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Media Release

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GGA appoints Director to Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub

The Grower Group Alliance (GGA) has announced the appointment of Tom Davidson to the role of Director of the South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SWWA Hub).

“Tom brings to the position significant experience and expertise in strategy, innovation and commercial management, and the GGA is pleased to have him on board to lead this important new initiative,” GGA Chief Executive Officer Niki Curtis said.

“His skills and capability will be ideal for overseeing the SWWA Hub which aims to improve the drought resilience and preparedness of local farmers and regional communities.”

Prior to joining the GGA, Mr Davidson was Head of Strategy & Digital at Elders Limited – an ASX 200 listed agribusiness.

He also has extensive previous experience from running his own management consulting business and through roles with PwC, Strategy& and iiNet.

The SWWA Hub will provide networks for researchers, farmers, communities, First Nations people and other stakeholders to work together to enhance drought resilient practices.

It is one of eight Hubs established around the country through the Australian Government’s \$5 billion Future Drought Fund.

The SWWA Hub is led by the GGA, is a producer-led network that earlier this year was awarded an \$8 million Australian Government investment to lead the Hub until at least 2024.

Hub partners are providing cash and in-kind co-contributions worth several million dollars, and represent all segments of the supply chain for WA’s southern agricultural growing region.

The SWWA Hub’s key location is at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development’s Merredin Dryland Research Institute.

Hub nodes are at Carnarvon, Geraldton, Northam, Bunbury, Manjimup, Albany, Katanning and Esperance, and core industries include grain, sheep, beef, dairy, viticulture and horticulture.

Mr Davidson will lead an experienced team appointed by the GGA to manage the initiative, including Knowledge Broker Tanya Kilminster, who is based at Merredin, Business Development Manager

Grower Group Alliance Inc

-  Office: Level 6, 1 Nash St, Perth 6000
-  Postal: Locked bag 4, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA 6983
-  admin@gga.org.au  (08) 9368 3417
-  www.gga.org.au  @GGA_WA

Annabelle Bushell, Project Manager Kellie-Jane Pritchard and Stakeholder & Communications Manager Natalie Lee.

Team members have strong links to the agricultural industry and the research, development and extension sector.

Mr Davidson said they would aim to make agricultural research and practices impactful and accessible, and increase innovation and commercialisation opportunities.

“This will assist in better positioning WA in the global agricultural innovation landscape, and help our industry to compete against other countries targeting our hard-won markets,” he said.

“While many areas in the region covered by the Hub have experienced higher-than-average or even record rainfall figures in recent months, a drying trend has been evident in Australia in recent decades, particularly in our southwest region.”

According to Bureau of Meteorology’s [State of the Climate 2020 report](#), the trend is particularly strong from May to July over southwest WA, with rainfall since 1970 about 20 per cent less than the average experienced from 1900 to 1969. Since 2000, this decline has increased to 28 per cent.

More information about the SWWA Hub is available on the GGA website at <https://www.gga.org.au/activity/drought-innovation-hub> and information about the Australian Government Future Drought Fund is available at www.agriculture.gov.au/dfd.

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Caption: Tom Davidson, Director of the South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SWWA Hub).

Contact

Natalie Lee
Stakeholder & Communications Manager – SWWA Hub
nlee@gga.org.au
0456 869 791

Interviews

Tom Davidson
Director – SWWA Hub

Niki Curtis
CEO – GGA