



## **BIGG Communications Plan**

### **2024-25**

#### **Overview**

The Communications Plan gives a summary of BIGG’s current communications activities and proposes actions to be implemented by the Communications Officer, with assistance from the Communications Intern, over the next 12 months to achieve the identified Communication Objectives.

**BIGG Vision: Resilient landscapes and land managers.**

**BIGG Mission: To improve farm grazing systems.**

#### **Communication Objectives**

Provide simple, accessible, timely and valuable information to:

1. Maximise the awareness and adoption of BIGG activities to build productivity, sustainability and natural resource management outcomes for livestock producers in the Barossa and surrounding regions.
2. Enhance the BIGG brand as a trusted and valued industry leader and partner.
3. Encourage and provide opportunities for ongoing engagement and collaboration between BIGG, producers, industry and funding organisations.

#### **Audiences**

##### **Producers**

*Livestock and mixed producers from the Barossa and surrounding areas.*

Information on BIGG projects, opportunities and information resources is directed to producers with the aim to improve farming practices. Timely and relevant information on current BIGG and industry opportunities and projects are consistently delivered to producers via the eNewsletter, direct email and Facebook, supported by media coverage. The BIGG website and You Tube channel provides producers with an ongoing, long-term platform for past project outcomes and learning resources. Events are also utilised as an effective platform for delivering information, demonstrating practices and building relationships.

Feedback from the June 2024 Communications Survey (28 responses) indicated that producers are interested in (in order of priority):

- Upcoming BIGG and industry events
- Learning opportunities and resources
- Local case studies and project information
- Industry news and opportunities

The preferred email channels are eNewsletter, events and Facebook.

### **Industry and Government organisations**

*Government, funding bodies and agricultural groups at a local, state and national with an interest in agriculture, livestock, natural resource management, community and economic development.*

BIGG has established and continues to build collaborative relationships with state and national industry partners to identify and deliver valuable information and opportunities to BIGG producers.

An insufficient number of responses were received from this audience in the June 2024 Communications Survey to provide valuable feedback.

Organisations include (not limited to): Ag Ex Alliance, local Agricultural bureaus, Landscapes Boards, Livestock SA, Drought Hub SA, PIRSA, Barossa Australia, Regional Development Australia (Barossa & Light), Barossa Council.

### **Agri-business**

*Industry suppliers and partners, including BIGG sponsors, from the Barossa and surrounding areas.*

Again, BIGG aims to build relationships with these organisations and work collaboratively to deliver valuable information and opportunities to BIGG producers.

Feedback from the June 2024 Communications Survey (5 responses) indicated that Agri-business interests include (in order of priority):

- Upcoming BIGG and industry events
- Learning opportunities and resources
- Local case studies and project information

Preferred communications channels are the eNewsletter and events.

## **Communications Channels**

### **Direct email**

BIGG's most effective method of communication is through direct emails to subscribers, including the monthly member newsletter. With an engaged mailing list of 445 subscribers and opening rates are 47.5% (July 2024) current direct email is an efficient and cost-effective communication channel also allowing for immediate actions such as a link to make an event

booking, or further enquiry. Online email service Mailchimp is utilised for the design, database management and distribution of the newsletter to the mailing list.

The monthly eNewsletters content includes:

- BIGG project outcomes, opportunities and events.
- Sponsor feature: current sponsors are invited to submit content (either a small article or advertisement) annually.
- 'From the inbox' lists relevant industry events, opportunities and news.

### **Website**

The BIGG website offers 24/7 access to comprehensive information on BIGG's current and past projects and opportunities that is accessible to all audiences. The website is the central information source for BIGG resources and news with other communications channels often funnelling audiences to it for further information. Ongoing maintenance of the website is required to ensure an user-friendly experience with up-to-date and valuable information.

The BIGG website is on the Word Press platform. Currently there is no site performance analytics available on the website.

### **Social media: Facebook**

Currently BIGG has a social media presence on Facebook only with 547 followers (July 24). Social media is a cost-effective communications channel with possible extended outreach via content being shared with partner organisations. Social media provides an opportunity for engagement (via likes, comments, shares) on a personal level with audiences.

Results from the June 24 Communications Survey provided insights into social media preferences, with Facebook being the preferred platform.

*Survey question:*

What social media platforms (if any) do you prefer to use for industry news?

*Responses:*

11	I don't use social media
8	Facebook
7	LinkedIn
4	Instagram
2	X (formally Twitter)

Insights indicate that content performs best when there is a human interest/ connection element for example event photos featuring people, and when BIGG content is shared by other users extending audience exposure. Awareness posts with a clear value proposition for example a funding opportunity or upcoming event are also good performers.

With the survey indicating that a large number of BIGG members do not use Facebook (or social media at all), the relatively low engagement rates, and increasingly competitive and noisy social

media environment that makes it difficult to reach audiences, social media is best used to support BIGG's communications activities rather than serve as a core communications tool.

## **Events**

BIGG events including the annual conference, workshops, pasture walks and tours serve as a core communications tool for delivering information, allowing for practical demonstrations, building authority and credibility, and strengthening community and relationships. The success of the event itself is dependent on supporting communications tools such as direct email to attract attendees and support information distribution after the event.

The June 24 Communications Survey indicated that events are the second most preferred communications channel.

## **External media: editorial and advertising**

External media allow for information to reach a larger audience via a third party enhancing BIGG's credibility and brand awareness at a minimal cost. Media releases and paid advertising are tools to boost visibility and generate awareness on a news item or opportunity.

BIGG has established an excellent relationship with Barossa newspaper The Leader with regular editorial features and the occasional paid advertising for events. Industry media such as the Stock Journal, along with publications including MLA, Landscape Boards and Drought Hub newsletters are also targeted when applicable.

The June 24 Communications Survey indicated that the media is the least preferred communications channel.

## **Video & Webinars**

Video allows for information that has a longer life-span to be delivered in an engaging and convenient format that is easily shared to reach a wider audience regardless of location. Video can be especially effective as an in-depth learning or information resource that is accessed by viewers when required. However, often video production requires extensive time and financial inputs. BIGG has an established YouTube channel with links to the uploaded videos on the BIGG website.

Webinars are an alternative option to events when targeting a specific audience at different locations whilst allowing interaction with the audience. Information can be delivered verbally and visually in an engaging and interactive format however audience recruitment and retention challenges may occur. Recorded webinars can be uploaded to the BIGG website for ongoing access.

6 of 34 respondents in the June 24 Communications Survey indicated video as a preferred communications channel.

## 2024/25 Actions:

The following actions are aimed to ensure effective communications is delivered to BIGG's key audiences:

### **Deliver monthly eNewsletter to the BIGG mailing list.**

*Target audience:* Producers, Industry and Government organizations, agri-business.

*Strategy:* Maintain the eNewsletter as a trusted and consistent information source to provide valuable information on current news, learnings and opportunities. Engaging short format copy and images with links to seek further information/ calls to action. Opportunity to collaborate with and share sponsor and industry partners news. Newsletter sections include BIGG news, sponsor news and 'from the inbox' featuring relevant industry news.

New subscribers are join the mailing list via a link on the BIGG website.

*Tools:* Newsletter

*Communications channels:* Direct email, website (copy of newsletter made available)

### **Deliver news, opportunities and project outcomes to assist learning and on-farm adoption.**

*Target audience:* Producers

*Strategy:* Assist Technical Officers on developing project communications when required to suit project timeline, budget, audience, and desired outcomes. Ensure information is delivered using tools and channels that best suit the target audience and information to be delivered. Ensure branding requirements are met.

*Tools:* Presentations, case study fact sheets, information articles, social media posts, media releases.

*Communications channels:* Events, website, direct email (including newsletter), social media, print media, video/ webinars

### **Providing communications support in the delivery of BIGG project events including the BIGG Annual Conference.**

*Target audience:* All

*Strategy:* Liaise with BIGG personnel to develop and deliver a communications strategy for events suited to the event timeline, budget, audience, and desired outcomes. Ensure branding requirements are met. Collaborate with event partners to ensure that their needs, including branding and acknowledgements, are met.

*Tools:* Presentations, videos, print publications, banners, signage

*Communications channels: Event, website*

**Ensure consistent BIGG branding.**

*Target audience: All*

*Strategy:* Ensure a consistent brand is presented to enhance BIGG's image and reputation as a trusted and credible industry leader and partner.

Review and monitor communication activities to ensure branding requirements are met.

*Tools:* Branding guide (to be developed)

*Communications channels: All*

**Ongoing website and social media maintenance.**

*Target audience: All*

*Strategy:* Ensure the website and Facebook profile is up-to-date, relevant and engaging.

As the website is an ongoing central source of valuable and reliable information its functionality and design are to be regularly monitored and updated to meet the evolving audience and content needs.

Facebook requires ongoing monitoring to respond to audience engagement and interact with other relevant stakeholders for example by sharing their relevant content.

*Tools:* Written articles, videos/ webinars, photos/images, case studies, Facebook posts.

*Communications channels: Website, social media*

**Provide communications support for BIGG representation at industry events.**

*Target audience:* Industry and government organisations.

*Strategy:* Provide support to build brand awareness, credibility, authority and networks to generate opportunities. Possible collaboration with other organisations to deliver information.

*Tools:* Presentations, banner, print publications, signage

*Communication channels:* Industry events including awards.

**Evaluation and monitoring**

The effectiveness of communications channels and audience preferences are continually evolving. It is proposed that the Communications Plan is reviewed and updated annually with consideration of the following measures:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Direct email opening rates (inclusive of eNewsletter)	Annual
Online engagement as measured by website visits, Facebook insights and YouTube views.	Annual
Survey responses: Annual conference, bi-annual communications survey, relevant project and event surveys.	Per event
Anecdotal feedback.	Ongoing

## **Appendix**

### **2024 Communications Survey**

In May-June 2024 the BIGG audience was invited to complete a short online survey promoted via the eNewsletter, Facebook page and direct email to the BIGG mailing list. 34 responses were received.