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## GSF STEERING GROUP KEEN TO GET ON WITH THE JOB

**19 June 2025**

The Grain Sustainability Framework (GSF) has announced appointments to the Steering Group, drawing together a wide range of experienced industry experts to commence work on the initiative.

Chaired by agriculture leader Catherine Marriott OAM, the GSF Steering Group consists of the following people:

- Lachlan Evans - Grains Australia, Trade and Market Access Manager
- Dr Mark Farrell – CSIRO, Principal Research Scientist
- Graham Page - Terragen Holdings, Manager of Plant Bio-stimulants ANZ
- Steph Schmidt – Grower and psychologist
- Ruth Sommerville – Grower and consultant agro-ecologist
- Ash Wiese – Grower and owner of the “Three Farmers” quinoa brand.
- Toby Wright - CBH Group, Head of Strategy and Sustainability.

Appointments to the skills-based group were made based on experience in the grain value chain, proficiency in the relevant issues facing the sector and the ability to collaborate.

As work begins to design the GSF, the next phase of work will involve consultation with key stakeholders, including grower groups across Australia, to inform and refine the framework. The first GSF Annual Report will be released in early 2026.

Steering Group Chair Catherine Marriott OAM welcomed steering group members and said they were looking forward to getting on with the job.

“I’m thrilled with the appointments. The depth of experience across the steering group is remarkable.”

“I know the whole steering group is eager to begin working on the Grain Sustainability Framework.”

Ms Marriott explained the purpose of the steering group was to continuously strengthen the design, development, operation, and value of the GSF.

The group is responsible for defining what sustainable grain production means in the Australian context, developing the vision and operating principles of the GSF and structuring the framework to reflect priority topics. It will also consult with key industry stakeholders, play a central role in delivering the GSF Annual Report and administer the GSF in line with the scope and principles.

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The group is linked to the GSF Council, which comprises representatives of GrainGrowers and Grain Producers Australia, with GRDC as an observer. The Council is ultimately responsible for the GSF and approves work undertaken to support the framework.

GSF Council Chair Tess Herbert said a strong steering group would provide a strong foundation for the development of the framework.

“A highly qualified steering group is foundational to the success of any sustainability framework. The grains industry is fortunate to have an exceptionally skilled steering group driving the Grain Sustainability Framework,” Ms Herbert said.

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## STEERING GROUP MEMBER QUOTES

In response to

- Why are you involved in the GSF Steering Group?
- What do you hope to contribute?

### Ruth Sommerville

*"I see the GSF as a unique opportunity to bring transparency and accountability to the grains industry. It has the potential to be a market access tool, a hook to hang our hat on and an incentive to work on areas that need it."*

*"As a grain grower with an extensive background in ecology and agricultural research I hope to use my experience to continue improving the sustainability of the agricultural sector across Australia while ensuring improvements in profitability and productivity."*

*"Ensuring the GSF is built on quality scientific data and clear metrics with tangible outcomes for the environment and community, will directly benefit industry at a market level and through directing research, development, extension and adoption investments."*

### Ash Wiese:

*"I think it is important that our industry gathers the data, understands what we do well and what areas need improvement. Understanding and telling our sustainability stories, will highlight opportunities to consumers, at a time when claiming we are "clean and green" doesn't cut it anymore."*

*As a grower I understand what sustainable practices look like on the ground, and the impact change can have on growers. My experience in the retail supply chain gives me a unique perspective and understanding around creating value and ensuring the information we collect and present builds trust with customers and consumers."*

### Graham Page

*With increasing pressure from climate variability, soil health, market access and food security demands, it is essential Australian farmers have resources to advance sustainable practices within the grains industry. My involvement will allow me to work with like-minded industry professionals and leaders to drive meaningful change and make a long- term difference.*

*I hope to bring valuable insights and practical solutions using my knowledge, experience and networks from across the grains industry particularly the supply chain. I see stakeholder engagement being critical to formulating a practical and relevant framework that is support by our industry over the longer term.*

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## Lachlan Evans

*I joined the GSF Steering Group to help build something people can trust. It needs to work for growers. It needs to make sense overseas, and shift as things change.*

*I bring a trade and market access view - making sure what we build lines up with how things actually work on farm and stacks up internationally.*

## Steph Schmidt

*As a producer with three young children, my involvement is personal as I want my children to be part of a sustainable grains industry into the future. Working through the GSF Steering Group will also allow me to be able to have a positive impact on the capacity and wellbeing of producers despite the challenges we face.*

*As a psychologist my knowledge can contribute to the social and people elements of the framework, as without sustainable people we can't have a sustainable grains industry. I also bring my lived experience as a producer in marginal, low rainfall country to share the challenges, as well as the opportunities and rewards we have as grains producers.*

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## STEERING GROUP MEMBER BIOS

### **Catherine Marriott OAM (Chair)**

Catherine is a recognised leader in agriculture. In addition to having spent 12 months as a Nuffield scholar, she has more than 15 years of involvement in Australian and international agribusiness, focusing on business growth, sustainability, strategy, and partnerships.

### **Lachlan Evans**

Lachlan Evans is the Trade and Market Access Manager at Grains Australia. He brings skills and experience in biosecurity, labour rights and GHG emissions in the context of trade and market access.

### **Dr Mark Farrell**

Dr Farrell is a Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO, based in Adelaide. With 20 years of experience in soil carbon and nutrient cycling, Mark brings technical understanding of soil resilience and health, with a strong focus on the Australian grains production sector. He leads GRDC's new investment to develop a Soil Health Framework for the Australian grains and broader agricultural industry.

### **Graham Page**

Graham is an experienced agronomist with 28 years of experience. Graham is currently the Manager of Biologicals ANZ for Terragen Holdings. He brings skills and experience in chemical use, agricultural innovation, and soil health.

### **Steph Schmidt**

Steph Schmidt is a psychologist and farmer, running a large sheep and cropping enterprise in South Australia. Combining her psychological expertise with her lived farming experience, Steph brings skills in worker health, safety, and wellbeing.

### **Ruth Sommerville**

Ruth Sommerville is an agro-ecologist based in Burra, South Australia, where she runs her consulting business Rufous and Co. and is a grower. She brings expertise in land use change and ecosystem conversion, climate change resilience and adaptation, and agricultural innovation.

### **Ash Wiese**

Ashley runs the family farm in Narrogin Western Australia. Ashley's quinoa and "wheat-free" oats is supplied to supermarkets through his "Three Farmers" business under Coles and Red Tractor branded products. Ash brings expertise in climate change resilience and adaptation, land and resource rights, and GRG emissions.

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## **Toby Wright**

Toby Wright currently serving in the position of Head of Strategy and Sustainability at CBH Group. He has 10 years of experience working in the grain bulk-handler sector and brings skills in the context of a bulk handler in climate change and extreme weather, labour rights, practices and working conditions, and agricultural innovation.

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