

Chairperson's Report to AGM 2019

Distinguished Guests, Members and Associates

It is a privilege to present my first Annual Report since being elected to the Chairperson's role twelve months ago. It is especially pleasing to be able to remind everyone present that 2019 marks the thirtieth year of TAPG's existence. A proud milestone!

Although I have been a Director of TAPG since 2009 the Chairperson's role has required me to sharpen my focus on the broader landscape of Tasmanian Agriculture rather than the narrow fresh vegetable perspective that was my original core business. The variety of our companies, their world market penetration and their interdependence locally has always impressed me, and I am intensely proud to be part of an organization that represents the interests of such a diverse and productive group.

Our Board meets on average every two months and we try to have a Guest at each meeting who can both inform and challenge our thinking so that we don't spend too much of our valuable meeting time on operational matters. We leave the organizational and representational tasks largely to our Executive Officer who does report these to the Board at each meeting. This approach ensures that the industry expertise that is contained within our Board of Directors is focused on the emerging and likely future issues that will affect productivity and how we can best represent the interest of our members should these various scenarios emerge. I would like to reflect some of this future focus in this Annual Report.

However, I will take the opportunity to comment on three important matters that have been resolved this year because each of them is critical to shaping our preferred future in agriculture.

- **Tranche 3 of Tasmania's Irrigation Scheme has been approved for funding at both Federal and State levels with private**

equity already being pledged for the third required input under the unique funding model that continues to serve us well. This irrigation provision is the envy of farmers across Australia with the funding model that has created it being recommended in other jurisdictions. The bi-partisan political support across many years is to be commended as is the willingness of many private farming enterprises to raise capital in support of their own growth.

- **Brand Tasmania has been reconfigured to become the first statutory place-branding authority to be established in Australia. It is industry & community led and government enabled. It was established by the Brand Tasmania Act 2018 and we will hear today from its first CEO Todd Babiak about the opportunities that will arise through its activity. It is no small irony that the initials of Brand Tasmania (BT) is also regularly used with reference to Biosecurity Tasmania. Over a year of consultation and effort by industry reference groups culminated this year with the passage through parliament and into law of our contemporary Bio-security Legislation. The underpinning connection between our biosecurity status and the quality of our Brand is self-evident.**
- **The Tasmanian Freight Equalization Scheme has been recently upgraded to include both north and south bound freight so that “geography is no longer a barrier” to the state’s prosperity. At the same time both SeaRoad and Toll have introduced new ships on their Bass Strait services which, when combined with the Spirit of Tasmania services provides a level of logistical support never experienced before. Renewed interest by international carriers who previously abandoned the state is also in evidence. Maintaining support for our dedicated Bass Strait companies must remain a priority should price pressure from these outside providers becomes a factor.**

- In simple summary then Tasmania now has the “Holy Trinity of Agriculture” in place: we have irrigation, we have effective logistics and we have a Brand that people want. **Game on!**

Now, in common with all representative bodies that don't have the financial luxury of mandated industry levies to underpin their operation, TAPG needs to stay relevant to its membership base if it is to remain viable. There is nothing like having a contentious policy issue emanating from Government to boost the willingness of companies to pay their membership fees! However, to everyone's credit there are no major policy “triggers” in evidence at the moment. Does this mean we should pack up the tools and go home for a well-earned rest? On the contrary, this is the opportunity to move into a pro-active discussion about future directions and how to get there. The 2050 Vision for Agriculture is a case in point. Everyone agrees that it represents an admirable “stretch” target but detail around “how” its going to be achieved is lacking and needs cross industry discussion and incremental lock step planning resolution.

Current growth trajectories, although encouraging, will not see us achieve the goal through application of status quo practices. As I have already outlined Tasmania has the three legs of the “productivity” stool in place but the seat that sits on top to complete the picture is missing. There is now a compelling case for all representative groups to work together and develop a roadmap for the way forward that includes milestones and related performance indicators for each contributing sector within the industry. A co-design process will enable better understanding between sectors of the attributes and difficulties unique to each contributing element of the overall plan. Importantly, it will also help to identify those roadblocks that are common to all sectors and might best be solved through government policy or resources. More flexible power tariffs across multiple meters within a

business could be an example of regulatory reform that might be identified as a desirable enabler from government. Work of this nature must have its origins in best practice and accordingly it is only Industry players who have the knowledge and experience to develop this plan. TAPG is ready to work with all other representative groups on this island building task.

Please join with us.

In readiness for our full participation in such a collaboration I will be asking my Board to attend our December meeting where we will suspend standing orders around agenda and organizational items and concentrate on how best to work towards the preferred future described in the 2050 Vision for Agriculture. We must clear our own thinking in order to be a contributor to the industry coalition I have described. Our broad-based membership is both our greatest strength and our greatest weakness when we embark on a task such as this. As we again reflect on thirty years of representation it is sobering to recognize that next year will leave us with another thirty years to reach the 2050 target and while many of us will no longer be involved our children certainly will be the recipients of our efforts. Success will become our legacy to them!

Let's get started.

Thank you, I now wish to move my Annual Report for adoption and call for a Seconder.

Mark Kable

Chairperson

Friday 25 October 2019