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## Media Release

15/05/2023

### **Emerge Program Grants – harnessing the innovation of agricultural minds**

A new Grower Group Alliance (GGA) led program is offering small grants valued between \$2,000 and \$10,000 to the agricultural sector in Western Australia with the aim of improving water efficiency.

The ‘Emerge Program’ initiative is funded by CSIRO, Australia’s national science agency, through its Drought Resilience Mission.

It will facilitate the development of ideas to help Western Australian farmers and the agri-food sector prosper in hotter, more variable climates and build greater resilience to more frequent seasonal droughts.

The program is designed to forge a pathway into the innovation ecosystem for producers, growers, and regional community members alike.

GGA’s Innovation Manager Dr Jo Wisdom said a bottom-up approach often produced the best ideas.

“Ideas don’t always have to be top-down,” Dr Wisdom said.

“Ideas often come from those in the action of doing – picked up from gaps they detect in their own processes, practices, and products.

“What the Emerge Program aims to create is a space where ideas to address those gaps are captured, and where connections between the originator of the idea and R&D experts are cultivated,” she said.

CSIRO Drought Resilience Mission lead, Dr Graham Bonnett said bringing together different voices through the Emerge Program will foster innovative ideas to build greater resilience to drought.

“The Emerge Program will complement other activities in our Drought Resilience Mission by giving untested ideas a life so that they can be further developed and hopefully lower the impacts of dry years on agriculture,” Dr Bonnett said.

“Improving farm productivity through more efficient water use is an enduring goal and requires a range of approaches and innovators.”

GGA CEO Rikki Foss encouraged those with an idea to apply for this unique opportunity.

“Drought resilience is a critical issue facing WA and the regions, and to have ideas coming from the ground up gives those living with the effects of drought a seat at the table,” Ms Foss said.



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“The Emerge Program is an exciting chance for growers and producers to develop an idea, coined on the job, into a potential product or process to address this very present and real issue with the support of CSIRO and GGA experts,” she said.

‘Emerge Program’ applications will remain open for a six-week period from May 15, 2023, closing at 5pm (AWST) June 28, 2023.

Once this short pilot round commences and grants have been awarded, the recipients will undertake a mentorship period with the relevant experts.

Informing the future of the project, the mentees will have the opportunity to reflect on their learnings during the ‘Emerge Program’ and provide feedback to CSIRO and GGA.

For more information, head to the project webpage <https://www.gga.org.au/activity/emerge-program-grants/>

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