

## Year 1 in Future Farm Industries CRC: What will it look like from a participant's point of view?

In discussion with prospective researchers and educators in the new Future Farm Industries CRC and with their participant organisations, a number of questions have commonly been raised. Set out below are notes that answer these questions and report on FFI CRC Ltd development through 2007/08.

As we engage in the transitional planning process, building on the legacy of CRC Salinity yet providing sufficient opportunity for FFI CRC to embark on new directions in its first year, we have key signposts to mark our way:

- We will be under new FFI CRC governance and management from 1 July 2007
- We have an agreed **Business Plan 2007/08 to 2013/14** that spells out the outputs, milestones and priorities we are bound to deliver from then
- Activities in year 1 will be a blend of CRC Salinity initiated projects and FFI CRC start-up projects, decided according to the Business Plan
- Year 2 will have the full suite of new FFI projects, decided under a new **Strategic Plan** developed by the Board of FFI CRC Ltd
- We will have a seamless transition of agreed projects and activities from CRC Salinity to FFI CRC
- Communication products and infrastructure will continue through Year 1

Updated information will be readily available on [futurefarmcrc.com.au](http://futurefarmcrc.com.au).

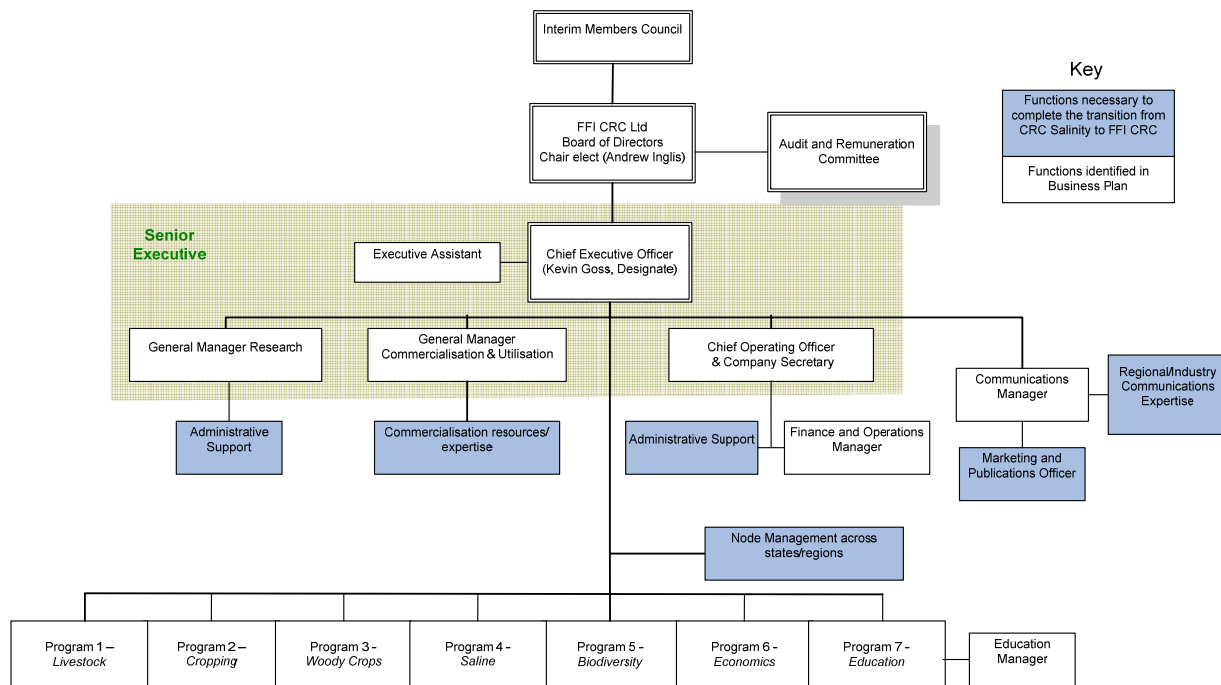
### What is the process for me becoming an integral part of FFI CRC projects?

Planning for the new CRC is well advanced, and has been since August 2006, with programs and products defined and documented; and indicative commitments of participants' in-kind resources. While these are the right starting point for planning the early years of FFI CRC, 2007/08 is a transitional year which blends activities and resources of CRC Salinity and FFI CRC under FFI CRC management. There are new opportunities and we will consider them flexibly. May 2007 is a crucial time for our newly appointed Program Leaders to finalise activities and resources for 2007/08 and set the foundation for project development into the early years of FFI CRC.

An important and necessary step is confirming all positions on the FFI CRC structure diagram (see over).

We are making good progress:

- Board directors
  - Selection process is underway (applications closed 16 March)
  - Nominations Committee will complete this by late April
  - FFI Members will appoint the directors on 11 May
- Senior Executive
  - Acting arrangements continue until directors and program leaders settled
- Program Leaders
  - Roles and responsibilities documented (see web-site)
  - Applications called for (by 6 April)
  - Appointments announced from 16 April
- Researchers, educators and other in-kind staff; and CRC funded technical and support staff
  - We will provide for continuity where people fit within agreed projects and activities, as categorised on page 2
- Postgraduates
  - We will provide for completing students and have initiated the first group of new FFI students



## What and how will we deliver in year 1 of FFI CRC?

Output in year 1 (2007/08) will be managed by the FFI CRC but will be dominated by activities that represent the completion of CRC Salinity (~70% activities). The full array of activities will include:

1. **Continuing projects** consistent with the CRC Salinity's Operating Plan for year 7 (also 2007/08), and now to be finalised and appended to the CRC's Transition Plan.
2. **Harvest and delivery activities** focusing on extension and communication of the key project outputs of CRC Salinity; documented by Program 1; and leading seamlessly into Commercialisation and Utilisation activities of FFI CRC.
3. **New project development** for FFI CRC, involving project identification, planning, preliminary analysis and decision under a new Strategic Plan being developed by the Board.
4. **Transitional projects** of short duration; the outputs of which will be inputs into the emerging suite of new projects. These projects will allow momentum to be maintained or built for research areas that will be central to FFI CRC.
5. **Opportunistic projects** that are being developed in the current year or very early in FFI CRC to take advantage of immediate investment opportunities that cannot be effectively delayed to fit our planning horizon.

Transitional and opportunistic projects will be entirely consistent with the **Business Plan 2007/08 to 2013/14**, and will bridge activities to the new projects under development in 2007/08. All five activity types will require the formal commitment of in-kind staff to projects under program leadership and project management.

The activity mix in year 2 (2008/09) when new projects are commissioned and transitional projects have run their course, will likely be ~70% new projects and ~30 % originating from CRC Salinity.

## How will planning of new research and education develop?

The research and education planning activities will play out alongside other transitional activities that are envisaged to occur in the coming period. This is spelled out in a '**Transitional Map**' (attached).

More specifically research planning will:

- At the outset, be consistent with the outputs, milestones and priorities spelled out in the **Business Plan 2007/08 to 2013/14**.
- Involve a strong commitment to preparing the way for commercialisation of products and for meeting **Commercialisation and Utilisation Plan** ('path to adoption') milestones, including industry engagement
- Ensure that projects developed largely within industry programs (Programs 1 to 4) will involve:
  - Industry engagement and joint planning where appropriate
  - Extensive 'pre-experimental' analysis against performance standards including profitability water use and biodiversity impact
  - Embedded commercialisation and utilisation activities, properly planned and resourced
  - Education and training activities identified at commencement
  - Relevant staff with these skills (often listed in other programs) in the initial planning
- Require the constitution of a **Project Evaluation Committee** (PEC) to review and direct on all project development against these requirements. The PEC builds on the strength of the CRC Salinity's Research Evaluation Committee.
- Involve interaction with the Board, contributing to and taking direction from its new Strategic Plan and the consequential project approval process.

### **What is the position for CRC Salinity projects in the transitional year?**

Continuing projects initiated in CRC Salinity that will continue in Year 1 of FFI CRC are of two general types.

- Projects that were funded to continue and be completed in Year 7 of the CRC Salinity, generally funded with CRC cash and partner in-kind.
- Projects funded to continue in Year 1 and beyond involving substantial support from external partners.

The project classification list to be appended to the Transition Plan will differentiate these projects.

### **How will in-kind staff be involved in year 1 of FFI CRC?**

In 2007/08 (FFI CRC year 1) most partners will initially have in-kind staff involved in all five types of CRC activity:

- Continuing projects – terminating and on-going as at 30 June 2008
- Harvest and delivery activities
- New project development
- Transitional projects
- Opportunistic projects

The extent of continuing project activity by in-kind staff will influence their availability for participation in year 1 specific activities and new emerging activities.

Program Leaders will have the responsibility for matching in-kind resources from partners (numbers and skills) to project demands. In doing this they will rely heavily on:

- Summary information from the central executive team (initial partner suggested allocations)
- Updated information from Node Managers
- Their own work-shopping, involving Key Researchers, Project Leaders of continuing projects and emerging project teams.

The initial workshops will occur in May 2007 for the purpose of settling project activities and in-kind resources for 2007/08.

The schedules to the Commonwealth Agreement, to be signed in June 2007, will specify the in-kind contributions for FFI CRC year 2 (2008/09) and beyond.

**Key Activities in the transition from CRC Salinity to FFI CRC**

Month	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
<b>CRC Salinity</b>	<b>CRC wide activities</b>		Completion of annual and final project reports – Project leaders supported by project teams	Harvest and delivery plan coordinated Develop a schedule of continuing projects & budgets	Develop a schedule of projects with recommended carryovers				
	<b>CRC central management</b>	Project tracking review Transition plan developed Update project reporting format <sup>1</sup>		Review of project actual budget position – identify under expenditure IP register updated Publication list updated				CRC Salinity Publication list finalised	CRC Salinity Final Report
	<b>Board level activities</b>	Board meeting to consider Transition Plan			RC & CEC to review continuing projects. Board to sign of transition schedules	Termination Agreement executed	Continuing projects proceed under FFI CRC management		
<b>FFI CRC</b>	<b>CRC central management</b>		Program managers sought	Program managers appointed. Project plans updated and distributed	Appoint FFI CRC Ltd Board members	Execute new Commonwealth funding agreement	New Board in place and FFI structure takes over		
	<b>CRC wide activities</b>		Develop FFI CRC Commercialisation and Utilisation Plan Business Plan distributed to participants.	Review the detail in the schedules of Commonwealth Agreement.	Program managers engage with teams and regions	Transition projects framed <sup>2</sup>	Project development teams formed <sup>3</sup>		

<sup>1</sup>Updated project reports need to deal explicitly with:

- Opportunities for harvest delivery both within the project and in collaboration with Program 1
- IP register – feedback on the current and updating (needed to allow effective transition)
- Publications – check past list and update the current year (needed for final report)
- Budget issues – foreshadow under expenditure
- Transitional issues – highlight staff at risk in the transition to likely new initiatives

<sup>2</sup>Transition projects are short term activities that are designed to allow continuity of activity between CRC Salinity and high priority activities highlighted in the FFI CRC Business Plan. Specific project approval arrangements will soon be finalised.

<sup>3</sup> Project development teams will engage in-kind scientists in the development of new initiatives. This will involve formal and accountable allocation of time to these important tasks