

Part 3 Our Organisation

Accountability	68
Corporate governance	71
Board	73
Advisory panels and program teams	79
Our people	81

Accountability to the Australian Government

Responsible minister

Under the *Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act 1989* (PIERD Act), the GRDC is made accountable to the Australian Parliament through the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Warren Truss MP. Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, is responsible for R&D corporations, including the GRDC.

Australian Government priorities

The GRDC continues to proactively address the Australian Government's National Research Priorities and the stated R&D priorities for rural R&D corporations. These priorities and the GRDC's achievements in meeting them so far are discussed in more detail in Appendix 1.

Ministerial directions

Section 143 of the PIERD Act provides that the Minister may direct the GRDC with respect to the performance of its functions and the exercise of its powers.

In July 1998, the Minister issued a direction in accordance with section 16(1)(b) of the CAC Act requiring the GRDC to comply with the reporting requirements of the *Guidelines on Funding of Consultation Costs by Primary Industry and Energy Portfolio Statutory Authorities*.

On 15 December 2004, the GRDC received ministerial directions relating to the Finance Minister's (CAC Act Procurement) Directions 2004. The GRDC is complying with the Directions.

General policies of the Government

Under section 28 of the CAC Act, the Minister may notify the GRDC Board of any general Australian Government policies that apply to the GRDC. As at 7 September 2005, the following notifications had been received:

- on 21 August 2002, Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines 2002
- on 28 August 2002, Finance Circular No. 2002/01—Foreign Exchange (FOREX) Risk Management
- on 14 April 2003, Finance Circular No. 2002/02—Cost Recovery by Government Agencies
- on 13 October 2003, National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry and the Commonwealth's Implementation Guidelines
- on 19 May 2005, Finance Circular 2005/04—Application of general policies of the Australian Government to bodies under the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*
- On 19 May 2005, Finance Circular 2005/05—Investment of surplus money.

The GRDC is complying with the notified policies.

Accountability to the grains industry

Industry representative

Under the PIERD Act, the GRDC is made accountable to Australian graingrowers through the industry's representative organisation, the Grains Council of Australia (GCA).

Grains industry priorities

In setting directions for 2004–05 (the third year of *Driving Innovation*), the GRDC identified industry priorities through consultation with the GCA and through graingrower workshops. The key industry priorities were incorporated into the GRDC Annual Operational Plan 2004–05 and included:

- sustainability and resource management
- new and innovative product development

- new alliances and links to market
- bringing biotechnology to bear on sustainability and consumer benefit outcomes, to support profitable farming systems and access to premium markets
- effective and targeted transfer and adoption of technology and knowledge for Australian growers
- integrated pest management to minimise total cost of pests, diseases and weeds, and to maintain options and control strategies
- genetic improvement and regional adaptation of new grain varieties for improved resistance to biotic and abiotic stress, and quality standards for specific end uses.

Information on how the GRDC is addressing these priorities is included in Part 2—Our Outputs.

Stakeholder report

Each year the GRDC prepares a stakeholder report to assist in determining the research levy rates for Australian grain commodities. This report is launched at Grains Week, the industry-wide conference held annually to discuss the performance of, and the prospects for, the Australian grains industry.

The conference is the mechanism through which the GRDC formally reports to industry. It also assists the GCA to formulate its advice to the Minister on setting the research levy rates, which provide the basis for the corporation's income each year.

Industry levy rates

During 2004–05 a levy rate of 0.99 percent applied to all leviable crops covered by the GRDC, with the exception of maize, which was levied at 0.693 percent.

The levies were imposed and collected as stipulated by the following legislation:

- *Primary Industries (Excise) Levies Act 1999*, supported by the Primary Industries (Excise) Levies Regulations 1999, Schedules 4, 12, 20 and 25
- *Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Act 1991*, supported by the Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Regulations 1991, Schedules 8, 19, 29 and 34.

Proceeds from levies in 2004–05 are recorded in Note 5C of the Notes to the Financial Statements.

The GRDC paid the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry \$553,717 for the collection and management of levies in 2004–05.

Consultation arrangements

Under the *Guidelines on Funding of Consultation Costs by Primary Industries and Energy Portfolio Statutory Authorities*, issued by the then Minister for Primary Industry and Energy in July 1998, the GRDC paid \$211,736 to the GCA for its participation in consultations with the corporation during 2004–05. These funds were used by the GCA to meet the council's costs of preparing for and attending consultative meetings with the GRDC to assess the corporation's performance against industry expectations.

The guidelines also specify that when a representative organisation conducts a project or consultancy on behalf of a statutory authority, details are to be included in the authority's annual report. Details for 2004–05 are: the GRDC provided the GCA with \$45,000 in conference support for *Grains Week 2005*.

In addition, the corporation provided the council with support for projects or consultancies, as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| • <i>Single Vision</i> regional forums | \$110,398 |
| • <i>Single Vision</i> implementation | \$150,000 |
| • Licensing and promotion of the GrainCare On-farm Quality Assurance System | \$103,584 |

Obligations under the CAC Act

A system of accountability and reporting obligations for the GRDC, reflecting its obligations under the PIERD Act, is set out under the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* (CAC Act). Under the CAC Act, the GRDC is obliged to:

- prepare an annual report (in the prescribed form, including a report of operations) and to give it to the responsible Minister by 15 October each year (section 9)

- ensure that any subsidiary's financial statements are audited by the Auditor-General (section 12(1))
- prepare and provide to the responsible Minister interim reports during a financial year, if required by the Finance Minister by notice in the *Gazette* (section 13)
- prepare and provide budget statements (section 14)
- provide the responsible Minister (in writing) with particulars of any proposal of the GRDC to undertake any one of a number of significant events (section 15)
- keep the responsible Minister informed of the operations of the GRDC and its subsidiaries and provide such reports, documents and information as that Minister or the Finance Minister requires (section 16)
- ensure, as far as practicable, that the general policies of the Australian Government as notified to the corporation are carried out (section 28).

Conduct of officers

The CAC Act imposes specific standards of general conduct for directors and other officers. Sections 22–27 ensure that officers of Commonwealth authorities are subject to standards of conduct comparable to those required of officers of companies under the Corporations Act. Subsection 22(1), which is a civil penalty provision, states:

An officer of a Commonwealth authority must exercise his or her powers and discharge his or her duties with the degree of care and diligence that a reasonable person would exercise if he or she:

- were an officer of a Commonwealth authority in the Commonwealth authority's circumstances; and
- occupied the office held by, and had the same responsibilities within the Commonwealth authority as, the officer.

The Act also obliges an officer to:

- exercise his or her powers and discharge his or her duties in good faith in the best interests of the Commonwealth authority (section 23)
- not make improper use of his or her position or information to gain an advantage for anyone or cause detriment to the Commonwealth authority or anyone else (sections 24 and 25)

- disclose to a meeting of the Board the nature of any material personal interest in a matter that relates to the affairs of the authority and unless otherwise determined by the Board or the Minister, to ensure that he or she is not present at deliberations or takes part in any decision on the relevant subject matter (sections 27F–27K).

Sanctions

A civil penalty regime is contained in the CAC Act (Schedule 2), to deal with any breach by directors of:

- annual reporting rules (section 11)
- their general duty to exercise care and diligence (section 22)
- their general duty to act in good faith (section 23)
- their duty to not make improper use of the position of director to gain an advantage or cause detriment (sections 24 and 25).

Independent audits

The Auditor-General, under the CAC Act, is required to audit each Commonwealth authority's financial statements. In addition, the *Auditor-General Act 1997* confirms the power of the Auditor-General's staff to carry out performance audits of Commonwealth authorities and, in this role, to obtain documents and information.

The Auditor-General's Independent Audit Report on the GRDC for 2004–05 is at pages 88 and 89.

Judicial decisions and reviews by outside bodies

During 2004–05 the GRDC was not affected by judicial decisions or by reviews conducted by outside bodies.

Corporate governance

The GRDC places high value on continuously improving the organisation's corporate governance, and made substantial advances in this area during the past year. In particular:

- when considering proposals the Board and the Executive Management Team (EMT) closely examined risks associated with new ventures
- the performance of the GRDC Board was reviewed by expert consultants, who found that the Board had clearly developed a more strategic focus.

Policies and procedures

In continuously improving the GRDC's corporate governance, the corporation is guided by the Australian National Audit Office's *Guidelines for Best Practice Corporate Governance*.

The GRDC Operating Manual, which is available to the Board and all staff members, describes the corporation's:

- policies and procedures
- roles and responsibilities (including those of the Board and board committees)
- Code of Business Conduct and Ethical Behaviour
- approval authority schedule, which includes delegations
- general guidelines
- management manual.

Risk management and fraud

The EMT, in consultation with managers, regularly updates the Business Risk Assessment Report and the Fraud Control Action Plan. The Board reviews these documents at each Board meeting.

Risk management has been embraced throughout the GRDC as a tool to assess risks at the strategic, operational and project levels.

Quality assurance

The GRDC's Quality Management System has ISO 9001:2000 quality assurance accreditation from SGS International Certification Services Pty Ltd. In 2005–06 the GRDC will seek to make greater use of quality assurance as a tool for continuous improvement.

Indemnities and insurance premiums for officers

GRDC officers, including members of the Board, are insured by the GRDC against various liabilities that they may incur in their capacity as officers of the corporation. Since 31 January 1999, Comcover, the Australian Government's self-managed fund for insurance risks, has provided the necessary insurance cover. The Comcover insurance contract prohibits the GRDC from disclosing the nature or limit of the liabilities covered or the amount of premiums payable.

Environmental objectives

The GRDC is required to report annually on its performance in relation to ecologically sustainable development (ESD) and other environmental matters discussed in section 516A of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The principles of ESD have been incorporated into the decision-making systems and processes of the GRDC, as required under the EPBC Act. The corporation has in place paper-recycling arrangements and, where operationally viable, purchases energy-efficient equipment. Energy-efficient practices are encouraged within the corporation's premises, to reduce energy consumption wherever possible.

At the strategic level, *Driving Innovation* articulates the GRDC's vision for an Australian grains industry that is both profitable and environmentally sustainable. The corporation aims to balance its investments to provide long and short-term economic environmental benefits for its stakeholders. Part 2—Our Outputs includes a discussion of how GRDC investments helped to achieve environmental objectives in 2004–05.

Privacy Commissioner

The GRDC's privacy policy and procedures form part of the Operating Manual.

The GRDC's annual *Personal Information Digest* entry as at 30 June 2005 has been lodged with the Privacy Commissioner. The online digest may be viewed at the commissioner's website, www.privacy.gov.au.

Freedom of information

The GRDC is required to comply with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). No requests under the FOI Act were received during 2004–05.

See Appendix 4 and www.grdc.com.au for more about the GRDC's information product line.

Enquiries about access to documents and other matters relating to freedom of information should be directed during normal working hours to:

Freedom of Information Officer
Grains Research and Development Corporation
PO Box 5367
Kingston ACT 2604
Telephone: 02 6272 5525
Facsimile: 02 6271 6430

Service Charter

The GRDC provides a wide range of publications for government and grower stakeholders as well as the wider community. The GRDC's Service Charter, available through www.grdc.com.au, outlines the corporation's commitment to delivering these important resources.

Board

The GRDC Board is responsible for the stewardship of the corporation, and oversees corporate governance within the GRDC. Its other functions include setting strategic direction, and monitoring the ongoing performance of the business and of the Managing Director.

The Board, comprising nine directors, has combined expertise in business management; commodity production; processing and marketing; economics; finance; sociology; management and conservation of natural resources and the environment; R&D administration; intellectual property management; and science and technology transfer.

The GRDC Board in session. *Photo: Vic Dobos*



Directors as at 30 June 2005

Mr Terry J Enright

Chair
(Non-executive)

Re-appointed 1 October 2004
for three years

Member:
Executive Committee and
Remuneration Committee

Terry Enright farms pulses, cereals, canola and sheep in the south coast region of Western Australia. A former Chair of the Albany Port Authority, he has also served as a member of the State Barley Research Committee and of the Western Australian Farmers Federation Grains Council. He has been a member and Chair of the GRDC Western Region Panel, and was deputy chair of the GRDC Board prior to his appointment as Chair.



Ms Christine Hawkins

BCom (Hons), MCom, CPA, FAICD

Deputy Chair
(Non-executive)

Re-appointed 1 October 2002
for three years

Member:
Executive Committee and
Remuneration Committee
Chair:
Finance and Audit Committee

Christine Hawkins is a corporate adviser and company director. She specialises in high-level strategic organisational planning and development and has a particular interest in the agribusiness sector. Christine has been involved in recent years in business start-ups, the commercialisation of new products and technologies, and the development of supply chain management and marketing structures in agribusiness. She has qualifications in economics, accounting, finance and taxation law. She is Chair of the Advisory Committee of Go Grains and a member of the National Rural Advisory Council.



Mr Peter F Reading

BScAg (Hons), FAICD

Managing Director
(Executive)

Appointed in February 2004

Member:
Executive Committee

After graduating from the University of Sydney, Peter Reading commenced postgraduate studies in agronomy before leaving university to work for American Cyanamid in Australia. He went on to work for American Cyanamid in Asia and the United States; Incitec in Australia; the British Oxygen Company in Australia and Asia; and Grain Pool in Western Australia (from 2001 to 2003). Peter is a member of the boards of Enterprise Grains Australia, Export Grains Centre Ltd, Australian Centre for Intellectual Property in Agriculture, and *Graingene*.



Dr Tony Fischer

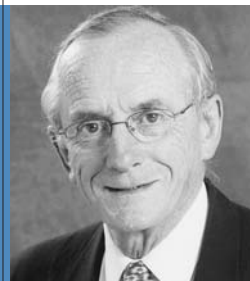
BScAg, PhD, FAIAST, FTSE

Director
(Non-executive)

Re-appointed 1 October 2002
for three years

Member:
Remuneration Committee

Tony Fischer works part-time at the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) in Canberra as a Senior Adviser—South Asia. This involves overseeing ACIAR activities and projects in South Asia. Previously, Tony managed an ACIAR research program, covering crops as well as land and water projects, involving many developing countries. He has been active in research in these fields for over 30 years, at the New South Wales Department of Agriculture, CSIRO, and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) in Mexico. From 1988 to 1995 he was director of the Wheat Program at CIMMYT. He has travelled widely in the developing world. He also retains a close interest in a mixed farming property at Boree Creek in southern New South Wales.



Mr Ross Johns

FAICD

Director
(Non-executive)Appointed 1 October 2002
for three yearsMember:
Finance and Audit Committee

Ross Johns is a grain producer who lives and works in rural Victoria, and takes a keen interest in regional affairs. He is an active member of the Victorian Farmers Federation and also serves as a director of ABB Grain Ltd. He has been a graingrower for many years and has participated in many overseas marketing missions. He brings to the GRDC experience in grain production and marketing, business management, sociology, technology transfer and natural resource management. Ross has recently completed the Advanced Diploma in Business Management.

**Dr Rachel Lucas**

BSc (Hons), PhD, FAICD, AIMM

Director
(Non-executive)Appointed 1 October 2002
for three yearsMember:
Finance and Audit Committee

Rachel Lucas is currently Director of Science and Innovation with the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology in South Australia. She is a non-executive director of Playford Capital, and chairs South Australia's Sustainable Energy Research Advisory Committee. Rachel's background encompasses molecular biology, banking, venture capital, business development and management, strategy development and implementation, R&D administration, technology transfer and intellectual property management. She has many years experience with the food industry through previous involvement with several cooperative research centres. She has brought commercial R&D to market and has extensive experience in negotiating and implementing commercial agreements.

**Mr Roland Pittar**

BSc (Agr) Hons

Government Director
(Non-executive)

Appointed 7 March 2005

Member:
Finance and Audit Committee

Roland Pittar is the General Manager of the Crops, Wine and Horticulture Branch within the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. His team is responsible for providing policy advice and implementing a number of programs which, by enabling business to perform better and respond to market signals along the value chain, contribute to the global competitiveness of Australia's agriculture and food industries. Roland has held a range of policy positions with the Australian Government, which have focused on agriculture, minerals and science policy. He has also worked for a state agriculture department.

**Dr Don Plowman**

BScAg, MScAg, PhD

Director
(Non-executive)Appointed 1 October 2002
for three years

Don Plowman is Executive Director Agriculture and Wine, in the Department of Primary Industries and Resources in South Australia. He trained at the University of Sydney, where he specialised in soil science. He has held positions in the University of Sydney, the Monarto Development Commission and the South Australian Government, and in organisations overseas. Don was a director of the dried fruits R&D and horticultural R&D corporations, and has been a director of a number of cooperative research centres.



Selection

The Board Selection Committee, a committee chosen by the parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, on advice from the Grains Council of Australia, nominates six of the nine GRDC directors. Appointment of directors nominated through this mechanism is subject to ministerial approval.

The Chair and the Government Director are selected and appointed by the Parliamentary Secretary. The Board appoints the Managing Director. With the exception of the Managing Director and the Government Director, GRDC directors are appointed for three-year terms. The Managing Director holds office at the corporation's pleasure.

On 5 August 2005 the Selection Committee's Presiding Member delivered a copy of his annual report to Senator, the Hon Richard Colbeck. A copy of this report is at Appendix 6.

Committees

The Board receives formal reports from each of the board committees, and any decisions the Board makes in relation to the reports are recorded in the minutes of the subsequent board meeting. Terms of reference are in place for each of the committees described in Table 3.

Meetings

The GRDC Board holds seven meetings every 12 months—four full quarterly meetings and three other meetings. Each of the latter meetings is combined with a visit to each one of the GRDC regions at least once every 12 months.

Each director's attendance at Board and board committee meetings during the year is set out in Table 4.

Table 3 Board committee roles and structures as at 30 June 2005

Executive Committee	
<i>Role</i>	The role of the Executive Committee is to ensure that GRDC affairs are properly managed, within the provisions of the <i>Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997</i> and the <i>Primary Industries and Energy Research Development Act 1989</i> , between meetings of the Board.
<i>Membership</i>	The Executive Committee comprises the Chair, the Deputy Chair and the Managing Director.

Finance and Audit Committee	
<i>Role</i>	The primary role of the Finance and Audit Committee is to assist the Board of the GRDC in ensuring that the corporation complies with its statutory and other obligations in an efficient and effective manner. The committee also considers other matters as referred to it by the Board.
<i>Membership</i>	The Finance and Audit Committee comprises at least three directors of the Board. The Board designates the committee's Chair.

Remuneration Committee	
<i>Role</i>	The role of the Remuneration Committee is to review and make recommendations to the Board on matters relating to the remuneration and performance of the Managing Director, and to review advice from the Managing Director on remuneration and performance policy for the corporation.
<i>Membership</i>	The Remuneration Committee comprises the Chair, the Deputy Chair and one other director.

Table 4 Attendance at board and committee meetings, 2004–05

Board member	Board		Executive Committee		Finance and Audit Committee		Remuneration Committee	
	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held and eligible to attend	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held and eligible to attend	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held and eligible to attend	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held and eligible to attend
Mr Terry Enright	8	8	5	5	0	0	1	1
Ms Christine Hawkins	8	8	5	5	4	4	1	1
Mr Peter Reading	8	8	5	5	0	0	0	0
Mr Tom Aldred ^a	6	6	0	0	3	3	0	0
Ms Helen Cameron ^c	5	8	0	0	1	1	0	0
Dr Tony Fischer	8	8	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mr Ross Johns	8	8	0	0	3	4	0	0
Dr Rachel Lucas	8	8	0	0	3	3	0	0
Mr Roland Pittar ^b	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
Dr Don Plowman	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0

a Mr Tom Aldred resigned effective from 7 March 2005
b Mr Roland Pittar was appointed effective from 7 March 2005
c Ms Helen Cameron resigned from the Finance and Audit Committee effective 12 September 2004 and from the Board effective from 31 January 2005

Independent professional advice

With the Chair's approval, directors may obtain independent professional advice, at the GRDC's expense, on matters arising in the course of their board and committee duties.

Induction and training

New board members go through a formal induction process, and there is a process of continuous education for members of the Board.

Roles, responsibilities and code of conduct

The roles and responsibilities of members of the Board, and their code of conduct, are documented in the GRDC Operating Manual. To request a copy of the manual, telephone the GRDC on 02 6272 5525, or send an email to grdc@grdc.com.au

Disclosure of direct and indirect pecuniary interests

In accordance with section 84 of the *Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act 1989*, the Managing Director must disclose all direct or indirect pecuniary interests that he or she has or acquires in any business or in any body corporate carrying on any business.

Directors must also comply with the CAC Act's requirements regarding material personal interests and with the GRDC's policy and procedures for conflict of interest, which require declarations of conflicts of interest at the start of each board meeting, and regular updates of records of conflict of interest declarations.

Board Secretary

In September 2004, the Chair confirmed the appointment of Mr Geoff Budd, GRDC General Counsel, as secretary to the Board. The role of the Board Secretary is to:

- ensure the correct recording of board minutes, resolutions and action plans
- help ensure that action plans are closed out within agreed time frames
- prepare board agendas
- collate and distribute board papers and other related documents.

Relationship with the Executive Management Team

The Executive Management Team (EMT), under the new organisational structure as at 30 June 2005, comprises seven members: the Managing Director, together with the Executive Manager from each of the six management groups (four lines of business and two enabling functions), namely:

- Varieties
- Practices
- New Products
- Communication and Customer Services
- Corporate Strategy and Program Support
- Corporate Services.

(the management structure is shown in Figure 9 in Part 1—Overview).

The EMT has an advice and implementation role in relation to the Board. The team investigates and recommends matters for the GRDC Board to consider. It also implements board decisions in accordance with approved policies and procedures, including an approval authority schedule that sets out the necessary delegations.

To ensure that the GRDC's operations are monitored and managed efficiently and effectively, the EMT meets regularly, and maintains and updates an annual business schedule.

Consultant's review

In 2004, the Board commissioned Blake Dawson Waldron to conduct a follow-up review of, and report on, the Board's performance. The review

was to test the Board's performance against the findings and recommendations of the 2003 Blake Dawson Waldron review described in last year's annual report.

The follow-up report, provided in December 2004, indicated that:

- the Board had reflected on the 2003 review and implemented many of its recommendations, and this had made a significant and positive impact on the Board's performance
- the Board had clearly developed a more strategic focus
- a small number of items still required attention, including
 - establishment of key performance indicators for the Board
 - further development of strategic focus
 - more thorough examination of the risks associated with new ventures
 - further consideration of the skills mix on the Board
 - further development of succession planning
 - further development and implementation of a comprehensive conflict of interest policy, and further development of the code of conduct.

The selection of board members takes place through a process established by the Minister, and the GRDC does not have formal input to that process. The Board and the EMT have addressed each of the other issues identified in the 2004 report, with the following results:

- the Board has adopted key performance indicators
- management is continuing to develop strategies for each line of business, and the Board is setting aside more time in meetings for the consideration of strategic issues
- when considering proposals, the Board and the EMT are closely examining the risks associated with new ventures
- succession planning is specifically included in the GRDC staff annual performance review process
- the conflict of interest policy and board members' code of conduct have been reviewed, as part of an ongoing review of the GRDC Operating Manual.

Advisory panels and program teams

The GRDC Board makes decisions with the support of a national advisory panel, informed by the knowledge and experience of three regional panels and six investment program teams. This network helps to ensure that GRDC investments are directed towards the interests of all our stakeholders and the strategic objectives of our programs.

National Panel

The National Panel comprises the three regional panel chairs and the GRDC's executive managers. The National Panel addresses national R&D priorities across the GRDC investment programs, and advances recommendations on investments to the Board.

In assisting the Board, the panel's key advice functions include reviewing program investment plans; reviewing budget development and allocations; recommending strategic changes in allocations; arbitrating issues of investment allocation or investment strategy; and actioning review recommendations. The National Panel also plays a major role in communicating with research partners and stakeholders.

The National Panel on tour inspecting storage facilities at The Lentil Company based at Horsham, Victoria.

Photo: Brad Collis



Regional panels

The GRDC's three regional panels are composed of graingrowers, agribusiness representatives and scientists, with provision for other industry experts to participate as appropriate. Regional panel members also participate as members of GRDC program teams.

The regional panels develop strategies for each of the three GRDC regions (details of the regions are provided in Figure 7 in Part 1—Overview) and advise the Board on allocating investment budgets to meet regional R&D needs and priorities across the six GRDC investment programs. The panels are responsible for developing and reviewing strategy across the programs and for ensuring that investment strategy is responding to the regional and national priorities of stakeholders.

The GRDC Operating Manual covers roles, responsibilities, codes of conduct, remuneration and selection guidelines for panel members. Panel members as at 30 June 2005 are listed in Table 5.

Program teams

Each of the six GRDC program teams comprises seven members: a program manager, and two panel representatives from each of the regional panels. In addition, other consultants from other programs provide support to each program team. Each program team is responsible for developing, implementing and reviewing the investment strategy within its program.

Table 5 Regional panel membership as at 30 June 2005

Northern Regional Panel			
<i>Chair</i>	<i>Deputy Chair</i>	<i>Members</i>	
Mr Ian Buss	Mrs Di Bentley	Mr Philip Bardsley Dr John Doughton Mr Warwick Fisher Dr David Freebairn Dr Ray Hare Mr Chris Joseph Mr Mark McKay	
Southern Regional Panel			
<i>Chair</i>	<i>Deputy Chair</i>	<i>Members</i>	
Mr Ian MacKinnon	Dr Michael Southan	Mr Robert Freebairn Dr Barbara Howlett Dr Mark Peoples Mr David Shannon Mr Alan Umbers Mr Jon Whykes Mr David Wolfenden Dr Allan Mayfield (consultant)	
Western Regional Panel			
<i>Chair</i>	<i>Deputy Chair</i>	<i>Members</i>	
Mr Dale Baker	Dr Juliann Lloyd-Smith	Mr Deane Aynsley Dr Robert Belford Mr Ian Blayney Mr Ben Curtis Mr Darrel Dent Mr Andrew Lee Dr James Ridsdill-Smith	

Our people

The 2004 strategic review that produced the new GRDC business strategy, *The Way Forward*, and informs the Annual Operational Plan 2005–06, made several key findings reinforcing the value of our people. The GRDC understands that highly motivated and skilled staff, working together, are the key to achieving core objectives such as building research capacity and demonstrating best practice in corporate and program support.

To help us attract and retain top talent, the GRDC has in place a performance management scheme that rewards commitment and initiative, and encourages staff to follow career paths through the organisation. The suite of targeted training we offer covers both immediate operational needs and longer term goals, of individuals and the GRDC.

In keeping with Australian Government requirements, and to secure the best blend of skills and experience, we ensure that age, gender,

cultural diversity or disability are not obstacles to being employed at the GRDC. The GRDC also provides a range of preventative strategies and return to work options to minimise the effects of occupational hazards and injuries on our people.

Staff profile

Staff are employed under section 87 of the PIERD Act, which provides that the terms and conditions of employment are to be determined by the GRDC.

As at 30 June 2005, there were 46 full-time employees, including the Managing Director. The gender mix consisted of 23 females and 23 males. A staff list is provided in Table 6.

The GRDC also engaged seven program consultants, under section 88 of the PIERD Act.

Table 6 Staff as at 30 June 2005

Managing Director	Mr Peter Reading
Executive Assistant	Mrs Wynette Neil
Corporate Services	
Executive Manager	Mr Gavin Whiteley
General Counsel	Mr Geoff Budd
Corporate Lawyer	Ms Sara Wedgwood
Compliance Officer	Mrs Helen Buchanan
Administrative Assistant	Vacant
Manager Finance	Ms Kim Niquet
Accountant—Reporting	Ms Danielle White
Contract Payments Officer	Temporary vacancy
Accounts Payable Officer	Mrs Cathy Wells
Manager Human Resources	Ms Wendy Neil
Travel Coordinator	Ms Sarah Smith
Records Management Coordinator	Temporary vacancy
Receptionist	Ms Ros Walton
Manager IT Facilities	Mr Alex Bate
Project Officer (IT Support)	Mr Daniel Ristevski
IT Administrator	Mr Ray Young

Table 6 Staff as at 30 June 2005 (continued)

Corporate Strategy and Program Support	
Executive Manager	Mr Morris Lloyd
Manager Strategic and Economic Analysis	Dr Iftikhar Mostafa
Corporate Strategist Evaluation and Reporting	Dr Zoltan Lukacs
Manager Procurement and Contracting	Mrs Cathy Stewart
Contracts Coordinator	Ms Klaudia Skazlic
Varieties	
Executive Manager	Mr John Harvey
Administrative Coordinator	Mrs Marilyn Baulman
Administrative Assistant	Ms Noelia Freitas
Administrative Assistant	Temporary vacancy
Manager Gene Discovery	Dr Andreas Betzner
Manager Germplasm Enhancement	Dr Richard Brettell
Project Manager, Pre-Breeding	Dr John de Majnik
Manager Wheat and Barley Breeding	Mr John Cullen
Manager Pulse/Oilseed Breeding	Mrs Bronwen MacLean
Communication and Customer Services	
Executive Manager	Mr Vic Dobos
Program Support Coordinator	Ms Sonia Yanni
Manager Customer Services	Mr Tom McCue
Webmaster	Ms Anastasis Lipapis
Manager Corporate Communication	Mrs Helen Weldon
Information Products and Services Officer	Ms Maureen Cribb
Panel Support Officer	Mrs Shona Tidswell
Panel Support Officer (WA)	Mr Jim Carroll
Panel Support Officer	Temporary vacancy
Practices	
Executive Manager	Mr Greg Fraser
Program Coordinator	Ms Chris Valakas
Administrative Coordinator	Mrs Angela Ditton
Manager Agronomy, Soils and Environment	Dr Martin Blumenthal
Project Manager Practices	Temporary vacancy
Manager Crop Protection	Mr John Sandow
Manager Validation and Adoption	Mr Stuart Kearns
New Products	
Executive Manager	Mr Vince Logan
Administrative Coordinator	Ms Manisha Jayawardana
Manager New Farm Products and Services	Mr John Thorne
Manager New Grain Products	Ms Katrina Spencer
Note: Three staff are currently on maternity leave. Two temporary staff are currently employed.	

Staff locations

Six management groups, including the professional staff who manage research contracts and investment opportunities, are housed in offices at the following Canberra address:

Grains Research and Development Corporation
First Floor
40 Blackall Street
BARTON ACT 2600

The GRDC owns one floor of Tourism House at 40 Blackall Street. The GRDC does not own any research facilities.

The GRDC also maintains one full-time officer in rented office space in Perth.

Code of conduct

The GRDC Code of Business Conduct and Ethical Behaviour is published as part of the GRDC Operating Manual, and copies of the code are available upon request.

Performance management

Performance measures are strongly aligned with the strategic direction of the GRDC. Individuals are rewarded through an annual bonus scheme that promotes over-achievement in key performance areas and recognises the efforts of individuals, rewarding behaviour that reflects passion, commitment and ownership in relation to GRDC goals.

Managers assist in developing accountability and performance measures to tie operational outcomes to strategic aims. Individual performance is assessed against agreed key result areas and performance indicators twice a year.

Recruitment, retention training and succession management

The GRDC makes a significant investment in training each year to ensure that its staff are able to manage the complexity of issues facing the Australian grains industry. We acknowledge and address the strategic link between the recruitment and induction process, training, development, performance, succession planning and retention.

On recruitment, staff undertake an induction program that introduces them to the organisation and explains the part they will play in achieving the GRDC's strategic objectives.

We aim to identify training that will challenge people and develop their capacity to perform both their current roles and future roles in the organisation. Our biannual performance review process identifies possible career paths for individuals, which contributes to their personal goals and sense of achievement, and assists GRDC succession planning. Individual training plans are agreed formally, as part of that process. Three staff members are undertaking courses of postgraduate study relevant to their positions the fees for which are partly subsidised by the GRDC.

The Board Secretary attended the Australian Institute of Company Directors Company Directors Course during the year.

During 2004–05, new procurement training was also made available to all GRDC staff as part of the organisational focus on improved procurement procedures.

Exit interviews can help to identify the reasons why staff leave the GRDC and offer opportunities to increase retention rates by addressing any issues that reflect upon it. The feedback from exit interviews was generally very positive and indicates that most staff left to pursue greater career opportunities than a small organisation is able to offer. As part of its retention strategy, the GRDC acknowledges the need to monitor pay and conditions in the local, and unique, employment market. We analyse current, comparative commercial salary tables to review pay, conditions and non-financial rewards.

Occupational health and safety

Supporting and retaining our valuable staff is a high priority of the GRDC, and ensuring their health and safety continues to be a prime responsibility of management. In fulfilling this responsibility, managers strive to maintain a working environment that is safe and without risk to health, including by:

- providing and maintaining safe plant, systems of work and access to and egress from the workplace
- providing a free flu immunisation program for all staff
- keeping the workplace in a safe and healthy condition
- providing adequate facilities to protect the welfare of all staff
- providing information, training and supervision for all staff members, enabling them to work in a safe and healthy manner
- maintaining information and records relating to health and safety.

A policy to support the gradual return to work of injured staff members continued to be developed during 2004–05. The policy will address the

GRDC's commitment to provide specialised equipment, professional monitoring and flexible working hours to enable staff to successfully return to full duties as soon as they are ready.

Table 7 summarises the key elements of the GRDC's occupational health and safety performance during the year.

Equal employment opportunity

The GRDC currently has 46 full-time positions, and falls within the meaning of the *Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987*. Staff are employed under terms and conditions consistent with the GRDC equal employment policy, as set out in the GRDC Operating Manual.

Table 7 GRDC occupational health and safety performance, 2004–05

Indicators	Performance
Workstation assessments completed for all GRDC staff	A professional assessor conducts and documents workstation assessments for all new and relocated staff members.
Training and awareness of occupational health and safety requirements	Important activities conducted during the year included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fire drill evacuation exercises • quarterly meetings of the Tourism House building emergency committee, to coordinate emergency evacuation plans between floors • the ongoing training of fire wardens • the provision of flu vaccinations for staff • the provision of an employee assistance program, to provide support and counselling.
Improved internal security arrangements	A new lift security system was installed, and a review and upgrade of the internal GRDC security system commenced.
Workplace facilities maintained to a high standard	All safety equipment continued to be maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' and statutory requirements.

Disability strategies

The GRDC continued to implement the Commonwealth Disability Strategy, complying with the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, as described in Table 8.

Table 8 GRDC performance under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

GRDC performance as an employer	
Indicators	Performance
Compliance of GRDC employment policies, procedures and practices with the requirements of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Disability Act)	There were no breaches.
Availability of recruitment information for potential job applicants in accessible formats	Recruitment information was available in electronic and hardcopy format, and large print.
Application of the principle of 'reasonable adjustment' by all GRDC recruiters and managers	Information on 'reasonable adjustment' was provided to all GRDC recruiters and managers.
Consideration of and response to the needs of people with disabilities when designing and delivering training and development programs	Needs were addressed as required.
Grievance mechanisms in place for addressing issues and concerns raised by staff and the public	Mechanisms were established to ensure that grievances could be dealt with in the normal course of business.
GRDC performance as a purchaser	
Indicators	Performance
Availability of information on agreed purchasing specifications, in accessible formats for people with disabilities	The information was made publicly available; large print was available on request.
Consultation with disability groups when developing and designing processes for purchasing goods or services	Consultation occurred when and as required.
Ensuring consistency with the requirements of the Disability Act when developing and designing purchasing specifications, including contracts for goods and services	Needs were addressed as required.
Consideration of and response to the needs of people with disabilities when developing and designing performance reporting mechanisms against the purchase contract specifications	Needs addressed according to the circumstances of each person and in accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Strategy. Examples include the use of large print formats, plain English text and accessible electronic formats.
Grievance mechanisms in place for addressing issues and concerns raised by staff and the public	Mechanisms were in place to ensure that grievances could be dealt with in the normal course of business.



Half grazier, half cropper: Stephen Poole's paddocks are a complex system of laying one crop over another. *Photo: Brad Collis*