

TAPG Chairman's Report

TAPG Chairman: Mr Ian Blanden

Annual General Meeting

23 November 2007

Thank you for coming along the 18th Annual General Meeting of the Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group.

I would like to welcome our distinguished guests including: The Hon Sue Napier, Mrs Norma Jamieson, The Hon Richard Colbeck, Senator Kerry O'Brien and Mr Mark Baker. I would also like to welcome our other invited guests and TAPG members to this meeting.

The AGM is an important opportunity to bring together the members of TAPG and other individuals and organizations who are supportive of the organisation's aims and goals.

The TAPG AGM is a chance to remind ourselves of the shared objectives and issues of concern for our diverse membership. The whole purpose of TAPG is to seek common ground amongst industry sectors and work together to promote and support all of Tasmanian agriculture.

TAPG is quite a unique organization. It has the ability to bring together a diverse range of Tasmanian agricultural enterprises. It includes growers, processors, agricultural service providers and government representatives. As far as we know there is not an equivalent organization on the mainland that brings together such diverse agricultural industry groups.

TAPG was formed in 1989 to work on improving the operation of aerial spraying in Tasmania. Through cooperation with operators, industry and Government, a code of practice was established which assisted with industry self regulation leading to improved practices.

Since then, TAPG has been actively involved in improvements to paddock re-entry systems, reducing risk of weed seed in imported feed grain, raising awareness about duty of care for material on roads, documenting and summarising the regulatory framework for chemical use in agriculture, providing support for water infrastructure for irrigation purposes, and providing information about use of GM technology in various agricultural industries.

In the last 12 months, TAPG has worked to promote water infrastructure projects in Tasmania. This has been the major focus for the organization this year. It has responded to a request from the Minister of Primary Industries, Mr David Llewellyn to summarise the impact of the drought on the industries that we represent. It has distributed information to its members about the Select Committee review of GM use in primary industries.

It has jointly funded with TFGA an update by Davey and Maynard reviewing the value of agriculture to the Tasmanian economy (which I will launch after we hear from our speakers), it has made a submission to the Federal Government's review of Chemicals of Security Concern, it has monitored the progress of new legislation for regulation of aerial spraying, it participated in and helped organise the agricultural marquee at the Devonport Taste the Harvest Festival and has circulated to its membership information about a range of topics.

TAPG is currently looking to expand its membership to represent the agri-finance sector, agricultural pharmaceutical companies and the meat processing industry. Current membership has remained stable, with most companies renewing membership for 2007/08. TAPG has maintained a sound financial position, with an operating profit of \$4,399.00 for 06/07.

The current Directors of the company and the categories they represent include

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| Ian Blanden, | representing the plantation forestry industry |
| David Kay, | representing the dairy processing sector |
| Les Murdoch, | representing vegetable processors |
| Neil Armstrong, | representing the fresh fruit and vegetable industry |
| Graeme Palmer, | representing the agribusiness service sector |
| Rick Rockliff, | representing the crop processing industry |
| Graham McKenna, | representing the primary production sector |
| Bruce Williams, | representing the primary production sector |
| David Stirling, | representing the vegetable processors |
| Colin Bell | representing the agribusiness service sector |
| Wes Ford. | Representing the Minister for Primary Industries |

The company secretary and executive officer is Rowena Bell.

I would like to thank David Kay for his time on the Board in the last 2 years, David is retiring from his position on the Board because of a job change. Our new Director representing dairy processors is Mr Alistair McDonald. I would also like to thank Rowena Bell for her work as executive officer for the organization.

As everyone knows, we have a federal election tomorrow. I would like to acknowledge the commitment by both major parties to agriculture in Tasmania. We understand both parties have made provision for financial support for water infrastructure projects in Tasmania should proposals reach the investment ready stage.

In conclusion I would like to remind everyone here that despite many challenges for agriculture in Tasmania, it has been and will remain a fundamental foundation for the Tasmanian economy, its rural communities and the wider community. There is a well founded optimism for all of the industries represented by TAPG.

There is a new awareness that Tasmania has many advantages not available to its mainland counterparts, which especially recognises the abundant natural resources upon which agriculture relies. Agricultural growth very much depends on wise use of our natural assets. TAPG will work with all stakeholders in Tasmania to grow agriculture on a sustainable basis.

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