



## Strategic Statement of the Mingeneew Irwin Group

March 2009

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### 1. Background / Purpose

This document presents a summary of strategic issues for the Mingeneew Irwin Group. A planning workshop was held in March 2009 with Management Committee member and cross section of Full members of the Group.

### 2. Performance

The MIG has made many significant achievements since it was formed in 1994. These achievements include:

- Building a reputation as a reputable R&D and Environmental group that is recognised internationally, nationally and locally
- Recognition for its integrity, transparency, independence and farmer involvement
- A group that has evolved for the people. The Group supports a diversity of ages and genders maintaining the Group's vitality and enthusiasm
- Working in a diverse environment – with researchers, government bodies, commercial entities, local growers and sponsors, supporting grower needs across variable landscapes and conditions
- Employing skilled and valuable staff that have helped build the local community
- Providing an interactive environment for social and intellectual development
- Circulation of valuable and reputable publications

A review of achievements since the strategic planning session in 2005 shows:

- The majority of goals and strategies have been successfully completed
- Strategies not completed include succession planning and a student membership

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong reputation for delivery and integrity</li> <li>▪ Good track record</li> <li>▪ High percentage of farmers as members</li> <li>▪ Educated, pragmatic young farmers coming back to the farm</li> <li>▪ Financial stability</li> <li>▪ Producer driven R&amp;D</li> <li>▪ Passion for new technologies and best practice</li> <li>▪ Strong industry connections</li> <li>▪ Generational interaction</li> <li>▪ Diversity of skills and businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication outside the group</li> <li>▪ Matured and a plateau in growth</li> <li>▪ Complacency / apathy</li> <li>▪ Finances are dependent on a few key players: fed, state govt and sponsorship</li> <li>▪ Inefficient group structure</li> <li>▪ Fewer farmers in district</li> <li>▪ At high risk of losing reputation from increased competition of other groups</li> <li>▪ Lack of R&amp;D focus on poor country</li> <li>▪ Lack of alignment of ideals for group's future</li> </ul>

### 3. The Environment

MIG operates in a challenging environment. It is important for the group to recognise these challenges and develop strategies in response. The environment has changed in the last five years.



The important changes in the environment are:

- Government (both State and Federal) are more prescriptive in their outcomes required from funding. The amount of funds for environmental projects is reducing and the priority areas for government have shifted to climate change and drought
- The number of farms has continued to decline and farm size has increased
- The Shire boundaries are likely to change
- Farming practices are evolving and are likely to accommodate biofuels and the ETS
- There is increased demand for transparency of products through QA, EMS, etc
- The continual cost price squeeze
- There are increasing numbers of grower groups competing for reputations, research and funds
- Increasing deregulation of the markets

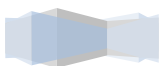
These changes in the environment present both opportunities and threats as follows:

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Marketing products with local branding such as EMS</li> <li>▪ Increased political influence</li> <li>▪ Climate change funding opportunities</li> <li>▪ Employment of communications expertise</li> <li>▪ Broader financial base</li> <li>▪ Commercial expertise</li> <li>▪ Increased family member involvement through accountability programs i.e. EMS, QA</li> <li>▪ Leader in ETS</li> <li>▪ Fill void left by government</li> <li>▪ Branding of reputation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Competition from other groups – funding, resources, researcher time</li> <li>▪ Reduced funding from sponsors, govt bodies</li> <li>▪ IR reforms</li> <li>▪ Climate variability</li> <li>▪ GM public perception and split of group</li> <li>▪ Increasing cost of administration</li> <li>▪ Member burnout</li> <li>▪ Biosecurity issues resulting in fewer sites being available</li> </ul>

#### 4. Implications

This consideration of performance and environment suggests a number of important implications for the group.

- To maintain our position as a leading R&D organisation, we must move forward, to embrace change and growth
- Will changes to shire boundaries have an effect on membership?
- There will be increased competition for research and environmental dollars
- There is need for increased and improved communications
- The group needs increased financial flexibility – or a wider funding base
- We need to make our governance processes clearer
- We can sell our strengths and buy in others where we don't have the skills
- Capture ETS dollars
- Risk management plans need to be developed
- Test everything against benefits to members
- Goal posts are moving due to the pressures on the 'right to farm'
- Should cooperate more with surrounding groups
- Get closer to the competitive bid process
- Do we become service providers for things like biosecurity?



## Summary

- Need to find a common path
- Keep doing what we do well
- MIG is a responsive organisation that knows the environment is changing
- Some risk must be taken to maintain the core
- Funding for communication is required – internal and external

## 5. Vision

The vision of MIG has not changed significantly, however there is a need to respond to the changes in environment to maintain MIG's position as a leading farmer group in Australia

## 6. New Strategies

Although the degree of change required is not large, there are a number of strategies that require attention.

- The business environment will become more difficult due to funding being more targeted to a lower membership base. This can be managed through using the group's reputation to secure new funding
- Opportunities extend in new areas of work in climate adaptation change, precision technology emission trading and GM technologies. To capitalise on these opportunities, a strong business will be required
- Stronger business management will be required to take risks. Clearer roles and responsibilities of governance and management will be required with clear succession plans and development and encouragement of younger members of the team
- While retaining the core business of farmer driven research, MIG must respond to trends and provide services to members where cooperation between farms and groups of farmers provides benefits to members, e.g. study tours, joint investment in technology for trailing regional research

### Key Areas for Strategy Development

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| ▪ Financial / Business   | ▪ Membership              |
| ▪ Research & Development | ▪ Governance / Succession |
| ▪ Communication          | ▪ Environment             |
| ▪ Education              |                           |

