# Background points on the industry

* Tissue culture material is being sourced from London
* There are variety trials based on different locations in Australia
* There are growing challenges but marketing is a bigger challenge
* The history of dates in Australia is important
* Dates are now imported into Australia from MENA- they have cheaper labour costs
* Growers are refrigerating pollen but can’t tell if it is viable

# Research and development ideas

## General

* Using visiting scholars and research partnerships to advance knowledge in Australia.
* Economic modelling, gross margins
* Research needs to be market and skills driven
* Where, how to develop and export
* Collating history
* Food security
* Climate change

## Agronomy

* Regional Best Practice Manual (BPM)
* Nutritional guidelines for fertilising dates for Australian conditions.
* Sucker removal and sucker propagation.
* Tools for de-suckering.
* Impact of agronomy on productivity, fruit quality
* Management tools to influence timing

## Water

* Using recycled water for the production of dates, especially in remote communities.
* Simple solution for the cleaning of non-potable water in communities.
* Water resource assessment at Deep Well.
* Soil chemistry and how that interacts with the water.

## Pests

* Biological control of *Parlatoria* and other pests.
* Companion planting.
* Training with biosecurity plans
* Integrated Pest Management (IPM) options
* Pest and disease management and trialling new chemicals and understanding impact of this on maintaining market

## Pollination and fruit set

* Barhee pollination and fruit set.
* Optimal methods and techniques for diluting and applying pollen.
* Determine the time, temperature and duration of stigma receptivity for commercial cultivars.
* Measuring pollen viability
* Cold storage, guidelines, especially for the storage of Barhee at Rutab.

## Harvest and post-harvest

* Harvest technology
* Small scale processing and value adding for low grade fruit.
* What food tech options are there
* Warehouse production flow.
* Packaging and transport, best packaging for a rough road. Also pallet configuration.
* Managing labour and bottlenecking of labour needs.
* Benchmarking

# Ideas for the AZRI collection

* Training facility for new people to the date industry.
* Genetic repository for the date industry, a source of pollen and offshoots.
* Older block – trial as a desert oasis system with a desert fruit forest
* Experimental kitchen for value added products.
* Access a cool room for town storage of dates.
* Commercial exploitation of the farm by local growers.
* Source of baseline data from the past.
* A centre for industry to focus on, and to cut through the politics and champion the cause for funding.
* A place to build community awareness of the date industry.
* Comprehensive variety performance research program, documenting performance
* Water quality understanding: AZRI is an example of terrible water quality, but it is a opportunity to understand impact of long term irrigation with poor quality on both yield of dates and soil health
* Pest and disease management and trialling new chemicals and understanding impact of this on maintaining market
* Understanding production days 120 or 240 for varieties

# Next steps

* Prioritise these issues
* Look at constraints
* Bring in climate change understanding
* Funding bodies for regional development
* Capacity of existing bodies
* Partner with existing R&D.