

## Candidate Information Pack

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**Organisation:** Grains Research & Development Corporation  
(GRDC)

**Position:** General Manager Strategy & Innovation

**Consultant:** Andrew McEncroe

May 2026

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# Contents

<b>Advertisement</b> .....	3
<b>The Organisation</b> .....	4
<b>Role Description</b> .....	7
<b>The Application and Selection Process</b> .....	10

## Useful links:

- [Snapshot 2025](#)
- [Annual Report 2024-25](#)
- [Research & Development Extension Plan 2023–28](#)

## Advertisement

# General Manager Strategy & Innovation

- Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC)
- Commercial executive sought to shape and drive world-class grains investment
- Canberra preferred; or Adelaide, Toowoomba, Perth | Salary negotiable

Australia's grain growers fund more than a billion dollars in research, development and extension every five years. GRDC is the statutory corporation responsible for directing that investment well and its ambition continues to grow. Building on a strong strategic platform, GRDC is increasing investment at the discovery end of its portfolio, launching major new global investment missions, and deepening commercial partnerships with some of the world's leading agricultural and life science organisations. The incoming General Manager, Strategy and Innovation (GM) will be at the centre of all of it.

### The role

Reporting to the Managing Director, this is a senior executive appointment with accountability for enterprise-wide strategy, portfolio design, and commercial partnerships. An immediate focus will be on the renewal of GRDC's five-year RD&E Strategic Plan – building on existing momentum and sharpening GRDC's focus on boundary-pushing investment that positions growers and industry for the future.

Central to that renewed agenda are a series of major new investment missions, each involving a global call for partners and decade-long capital commitments. The GM will drive this process, identifying new partners, breaking out of traditional pathways, and building the long-term collaborations that genuinely game-changing research requires. Alongside this, a \$300 million investment portfolio spanning 600–700 projects demands disciplined capital allocation across discovery, applied research, and adoption. GRDC's commercial partnerships with major agribusiness and life science organisations need a GM capable of negotiating from a position of strength, protecting the IP interests of growers, and building relationships that deliver genuine co-investment.

GRDC also oversees GrainInnovate, a venture capital and managed investment fund that provides deal flow, market intelligence, and access to emerging innovation. The incoming GM will provide governance oversight and use it as an active source of opportunity.

Leading a team across 5 branches, the GM will set clear direction, develop senior capability, and maintain high performance across a complex portfolio.

### The person

We are seeking a commercially sophisticated executive who has operated at senior levels in a large agribusiness organisation. The ability to allocate capital to growth opportunities, build and negotiate complex commercial partnerships, and think strategically across a diverse portfolio are the core requirements. GRDC brings deep scientific expertise to every investment decision; the GM brings the commercial discipline to ensure that expertise is translated into maximum value for growers.

A track record in commercial strategy within the grains sector or a closely related part of agribusiness is essential. This includes crop protection, grain supply chain, plant breeding, agri-inputs, and OEM agricultural equipment. Candidates with experience across the broader plant-based value chain where commercialisation dynamics are comparable will also be considered.

GRDC's executive team operates as a cohesive, high-performing group of self-starters. The culture is one of initiative, accountability, and delivery – people who think strategically, proactively build momentum, and follow through consistently. The successful candidate will bring both the commercial credentials and the leadership character to contribute to that culture.

### How to apply

Candidate information: Please **click on the "Additional Information" button** to download a copy of the **Candidate Information Pack**. For more information, please contact Andrew McEncroe on email [publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au](mailto:publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au) or call 02 9223 1855 quoting reference number: 34349.

**To apply:** Please provide a cover letter highlighting your suitability for the role and a resume by the due date.

**Applications close:** Sunday, 24 May 2026.

## The Organisation

Grains Research and Development Corporation (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 25 leviable grain crops.

GRDC's purpose is to invest in RD&E to create enduring profitability for Australian grain growers:

- **Invest** – Invest to deliver a return on investment to grain growers.
- **RD&E** – Make investments in RD&E activities in line with the objectives of the Primary Industries Research and Development Act 1989 (Cth) (PIRD Act).
- **Create** – Invest to develop innovative approaches to constraints and opportunities and facilitate their adoption.
- **Enduring** – Invest to drive long-term, sustainable impact on grain-growing businesses and their profitability.
- **Profitability** – Focus on grower profits, not just productivity.
- **Australian grain growers** – Deliver value to Australian grain growers. While not all growers will benefit from every investment, GRDC aims to deliver impact to all growers. GRDC's primary objective is to drive the discovery, development and delivery of world-class innovation to enhance the productivity, profitability and sustainability of Australian grain growers and benefit the industry and the wider community.

The resources available to GRDC for investment in RD&E predominantly derive from levies paid by grain growers and contributions made by the Australian Government, with additional income from interest, royalties and grants.

### GRDC Snapshot 2025

- In 2025 GRDC had a total consolidated research, development and extension investment of \$242.5 million, up from \$223.1 million in 2023-24.
- GRDC's strategic pillars of investment included:
  - Harness existing potential \$131.9m (up from \$131.5m in 2023-24)
  - Reach new frontiers - \$40.5m (up from \$28m in 2023-24)
  - Grow market and capture value - \$17.8 m (up from \$14.7m in 2023-24)
  - Thrive for future generations - \$7.4m (up from \$3.8m in 2023-24).
  - Plus \$45.1m into GRDC's foundational enablers (up from \$43.1m in 2023-24)
- Grower input through the National Grower Network guided locally relevant investments, and the GRDC RD&E Plan (2023-28) guided strategic investments.

More information regarding the 2025 Snapshot can be found here:

<https://grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/all-publications/publications/2026/grdc-snapshot-2025>

## The Australian Grains Industry at a Glance

19,401

Number of  
levy payers



\$26.2  
billion

Total value  
of grains  
production<sup>1</sup>



↑ 1.4%  
growth

Total factor productivity  
growth in 2023-24,  
climate adjusted<sup>2</sup>

63.7

million  
tonnes



Grains produced<sup>1</sup>

26.4

million  
hectares



Crop sown



\$22.1  
billion

Value of grains  
exported (includes  
prior season grain)<sup>1</sup>

42.5

million  
tonnes



Volume of  
grains  
exported  
(includes prior  
season grain)<sup>1</sup>

28%

Grains industry share  
of Australia's total  
gross agricultural  
production<sup>1</sup>

Note. Figures are for the  
2024/25 season and use latest  
available data. Source:

1 ABARES Agricultural  
Commodities December 2025

2 ABARES Productivity Data  
Dashboard July 2025.

# RD&E Plan 2023 – 28 Overview

## Purpose

To invest in RD&E to create enduring profitability for Australian grain growers.

## Vision

World-class innovation, creating solutions for Australian grain growers for a better tomorrow.

## Values

We are committed and passionate about the Australian grains industry.

We value creativity and innovation.

We build strong relationships and partnerships based on mutual trust and respect.

We act ethically and with integrity.

We are transparent and accountable to our stakeholders.

Over the next five years, the Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC) will invest more than a billion dollars in research development and extension (RD&E) to deliver significant gains for Australian grain growers.

The GRDC RD&E Plan 2023-28 is a plan for the grains industry’s future. A plan that will drive impact well beyond its five-year timeframe. It builds on the significant investment made by GRDC in the past and has been informed by extensive consultation with growers and industry. It signals a new level of ambition and sets the challenge to move thinking beyond what is holding the industry back, to what is possible. From why things may not work, to what if they could? It will ensure RD&E investment continues to support growers to address the here and now, whilst seeking to create the step change they are after.

The plan will see continued investment focused on increasing yield and yield stability and optimising costs, improving technical efficiency and helping manage risk to reach existing potential.

But importantly, in response to industry calls for bolder and more ambitious RD&E, this plan also seeks to deliver the next big breakthrough – the next no-till practice, auto-steer technology, semi-dwarf wheat or profitable break crop – by doubling investment in the discovery of new practices or technologies to reach new production frontiers. Getting the balance of investments right is no easy task, requiring GRDC to make numerous trade-offs and take calculated risks on behalf of growers – recognising that the success of investments may vary in the quest for big, long-term gains.

# PILLARS



FOCUS AREAS

### HARNESS EXISTING POTENTIAL

Growers hit yield & profit targets, across every paddock, every season.

- ▶ Right crop & cultivar.
- ▶ Biosecurity, weed, pest & disease control.
- ▶ Optimise crop nutrition & improve soils.
- ▶ Systems integration for reliable profit.

### REACH NEW FRONTIERS

Productivity of crops exceeds what we thought possible.

- ▶ Step-changes in water & soil productivity.
- ▶ Unlock plant potential.
- ▶ Transform efficiency of input use.

### GROW MARKETS & CAPTURE VALUE

Growers have access to a diversity of markets & get more for the crop.

- ▶ Enduring access to a diversity of markets.
- ▶ Add value to the crop to increase margins.
- ▶ Lower post-farm gate costs.

### THRIVE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Australia’s grains industry remains a global leader in sustainability, for people, the planet & our long-term ability to farm.

- ▶ Sustainable, responsible production systems.
- ▶ Support communities & social licence.

## FOUNDATIONAL ENABLERS

Knowledge transfer & adoption

Capacity & ability

Data & insights

Innovative partnerships

More information can be found: <https://rdeplan.grdc.com.au/>

## Role Description

<b>Job Title:</b>	General Manager, Strategy and Innovation
<b>Location:</b>	Canberra preferred, but can be in Adelaide, Toowoomba or Perth.
<b>Reports to:</b>	Managing Director
<b>Direct reports:</b>	5 – 10

### Position Overview

The General Manager, Strategy and Innovation develop and implements sound short, medium and long-term strategies for the commercial delivery of outputs from grains research and development in a manner that most effectively leverages internal (Managers), national and international capacity and which accounts for major co-dependencies and risks. Develops credible business cases that foster national and international collaboration to deliver optimal outputs for grower adoption.

### Key responsibilities:

#### Strategic Leadership & Enterprise Planning

- Set and execute enterprise-wide corporate and research, development and extension (RD&E) strategy, translating long-term ambition into clear priorities and outcomes.
- Partner with the Managing Director and Executive to shape organisational direction, growth agendas, and strategic decision-making.
- Coach and develop senior leaders to deliver strong people management outcomes, aligning performance outcome to GRDC objectives, values and behaviours.
- Development and execution of sound strategy relating RD&E that considers the wide range of grower stakeholders, RD&E collaborators, industry and the various pathways to adoption including working with commercial and not for profit entities as required.

#### Innovation, Business Development & Commercialisation

- Provide enterprise-wide leadership for innovation-led growth and commercial strategy, integrating RD&E investment, business development, and commercialisation to maximise impact and long-term value.
- Establish and lead frameworks that identify, prioritise, and invest in innovation opportunities, while overseeing cross-organisational business planning, licensing, and investment in existing and emerging commercial enterprises.
- Govern and optimise the performance of the organisation's subsidiaries, build high-value partnerships with national and multinational organisations to accelerate joint R&D and commercial outcomes, and drive the effective transition of R&D outputs into market-ready products for growers through optimal pathways to market.
- Ensure disciplined management of capital, risk, and returns arising from innovation and commercial activities, and provide authoritative advice to the Executive and Board on innovation strategy, commercialisation pathways, market access, and value realisation.

#### Transformation & Change Leadership

- Provide visible leadership for organisational transformation, acting as a catalyst for change and embedding a culture of innovation, accountability, and continuous improvement across the enterprise.

#### Portfolio, Program & Value Oversight

- Exercise Executive oversight of a complex portfolio of strategic initiatives, ensuring alignment to strategy, effective resource deployment, operational excellence, and the delivery of measurable returns on investment.

#### Venture Capital & Equity Investment Stewardship

- Lead the growth and performance of venture capital and commercial equity investments (including GRDC's GrainInnovate managed investment fund), overseeing investment strategy, capital allocation, governance, and value realisation across the investment lifecycle.

## **Senior Stakeholder & Partnership Engagement**

- Build and sustain high-value partnerships across government, corporate, research, and not-for-profit sectors, representing the organisation at senior levels while ensuring sound governance, compliance, and reputational stewardship.

## **Performance, Insights & Decision Enablement**

- Leverage data, evaluation, and market intelligence to assess impact, inform strategic choices, and optimise portfolio and investment performance, providing clear insights to the Executive and Board.

## **Technical Advice, Issues and Ideas Management**

- Leverage internal and external stakeholders to provide technical advice to others including Executive, Managing Director and Board, ensuring strategies respond to regional requirements while aligning to GRDC's objectives.
- Provide strategic analysis and advice on investment scope, predicted return on investment, adoption pathways and life cycle management plans, including clear path to market strategies.
- Oversee and manage large and complex investments including bilateral agreements, the RD&E components of major commercial arrangements while building organisational capability in value realisation and commercial decision making.

## **Procurement, Contracts and Financial Management**

- Oversee enterprise accountability for procurements, contract and financial management processes that comply with organisational and regulatory requirements.
- Manage disputes and claims to minimise impact to GRDC.
- Provide detailed analysis and advice on predicted return on investment.
- Oversee and ensure the effective management of budget and financial performance of area.
- Ensure accurate and timely financial reporting that provide insight into strategic decision making.

## **Intellectual Property (IP) Analyses and 'Freedom to Operate' (FTO)**

- Oversee the effective management of IP including IP analysis and developing strategies that address FTO in respect of IP that is generated through GRDC's research contracts.
- Identify appropriate paths to market to optimise value for money returns to growers and GRDC.
- Ensure GRDC's knowledge management system is fully utilized to ensure that all available data generated through GRDC's investments in RD&E is available for use by others.
- Support the effective management of informal and formal disputes and claims arising in projects in close conjunction with Legal and other stakeholders as required.

## **Work, Health and Safety**

### **Driving excellent WHS performance across GRDC**

- Comply with GRDC WHS & systems, including statutory obligations.
- Consistently deliver excellent WHS results.
- Acts as a role model pursues safety for a positive WHS culture; encourage others to do the same.

### **Authority**

- The General Manager Strategy and Innovation has the authority to use all assigned resources and take any reasonable actions which are consistent with the responsibilities of the position and subject to any limitations set by GRDC Corporate Policies, Procedures or guidelines and the GRDC Delegations and Authorisations instrument.

### **Accountability**

- Accountable for driving RD&E strategic direction and team and the Business Group as a whole.
- Accountable for the work quality, productivity and safety of self and others through effective leadership behaviours.
- Accountable for ensuring all GRDC policies and procedures are adhered to.

## Position Requirements

- Demonstrated experience in development and implementation of detailed strategic plans. GRDC is required to prepare a 5-year RD&E Strategic Plan to guide it in achieving outcomes for Australian grain growers and the broader grains industry
- Demonstrated capacity to negotiate and manage complex commercial arrangements that also deliver benefits to growers.
- Capacity to represent GRDC and to communicate with national and international parties at senior levels in both the public and private sector, nationally and internationally.
- Proven ability to work flexibly and adaptively in a complex environment with multiple stakeholders.
- Proven experience in the administration and handling of complex commercial contracts, including licensing and commercialisation contracts, complex research contracts, funding agreements and strategic partnership agreements.
- Highly developed presentation, interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to influence, motivate and develop others.
- Demonstrated ability to write high level briefs, Executive and Board papers.
- Demonstrated ability to synthesise information and provide a summary and recommended options.
- Demonstrated experience in the consideration of risk and application of risk management principles.
- Highly developed analytical skills and the capacity to leverage off external expertise and think strategically, including the ability to provide sound project and issues advice.
- Exposure to commercial issues and demonstrated strong commercial acumen.
- Degree in Science, Agricultural Science, or equivalent.
- An MBA and/or GAICD or a relevant PhD will be highly desirable

## Special Conditions

- Significant travel required to successfully deliver responsibilities of the position, which may include domestic and international.
- Required to hold and maintain a valid Australian Drivers Licence.

## The Application and Selection Process

### *Applications*

**Closing date: Sunday, 24 May 2026.**

#### Applications:

All applications are to be received by Derwent. To apply, please go to [www.derwentsearch.com.au](http://www.derwentsearch.com.au) and “Search Jobs” where you will find links to submit your application. Your application should include a resume and a cover letter highlighting your suitability.

#### Inquiries:

Please contact Derwent by email [publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au](mailto:publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au) and we will reply with appropriate information and/or arrange a convenient time to speak. You may also contact Andrew McEncroe, Managing Partner Derwent on 02 9223 1855.

### *Merit based selection process*

The selection panel will assess applicants against the selection criteria to select a short list of applicants to be invited to attend an interview with the selection panel. Candidates may also be invited to attend a pre-screening interview with Derwent to support the panel's decision making.

Candidates may be required to attend additional interviews and or complete additional assessments such as presentation task, or psychometric assessments.

### *Reference Checks*

Candidates at an advanced stage of consideration will be requested to provide at least two referees who may be contacted before an offer is made. Any written references provided will also be checked.

### *Pre-employment verification and background checks*

Before an offer of employment is made the following checks will be undertaken:

- Academic Qualification Check
- Professional Membership Check
- Criminal History Check
- Financial Regulatory Check
- Bankruptcy Check
- Media and public commentary searches.

### *Candidate Care*

We are committed to ensuring that potential applicants and candidates are treated respectfully and fairly. Derwent consultants are available to field inquiries and ensure that applicants are informed about developments as they become available. Candidates who are shortlisted and complete assessments including interviews will be offered a feedback session to discuss their experience and the assessment results.

### *Candidates with a Disability*

Derwent aims to ensure people with disability can access secure and sustainable employment opportunities and are respected for their skills and capabilities. If required, we will provide reasonable adjustments such as access, equipment or other practical support at relevant stages of the recruitment process. You can specify in the application if you have necessary adjustments, or please inform us at any stage, and we can arrange reasonable adjustments on your behalf. If you need to contact us about reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process, please contact [publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au](mailto:publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au)

**Thank you for your interest in Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC)**