman.
	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Waikerie Field Day held.
	2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner NRE Hugh Mackay Award
	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner South Australian Landcare Research Award (Finalist in NSW and Victoria).
	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner National Landcare Research Award.
	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony Robbins becomes 2nd MSF Chairman. • The Five Year Grain & Graze Project begins. • The farmtalk fact sheet series is launched with No 1 "Wind Erosion Control".
	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allen Buckley becomes 3rd MSF Chairman. • The Mallee Calculator (to calculate yield potential) is launched.
	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim Maynard becomes 4th MSF Chairman.
	2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSF Membership is launched at the Speed Field Days.
	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSF expands into social capacity programs with Strengthening Our Community. • The Grain & Graze Project results in a 6% increase in profitability for participating Mallee dryland farmers.
	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10th Anniversary Research and Extension Forum. • The N Management Tool to calculate optimum nitrogen applications is launched as part of the Reaping Rewards Project.
	2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner South Australian Ag Excellence Alliance Grower Group Award.
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fourth consecutive year of Strengthening Our Community project funding. • Ian Hastings becomes 5th MSF Chairman. 	



Strategic Plan 2010 - 2012

OUR VISION

Dynamic, profitable and sustainable farming

OUR MISSION

Provide excellence in research, development and extension initiatives for the dryland Mallee of South Eastern Australia

PRINCIPAL PURPOSE

To protect and enhance the natural environment by the encouragement of sustainable dryland farming practices

OUR VALUES

Creativity and Innovation

Honesty and Integrity

Professionalism

Collaboration

Credibility

Accountability

Dignity and Respect

Fairness and Impartiality

OUR STAKEHOLDERS	OUR GOALS We will	OUR STRATEGIES We will
<p>1. OUR FARMERS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>1.1 Promote proven innovation and build community capacity</p> <p>1.2 Research improved dryland farming systems</p>	<p>1.1.1 Implement a program to reinvigorate state reference committees</p> <p>1.1.2 Ensure quality control and risk management assessment on all research projects and programs</p> <p>1.1.3 Implement a proactive extension and information plan;</p> <p>1.1.4 Build MSF’s agronomic capacity and profile</p> <p>1.1.5 Respond to a demonstrated need for community capacity building initiatives where MSF is able to deliver outcomes</p> <p>1.2.1 Generate increased opportunities for farmer directed participation in MSF R, D & E activities</p> <p>1.2.2 Investigate farming system options to address issues in sustainable dryland farming</p>
<p>2. THE ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>2.1 Be an environmentally responsible organisation</p>	<p>2.1.1 Investigate farm management options to tackle the environmental challenges for sustainable dryland farming</p> <p>2.1.2 Provide credible representation of dryland farming issues</p> <p>2.1.3 Build our capacity to be a credible information and referral source on environmental and natural resource management issues relevant to Mallee dryland farming</p> <p>2.1.4 Pursue Environmental Organisation Registration</p> <p>2.1.5 Develop and implement an MSF Environmental Management System</p>
<p>3. OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS</p>	<p>3.1 Be a professional organisation that delivers value to our partners, funders and members</p>	<p>3.1.1 Identify and develop strategic alliances which demonstrate specific and measurable benefits for Mallee farmers</p> <p>3.1.2 Demonstrate excellence in compliance and project management systems</p> <p>3.1.3 Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement strategy</p>
<p>4. OUR ORGANISATION</p>	<p>4.1 Be responsive, accountable and financially viable</p>	<p>4.1.1 Grow the MSF business by incorporating new activities, building alliances and applying economic efficiencies</p> <p>4.1.2 Implement and maintain sound governance, policy and risk management practices</p> <p>4.1.3 Review resource arrangements for research, development and extension delivery</p>

MSF Board

Current Directors



Ian Hastings (Chair)

Appointed: 2009

Ian Hastings is a fourth generation farmer operating 4,000ha in a family business around the Ouyen area (Victorian Mallee). He has been active in many agricultural organisations including being the current President of the Victoria Groundsprayers Association.

Ian also contributes substantially to the local community holding positions such as President of the Local RSL sub-branch and Ouyen Farmers Festival Committee member.

He is a past President of the VFF Grains Group and served on the VFF Board of Management from 2003-2007. From 2002-2009 Ian was a member of the Grains Council of Australia and served as Deputy Chair from 2005 -2009.

Ian was an inaugural Board Member of Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc in 1998 and remained a Victorian farmers' representative until 2002. He re-joined the Board in 2008 becoming Vice Chair in 2009 and is a member of the Executive, Finance & Audit and RD&E committees.



Jim Maynard (Invited Specialist)

Appointed: 2004

Jim Maynard has spent his working life developing Kerribee Station, NSW, a family owned property, which was begun by his father in 1932. During Jim's time, Kerribee has evolved from being a sheep station to producing sheep, beef and wheat. Jim and his son also have a property at Manangatang, Victoria. The knowledge Jim has gained from being involved with MSF has been applied to his properties.

Jim as been active in many organisations including the Rural Lands Protection Board, the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority, the Rangeland Management Action Plan and the Western Lands Advisory Council. He is currently the Region Chairman of the Westerns Division of the NSW Farmers Association.

In 2001 Jim was invited to join the Board of Mallee Sustainable Farming and became Chair in 2005, is a member of the Finance & Audit, RD&E and Communication & Membership committees.



**Paula Gordon (Secretary)
(Invited Specialist)**

Appointed: 2001

Paula Gordon was invited onto the Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc Board in 2001 as a specialist with experience in communications, rural community development and policy. Paula brings to the Board extensive experience in rural community development, rural policy and communications at a regional (Mallee), State, tri-state and Commonwealth level.

A teacher and sociologist by training, Paula has held positions largely in the Victoria public service in such areas as community services, and agriculture and natural resource management.

Paula has an interest and experience in risk management and building farmer resilience in times of change having been involved with the establishment of the first Rural Financial Counselling Service in Australia, and then later with the Mallee Crisis Committee Victoria. Paula is currently retired, operating a vine nursery and citrus property in a family partnership at Trentham Cliffs, NSW, and applying biological farming methods.

Paula is a member of a number of industry organisations associated with sustainable farming in the Mallee including the Vine Industry Nursery Association, Sun Cancer Resources Committee and Mallee Catchment Management Authority Drought Coordinating Committee. Paula is a Director of the Murray Valley Citrus Board, President of the Trentham Cliffs Landcare Group and a Director of the Mallee Catchment Management Authority.



Ron Hards (Treasurer)

Appointed: 2009

Ron Hards began share farming in the Millewa area of North West Victoria in 1978. In 1988 Ron bought his first farm at Yarrara, Victoria, where he began spray fallowing and reduced tillage practices. In 1998 Ron's son Nick, under took a farm apprenticeship at Longerenong College and joined Ron in farming at Yarrara. In 2001 Ron bought his second farm next door to the farm at Yarrara. In 2002 Ron and Nick began converting their plant from reduced tillage to no till. In 2006 Ron bought their third farm bringing the total to 2,800ha.

Ron has been associated with many organisations such as the Millewa Carwarp Landcare group where he held the role of President for 6 years from 1987-1994. From 1989–2006 Ron was involved with the VFF Grains Council. From 1999–2003 Ron held the position of President of the VFF Grains Council and was also on the Farrer House Board for 4 years and during this period held various roles on the Grains Council of Australia including Vice President and Treasurer.

From 2004 to 2006 Ron was a member of the Grain Corp Board and member of its Audit committee during that time. He also has been involved with the Grain Growers Association for 2 years, 1 year as President in 2005/06.

In October 2009 Ron joined the Board of Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc taking on the role as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee. Ron is also a member of the Executive and RD&E committees.



Glynn Schmidt (Director)

Appointed: 2006

Glynn Schmidt has been farming at Low-Bank near Waikerie in South Australia since 1962. Low-Bank is predominantly a sheep and cereal property of 9,200 hectares.

Glynn has been involved with the Murray Mallee Soil Board, the Board of Management of the Wanbi Research Centre and the South Australian No Till Farming Association. He is a life member of the Low-Bank and Districts Agricultural Bureau having been Chair of this group for a number of years.

Glynn joined the Mallee Sustainable Farming Board as SA director in 2006 and is a member of the RD&E committee.



Dean Wormald (Director)

Appointed: 2010

Dean worked the family farm in partnership with his father and brother for 12 years before taking over the 900ha property, including a 50 sow piggery, 40km SW of Loxton (Caliph) on his own.

Between 1995 and 2007 the land under crop grew to over 3000ha and now runs at 2500ha. Dean was a director of MSF from 2000 – 2006, being treasurer for 4 of those years.

Dean is a member of the local Ag Bureau, Country Fire Service brigade & SANTFA.



**Rick Llewellyn
(Invited Specialist)**

Appointed: 2006

Rick Llewellyn was invited to the Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc Board as an invited specialist and provides scientific expertise to Mallee Sustainable Farming. Rick has been a Director since 2006.

Rick attained a Bachelor of Agricultural Science from the University of Adelaide, followed by a PhD from the University of Western Australia. Rick previously worked at the University of Western Australia as a lecturer in Agricultural Systems and Extension where he also conducted research into weed and herbicide management and was on the management committees of two Western Australia-based grower group networks which aimed at developing links between scientists and grower groups.

Rick has been with the CSIRO since 2005 working as a Senior Research Scientist in Farming Systems based at the Waite Campus in SA. He currently leads several farming systems research projects including the Mallee GRDC Water Use Efficiency project, the CRC Future Farm Industries EverCrop and Adaptability projects and has continuing research developing strategies for greater adoption of key farming systems innovations.

Invited as a specialist director in 2006 Rick is a member of the RD&E committee.



Tim O'Halloran (Deputy Chair)

Appointed: 2007

Tim O'Halloran runs a mixed farm business at Tylden, 30km north east of Balranald, NSW. Tylden has been in the O'Halloran family since 1925. Until 1980, Tylden was predominately a grazing farm but since then a gradual transformation to Poll Merinos and grain growing has occurred. In more recent years Tim has adopted biological farming methods.

Tim has been an active member of the community for many years including Captain of the local Rural Fire Service for over 20 years, member of the NSW Farmers Federation for over 30 years, has been a part of the Rangelands Management Action Plan committee for 3 years as well as a life member and Secretary of the Homebush Recreational Reserve Trust. Tim also has skills as a professional Wool Classer and is a Justice of the Peace.

Tim has been a NSW farmer representative on the Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc Board since 2007 and became deputy chair in 2010. He is a member of the Executive, Finance & Audit and Membership & Communications committees.



Gavin Howley (Director)

Appointed: 2010

Shortly after obtaining a degree in agriculture from the University of Adelaide in 2000, Gavin returned home to the family farm near Kyalite in NSW.

A 4th generation farmer, he runs a no-till cropping enterprise with his father based mainly on wheat and some barley. The original part of the farm was taken up in 1910 by his great grandfather and today the farm covers 6000ha including red gum forests and the Wakool – Murray River junction.

As a relatively new member of Mallee Sustainable Farming, Gavin was elected to join the board in 2010. He is an active member of the Kyalite and district community and is looking forward to the opportunities, and overcoming the farming challenges, that lie ahead.

Gavin is a member of the Membership & Communications and RD&E committees



Geoff Thomas (Invited Specialist)

Appointed: 2011

Geoff is a graduate of Adelaide and Melbourne Universities and spent much of his career in the public sector, mostly in senior management of regional services and extension.

Since 1999 Geoff has run his own consulting business as Thomas Project Services in which he manages a range of programs including the SA Grain Industry Trust and the Low Rainfall Collaboration Program for GRDC, as well as servicing smaller individual clients. Geoff has been National President and Board Chairman of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology since 1998.

Geoff is a member of the Membership & Communications and RD&E committees.



Ron Storey (Invited Specialist)

Appointed: 2011

Ron has spent over 35 years in the grains and agribusiness sectors, holds a Bachelor of Economics degree from Monash University and runs an agribusiness consultancy, Storey Marketing Services. He owned Australian Crop Forecasters (ACF) from 2005 – 2010 before selling it to NSX and remains as a part time consultant to NSX, ACF and Profarmer.

Ron is Chair of AGT and has been a director of the Pulse Australia board since 1998.

He was a senior executive with AWB Limited for almost 20 years and was a key figure in the deregulation of the domestic market in 1989. Ron established AWB's new trading business in early 1990's, managed the Trading Division 1996-2000 in the lead-up to AWB's privatization.

Ron comes from a grain and sheep farm at Wycheproof in the Victorian Mallee, where he retains farming interests and is married with five children.

His most valued characteristic in the grain business – integrity and independence.

MSF Staff



Mike Mooney
Executive Manager

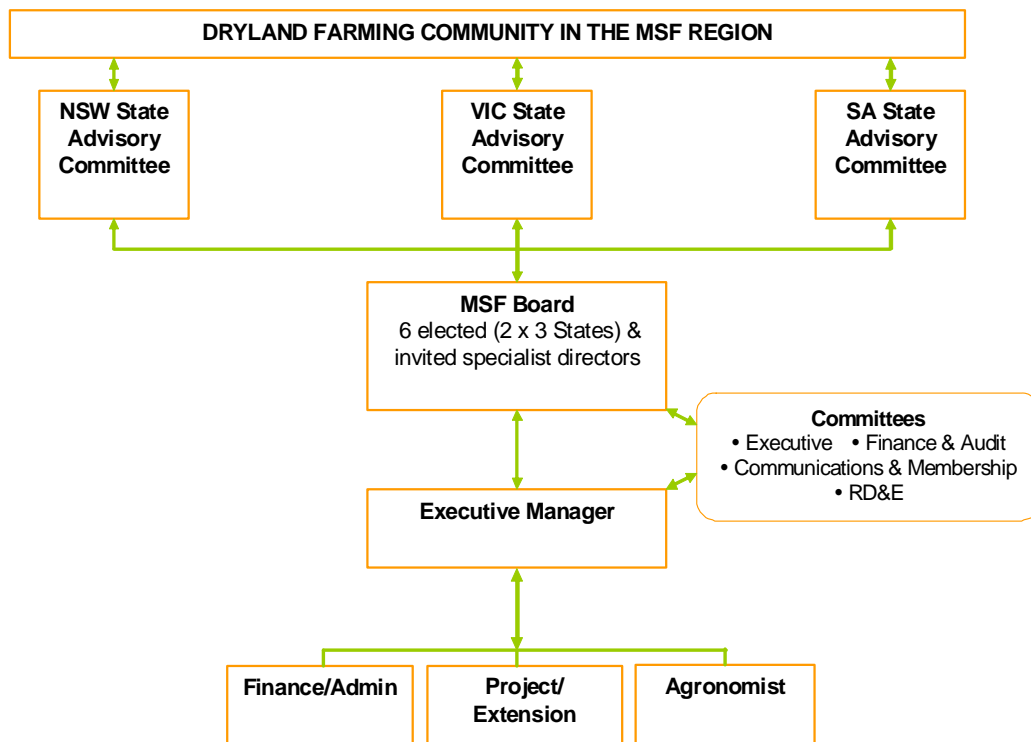


Donna Robertson
Finance/Admin



Michael Moodie
Agronomist

MSF Structure



Project Overviews – a sample. Full list at www.msfp.org.au/currentprojects.php

Water Use Efficiency

Water use efficient farming systems for the Mallee

Locations:

Karoonda, Waikerie, Ouyen, Natya, Merbein, Chinkapook, Cowangie, Loxton, Paringa, Lameroo.

Funding Bodies:

GRDC, CSIRO



Research/Extension Partners:

CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems – Urrbrae, Rural Solutions SA, Vic DPI, Mallee Focus.

This project aims to improve whole-farm water use efficiency and profitability across 7 million hectares of the Victorian, South Australian and NSW Mallee region.

It targets two major avenues to further improve future average whole-farm water use efficiency across the Mallee:

1. address challenges to sustainability i.e. grass weed problems, disease, high fertiliser costs;
2. develop and adapt new strategies for improved water use efficiency for a wider range of soils and farming systems.

A major component of the project is the spatially designed on-farm field trials. These trials aim to test the water use efficiency, productivity and risk of a range of continuous cereal systems, and the decisions around inputs, timing, agronomy and potential break crop options across soils of differing potentials.

To add value to the field trials, simulation modeling (APSIM & Yield Prophet) will be used to test strategies and recommendations for longer-term and broader ranging scenarios.

Mallee Young Guns Cell Grazing versus Set Stocking

To address the issue of soil erosion and sustainable pasture utilisation

Locations:

Lameroo, SA

Funding Bodies:

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Community Action Grants 2010



Research/Extension Partners:

Rural Solutions SA

The Mallee Young Guns are a group of young livestock focused farmers and their program to date has consisted of workshops and practical farm visits.

Many of the group members are currently set stocking livestock which is either restricting the number of potential grazing in a paddock or leading to some degradation issues in fragile areas in erosion prone paddocks.

This project, through the use of temporary electric fencing hopes to maximise the number of grazing days whilst protecting fragile areas within a paddock.

This project will result in better sustainable farming practices, through increased awareness of the importance of grazing management to maximise production and minimise environmental degradation through erosion.

Project Overviews cont'd...

Adaptive Practices to minimise impacts of climate change

Australian farm groups demonstrating adaptive practices to minimise the impact of climate change on farm viability

Locations:

MSF Core sites at Kerribee (NSW), Ouyen (Vic), Waikerie (SA) and other farm properties across the tri state MSF region.

Funding Bodies:

Australian Government Climate Change Research Program & GRDC



Research/Extension Partners:

BCG (Birchip Cropping Group)

A part of the Federal Government National Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative (NAMI) the project is designed to provide growers with tools & knowledge to adapt & mitigate climate change.

Farm groups working in co-operation with project consortium members and CSIRO, will establish trials and demonstrations of adaptive practices to minimise the long term impacts of climate change on production. The tactical adaptive practices will be chosen as those most likely to reduce risk of production whilst maintaining income.

As part of a national network of demonstration sites, co-ordinated by key farm groups (owned and driven by farmers) in each state and working in conjunction with State Agencies and CSIRO, they will examine new and alternative strategies for farmers in the Australian broad-acre and wheat/sheep zone to mitigate the negative effects, and capitalise on the opportunities of climate change on their production systems.

Mallee Dryland Soil Health Monitoring Program

Establish benchmarks of current soil health indicators to report against trends.

Locations:

Benchmark sites at Cowangie and Chinkapook, 80 focus sites across the North West Victorian Mallee.

Funding Bodies:

Mallee Catchment Management Authority



Research/Extension Partners:

Vic DPI, Mallee CMA

The intended outcomes of this project will improve knowledge on soil health indicators and interactions with Land Management Plans. The outcomes of this project will provide the Victorian dryland Mallee with soil health information on which to develop and report against benchmarks and targets.

Data will also be used to inform the region in the proposed development of the Mallee Soil Health Strategy.



Project Overviews cont'd...

Training & Demonstration of Precision Agriculture in Practice

Locations:

Ouyen, Merbein South, Paringa, Loxton, Natya & Lameroo

Funding Bodies:

GRDC, SPAA



Research/Extension Partners:

Rural Solutions SA

Increasing costs of inputs including phosphorus and nitrogen fertiliser, fuel and some herbicides has increased growers' focus on more efficient use of these inputs to reduce costs.

Precision Agriculture (PA) tools have been identified as a method for achieving these improvements in efficiency. PA tools may also deliver productivity gains to the grains industry by targeting inputs to areas of greatest need and the targeted amelioration of some soil constraints.

Despite this, the adoption of PA beyond guidance has been low, at less than 10% of growers.

The objective of this project is to increase the level of adoption of PA beyond guidance by broadacre grain growers. Specifically it aims to increase the level of adoption of variable rate by growers in the project by 30% by 2013.

Increasing Adoption of No-till technology in Pastures to Prevent Wind Erosion

Locations:

Upper and lower Murray Mallee

Funding Bodies:

Caring For our Country



Research/Extension Partners:

Rural Solutions SA, SAMDBNRM Board

The project will address the barriers limiting the uptake and effective use of no-till cropping strategies in or following the pasture phase in mixed cropping/livestock systems and encourage farmers to adopt improved practices in sustainable dryland farming in the Mallee region of SA.

Four on-farm sites will be established and managed with farmer group input to demonstrate successful use of no-till in the pasture phase and will identify management options to reduce farming enterprise risks. Adoption by producers of practices to improve production, soil cover, water use efficiency and soil condition will be encouraged through field days, workshops, factsheets and project promotion.

Major funding and research partners

