

Annual Report 2020

Monday 2 November

Precision Agriculture EXPO

Hagley Farm School

Hon. Jeremy Rockliff, Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Disability Services and Community Development, Minister for Trade, Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries.

Hon. Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Minister for Energy, Minister for Resources, Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

Directors of TAPG, Professional Colleagues from our Industry, Other Interested Associates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me begin by saying: "Third time lucky" Thank you all for sticking with us as we have battled both Covid and the weather to bring our annual EXPO to you.

It is my privilege to present the TAPG Annual Report on a year like no other we have ever experienced. As an industry we are accustomed to viewing the weather-based variations of each season along with the vagaries of markets as the basic challenges that needed to be managed. We have faced floods, drought, fires and even pestilence with resolution and creative problem solving. In all these challenges the common enemy brought us together and brought out our best.

The mental adjustment of fighting a frightening enemy by staying apart has required a resolve that has challenged the very core of what it means to be an Australian. To experience your workplace where individuals became fearful of proximity to their colleagues has not been a pleasant experience. To witness graphic images on the news of queues of suddenly unemployed workers was to question

the very fabric of our society. This has been “war-time” devastation beyond anything most Australians have ever had to experience.

From an agricultural perspective the contrast couldn't be stranger as most sectors report potentially “bumper” crops and resultant increased productivity. Machinery sales across the country are at record levels. Our biggest challenge in the fresh sector has been hiring enough workers to get our crops out of the paddocks! The bottom line throughout has been that Agriculture has fed the nation and, indeed, people from many other countries as well. Tasmania has made a massive contribution to this achievement. Critical to this success has been the constant policy dialogue between the government and industry and the willingness to respect each other's suggestions and collaborate for the best outcome. In my earlier welcome to the EXPO I recorded our appreciation of the Tasmanian Government's leadership in this regard and further endorse it here.

You would understand that today's event has been developed as a modified version of the program that we had planned to deliver back in April before we had to postpone because of safety concerns. A feature of that program was a massive four-day residential program for senior high school students enrolled at schools who are members of the Revitalizing School Farms Program and would have culminated in their participation in the EXPO. Each student would have been presented with a Bursary donated by an individual TAPG company to cover the costs of the Residential Camp and provide some assistance with material costs for their major project. We look forward to the opportunity to deliver this experience at next year's EXPO.

However, closer inspection of the various Ag training initiatives operating in Tasmania still shows a “scattergun” approach. A quick scan would include the recent AgCard initiative and Clare Peltzer is available today to explain how it works. The TasTAFE training initiative developed in conjunction with FGT, Arbre, the Freer Farm

Centre of Excellence redevelopment at Burnie and the more traditional curriculum delivery provided by the University College, UTAS and TIA.

The TAPG Board have been engaged for several years now in developing an understanding of the training agenda in Tasmania right the way from school-based initiatives through to mid-career re-training. A lot of people have put a lot of effort into this space but our view is that bringing it all together into a coherent structure would greatly facilitate both industry needs and present a much more appealing pathway for young Tasmanians looking for a great career.

To this end I am announcing today that I have asked Andrew Harris with the support of our Executive Officer and other interested Directors to develop a scoping paper that explores this question and develops a viable model to help us move the discussion forward. Wide consultation with other representative bodies will be required throughout the work. Clearly the two most critical ministerial portfolios to engage with in this work are the Department of Education and Department of Primary Industries and Water. The commitment to young people and their training are well known personal traits of the two Ministers here today and we look forward to further engagement around this Policy theme.

I will end this year's Report with a personal thankyou to my Directors on the Board of TAPG along with the continuing support of our Member Companies.

I now move that my Annual Report be accepted.