

# RIVERINA AG INDUSTRIES COMING TOGETHER TO REDUCE SPRAY DRIFT

Over the past few seasons, off-target spraying and spray drift has been cause for serious concern across all agricultural industries. In fact, at IREC breakfast meetings in 2017, attended by around 100 growers, spray drift rated as a top issue for all groups.

IREC has been instrumental in the formation of a new group to tackle spray drift in the region—known as SOS Riverina Valleys. SOS stands for stop off-target spraying.

With Grassroots Grants funding from CRDC, IREC held an open meeting at Darlington Point in January 2019, and around 45 representatives from all farming industries (including cotton, dryland cropping and grazing, rice, grains, apiarists and horticulture), advisors, chemical suppliers/resellers, spray applicators, councils, government departments and water supply organisations attended. Guest speaker on the day was Maurie Street from the SOS Macquarie Valley committee. The SOS program was first established in the Macquarie Valley last year and as a grass roots initiative has had great uptake and gone from strength to strength over the past 18 months.

The meeting agreed that spray drift is a significant issue for many businesses across our region and that we need to engage with the whole agricultural community to increase awareness of the risks of off-target spray drift and change practices to reduce the number of potential drift events.

A working committee was formed to progress this initiative, with IREC providing secretariat support. Committee members are:

- Kevin Sternberg, Sinochem (Chairman)
- Matt Toscan, irrigation farmer, Darlington Point
- Grant Delves, Prune Growers Association and irrigation farmer, Hanwood
- Michael Pfitzner, dryland farmer, Rankin Springs
- Lachlan Danckert, irrigation farmer, Deniliquin
- Harold Saxvik, apiarist, Darlington Point
- John Ward, grazier, Griffith NSW Farmers Representative
- Gerry Wilcox, Riverina Helicopters
- Brian Bortolin, Riverina Winegrape Growers
- Mark Groat, SunRice
- Craig Bretherton, EPA
- Neil Bull, Rice Growers Association
- Honi Anderson, Cotton Australia
- Peter McGrath, Griffith City Council
- Pat Brown, Murrumbidgee Shire Council

Over the next few months SOS Riverina will plan activities to engage and educate applicators and farmers in order to bring about improvements in on-target application efficiency and so reduce spray drift.

There was also a general feeling that spray drift events are under-reported. In order to get a better understanding of the extent of the problem so we can best target our resources, SOS Riverina has set up an email address for people to anonymously report spray drift events, with all information provided remaining confidential. If you would like to report an event please email [riverinaspraydrift@gmail.com](mailto:riverinaspraydrift@gmail.com)

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## More information

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