



Why we mean business - our strategic plan is launched

Rural Solutions SA has staked its future on achieving its full potential in the marketplace and on delivering real bottom line benefits.

The release of its five-year Strategic Plan sets a target of \$16million in government business and \$10million in commercial business by 2008. Activity will also centre around achieving environmental and social sustainability and efficient operational processes. Driving this is a proven level of diversified skills and experience of its consultants and the recognised imperative to demonstrate value for money – to both its customers and its government partners.



"Adding value for all our stakeholders will guarantee our business success," said **Rural Solutions SA's** Executive Director, Locky McLaren

Strategic Plan key points:

- Targeting minimum \$16 million revenue from broad Government customer base by 30 June 2008.
- Growing commercial business to at least \$10 million by 30 June 2008.
- Enhancing services with quality systems.
- Establishing centralised customer database by 30 June 2005.
- Cultivating efficient value-add, value-for-money ethos with all customers.
- Strengthening sustainability of regional and indigenous communities.
- Building partnerships with large corporate entities.
- Securing large business contract with one international project, one research organisation and another Government department.

New working alliance



Jim Hallion (Primary Industries and Resources SA CEO) above left, and Rob Freeman (Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation CEO) sign a Memorandum of Understanding designed to maximise the value of services delivered to the two agencies by **Rural Solutions SA**.

This cross-agency initiative will focus on business, planning and investment strategies for **Rural Solutions SA** and will monitor the results.

"As stakeholders, Rob and myself will be hosting forums to review progress and identify further opportunities," said Jim Hallion. *"We see this as an excellent model to deliver real results for both our conservation and business agendas."*

New forest project to be managed by **Rural Solutions SA**

The Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula will be the home to a new sustainable eucalypt plantation – set up by a Japanese consortium and supported and managed by **Rural Solutions SA**.

Over the next 10 years, Adelaide Blue Gum P/L (ABL) plans to plant 10,000 hectares of fast-growing Tasmanian blue gum at selected tree farms.

The project will be worth \$70 million in capital investment to the region and will establish a viable and ecologically

sound woodchip export operation, generating new jobs.

Rural Solutions SA has a 5-year contract to prepare and manage the tree farms on behalf of ABL.

"This is the first time Rural Solutions SA has been involved in an overseas project of this type," said Martyn England who leads the Farm Forestry Development section of Resource Protection and Development Services.

The groundwork to secure international interest for such a

venture was initiated in 1997 by the Mount Lofty Ranges Farm Forestry Group. PIRSA and **Rural Solutions SA** then undertook GIS modelling of the region to identify suitable tree farm sites and assess their productivity. When Mitsubishi Paper Mills (the largest share holder) was approached, this information helped them make their decision.



Minister Holloway and Rural Solutions SA's Hamish Little.

"They told us that

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Focus on Business: Wine

Message in a bottle - time to uncork wine expo

*With the Australian wine industry facing stronger competition and scrutiny overseas – plus water restrictions and diminishing profit margins at home – **Rural Solutions SA** has been providing practical support.*

Wine expo displays expertise

Rural Solutions SA's stand at the Wine Trade Expo in the Barossa Valley in July signalled its commitment to build its working relationships with the industry – and to deliver real benefits.

"More than 1,000 wine industry representatives attended," said Business Development Manager, Michy Kris, and we were able to explain our successes in such areas as water management and soil analysis.

"We are currently packaging our wine-related products and services and plan to meet many more people from this industry to demonstrate how we can increase their profitability and sustainability."

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Rural Solutions SA's Wayne Brown, left, and David Pocock, centre, with visitors at the Expo stand.



Rural Solutions SA's wine products and services :

- Environmental Management Systems (EMS)
- Analytical and Diagnostic Services Kits (Identify problems with irrigation management, crop nutrition and soils - plus colour testing on red grape berries)
- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) (internationally-recognised risk management for food safety)
- Waste Water Effluent Management Models



- Chemical Spray Drift Buffers
- ChemCert Courses
- Farm Safe (Popular training course for Viticulturists on increased productivity)
- Specialist Technical Consultants (Covering salinity mapping, quality systems, water reuse and legislation, business planning, etc).



Clean and green? Prove it!

More than two years' work with the growers for Hardy Wine Company has been addressing this challenge head on.

David Pocock of Rural Solutions SA, has helped introduce a HACCP food safety programme across the company's Australian vineyards and for their growers supply base. The objective has been to achieve a consistent approach to preventing contamination of wine grapes.

"We worked with Hardy's to develop the required specifications and standards of the programme," said David, "and this included things like growers having to keep chemical spray diaries and running residue testing.

"The volume of work was quite high and five of our team were allocated to it, walking through the steps with the winery's growing liaison officers and their growers. There was a strong education component."

The team's method used group presentations, on location vineyard analysis and written reports setting operating procedures.

The formula has worked – from both a production and marketing sense.



The Mountadam vineyards – working towards better management of soil and water.



Hardy's Tintara vineyards - one of the locations where Rural Solutions SA is introducing HACCP safety measures.



Quality processes are helping ensure quality grapes.

Consistent quality and safe products are powerful sellers overseas.

"People are realising that while there may not be direct dollar benefits," said David, "running this accredited food safety programme helps ensure continued market access. It's not a luxury – it's a growing necessity – and gives participating wineries a competitive edge."

Rural Solutions SA have proven competitive themselves, running the most favoured safety system.

"The programme has been expanded to several other wineries," said David. "Our approach is generating a lot of new work."

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Win:win result for winemaker and land

An environmental review and management programme is allowing Mountadam winery to cut its water bill, better conserve its natural resources and boost its profile with the local community and consumers.

Rural Solutions SA's Senior Consultant Wayne Brown explained the process that is being recognised as a win:win scenario for producers and their land.

Mountadam – a leading Australian wine brand famous for its cool climate premium wines – is currently exporting to the UK, USA and Japan. The company wanted to conserve its water use and use its land more efficiently but needed some expert help.

"In Stage One, we built a profile of land use and production," said Wayne, "by assessing vegetation, soil and weed types, water courses, impact of livestock grazing, salinity, water discharge and production methods."

The 600-acre property was utilising around 12% for the vineyard and the balance for rearing sheep and cattle.

"Water use was a key issue – its discharge from the winery, the water quality itself, volume and availability," said Wayne. "So was the impact of the livestock – on the land itself and on the management and maintenance time. We demonstrated how a redesign of land use could free up the vineyard team to concentrate on what they did best."

The redesign involved separating the livestock from the water courses and planting perennial grasses between vineyard rows to reduce fire risk and water use. This will enable Mountadam to manage water use in both wet and dry periods. The company has also helped fulfil the local community's desire to increase water flows from the Marne River and has reduced its dam capacity by half.

This meant a major improvement for the water catchment of the whole community – and a major raising of the winery's profile as an efficient and responsible operator. Apart from meeting EPA requirements on effluent disposal and water discharge, there are direct benefits to the bottom line.

"Wayne and his team are a one-stop-shop with a wide range of skills," said Murray Jago, Mountadam's Vineyard Manager. "Wayne's knowledge and enthusiasm has helped Mountadam bring forward its vision of responsible land management and custody for future generations."

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Winemaking and wildlife co-exist at Mountadam.



Rural Solutions SA has helped protect water resources.



Land and Water management

Technology flows into Murray

A new generation of irrigation technology is set to flow into Australia's largest river - with SARDI and **Rural Solutions SA** named as key players. During the next 4 years, the State Government will provide \$3.5 million for State Government research and knowledge transfer. This will see these two business groups research and develop ways of helping irrigators achieve greater efficiencies and water savings. Given that 75% of all stored and controlled water in Australia is used for irrigation, such savings will prove vital.

SARDI will research irrigation systems and technologies and participate in the Cooperative Research Centre for Irrigation Futures programme which will commence from September 2004. **Rural Solutions SA's** role in the programme includes analysis of irrigator's operations, introducing technology solutions, training and ongoing support.

Under the new initiative, around 3,000 irrigators will receive an accredited education package using Environmental Management Systems (EMS) principles. The package will incorporate AQ, Irrigation Management and Property Management and Best Available Technology Economically Achievable (BATEA) components.

Both SARDI and **Rural Solutions SA** have been working with irrigators on related projects for many years but this new funding will provide a boost to tackle the issues in a more comprehensive way.



The sweet smell of success... in cutting costs

Major savings in fertiliser cost can now be achieved – thanks to a new computer program jointly developed by Rural Solutions SA.

Using FertiPlan™, farmers can now calculate exactly the right volume and nutrient mix of fertiliser - matched to their crops and soil types.

"When you consider that fertiliser costs account for around 40 per cent of overall crop production costs, any savings can be significant," said **Rural Solutions SA** consultant Dave Lewis.

"For example, we have run tests with a medium-sized farming operation and have calculated savings of \$5,000 on fertiliser outlay for a durum wheat crop."

Developed from CSIRO research, the Windows-based program analyses paddock crop and fertiliser history along with soil test results – then calculates the optimum



FertiPlan sales literature - software solutions.

nutritional mix, the amount required and cheapest means of applying the fertiliser.

"It is an easy system to use," said Dave, *"and of course the other real benefit on top of cost savings is that it will help optimise the yield and protein content of the crop."*

FertiPlan™ will also be able to analyse zinc and maganese trace elements and a tropical soils version is being planned.

"For the first time, farmers can get the facts on their exact fertiliser needs - literally at their fingertips," said Dave.

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New forest project to be managed by Rural Solutions SA (continued...)

normally they would take two to three years to make a decision but that the GIS data gave them confidence – and they decided to commit to the project within six months," said Martyn. The seven consortium owners – only two being paper mills – comprise some of the largest and most respected operations in Japan's utility, transport and retail sectors. They include Tokyo Gas; Chubu Electric Power Company International; NYK shipping and global logistics; and Aeon general merchandise stores.

"The owners' business plan spans fifty years and so this is an excellent opportunity to build long term valuable business relationships and demonstrate the worth of sustainable projects like this," said Martyn. *"We will use the best possible forestry practices while caring for the environment,"* said Masaru Mogi, President of ABL, *"and we have appreciated Martyn and his team's help in getting us personally established in Victor Harbor."*

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