



## Annual Report 2023-24

RAID Network is a program of the **Crawford Fund**  
and is supported with funding from the **Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)**

**CONNECT ENGAGE SUPPORT**

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## Executive Summary

The RAID Network is an active group of early to mid-career researchers (EMCRs) with an interest in agriculture and international development. Over the 2023/24 period, we have continued to share knowledge and opportunities, build research capacity, and communicate the value of agricultural research.

RAID continues to curate new partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships alongside the Crawford Fund to engage, connect and support the international agricultural community. The key achievements for 23/24 are highlighted below.

### Strategy and Management

- The network continues to implement our Strategic Plan (2023-2027) by operating in the new organisation structure, investing more heavily in capacity development, communications and operation support.
- Continuing to use Crawford Fund SharePoint as our main platform for communication and sharing files.
- Executive roles and administrative support remain unchanged, but preparations have been made for identifying the next prospective President/Vice-President team as the mid-term point is passed.

### Connect Team

- A strong team of 22 state representatives continue to connect emerging researchers and practitioners across all Australian state and territories through engaging and interactive networking and speaker events.
- Seven in-person state events were run over this period.

### Engage Team

- The Central Committee 'Engage' team focused on relevant and novel capacity development opportunities for Network members over the course of the period, stemming from key member interest areas, running ten events including two series events.
- Main 'Engage' events included 'Ethics of Conducting Development Research', 'Finding Your Purpose', 'Identifying Relevant AgR4D Career Pathways', PhD 'Brownbag Seminar', and 'Harnessing AI in Agricultural Research'.

### Support Team

- The Central Committee 'Support' team ably designed and implemented Phase 4 of the Australian Volunteers/Vietnam National University of Agriculture (VNUA) research exchange program focused on finalising the partnership and governance foundations needed to support the on-going success of the program.

## Communications

- RAID has increased its presence and following on LinkedIn (doubled - now 836 followers), Instagram (now 477 followers) and Facebook (now 1800 followers)
- The photo comp had great engagement around it. **Nitty Simard** took out the top prize and the people's choice award with her photo of Mabé pearls, and **Matt Champness** took out runner up.
- The RAID website continues to house opportunities, events and blogs to increase benefits to RAID members and provide a central hub for information regarding agriculture for research in international development.

## About the RAID Network

Researchers in Agriculture for International Development (RAID) is an Australia-based network, bringing together early to mid-career researchers with an interest in agriculture and international development.

RAID was founded by a group of motivated Australian researchers who saw an opportunity to establish a network through which they could better CONNECT with their peers and share knowledge, experiences and opportunities working internationally. The group also believed that by raising awareness about career pathways into international agricultural research, more Australians would ENGAGE in agriculture. Finally, the group wanted to SUPPORT the career development of early to mid-career researchers.

RAID is a program of the Crawford Fund Ltd and was established in December 2013 with the support of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). During the last year, RAID has celebrated its 10-year birthday.

## Mission

To connect, engage and support Australia-based early to mid-career researchers and practitioners working in, or interested in, agriculture and international development.

## Vision

The RAID Network is an active young professional's community of early to mid-career researchers working in, or interested in, agriculture and international development, through which knowledge and opportunities are shared, research capacity is built, and the value of agricultural research is communicated.

## Objectives

1. **Connect** researchers involved in international agricultural research for development by facilitating networking and knowledge sharing.
2. **Engage** more people in agriculture by raising public awareness about career pathways into, and the importance of, international agricultural research for development.
3. **Support** career development of early to mid-career researchers through targeted capacity building initiatives.

## Strategy and Management

The central committee has seen a few members leave in response to evolving work and personal commitments, as well as seeing it as their time to say farewell to the Network after several years of involvement and progression into more mid/senior pathways. During this period, we also welcomed several new committee members including Bek Ash in the Communications team, Anam and Somia Afzal in the Engage (Capacity Development and Crawford Conference partnerships) team, and Nam Ha Duong and Vinh Ngo to support the AVP/VNUA research exchange program.

The state representative team saw a valuable refresh during this period as well, which is now a very active network of 22 individuals representing all Australian states and territories.

## Central Committee

### Executive

- President: Mikayla Hyland-Wood
- Vice President: Jessica Fearnley-Pattison
- Secretary: Anna Mackintosh
- Treasurer: Aditya Baxi

### Core portfolios

#### Communications

- Lead: Bridget Mullany
- Bek Ash

#### Engage

- Lead: Manita Raut
- Anam Afzal
- Somia Afzal

#### Support

- Lead: Megan Williams
- Chi Mai Do
- Nam Ha Duong
- Vinh Ngo

#### Connect

- Lead: Greta Stark

#### Administrative officer

- Sue Faulkner: [raid.network@crawfordfund.org](mailto:raid.network@crawfordfund.org)

## State Representatives

Table 4: RAID representatives as of December 2024

State	Reps
NSW	Jess Fearnley Anika Molesworth Kamana Rayamajhi Bishwas Thakuri Dinesh Jamarkattel Annabel White
VIC	Camilla Humphries Anam Afzal
QLD	Bek Ash Somia Afzal Sabrina Morrison Dipika Das
TAS	Alex Russell Yesh Desai Belinda Nielsen Anna Mackintosh
NT	Beth Penrose Patrick Di
SA	Jack Hetherington Greta Stark
WA	Sophie Lountain Mackenzie Coopman
ACT	Greta Stark Mikayla Hyland-Wood

## Communications

### Membership

RAID's primary modus operandi is via its website and social media platforms. RAID's website (<https://raidnetwork.crawfordfund.org/>) is the central location of all stories, jobs, opportunities and events. These are then pushed through the various communication channels, primarily LinkedIn and Instagram, however, RAID also publishes material to Facebook and via our member email list.

Current membership stands at **1,203 active members**.

## Social Media

RAID has increased its following across all platforms, including:

1. Doubled followership on **LinkedIn** with **836** total followers
2. Increased **Instagram** followership to **477** individuals
3. **Facebook** network is now standing at over **1,800** individuals
4. Passively decommissioned X (formerly Twitter) as engagement dropped significantly

While it is not the highest follower count, the Network saw the greatest engagement with posts and opportunities on LinkedIn, and it is now considered our professional social media platform of choice. Our LinkedIn page had 1,486 searches and visits this year, catalysed in part by one paid ad that was run alongside the AI in Agriculture workshop series. This ad was viewed by 3,298 people and 54 clicked through to our Humanitix event through this avenue. During the time the advertisement was run, we gained approximately 100 new followers on LinkedIn.

Formal membership on RAID's website continues to grow, adding members via subscription to our quarterly newsletter blast and any one-off email send outs. A focus within the comms team has been to increase engagement with other like-minded individuals and agencies by connecting and sharing online content on platforms such as Instagram and LinkedIn. This has assisted in broadening RAID's connections and awareness of opportunities in agriculture for development space.

The sharing, communication and hosting of events has enhanced our online capacity, with the majority of our interactions with RAID members occurring through LinkedIn, Instagram and Teams platforms. This has greatly increased collaboration between the events and communications team, leading to the potential development of an additional communications role in the coming year.

## Merch

A restock of RAID network merchandise was completed in June/July 2024, including additional t-shirts (navy/brown), hoodies (navy/brown), business cards, flyers, tote bags, cooler bags, and pens. These items were identified as popular by committee and state rep volunteers and regularly used at in-person events as promotional products.

Business cards and flyers were also redesigned and reprinted as stock ran low. Stickers, pens and t-shirts remain some of the most popular merch by members. The logo remains relevant and appropriate. The colour scheme of future merch is up for discussion at the in-person committee workshop in Feb 2025.

RAID t-shirts (in the requested colour and size) were sent out to new state reps as they came on board.

## Photo Competition

In 2024, RAID brought back the annual photo competition and was judged during the Crawford Conference in Canberra. This year we had great engagement from entries, and including the finalists at the conference attracted attention from the crowd. **Nitya Simard** took out the top prize and the people's choice award with her photo of Mabé pearls, and **Matt Champness** took out runner up.

## Newsletters and Events

**11 Jan, 25 Jan & 8 Feb 2024**

### RAID Network presents 3 online workshops facilitated by Anika Molesworth

SESSION 1: Finding Your Purpose (Thursday 11 January 2024)

SESSION 2: Personal Brand to Impact Good (Thursday 25 January 2024)

SESSION 3: Talk like TED (Thursday 8 February 2024)

Facilitator: Dr Anika Molesworth

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**13 March 2024**

### RAID Network & Crawford Fund WA Event

RAID Network and Crawford Fund WA hosted an information and networking event presented by Crawford Fund WA Coordinator, Emerita Professor Lyn Abbott, with speaker, Professor Ed Barrett-Lennard.

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**15 March 2024**

### Careers in international agricultural research

'Careers in International Agricultural Research' event hosted by the RAID Network, Crawford Fund, AgriBio, AgVIC and La Trobe University on 15 March 2024. Special keynote presentation by Dr Sally Norton, research lead of the Australian Grains Genebank and Plant Genetic Resources team at Agriculture Victoria.

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**2 May 2024**

### Starting your International Agricultural Research Career at CSU

This event took place at the Rules Club Wagga Wagga on Thursday 2 May. An informative and interactive session on getting your career in international agricultural research started at CSU. Attendees were introduced to CSU researchers actively working in the space, alongside other like-minded students.

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**14 June 2024**

### RAID Network Brown Bag Seminar

The Brown Bag Seminar provided a platform for early and mid-career researchers and practitioners to present their work in various fields of agricultural research and development. Presenters shared their work



on international agricultural development and prizes were awarded, (including the People's Choice Award for outstanding presenter), chosen through live voting at the end of the seminar.

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**17 July 2024**

#### [RAID Network & Crawford Fund WA networking event – July 2024](#)

RAID Network and Crawford Fund WA, in collaboration with Ag Institute Australia, hosted a networking event prior to the industry forum to take advantage of agricultural researchers/students who attended the industry forum, as well as provide a networking opportunity for UWA students and affiliates who were interested in research in agriculture for international development. Two researchers from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Balwinder Singh and Hasnein Tareque, presented on their research related to agricultural development internationally.

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**25 July 2024**

#### [RAID Webinar: Exploring International Plant Research Pathways](#)

The RAID Network returned with a brand new webinar series. This time, all about Higher Degree Research pathways (Masters and PhD).

This event featured three talented Masters and PhD students showcasing their research pathways for attendees to discover inspiring project linkages, diverse research topics, and effective methods to find a supervisor and scholarship support. Also how to get involved in international research and broaden their academic horizons.

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**July/August 2024**

#### [“Your research in one photo” competition – 2024](#)

RAID invited submissions for ‘your research in one photo’ competition for a photo taken in the field or representing students research. Eg: a photo of research species, community or the aim or outcome of their research.

#### [Winners were announced on 23 October 2024.](#)

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**13 August 2024**

#### **Crawford Fund Conference – 2024 Scholars Social Trivia Night**

With so many in town for the 2024 Crawford Fund Conference, this evening was a great opportunity for early career researchers and students to connect with fellow scholars. Meeting like-minded people involved in the agricultural research for development space over drinks and nibbles at the Kingston Hotel.

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**12 September 2024**

### RAID Network NT – Online Speed Networking Event

This networking event was designed to engage with students, professionals, and institutions who are working or have interest in working in Agriculture for International Development. A fantastic networking opportunity for students who were looking for opportunities in Ag4D.

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**1 November 2024**

### RAID Network – ACT event

This event was for students or young professionals based in Canberra and curious about relevant opportunities to apply their background to the intersection of agriculture, natural resource management, policy and international development.

Held at Symposium (Kambri, ANU) it was an evening of engaging presentations, Q&A, and access to emerging and established leaders in these fields.

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**21 & 28 Nov & 5 Dec 2024**

### Harnessing AI in Agriculture Webinar Series

RAID Network delivered this exclusive 3-part webinar series, designed to empower those at the forefront of agricultural innovation with cutting-edge AI knowledge, tailored for researchers, practitioners, and students in agriculture.

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**14 Nov, 12 Dec 2024 (scheduled monthly in 2025)**

### Agri-food Security Journal Club

Co-hosted by ANU, the RAID Network has designed and delivered a journal club open to RAID committee and wider networks for the purpose of improving research critical thinking and robust dialogue. We look forward to this club extending into 2025 in a monthly session with a rotating host.

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## Crawford Fund Engagement

### State/Territory Committees

RAID representatives continue their involvement with Crawford Fund State/Territory Committees. RAID committee members are also part of the Crawford Fund State/Territory Committees in Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and ACT which strengthens our connections at a state-level providing opportunities for co-branding and funding of events. Through the involvement on the state committees, RAID can provide insight and connect opportunities specialised for the next gen in international development.

### Crawford Fund Conference

In 2024, RAID partnered with the Crawford Fund through the development and delivery of the Scholars days, and as Keynote Listeners during the conference. As part of the scholar's day, RAID chaired, facilitated, presented and time kept various sessions throughout the two days. On the Tuesday night after the conference, RAID hosted all the scholars for a social trivia event held at the Kingsford Hotel. Here, RAID provided an 'international development' themed trivia night and provided food and soft drinks for the scholars.

### ACIAR

RAID Network continues to have a very close relationship with ACIAR, both in the funding and in-kind support of our mission and activities. Over the course of this period, the network has maintained the agreement of contribution to the Network via the Graduate Research Officers (through the Graduate program) at a rate of 8 hours/week.

Contributions by current graduates include key central committee roles of President (Mikayla Hyland-Wood), State Rep Coordinator (Greta Stark) and Partnership Officer (John Yaxley). This support, facilitated by ACIAR, has been an incredible resource to drive Network initiatives and regular events. Additionally, the close proximity of graduates to senior ACIAR research and outreach staff has proved useful in the search of event speakers and panelists as well as promotional assistance on communication platforms.