



AT A GLANCE

The Lead Agriculture Teacher (LAT) program is a proven, high-impact initiative addressing critical gaps in agricultural education across South Australia. It delivers direct, in-school support to teachers, strengthens curriculum delivery and builds a stronger pipeline of students considering agricultural careers and tertiary study.

Since its inception in 2022, the LAT program has demonstrated strong, measurable outcomes including:

- 90 schools engaged across South Australia
- 222 teachers supported, including 75 new to agriculture
- 30 new schools introducing agriculture programs
- Over 850 educators reached through professional development
- Thousands of students reached through career events and classroom support
- Growing student enrolments in Stage Two agriculture subjects
- Direct alignment with workforce and education priorities



THE CHALLENGE FOR SA AGRICULTURE

South Australia faces a shortage of qualified agriculture teachers and limited curriculum support. This comes at a time when industry demand for skilled professionals is unmet. Many educators teaching agriculture come from non-ag backgrounds and require targeted support to deliver high-quality, industry-relevant curriculum. Without strong school-level engagement and exposure, fewer students consider these pathways, which limits student exposure to agriculture and reduces the pipeline of future industry talent.

THE LEAD AGRICULTURE TEACHER SOLUTION

The LAT provides tailored, face-to-face support to teachers and schools across metropolitan and regional South Australia. This includes curriculum development, mentoring, industry engagement and strategic advice on school-based agricultural programs. The role is uniquely designed to deliver practical, on-the-ground support that builds teacher confidence, improves curriculum delivery and connects education with industry.

The solution the LAT program provides is:

- One-on-one, face-to-face mentoring and tailored curriculum support to new and experienced agriculture teachers across South Australia.
- Building teacher confidence, capability and industry connections to deliver engaging, best-practice, industry-relevant curriculum.
- Developing and delivering targeted, industry-aligned curriculum resources to support consistent, high-quality teaching.
- Delivering professional development workshops and forums to upskill educators and share best practice approaches.
- Supporting schools to introduce and embed agriculture as a specialist subject, including onboarding new programs.
- Assisting schools with strategic planning for agricultural programs, including school farm infrastructure and resource development.
- Promoting agricultural careers and pathways through careers expos, school engagement and industry events, reaching students, teachers and the wider community.

BACKGROUND

The Lead Agriculture Teacher program was established in 2022 in response to significant challenges identified by the Agricultural Teachers Association of South Australia (ATASA). With no specialist curriculum support from the Department for Education or SACE Board and a dire shortage of qualified agriculture teachers, AgCommunicators proposed the introduction of a nation-first Lead Agriculture Teacher.

A pilot program was funded by the South Australian Grain Industry Trust (SAGIT) with outstanding success. In 2024, the SA Sheep Industry Fund became a co-funder and now, industry is seeking broader support for the project.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

The LAT program is delivered by AgCommunicators, with experienced leadership and strong industry connections.

The LAT role is delivered by Sue Pratt, a qualified and registered teacher with more than 35 years' experience. She has extensive expertise with SACE Agriculture program development, marking and moderation and has strong primary industry connections through her family farming interests. She has been the Lead Ag Teacher in the first three years of the project and has exceeded all expectations with consistently excellent feedback and results for students and teachers.



Project management and logistics support is provided by the AgCommunicators team, including Director Belinda Cay and Business Manager Cara Heney with administration support by Anita Giarratano.

PROGRAM DIRECTION

The LAT program targets the following outcomes for its funding partners:

Primary Outcomes

- Targeted, practical assistance to embed future-focused agricultural knowledge and practices into curriculum content.
- Teachers with increased confidence to deliver food and fibre content that engages students.
- Agriculture content taught in more schools.
- Teachers new to teaching agriculture supported and encouraged.

Secondary outcomes

- Increased proactive engagement between schools, vocational and academic institutions and industry partners.
- Promotion of all funding partners driving industry solutions.
- Increased ATASA membership.



Aspirational outcomes

- Increased enrolments in secondary and tertiary ag career pathways.
- Improved grades in SACE subjects with ag teachers able to provide best practice knowledge and input.
- Increased number of schools having grades confirmed through SACE marking and moderation.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The LAT program develops an annual workplan with activities centred on:

- Teacher mentoring and curriculum support
- Professional development workshops
- Development of curriculum resources
- Support for new school agriculture programs
- Career promotion and industry engagement
- School farm planning and development

In 2026-27, the program will deliver:

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Host and facilitate an Ag Education Forum to bring together key stakeholders to review the SA ag education landscape and identify priority topics.
- **Mentoring:** Deliver a mentoring program for 30 teachers which includes curriculum review, school farm development, budgeting support and revitalisation of the teaching program.
- **Professional development:** Deliver four professional development workshops per year for agricultural teachers in SA to upskill teachers in new ways to deliver food and fibre curriculum, with delivery in both city and regional locations.
- **Communication:** Distribute learning content via quarterly newsletters through the AgCommunicators education contact list of more than 300 teachers.
- **Onboarding new schools:** Deliver an onboarding program for four schools new to teaching agriculture. This has wide-reaching benefits as it engages a whole new cohort of staff and students to learn about agriculture. The LAT role will be to steer curriculum development and establish agriculture as a new teaching subject.
- **Career promotion:** Attend four Career Expos to showcase agricultural career options.

PROGRAM IMPACT

The program deliverables have been achieved and exceeded in each year of the program, delivering great value for the funding partners and clear benefits for educators and their students.

The LAT has become a recognisable and fundamental part of the ag education landscape in SA. Sue's professional and proactive strategies ensure she is a positive ambassador for all sectors of agriculture. Her clear brand and unique perspective have been recognised with invitations to join the PIRSA Agribusiness, Food and Wine Workforce Reference Group and the National Schools Food and Fibre Education Strategy Advisory Group.

The LAT's role includes travel to regions to work with teachers at their sites, providing the targeted and individualised support that is very difficult for those working in regional and remote schools to access. Survey results consistently show overwhelmingly positive outcomes for teachers, with 100% of respondents reporting increased confidence.

"The Lead Ag Teacher service is vital in being able to deliver the Agriculture curriculum. I cannot speak highly enough of the support this position has provided." LAT-supported teacher

REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

While the reach of the program has been phenomenal (see infographic below), over the past three years it has delivered:

- Expanded access to agricultural education, increasing school participation from approximately 10% to 15% and introducing agriculture programs into 28 new schools.
- Strengthened teacher capability, directly supporting 222 teachers (including 87 new to agriculture) and engaging over 850 educators through professional development.
- Built a statewide network of more than 300 educators, extending program impact to thousands of students across South Australia and the Northern Territory.
- Improved student outcomes, supporting over 1000 Stage Two students and contributing to increased enrolments (314 in 2023 to 362 in 2025) and 16 SACE Merits.
- Increased awareness and appeal of agricultural careers through engagement with thousands of students via career events and regional workshops.
- Strengthened the agriculture teaching profession, with ATASA membership growing from 115 to 156 and conference attendance increasing from 54 to 75 delegates.

Since commencing in 2022, the LAT has:



visited 90
different
schools



directly
supported
222 teachers



mentored 87
teachers new
to agriculture

attended 29
careers events
with thousands
of students



introduced
agriculture content
at 30 more schools



conducted 30 professional
development
activities for over
850 educators



distributed 16 newsletters
with new resources,
industry updates
and opportunities



created 47
new curriculum
resources



held 7 regional
student workshops
for over 180
students



visited 28 Stage Two Ag classes to review their External Investigations and plan for success – over 1000 students and their teachers directly supported

In the first term of 2026, Sue has already been approached by 18 teachers new to agriculture and two additional schools which are exploring incorporating food and fibre into their curriculum. There is no other person to support these requests as ATASA does not have capacity or the mandate to provide this kind of assistance. Schools also regularly change their teaching staff and place new people into ag teaching. These people are often from backgrounds in biology, geography and even home economics so the support to get them upskilled in teaching ag is essential.

INDUSTRY RELEVANCE

The LAT is a unique role and there are no other programs like it in Australia. The only Australian state with a centralised assistance role is Tasmania which has a government funded teacher role supporting the implementation of the *Revitalising School Farms* funding.

The program aligns with the SA Grain Industry Blueprint Pillar 5, which focuses on building industry capacity. The LAT project directly delivers against targets 1 (education pathways) and 2 (career promotion), with the LAT position clearly contributing through the growing number of schools teaching ag, increased teacher engagement and impact at career events.

The LAT program also aligns to the *SA Red Meat And Wool Blueprint 2030* goal 'To establish a thriving, trusted livestock sector, that attracts a diverse and competent workforce, capable of fostering a culture of collaboration, optimism, continuous learning and innovation'. Specifically, through the work of the LAT we will contribute to the *Our People – Objective 10* which states 'attract and retain appropriately skilled and educated recruits'.

The LAT has been directly included in the Government of South Australia Department of Primary Industries and Regions Workforce Project Plan *Attracting people to careers in South Australia's food, wine and agribusiness sector*.

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

In addition to SAGIT and the SA Sheep Industry Fund, the Agriculture Teachers Association of SA (ATASA) are key partners in the work of the LAT. As the representative body for agriculture teachers in SA, the group is affiliated with the National Association of Agriculture Educators. ATASA is a volunteer-run organisation with members across SA.

"There are very few agricultural education programs operating in SA due to limited funding opportunities. The Lead Ag Teacher is therefore vital to support teachers and ensure their skills are built to inspire the students who will be the future of SA's agricultural sector. We are sincerely thankful to SAGIT for funding the successful pilot phase of the Lead Ag Teacher project, which commenced in October 2022 and to SAGIT and the SA Sheep Industry Fund for their ongoing support. The program is still growing and the need is as big as ever."
Larissa Tallent, ATASA president



VALUE FOR FUNDING PARTNERS

Funding partners play a critical role in strengthening agricultural education and workforce pathways.

Benefits include:

- Direct engagement with schools and future workforce
- Promotion of partner organisations and industry leadership
- Alignment with workforce and education strategies
- Opportunities to integrate research and industry knowledge into curriculum
- Participation in key education and industry forums

We welcome the opportunity to discuss partnership options and tailor a collaboration that aligns with your organisation's goals.



CONTACT:

BELINDA CAY
AgCommunicators

E belinda.cay@agcommunicators.com.au
M 0423 295 576