

# PRIMARY INDUSTRIES HEALTH AND SAFETY PARTNERSHIP



## Primary Industries Health and Safety Partnership 2013–2017 Plan

Partners:

*(It is anticipated that new partners will join the partnership during the period of the plan)*





## INTRODUCTION

The Primary Industries Health and Safety Partnership (PIHSP) Five Year Plan has been developed by the Partnership's existing partners to outline the research, development and extension (RD&E) objectives for 2013–2017. These have been informed by:

1. national statistics on workplace health and safety
2. 17 years of research undertaken by previous partnerships
3. RD&E outcomes of the 2008–12 plan
4. goals and strategies of the RIRDC Corporate Plan 2012–2017<sup>1</sup>
5. the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012–2022<sup>2</sup> and
6. consultations with key existing or potential partners.



## BACKGROUND

It is well recognised that the effective management of all risks, including work health and safety (WHS), are necessary for the future sustainability of primary industries.

In continuing support of this, the PIHSP 2013–2017 Plan builds on the Collaborative Partnership for Farming and Fishing Health and Safety Four Year Plan 2008–2012. That program of investment aimed to improve the health and safety of workers and their families in the farming and fishing industries across Australia. The three main research objectives were to improve knowledge about the:

1. physical health of farming and fishing workers and their families
2. mental health of farming and fishing families
3. safety environment and work practices in farming and fishing industries.

During the period of this plan seventeen research projects were commissioned with a total value of \$2.11 million. At the end of the investment period an economic evaluation was undertaken of a sample of three of the seventeen projects. This identified a range of expected economic and social project benefits. Funding for the three projects/project groups

analysed totalled \$0.92 million (present value terms) and produced aggregate total expected benefits of \$3.92 million (present value terms). The analyses found all three investments provided positive returns with individual benefit-cost ratios ranging from 2.2 to 5.6. The economic evaluation demonstrated a positive estimated return on investment.

The major review of the 2008–2012 program showed:

1. existing research outcomes are sufficient to identify the major health and safety risks in the primary industries
2. there is not a strong case to develop a major research-only strategy for health and safety in the primary industries
3. health and safety outcomes in the primary industries were not improving at the rate of those in other industries and
4. resources available to the research, development and extension (RD&E) program from the primary industries are declining.

1 See [www.rirdc.gov.au/about-rirdc](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/about-rirdc).

2 See <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/australian-strategy/pages/australian-strategy>



## RATIONALE

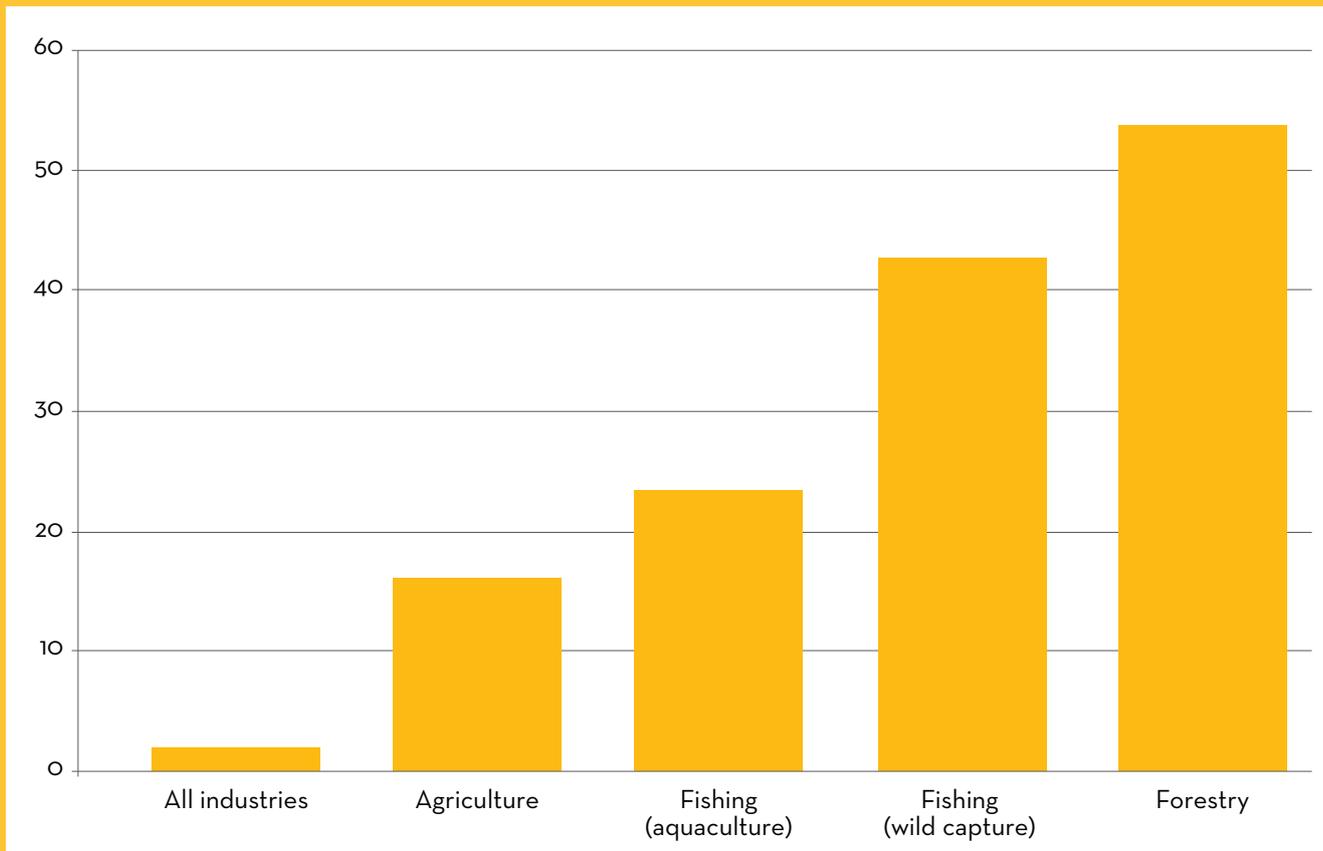
Australia's primary industries – agriculture, fisheries and forestry are fundamental to a sound national economy and to the social and economic sustainability of rural and remote Australia. Primary industries are responsible for 3 percent of Australia's GDP<sup>3</sup> (rising to 12 percent if value adding is included) and 10.6 percent<sup>4</sup> of its export income in 2011. Around 3 percent (335,000 employees) of the working population are employed in primary industries. In rural and regional Australia it is a major source of employment.

Despite the importance of the primary industries, all is not well 'in the field', 'on the water' and 'among the trees'.

Although there have been significant improvements, agriculture, forestry and fishing (the primary industries) collectively recorded the highest fatality rates of any industry in 2010–2011 with 17.64 deaths per 100,000 workers. This is nine times the overall fatality rate of 1.93 deaths per 100,000 workers.

In absolute terms, of 62 worker fatalities recorded in 2010–2011 across the primary industries, agriculture accounted for 48 of these, equating to a fatality rate of 15.65 deaths per 100,000 workers.<sup>5</sup> (refer Table 1).

**Table 1: Rate of Worker Fatalities per 100,000 Workers in the Primary Industries in 2010-11<sup>6</sup>**



3 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1301.0~2012~Main%20Features~Home%20page-1>

4 <http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/trade/trade-at-a-glance-2011.html>

5 Work-related Traumatic Injury Fatalities, Australia 2010-11, Safe Work Australia, 2012

6 Note that annual fatality data for forestry and fishing can be volatile. Also employment data excludes share fishermen i.e. those who work for a share of catch.

In agriculture alone 3,535 (ten year average) workers' compensation claims are lodged each year – among the highest rates for any industry.

The health and safety data for the fisheries sector are different for aquaculture compared to wild capture fisheries. In 2010–2011<sup>7</sup>, in absolute terms, the aquaculture sector reported 1 death, which equates to 23 deaths per 100,000 workers (11.9 times the all-industry average), while the wild capture fisheries reported 8 deaths, which equates to 43 deaths per 100,000 workers (22 times the all-industry average), as shown in Table 1.

Forestry worker fatalities in 2010–2011 had 3 deaths which equates to a fatality rate of 53.87 deaths per 100,000 workers, which is 28 times the all-industry average<sup>5</sup> (Table 1)

The total economic cost of work-related injuries and illnesses for the primary industry is significant at over \$2.1 billion dollars for the 2008–2009 financial year.<sup>8</sup> This data clearly demonstrates improving health and safety in primary industries will have significant economic benefits to individuals, their families, their communities, their industry and the nation.

The rate of improvement in health and safety outcomes of the sector lags behind all other sectors<sup>9</sup>. While specific health and safety risks may differ between industry sectors, RIRDC research shows there are common issues running through the farming, fishing and forestry sectors. These include:

- increasing global, regional and local economic and climate pressures on business. In response business must be strategic in adopting new technologies and approaches to remain economically sustainable.
- increasing numbers of ageing workers. The average age of farmers is now around 59 years.

- for a range of reasons people in rural and regional Australia typically have poorer physical and mental health than those in urban centres.
- working environments in the primary industries are often hazardous. For example workers commonly operate vehicles in challenging conditions, sometimes in adverse weather conditions, may have poorly guarded equipment and may work in physical and social isolation.
- a varied understanding of WHS responsibilities.
- a culture where some individuals value self-reliance, tend to underestimate the likelihood of injury to themselves and others, view health and safety risks as an inevitable part of 'doing business' and inaccurately believe managing work health and safety risks is complicated, expensive and unnecessary.

Work health and safety improvements have been made due to the continued investment by governments, industry and individual businesses. However, fatalities and serious injuries are still occurring at disproportionate rates. Unfortunately these are commonly caused by exposure to known hazards where effective solutions are available. The need to continue to improve health and safety in primary industries is recognised by business, government and the community.

A new approach is required to build on the early work and increase the improvements on a sustainable basis. Work-related deaths, injuries and illnesses will not reduce significantly until the barriers to adoption of systematic hazard management throughout the primary industries are overcome. Insufficient work has been undertaken to understand why the primary industries do not effectively implement systematic hazard management and this should be a focus of the new program.

7 It should be noted that there is some volatility in the data for aquaculture and fisheries from year to year. Also, employment data excludes share fishermen i.e. those who work for a share of catch.

8 Safe Work Australia (2013) The cost of work-related injury and illness for Australian employers, workers and the community 2008–09 page 30

9 Safe Work Australia: based on trend data over the ten years of the *National OHS Strategy 2002–2012*.

## SOURCES OF INFLUENCE

This plan describes a new approach to WHS RD&E which places greater emphasis on better understanding and then effectively overcoming the barriers to WHS in the primary industries. It also recognises and targets 'community' as an important influencer of attitudes and behaviour.

The PIHSP recognises the RD&E program may not directly change how WHS is practised, but it can identify and promote the mechanisms for change for implementation by others. Figure 1, below shows a diagrammatic representation of those involved in work health and safety in the primary industries and some of the key influencing parties and factors.

Figure 1: The Dynamics of Workplace Health and Safety in the Primary Industries

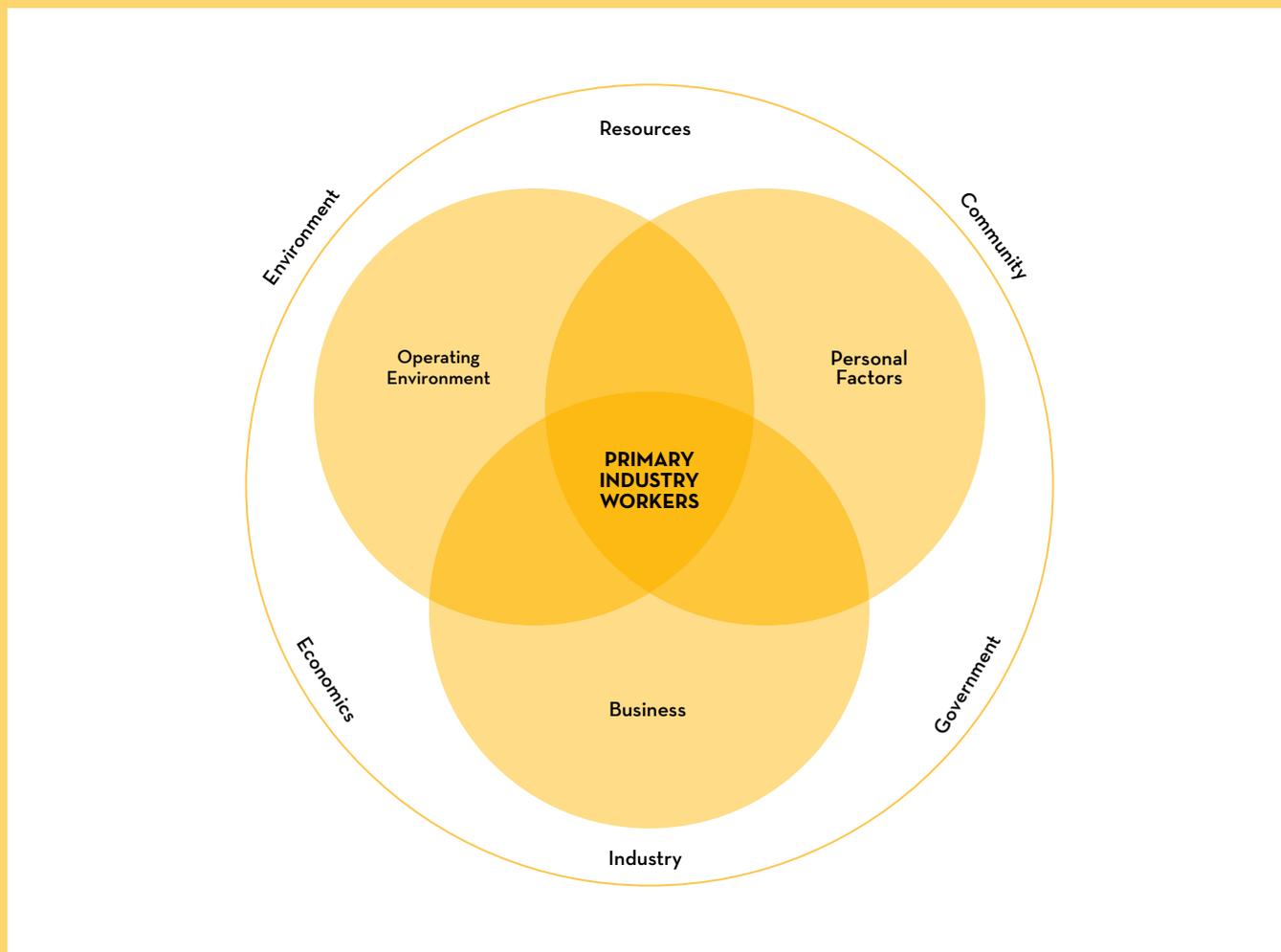


Figure 1 shows that the scope and capacity of a primary industries' worker to make a decision on work health and safety is constrained or enabled by a complex set of key influencers and the interactions between them. Each of the parties or factors noted in Figure 1 has an influence on WHS and the resulting capacity of workers to effectively address risks.

## THE DYNAMICS

Primary industry workers include business owners (employers and the self-employed), share farmers and fishermen, managers, employees and contractors. Decisions about WHS are most likely to be influenced by business issues (including business structure, profitability, commitments, responsibilities, financial institutions, industry bodies and

supply chain partners, etc.) but also government regulation (legislation, compliance activities), the operating environment (adequacy of plant, access to equipment and resources, production cycle, climate and weather conditions, remoteness) and personal factors (including age, skills, training, education, experience, motivations and attitudes, peer pressure, tradition).

At a broader level, WHS decisions will be influenced by issues such as industry (structure, market access, maturity status, leadership), government (policies that facilitate trade, effectively addressing market failures), community (positive engagement as an important part of communities, contributing to a culture of sustainability, respected as a valuable industry, influencing peer group values), access to resources (both input and output) with appropriate supporting logistics and infrastructure and environmental factors that will have a major influence on productivity. Importantly, the economic landscape will have a major influence on the business, operating environment and personal factors.

## THE INFLUENCERS

All levels of government (federal, state and territory and local) have an interest in maintaining vibrant and sustainable primary industries and can actively influence work health and safety through their policies, programs, compliance and communications. Central to this is to support the maintenance of an industry workforce that continues to deliver productivity growth.

Business and industry groups have a central interest in ensuring the ongoing sustainability of this sector. They recognise the primary industries are highly reliant on people (employing over 330,000 people in 2012<sup>10</sup>) and need to attract, develop and retain a productive workforce to ensure future success and viability. At a time where competition for workers is stronger than ever before and there is a growing gap between demand and supply of 'next generation' skilled workers, industry acknowledges the need to manage workplace risks to help attract new workers.

Supply chains are already powerful influencers on primary industries at every level through contractual specifications that directly affect how work is performed. Supply chains are recognised through the *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022* as having a significant role to play in improving work health and safety outcomes.

All members of the supply chain affiliated industries such as service industries and input suppliers are particularly important, with those upstream having a significant influence through contractual obligations.

In most cases, industry organisations can provide a direct conduit to workers, whether it is through industry peak councils, research and development corporations (RDC), or industry-initiated programs. There is a specific level of trust in these industry networks that are extremely effective in assisting messages to reach the primary industries.

Business also includes financial organisations such as banks and other rural industry finance bodies. While productivity is very important to them they may not be fully aware of the importance of the effective management of WHS risks in maintaining and improving long term productivity nor of their role in influencing WHS outcomes.

Those associated with the primary industries will be directly and indirectly influenced by attitudes and behaviours of their peers in the industry. This includes family members, local communities, local shops and businesses, teachers, health centres, rural doctors, community organisations and groups, unions, churches, media and any other individual or organisation with an interest in sustaining the primary industries. Very often the underlying values that inform decisions are supported or reinforced through these 'communities'. In terms of improving WHS in the primary industries, these 'communities' are currently underutilised and are therefore a key target audience for the program.

10 Taken from ANZSICo6 Group level employment data, ABS 2012

## A PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

Through its research program the PIHSP will seek to understand each of these groups or factors (including enablers and barriers) that can influence WHS, and the interactions between them. From this, effective approaches to overcoming the barriers to change that impede the adoption of effective risk management will be identified. This will inform the development and extension program in support of targeted approaches to deliver change.

Insights from previous and new research will allow the Development & Extension activities to focus on known issues and stimulate change through the translation of research outcomes and the extension of solutions for maximum adoption.



## THE RD&E PROGRAM 2013-2017

The PIHSP is committed to achieving significant benefits to industry within available partnership resources through the implementation of **targeted** and **high-impact** RD&E projects.

Program priorities will be guided by the *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022* and identified industry need.

**VISION** Healthy, Safe and Productive Working Lives in the Primary Industries

**MISSION** Through investment in RD&E drive sustainable improvements to work health and safety outcomes

**SCOPE** All primary industries: agriculture, forestry and fishing., with specific activities relating to those sectors participating in the PIHSP.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To draw on our understanding of the various elements (including enablers) that influence WHS in the primary industries and the interactions between them to influence improved WHS outcomes.
2. To address the barriers to the adoption of improved WHS outcomes.
3. To assist industry to apply approaches that will deliver improved WHS outcomes within the primary industries.

**BENEFICIARIES** The primary beneficiaries of the PIHSP 2013-2017 will be workers in the primary industries, particularly those in the industry sectors that support the Partnership. It is anticipated that 'spill-over' benefits will accumulate to other industry sectors over time. Families, local communities, regions, industry sectors and the nation will ultimately benefit from more productive, safe and healthy primary industries.



## DELIVERING THE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The program objectives will be met through the implementation of the following strategies to deliver these key performance indicators (KPI), resulting in identified impacts / consequences.

| STRATEGIC ACTIVITY                                                                                                                                                                                       | DELIVERABLES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | OUTCOMES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective 1</b> – To draw on our understanding of the various elements (including enablers) that influence WHS in the primary industries and the interactions between them to influence WHS outcomes. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Consolidate and analyse the research undertaken by the PIHSP to date, along with other relevant information, to document current knowledge of WHS in the primary industries.                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report of current knowledge of WHS in the primary industries.</li> <li>• Evidence-based reporting of the WHS priorities for each relevant industry sector within the primary industries.</li> <li>• Definition of the gaps in knowledge.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidating current knowledge regarding WHS in the primary industries.</li> <li>• Focusing limited resources on the WHS priorities for each industry sector.</li> <li>• Application of RD&amp;E resources to address current gaps in knowledge</li> </ul> |
| Analyse the drivers, influencers and enablers of WHS decision making in the primary industries                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified drivers, enablers and influencers of WHS decision making, including interactions between them.</li> <li>• Identified opportunities to leverage these drivers, enablers and influencers to deliver positive change in WHS.</li> <li>• Strategies that gain the commitment of key stakeholders to actively leverage their influence on primary industries to deliver improved WHS outcomes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved approaches to influencing change in WHS in the primary industries.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Objective 2</b> – To address the barriers to the adoption of improved WHS outcomes.                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Analyse the barriers to adoption of effective WHS risk management                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified barriers to the adoption of improved WHS practices.</li> <li>• Identified interactions between the barriers to adoption.</li> <li>• Analysis of the impacts of each identified barrier, and their relative ranking.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved understanding of the factors preventing adoption of effective WHS risk management.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                      |
| Develop approaches to overcome the barriers to adoption of effective EHS risk management                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly defined mechanisms to address the priority barriers to adoption</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased uptake of effective WHS risk management</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                |

| STRATEGIC ACTIVITY                                                                                                                                                                                    | DELIVERABLES                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | OUTCOMES                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective 3</b> – To develop and implement approaches that will deliver improved WHS outcomes within the primary industries.                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                         |
| Translate the experience (including tools / technologies) and learnings from other sectors (such as construction and mining) to identify and develop approaches applicable to the primary industries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translation of relevant approaches used by other industries to effectively manage WHS risks.</li> <li>• Strategies to adapt and apply translated approaches to the primary industries.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of effective approaches to address WHS risks in the primary industries.</li> </ul>                    |
| <p>Translate research to customise sector-specific approaches to address WHS risks, as identified from the evidence.</p> <p>Apply the enablers and develop strategies to overcome the barriers.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A framework applicable to each industry sector that will use new and existing structures and arrangements to deliver improved WHS outcomes.</li> </ul>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved WHS outcomes</li> </ul>                                                                               |
| Implement the extension programs on a national and industry sector basis.                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension strategy and framework completed and implemented.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension strategy and framework completed and implemented.</li> </ul>                                         |
| Work collaboratively with key stakeholders to support them to promote the adoption of effective risk management.                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative arrangements successfully implemented.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategic approach to the adoption of improved WHS risk management within the primary industries.</li> </ul> |

These objectives will be reviewed annually, as part of RIRDC’s Annual Program Review process. Further consultation and feedback will be sought from the Partnership Management Committee, to adjust or amend objectives as necessary.

Allocation of funding for these priorities will also be considered annually, as part of RIRDC’s Annual Operating Plan (AOP). The AOP is available on the RIRDC website, <https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/items/12-001>.

The program will undertake new research if assessed as essential to fulfil the abovementioned objectives. The underpinning focus will be on translating and disseminating results, exploiting the levers of influence, addressing the barriers to change and monitoring the results of these initiatives.



## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PIHSP PLAN

Each Party to the PIHSP has signed a Contribution Agreement and a Management Agreement with RIRDC, which sets out the obligations of Parties, including the establishment and operation of the program Management Committee. The role of the Management Committee is to manage the conduct of the program in accordance with this R&D plan.

Investment decisions will be made by the Management Committee in accordance with the priorities identified in this plan. Where additional expertise is required to assist defining the requirements of an investment, the Program Manager will seek to engage that additional expertise at minimal cost and with the agreement of the Management Committee.

When seeking to engage research providers to deliver specific projects, RIRDC (as the program manager) will utilise one or a combination of the following:

- Public call for submissions
- Public call addressing specific Terms of Reference
- Selective tender addressing specific Terms of Reference
- Direct commissioning

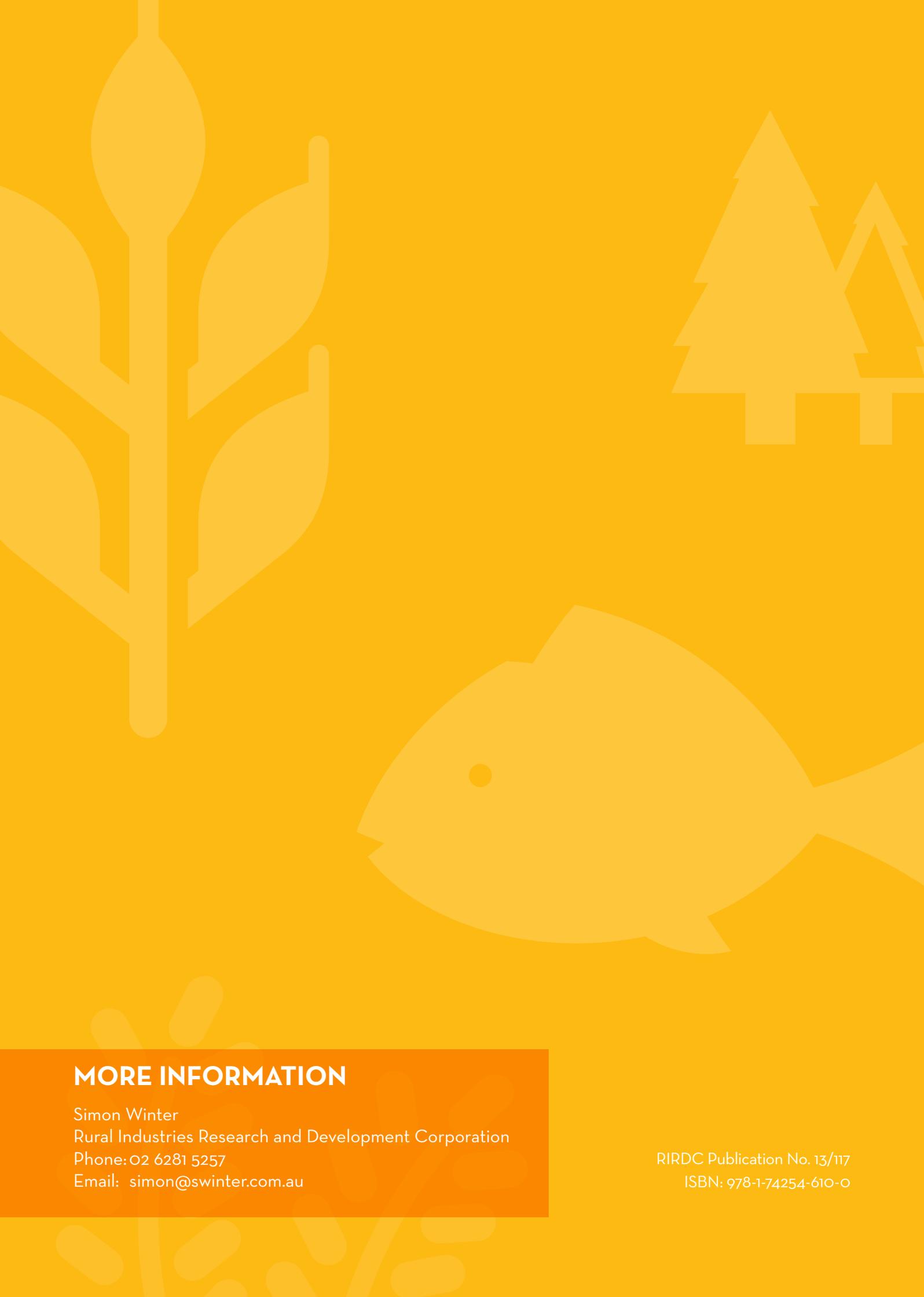
All service providers will be engaged consistent with the procurement requirements applicable to RIRDC.

### Financial commitments

The following funds have, so far, been committed to the PIHSP. New partners are being sought for the program and increased revenue is anticipated for the program. This will be updated regularly and new partners will continue to be sought over the full life of the program.

| PARTY | 2012/13   | 2013/14   | 2014/15           | 2015/16   | 2016/17   |
|-------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| RIRDC | \$100,000 | \$100,000 | \$100,000         | \$100,000 | \$100,000 |
| GRDC  | \$60,000  | \$60,000  | \$60,000          | \$60,000  | \$60,000  |
| FRDC  | \$50,000  | \$50,000  | \$50,000          |           |           |
| SRDC  | \$20,000  | \$20,000  | TBA <sup>11</sup> | TBA       | TBA       |
| CRDC  | \$25,000  | \$25,000  | \$25,000          | \$25,000  | \$25,000  |
| Total | \$255,000 | \$255,000 | \$235,000         | \$185,000 | \$185,000 |

<sup>11</sup> At the time this plan is being prepared, SRDC became Sugar Research Australia and future sugar industry research investments were not finalised.



## MORE INFORMATION

Simon Winter  
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation  
Phone: 02 6281 5257  
Email: [simon@swinter.com.au](mailto:simon@swinter.com.au)

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