

Fruit Growers Tasmania Inc

2021-22

Year in review



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About Fruit Growers Tasmania

Fruit Growers Tasmania Inc is the peak body representing apple, pear, cherry, berry and stone fruit growers in Tasmania. It is a not-for-profit industry association run by Tasmania's fruit growers, for Tasmania's fruit growers.

Fruit Growers Tasmania engages with growers, industry partners and government to grow the viability, resilience and confidence of Tasmania's fruit sectors. Our aim is to create a business environment that will build a sustainably profitable fruit industry in Tasmania.

Our association provides Tasmanian fruit growers with services and information to grow their business and adapt to the changing business environment.

FGT Board:

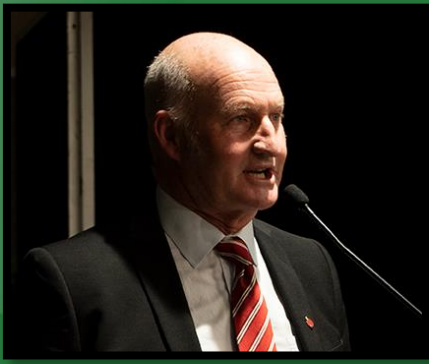
President: Scott Price
Vice President: Howard Hansen
Treasurer: Brent McClintock
Cameron Folder

Dr Dean Metcalf
Ian Newnham
Sam Riggall
Andrew Scott
Andrew Terry

FGT Staff:

Peter Cornish
Michael Tarbath
Kate Dickinson
Doris Elliston

Mark Salter
Lawrence Cowley
Katrina Green



Scott Price
PRESIDENT

Peter Cornish
Chief Executive
Officer



2021-22 saw COVID-19 becoming a way of life rather than a new disruption.

The opening of Tasmania's borders in December 2021 saw perhaps the biggest impacts of the pandemic so far with the significant spread of the virus throughout the workforce and the further interruption of operations through close contact isolations. We fought hard to ensure the rules and regulations were workable and practicable.

The Tasmanian Government again stepped up, in particular through their continued funding of the hotel quarantine for arriving Pacific workers. While costing many millions of dollars, this sensible and supportive decision was an important counter-balance to the substantial additional costs faced by growers.

Again Tasmania's fruit industry was resilient. While undoubtedly there was lost production through worker shortages, the dedication of workers and growers alike made this manageable.

The industry continues to see further investment in berries and cherries. This means more investment, more employment and more production.

While cherry exports were again strong, export market development for berries becomes a more pressing issue with each year of increased production. Tasmania's pest free area status for fruit fly sees it ideally placed to lead the way for increasing berry exports.

Our apple industry unfortunately faces significant challenges. A national supply-demand imbalance will see inevitable restructuring.

The changes to the piece rate provisions within the Horticulture Award also has major implications for our industry. Fruit Growers Tasmania will continue to support growers through these changes.

Our volunteer and committed board members remain a key strength of the association. Our thanks go to our current Board, as well as Simon Dornauf for his contributions through our Board and his continued involvement at a national level.

Our staff work hard to support growers and we want to thank our committed team for their efforts.

To our growers, once again you are what makes our industry and our association, and it is a privilege to support and represent you.

Trade Development

- Presented 30 market analysis reports including analysis on competitors. These reports received:
 - 235 views on the main Fruit Growers Tasmania website.
 - 108 views in the members section of the website.
 - 73 downloads of the reports.
- Worked with branding and marketing experts to build a distinct brand identity for TASMANIAN GROWN horticulture to support national and international marketing activities.
- Delivered the first ever Fruit Growers Tasmania business to consumer, 4 week, digital marketing campaign for Tasmanian cherries in Taiwan.
- This resulted in 3.1 million video views and over 115,000 facebook and web page interactions. It contributed to a 16 percent increase in cherry exports into Taiwan.
- Supported 38 apple and cherry exporters with accreditation for selling into protocol markets.
- Coordinated chemical residue testing across the industry supporting growers to demonstrate compliance with national and international food safety requirements to customers and regulators.
- Coordinated regular updates from IFAM and other industry experts on the availability and cost of air freight services out of Australia during the harvest season.

Trade Development (cont.)

- Liaised with Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) to ensure that exporters are compliant with the changing arrangements in relation to accreditation, crop monitoring and auditing of orchards and facilities
- Responded to trade enquires from buyers in market, as well as supporting growers seeking assistance with developing relationships in export markets.
- Facilitated a series of 8 Unlocking Value and Sales workshops drawing on a range of experts to support growers in building brands and developing markets.
- Continued to be a conduit to state and federal government trade related policy initiatives, events and activities and liaising with various organisations including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrade, DAWE, Department of State Growth, Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania.



Connecting buyers with growers

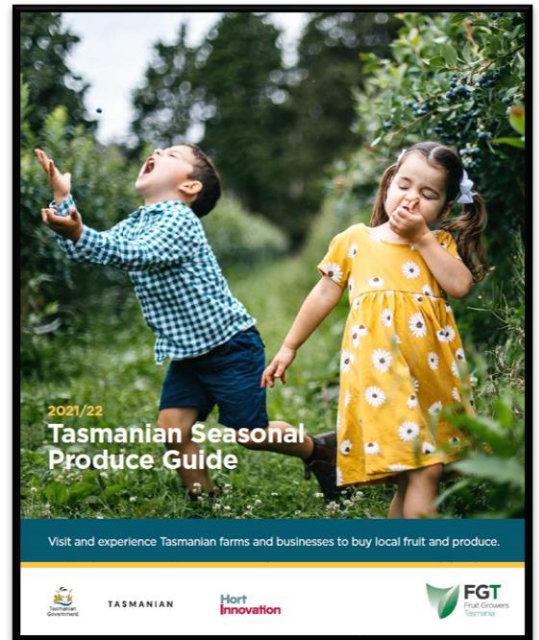
The Seasonal Produce Guide 2021-22 was launched by the Hon Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water on 8 December 2021 at Turners Beach Berry Patch.

The guide has been widely disseminated through social media channels, through the website and in hard copy.

Fruit Growers Tasmania has distributed 7,200 copies of the seasonal produce guide across the state this year, including through:

- 34 participating businesses
- 25 distribution partners.

In addition, the guide has been downloaded from our website 684 times.



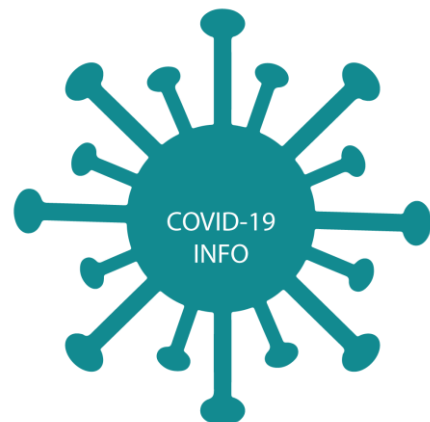
Skills and Training

- We developed safety induction videos to assist businesses in each of the apple, cherry, strawberry, raspberry and blueberry sectors. Available in ten different languages, the videos help employers communicate safety measure to workers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- We continued to work with TasTAFE to develop the Agriskills Entry Program. This provides practical job ready skills for new and existing agricultural workers at a subsidised cost for workers and/or employers.
- Secured the support of Skills Tasmania to fund a program of supervisory training units, delivered across 3 regions of the state, for up to 75 people from the fruit sector. Employers will be required to make a financial co-contribution of only 10% of the cost.



COVID-19

- Working with Safe Farming Tasmania and Worksafe Tasmania to assist growers and packers to meet new compliance requirements associated with COVID-19, especially after borders re-opened.
- Delivered key initiatives to assist growers in accessing sufficient seasonal labour, including coordination of subsidised worker transport options for growers.
- Coordinated workshops for growers to help them understand and connect with international workforce sourcing programs.
- Secured government financial support for the cost of hotel quarantine for seasonal workers from Pacific Island countries.
- Understanding and communicating industry seasonal labour needs to inform government decision making based on a comprehensive survey of growers.



Biosecurity

Fruit Growers Tasmania continues to work closely with Biosecurity Tasmania to ensure the protection of Tasmania's fruit industries from new and exotic pests and diseases.

- Significantly advanced the development of a Biosecurity Incursion Response Manual for Qfly
- Completed an abandoned orchard/wild fruit tree survey
- Assisted growers to understand and prepare their businesses for future biosecurity incursions
- Worked with growers and Biosecurity Tasmania following the identification of new blueberry rust infections
- Worked with Biosecurity Tasmania to support the rollout of new biosecurity initiatives



Berry Development Project

Assist Tasmanian berry growers on major issues, including:

- Plastic and coir waste management
- Chemical registration
- Pest and disease control and berry production techniques.

Conducted workshops, attended by 56 growers, on:

- Covid 19 Business continuity
- Understanding Piece Rates in the Horticultural Award.
- Blueberry Rust Plan update, latest Blueberry Rust R&D projects and pest and disease control.

Held field days, attended by 26 growers, on:

- Queensland Temperate Strawberry Breeding Program.
- Bitwise Agronomy's Artificial Intelligence technology.

Regular communication with berry growers through over 60 grower visits, and 10 Fruit eNews and Berry Burst newsletter articles.

Contributed 12 articles to the Australian Berry Journal. Topics included grower profiles, coir and plastic recycling, protected cropping, and Integrated Pest Management techniques.

Facilitated discussion with growers on Berries Australia's national project to develop export opportunities for berries.



Fruit Industry Development

Grower members increased from 85 to 92.

Over 70 grower visits.

Supported the temporary permit renewal for biological fungicide (Serenade) and the application for the aphicide Diazinon to extend full label approval for use in cherries in Tasmania.

Secured recovery grants of up to \$10,000 to support growers impacted by the hail storm in the Huon Valley.

Secured the extension of the Horticultural Netting trial to Tasmania, resulting in \$1.94 million of funding.



Secured changes to the Fair Work Commission provisional decision on the Horticulture Award.

Conducted workshops attended by over 150 growers including:

- the Horticulture Award changes and guidance to support compliance with the new provisions;
- insights on becoming an approved employer under the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme and the status of the Working Holiday Maker visa and the AgVisa;
- COVID-19 requirements.

88 MRL and 35 water test coordinated for growers

150 participants in the Annual Conference

Thank you to our:
GROWER MEMBERS
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
GOVERNMENT
PARTNERS
SPONSORS AND
SUPPORTERS



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