

## Chairperson's Report 2017

Hon. Jeremy Rockliff, Deputy Premier of Tasmania, your Parliamentary Colleagues, Representatives of the Federal Parliament, Distinguished Guests and Members of TAPG. Welcome to what has evolved as our "Annual" Industry Forum, alongside our traditional Annual General Meeting? TAPG is now 27 years old and I'm reminded by some of our more experienced directors that AGM's used to be attended by a grand audience of 8 or 10 at the Mersey Yacht Club. Last year we rebranded the AGM as an Industry Forum to recognise the relatively few opportunities we take to get together as an industry, network, and consider some of the emerging issues that influence our productivity. I'm delighted that the board have continued to support this approach this year, and most importantly we have secured some high calibre speakers to stimulate our thinking on productivity matters. A special thanks to Ros Harvey from The Yield, James Stronach from TIA, and Ted LeFroy from UTAS, for their presence and support today.

In planning for today our board sought coverage across our; Membership, TIA, and UTAS, as these collectively represent the foundation around which our involvement in extension projects is built.

I should also acknowledge the ongoing support TAPG is offered from DPIPW and AgriGrowth as both resource and governance partners in much of our project activity.

Finally, welcome to our Award Recipients who will be more formally recognised later together with their family members and professional colleagues.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to present the Chairperson's Report for 2017.

A primary function, perhaps 'the' primary for a group such as TAPG is to engage in the "Policy" debate on behalf of our members. Looking back, it's clear much of this policy engagement was done on a group by group basis, and I'm pleased to report that TAPG has been making a concerted effort to lead a collaborative model to deliver government a "whole of industry" position. There are however, inevitable challenges.

- TAPG has over forty member companies whose activities are spread across the entire supply chain. The “sectoral” nature of our Board is the key to managing this balancing act and I would pay tribute to our individual Board members for the diligence with which they have brought forward relevant sectoral considerations.
- TAPG is also one of a number of industry advocacy groups. Ideally, our Government is presented with an industry conduit that delivers messages with one voice, and listens with one ear. Sounds challenging, but we are getting closer to this model everyday. The ongoing process surrounding the Biosecurity Legislation review remains a prime example of this process. TAPG was one of the founding members of the Primary Industry Biosecurity Action Alliance (PIBAA) which brings together all the industry advocates and charges us, ‘the industry’, with the responsibility of a unified industry position rather than our Government needing to interpret one. This hasn’t been without speedbumps, I’m pleased to report PIBAA has made great progress to mature with sound decision making and communication protocols.
- TAPG has also been directly engaged with; the Agri Skills Reference Group, the Farm Safe Reference Group, and the Tasmanian Fruit and Vegetable Export Facilitation Group. TAPG also prepared a response to the Green Paper on RD&E and attended a recent briefing on the resultant White Paper that is yet to be released.

I’ve also reported to you previously that whilst policy and industry needs are relatively well aligned the board has taken the opportunity to provide leadership in “Extension” and “Projects” activities. 2017 has been no exception, and arguably takes this work to a new level. Examples of this include:

- The continuation of our state funded **Precision Agriculture Project**. Along with the ongoing work with our collaborating farmers the third Annual Precision Agriculture EXPO was again conducted at Deloraine in April. This year the program featured a mini EXPO on Poppies that was well received along with demonstrations of Field Robotics that captured a great deal of interest. The annual EXPO continues to

establish new benchmarks for field day attendance and creative programming. The Minister's recent announcement of additional funding to ensure that the EXPO can be continued past the life of the current PA Project is greatly appreciated and speaks to the recognition across industry of the EXPO's success.

- Earlier this year TAPG led a **Waste Water Management Forum** with the strong support of Doris Blaesing of member company RMCG. The planning committee included representatives from both Tas. Water and EPA. Many company representatives mixed well with the "regulatory" side of the topic and created an open dialogue that will foster further discussion.
- We have continued support for the uptake of **MATS technology in Tasmania**. It is pleasing to note that the RD&E machine is now in Scottsdale ready for assembly. Tom Lewis is unfortunately on apology today, but he and our Executive Officer have continued to work on producing a viable business case to satisfy Defence such that the larger MATS 30 machine will be brought to Tasmania within the next two years. Our Board have been sustained advocates in this opportunity to value add our world class commodities here in Tasmania.
- Finally at a project level, TAPG have led an ambitious project currently under consideration for federal funding to establish **catchment level water metrics** for real time management of all catchment users. Our guest today, Professor Ted Lefroy, will detail the rationale and key aspects of the project in his presentation. Clearly, I do not want to steal his thunder, but I will acknowledge the leadership presented from Ted in presenting and exploring this project with TAPG. And further to this, I should also acknowledge the enthusiasm and commitment shared between our Executive Officer Terry, and Ted, for delivering a compelling project amongst the complexity of multiple project partners from the public and private sector.

Of course the key to all of this achievement is the voluntary service of quality people and that is where we have continued to be very fortunate. Alongside

continuing Directors on our Board we are delighted today to welcome three new Directors. At the same time we offer our thanks to retiring Directors:

- We welcome **Lucy Gregg** as incoming director for Agri-Business Marketing – from her background with Fruit Growers Tasmania and more recently with Reid Fruits, Lucy brings a wealth of experience to the position. Her strong commitment and experience in the bio-security area will also be of immense benefit to the Board. **Anthony Houston** is the retiring director from this role. Anthony joined the Board early in 2014. He very quickly took a lead role in our discussions with UTAS about the suitability of Ag Science courses as they were then presented to students. Working closely with past Directors Allan Barr and Greg Bott it is fair to say that this team had a profound role in ensuring that an industry perspective was acknowledged by those responsible for implementing the curriculum changes our students now enjoy. Anthony's determination to pursue priorities such as these will be missed in the future.
- We also welcome **Doris Blaesing** as incoming director for Regulatory Affairs – I doubt that there is anyone in the room who has not worked with Doris in some form or another. Doris has vast experience in the Tasmanian Research and Development area and leads member company RMCG's Tasmanian business. Our Regulatory Affairs role on the board has been vacant for the majority of the year as Allan Barr's promotion to a new role within Ruralco was announced following last year's AGM. Allan joined the Board early in 2014 and his vision for agriculture and planning capacity were quickly apparent. It came as little surprise to his fellow directors that his company also recognised these qualities and moved him into a national development position. This overdue public recognition of Allan's service by the Board today is accompanied by our warmest wishes and sincere thanks.
- Simplot are one of TAPG's founding companies and have provided continuous service to the Board through provision of a Director since the group's inception. **Phil O'Keefe** is the General Manager of the

company's Agriculture Services and will take up his representation of the Vegetable Services sector on our Board following today's meeting. Phil is well known and respected across the vegetable industry both in Tasmania and nationally and the Board looks forward to his contribution. **Jo Tubb** has stepped down from this representative role to concentrate on her role as Agricultural Manager at Devonport. Jo has made a terrific contribution to the Board and she will be missed from our meetings.

- In addition, we were to have welcomed Ian Scutt from Serve-Ag today. Unfortunately for us Ian has received a promotion that takes him to the mainland and he has withdrawn his nomination. Alongside Allan Barr's promotion last year it speaks to the quality of the people we have on our Board and, more generally, the esteem with which our Tasmanian Industry Leaders are held nationally.
- Finally, Director Graeme Palmer has stepped down from his role on the Board. He has represented the Agri-Business sector on the Board since November 2003! This length of service is exemplary, and his advice and depth of knowledge have been greatly appreciated by all who have worked with him. At a personal level I have relied on counsel from Graeme on matters of precedent, and just plain old fashioned advice. Graeme's support and industry insight will be greatly missed from the Board and we wish him well in the next stage of his life as he transitions towards retirement.

In a few minutes time this annual meeting will have the opportunity to ratify the membership of the incoming Board for the next twelve months.

To look forward beyond 2017 and conclude, I'd like to provide three points that TAPG remain focused on;

- The first of these is "advocacy". The policy formation process I mentioned at the beginning of my report will always be required for as long as we are governed through democratic processes. I've highlighted TAPG's intent and progress on collaborative models for industry advocacy and engagement. TAPG will continue to progress this agenda

with leadership, and your board are continually looking for opportunities to collaborate, as I know our Government is asking for too.

- The second of these is TAPG's ongoing involvement in project work. I am often asked why an industry processing group is involving itself in extension type activities. Our unique cross sectoral resources provide the perfect platform for efficient and effective leadership with projects aimed to improve productivity. In many respects, these projects are far more rewarding for our board and executive than putting out fires.
- The final point rests with ongoing recruitment of our youth through recognition of our industry and the array of rewarding careers it offers. From TAPG's shoulder at this wheel, and the unique support the industry is offered from our Minister for Primary Industries and Minister for Education, we have made enormous progress. I'm delighted that our guests today include Ms Jenny Gale as Secretary to the Department of Education, and her colleagues Andrew Harris, Mick Davey, and Michael Leaman.

This said, none of these future targets have end points. TAPG doesn't draw lines around initiatives. We continually challenge the status quo in search of areas for improvement. Terry and I often discuss our education agenda and draw on his career long experience in education with the expression 'it takes a village to raise a child'. I'd like to borrow the spirit of this expression, and put it to you all today as a take home thought, if it takes a village to raise a child, it should also take a cohesive industry to support growth and fulfilment of our future people. As part of TAPG, you are all making a contribution to this. Well done.

Thank you for your attention.

Jim Wilson

Chairperson

Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity group

Friday 3 November, 2017