

Year in Review

2024-25



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.

And we proudly promote the brand *Tasmanian Grown*.

Board

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Michael Tarbath - left August 2024
Grace Lamont - started May 2025



Nic Hansen
President



Peter Cornish
Chief Executive Officer

The aim of Fruit Growers Tasmania is to add value to the state's fruit growers. It's the focus of everything we do! That aim translates to working at an industry level to save costs for the industry, ensure regulation is less disruptive, promote the industry and the fruit we grow, ensure the state's biosecurity credentials are maintained or strengthened and generally work to provide a better environment for our growers to operate in.

Following a Tasmanian election in early 2024 we worked to convert the important election promises of funding for our trade activities and \$600,000 for marketing and promotion support over 3 years to signed grant deeds.

The 2025 Federal election saw Fruit Growers Tasmania work to achieve a commitment of \$150 million to the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme. We then went one better and led a coordinated industry effort to secure a \$95 million increase in funding for the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme. This will see a 25% increase in assistance over the next 2 years prior to a full review – the biggest change in the Scheme for 25 years and significantly improving freight equalisation for our growers.

We have improved our underlying net income position and will achieve a surplus for 2024-25. This is in no small part due to the new voluntary berry grower levy, driven by our berry growing members, and the voluntary carton levies paid by stone and pome fruit growers, supported by Opal and Visy.

Thank you to our Board members and their efforts throughout the year and in particular to Scott Price who completed his term as President. Thank you to our dedicated staff including Michael Tarbath who departed after 7 years.

Priority Agricultural Pests and Disease

A core aspect of our work is to support the management of pests and disease. We have participated in a range of projects including the following.

- The Sterile Insect Technique Project for codling moth in apple orchards was completed in June 2024. It demonstrated proof of concept for the use of sterile insect technique as a tool with reduced fruit damage at two test sites. A report has been published and we are working on next steps.
- The Fruit Fly Biosecurity Incursion Response Manual has been prepared in collaboration with Biosecurity Tasmania and will be published shortly.
- Biosecurity Tasmania developed the Varroa Mite Action Plan 2024-2034 which focuses on prevention, detection and response actions aimed at minimising the impact of varroa mite in Tasmania. Biosecurity Tasmania is working to implement the plan.
- The CSIRO Safe Trade project is working to enhance systems approaches to effectively manage codling moth in apples to support treatment free trade.
- We are developing an Industry Guidance Document for priority pest and disease management and prevention for Tasmanian fruit growers. In part this will support growers to meet their General Biosecurity Duty requirements.
- With a change in the classification of Oriental Fruit Moth as a pest of trade significance for cherries imported to Western Australia, we are working to progress a systems approach that will remove the requirement for treatment prior to entry.



Trade Development

Central to the organisation's work is trade development.

During the year we:

- progressed a range of improvements in the protocol requirements for cherries to Korea and apples to Taiwan with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
- held an export workshop for berry growers focussing on export opportunities and compliance requirements
- held a debrief session for cherry exporters on the outcomes of the 2024-25 season and associated promotional activities



- delivered a briefing for 115 importers and retail buyers across 9 countries about the impending Tasmanian cherry export season
- briefed DAFF's agricultural counsellors posted in 8 countries about Tasmanian fruit exports and the unique requirements of Australia's Pest Free Area. These counsellors are involved in the bilateral negotiations with importing countries focusing on new market access, access improvement and diplomacy issues associated with trade and investment

Trade Development (cont.)

- coordinated 45 applications for accreditation to export apples and cherries to protocol markets, including supporting growers with accessing crop monitor training, compliance with audits and registering packhouses
- coordinated verification visits by quarantine inspectors from Japan and Korea for cherries and Taiwan for apples to verify adherence to the requirements of the export pathways
- provided in season weekly market analysis reports for cherries including competitor country trade, as well as monthly reports on apple exports for the 2024 export season
- responded to grower enquiries about export markets and compliance requirements for exporting
- signed an agreement with the State Government for \$200,000 per year for three years, to promote Tasmanian fruit in the domestic and export markets.

Tasmanian Grown

- We shared with growers more than 50 trade enquiries from interstate and overseas buyers seeking access to Tasmanian fruit.

- developed a new cherry promotional video with translated subtitles.



International promotions

It was a busy year promoting Tasmanian fruit to an international audience.

- In April we participated in Food Hotel Asia in Singapore. We were one of 7 exhibitors as part of a Trade Tasmania stand at this food and beverage international event. We provided samples of fresh Tasmanian apples and berries and received 33 trade enquiries including one which was realised after the event.

More International Promotions

- We supported Hort Innovation's 4 cherry season launch events for importers and retail buyers and led the Taiwan launch event held in January. We arranged a local media interview with an importer and Fruit Growers Tasmania about Tasmanian cherries. The story was picked up by 13 Taiwan news platforms.
- We visited importers and retailers in both Taiwan and Hong Kong during January, including supporting a retailer's Tasmanian cherry promotion. Such in season visits are invaluable, particularly as exporters are unable to do this in season.
- We attended Asia Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong in September receiving 66 business enquiries, with additional enquiries also being received by the 4 businesses who attended with us. At this event we launched our new promotional video for cherries.

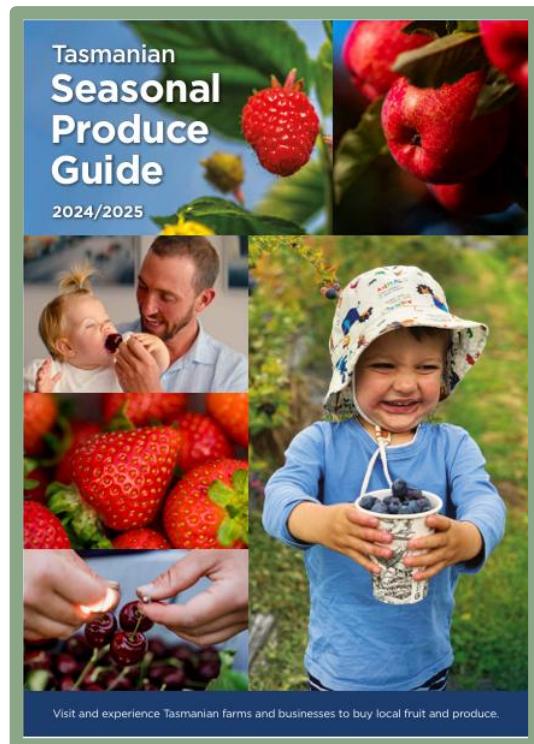


- We supported the Tasmanian Government's inward buyer event Savour Tasmania in July which was attended by 19 importers from Asia and USA. The event included a tour of Hansen Orchard's packhouse facilities and Willie Smith's cidery as part of a weeklong event in Tasmania.
- We coordinated a midautumn festival promotional campaign for TigerFuji apples in Taiwan in July. This was funded in part by International Apple Co-promotion Program through Hort Innovation Australia. This was held in a supermarket chain in Taipei and involved a grower visit, instore tastings and social media advertising.

Local Promotions

Raising awareness and promoting the industry in Tasmania benefits all growers and this year we:

- delivered the Tasmanian Seasonal Produce Guide to connect locals and tourists directly to Tasmanian producers. 12,000 physical copies of the Guide have been distributed across the 27 participating producers, Tasmanian Tourism Brochure Exchange sites, including the Spirit of Tasmania, Hobart Airport, Launceston Airport and Tasmanian Visitor and Information Centres. The Guide was launched by Minister Jane Howlett. The electronic version of Guide on the website has been viewed 2,184 times by 1,668 users and has been downloaded 755 times by 653 users
- issued more than 15 separate media releases including seasonal launches for berries, cherries and apples. These were picked up by local, domestic and international news media platforms
- distributed over 260,000 Tasmanian Grown cherry bags to growers, this year including a barcode to meet the requirements of supermarkets.



Industry Development

Key to the role and activities of the association is supporting and connecting with growers. During 2024-25 we:

- managed the Coir Reuse Project which is investigating opportunities to extend the coir lifespan and find suitable alternative options for strawberry production. Large scale commercial trials have been in progress over the 2024-25 season, investigating substrate type, proportion mixes, substrate age and their impact on plant vigour, yield and overall profitability
- held a berry spray optimisation webinar in February with Scott Mathew from Syngenta. The webinar covered how crop protection products work, factors that affect their performance and how to get the dose right. It was attended by 54 berry growers and industry associates from Tasmania and around Australia, over 80% of whom were growers
- secured a Minor Use Permit for the use of Dormex in cherries. This permit came into effect in December 2024 and is valid to the end of December 2027
- arranged a young grower event in Huonville in October. This was an opportunity for younger growers to chat and meet their peers



Further Industry Development

- supported Berry Quest International 2025 held in Hobart in February. The biennial event involved field tours across the state visiting leading berry and cherry growers. The conference was attended by 540 delegates, with 338 for the farm tours, 65 exhibitors, 53 speakers and 479 guests at the Gala Dinner
- participated in a collaborative webinar in May on the future of digital integration in berries, with Greg Calvert from FreshChain Systems. The webinar focused on how 2D barcodes, digital labels, connected packaging and AI are reshaping the berry supply chain
- supported the Workplace Wellbeing workshops with Safe Farming Tasmania in September and October across the state, addressing emerging concerns around compliance with workplace health and safety legislation
- supported APAL winter and spring Future Orchards Walks, the resilient farming workshop and the PIPS4Profit Research Roadshow in February
- supported a workshop on managing for future climate variability for berry growers in October. The workshop included a walkthrough of weather forecasting, seasonal outlooks and climate projections and an interactive workshop discussing climate resilience strategies
- supported a Cherry Growers Australia cherry vigour management workshop in February, in conjunction with Muir's post harvest field day
- kept growers informed through our Fruit eNews, the Australian Fruit Grower state updates, the Cherry newsletter state updates and APAL's industry juice news updates
- published 12 articles and grower profiles for the Australian Berry Journal on a wide range of topics including key pest spotlights, blueberry pruning, botrytis in rubus, weed management, grower profiles and Nuffield update, the coir reuse project and cucurbit pollinators
- raised awareness about the industry at a range of events and supported the Ag Innovation Expo in April in conjunction with the Tasmanian Agricultural Producers Group.

Industry Development (cont.)

Fruit Growers Tasmania 33rd Industry Conference

- The Fruit Growers Tasmania 33rd Industry Conference was held on 12 and 13 June, at Wrest Point Hotel Casino in Hobart. 139 people attended Day 1 and 159 on Day 2
- With a theme of *Tasmanian Grown Quality* the conference delivered a thought provoking range of speakers and topics and was widely praised by attendees
- A networking event was held at the end of Day 1 followed by the Awards Dinner. A total of 138 people attended the two events
- A dedicated trade display space was again a feature of the conference with a total of 27 exhibitors

- The conference was again well supported by sponsors including major sponsors Nutrien Ag Solutions, Visy, Muirs, Hort Innovation, Hobart Airport and Steritech.

Grower Services

- We conducted 140 grower visits to more than 80 different growers around the state, with the aim to visit each financial member at least once during the year. Visits aim to connect with growers, understand seasonal and ongoing challenges and identify key priorities.
- We facilitated 64 maximum residue limit tests in fruit and 32 water tests.
- We supplied export tape to groups to meet requirements for protocol markets.



Policy and Programs

Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme

Fruit Growers Tasmania participated in the Senate Committee inquiry into the Tas Freight Equalisation Scheme (TFES) preparing a submission and appearing before the hearing in November.

Following the inquiry we then worked closely with Boyer Mill (previously Norske Skog) to develop a 3 point specific plan for immediate action on the Scheme in relation to north bound and export trade. Gathering the wide support of Tasmanian industry this proposal was taken to independents and the major parties in anticipation of the Federal election in April.

We successfully secured a commitment from the Liberal Coalition, Labor, the Greens and independents.

The Federal Labor Government committed to a 25% increase across all aspects of the Scheme with additional funding of \$95 million across 2 years. We will now work to ensure that promise is kept and that our preferred increase in intermodal support is matched.



Biosecurity Protection Levy

After concerted pressure the Federal Government abandoned in February its legislative bill that would have allowed it to raise \$50 million each year for the national biosecurity system by levying the agricultural, fisheries, and forestry producers across Australia.

Fruit Growers Tasmania contributed to industry's response in lobbying both the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Minister on the unfairness and impracticality of the proposed levy.

Policy and Programs (cont.)



ACCC inquiry into supermarket behaviour

Fruit Growers Tasmania actively participated in the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission enquiry into the behaviour of the major supermarkets in Australia in 2024 which included attending several hearings with the Commission.

The focus of our participation was the supply arrangements with growers. The ACCC recommendations are now part of the mandatory Grocery Code of Conduct arrangements, which were enforced in April.

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme (PALM)

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations undertook a review of the PALM Scheme.

Phase one concluded in December and focused on minimum hours. The Government announced in February an extension to the minimum hours' obligation of 120 hours over 4 weeks to 31 March 2026.

Phase 2 is focused on topics including accommodation facilities, pay parity, low hours safety net, welfare and wellbeing support, transparency of deductions and transport standards. This closed in May with outcomes to come.



Policy and Programs (cont.)

The Greater South East Irrigation Scheme

In November Fruit Growers Tasmania along side several fruit growers campaigned for the Federal Government's \$150 million contribution to be committed for the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme.

The Scheme integrates the three existing (stage 1, 2 and 3) schemes in the south east into a new, interconnected single scheme with a new water source to supply the Stages 2 and 3.

It will service existing and additional demand around Gretna, Jordan River Valley, Brighton, Richmond, Dulcote, Cambridge, Colebrook, Campania, Tea Tree, Orielton, Pawleena, Penna, Sorell, Forcett, Elderslie and Broadmarsh.

In May 2024 the federal government's budget revealed that the State had failed to secure the critical funding leaving growers in that region high and dry.

In the following months a concerted effort was made to engage with Ministers at both the state and federal level to put the Scheme back on the agenda.

The funding was subsequently secured and the scheme is expected to be operational by June 2030.



2025 Industry Awards

The 2025 award recipients for the Tasmanian Fruit Industry were announced on 12 June at the Industry Awards Dinner, held as part of the Fruit Growers Tasmania 33rd Industry Conference in Hobart.

Award Winners:

- Lifetime Achievement Award - Carl Hansen of Hansen Orchards.
- Award for Excellence - Andrew Smith of R&R Smith and Willie Smith's Cider
- Young Grower of the Year Award - Uchitha Godahenges of Costa Group



Scholarship Recipient



Rupert Hansen is the 2025 recipient of Fruit Growers Tasmania's scholarship.

He is completing Agricultural Science with Honours at the University of Tasmania.

For his Honours research project, he is collaborating with the PIPS4 research team and focuses on evaluating the benefits of various soil amendments such as compost, mulch and sprays for under-plant management in horticulture.

Although the study will concentrate on apple trees, the findings will offer valuable insights into soil bed management practices applicable across most horticultural systems.



Thank you to our:

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