# MEDIA RELEASE

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**NATIONAL**

# National crop establishment project to help growers maximise yield potential

- **$11.2 million national investment to improve crop establishment and protect yield potential for Australian grain growers.**
- **Twenty-one grower groups, researchers and farming systems organisations will collaborate through a nationally coordinated program.**
- **The project will help growers apply research and technology on farm to optimise sowing performance, crop establishment and yield potential.**

**Australian grain growers will benefit from a new $11.2 million project bringing together research, commercial innovation and practical extension to improve crop establishment across the country.**

The Optimising Crop Establishment project is a co-investment by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), Grower Group Alliance (GGA) via South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SW WA Hub), and the University of Southern Queensland via the Southern Queensland and Northern New South Wales Innovation Hub (SQNNSW Hub).

The five-year project is led by GGA. It will be delivered between 2026 and 2030 through a national consortium of 21 grower groups, farming systems organisations and research agencies operating across Australia's grain growing regions.

The nationally coordinated program will translate existing research and emerging technologies into practical, regionally relevant information that growers and advisers can apply on farm.

GRDC Managing Director Nigel Hart said successful crop establishment was fundamental to protecting yield potential and improving the profitability and resilience of Australian grain production.

"Crop establishment sets the foundations for the entire season," Mr Hart said.

"When plant density, placement, depth, or uniformity is compromised, growers can lose yield potential before the crop has had an opportunity to properly develop.

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“Australian growers operate across enormously varied production environments, machinery systems, soil types, and seasonal conditions. This investment recognises that improving establishment requires strong technical evidence, but also regionally relevant testing and practical delivery.”

The project will consolidate findings from previous crop establishment research, validate established and emerging practices under commercial farming conditions, and demonstrate commercially available machinery and other potential solutions.

It will also continue and expand seeder and planter set-up workshops previously delivered through GRDC’s National Grower Network.

Mr Hart said the investment would strengthen the pathway between research and adoption by placing practical information in the hands of growers and their advisers.

“GRDC has invested in a substantial body of research relating to crop establishment, early sowing, machinery performance, crop agronomy and farming systems,” he said.

“This project will bring that knowledge together, test its application across different environments, and help growers understand what works, where it works, and how it can be adapted to their farming system.

“It aligns with GRDC’s focus on delivering enduring profitability for Australian grain growers through effective partnerships, locally relevant research, and faster adoption of proven practices and technologies.”

Seasonal operating plans developed with GRDC, delivery partners, and regional stakeholders will guide the location and focus of activities each year.

This will allow demonstrations and workshops to respond to changing seasonal conditions, soil constraints, machinery systems and grower priorities across Australia’s grain-growing regions.

Grower Group Alliance Chief Executive Officer Rikki Foss said the consortium combined national coordination with the local knowledge and trusted networks needed to support meaningful practice change.

“Grower groups understand the production systems, seasonal conditions and practical challenges faced by growers in their regions,” Ms Foss said.

“The strength of Optimising Crop Establishment is that it connects this regional capability through one nationally coordinated program.

“Our partners will deliver practical activities that reflect local priorities while contributing their findings and grower experience to a shared national knowledge base.”

Ms Foss said this leveraging of local networks and national knowledge base reinforces GRDC’s commitment to build the pathways that connect researchers, technical specialists, advisers, grower groups and growers.

“This ensures growers’ experiences, questions, and regional priorities continue to shape the activities and resources the project delivers.

“By sharing findings nationally while retaining their local context, we can increase the value of individual demonstrations and help useful knowledge travel much further.”

Project deliverables include:

- 45 seeder/planter setup workshops
- 45 regional demonstration trials
- Seeder Central, an online digital knowledge hub
- GRDC Back Pocket Guide publication
- A national community of practice
- A national monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework.

GRDC AgTech Investment Manager Peter Thompson said GRDC was investing to provide growers with evidence to make informed decisions on technology and sowing practices, improving crop establishment and maximising yield potential across every region.

“National coordination, strong technical expertise and trusted regional delivery will provide a powerful platform for turning knowledge into measurable on-farm value,” Mr Thompson said.

Details of regional workshops, demonstration activities, and resources will be announced through GRDC, GGA, and participating delivery partners.

**Regional Hubs**

**Northern Region**

- AMPS Agribusiness
- Central West Farming Systems
- Queensland Department of Primary Industries
- FarmLink Research Limited
- Riverine Plains*
- Southern Growers Inc.

**Southern Region**

- Birchip Cropping Group
- Flinders University
- Irrigation Farmers Network
- MacKillop Farm Management Group
- Riverine Plains*

- Southern Farming Systems

**Western Region**

- Facey Group
- Lakes Information and Technology
- Merredin and District Farm Improvement Group
- RegenWA
- South East Premium Wheat Growers Association
- Southern Dirt
- The Gillamii Centre
- West Midlands Group
- WA No-Tillage Farmers Association
- Yuna Farm Improvement Group

** Riverine Plains will operate across both Southern and Northern Regions.*

***About Us: GRDC is one of 15 Rural Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) responsible for planning, investing in and overseeing research, development and extension (RD&E) for 27 leviable grain crops. Our purpose is to invest in RD&E to create enduring profitability for Australian grain growers.***

## Contact details


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**GRDC investment code:** GGA2603-001RTX

**30-word summary:** Australian grain growers will benefit from a new $11.2 million project bringing together research, commercial innovation and practical extension to improve crop establishment across the country.

**Taxonomy terms:** Nutrition, Paddocks, Planting/sowing, Precision agriculture, Farm machinery, Field methods, Trials

**Photo 1:**



**Caption:** GRDC has announced a $11.2 million national investment led by Grower Group Alliance to improve crop establishment and protect yield potential for Australian grain growers. Credit: Angie Roe Photography

**Alt text**: Photograph of young green crops growing in orderly rows across a cultivated field

**Photo 2:**



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**GRAINS RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ABN 55 611 223 291**

**Caption:** GRDC Managing Director Nigel Hart said the $11.2 million project will bring together research, commercial innovation and practical extension to improve crop establishment across the country. Photo: GRDC

**Alt text:** Photograph shows a smiling man leaning on a gray barrier during a casual outdoor conversation with a person wearing a wide-brimmed hat and light-blue shirt. Green trees and grass form a soft-focus background.

**Photo 3:**



**Caption:** Grower Group Alliance Chief Executive Officer Rikki Foss said the project will connect regional capability through one nationally coordinated program. Photo: GGA

**Alt text** Photograph-style portrait shows a smiling blonde woman in a pale lavender blazer against a vivid green backdrop with yellow angular lines and dark foliage-like shapes.