

Year in Review 2025-26



Fruit Growers
Tasmania

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 governed 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*.

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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 to support the profitability of our growers.

Yet another Tasmanian election in 2025 followed by a tight budget has tested our relationship with the Tasmanian Government but we remain confident they see the wisdom of providing a relatively small but important level of support for an industry that employs over 10,000 people each year, contributes some \$10 million in payroll tax and adds over \$400 million to the Tasmanian economy.

The interim 25 per cent increase in assistance under the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme began this year bringing with it much needed relief in a market with ever increasing costs. The Australian Government's response to the Independent Review of the Scheme is now eagerly awaited and we will continue to work to ensure that this vital sea freight disadvantage is adequately addressed in what will be the biggest reform of the Scheme in over 25 years. This is essential if we are to repeat, or better, the record \$67 million in Tasmanian cherry exports recorded in 2025-26.

As an association Fruit Growers Tasmania remains in a strong financial position recording an underlying surplus of \$61,600.

Thank you to our Board members for their efforts throughout the year and in particular to Scott Price who retired from the Board. Thank you also to our dedicated staff who work hard to support the industry each and every day.

Priority Agricultural Pests and Disease

A core aspect of our work is to support the management of pests and disease.

This involved a range of activities including the following.

- Completed the Fruit Fly Biosecurity Incursion Response Manual in collaboration with Biosecurity Tasmania.
- Participated in and contributed to the Varroa Mite Taskforce.
- Completed a Risk Assessment for Oriental Fruit Moth in cherries as the first step in seeking a treatment free pathway for trade into Western Australia.
- Established a pilot program of trapping for Oriental Fruit Moth across 154 hectares and 77 traps. No Oriental Fruit moths were caught over the duration of the season, providing supporting evidence of Tasmania's case for low pest prevalence.
- Lodged several cases of abandoned orchards with Biosecurity Tasmania who have now implemented an assessment and response process for reported problem sites.
- Prepared a grower biosecurity video appealing to visitors not to bring fresh fruit and vegetables into Tasmania. The grower video has received 12,000 views.
- Expanded work on priority pests and diseases by developing a formal prioritisation framework and consulting with growers to inform trade negotiations, industry resources and future research investment.

A message from our growers

Please help us keep Tasmania free of fruit fly. Don't bring fruit or vegetables into Tasmania.



Trade Development

Central to the organisation's work is trade development.

During the year we progressed the following.

- Facilitated, together with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), a visit by the Indonesia Quarantine Authority to assess the reinstatement of the Fruit Fly Pest Free Area of Tasmania.
- Sought a reduction in the number of verification visits by Japan and Korea for the export of cherries. DAFF has achieved agreement that Japan will now visit one in three years, while Korea has indefinitely suspended its visits to Tasmania. Both reserve the right to reinstate annual visits if deemed necessary.
- Supported Tasmanian growers in exporting a record \$67.3 million worth of cherries for the season, placing Tasmanian cherries as Australia's fifth largest fruit export by value. This was also the second largest volume of cherry exports on record.
- Worked closely with Biosecurity Tasmania to prepare a case for DPIRD in Western Australia to consider a treatment free pathway for Tasmanian cherries. We are awaiting consideration of the proposal.
- Reviewed the protocol changes for apples into China which now includes apples from mainland Australia. In addition, we reviewed workplans for blueberries into Vietnam and an update to the Japan workplan for cherries.
- We managed 39 applications for accreditation from Tasmanian apple and cherry growers for protocol export markets for the upcoming 2026-27 season.



Trade Development (cont.)

- Delivered a briefing for 119 importers and retail buyers across nine countries about the upcoming 2025-26 Tasmanian cherry export season.
- Responded to grower enquiries about export markets and compliance requirements for exporting.
- Provided fortnightly market analysis reports for cherry exports including competitor country trade for the 2025-26 export season.
- Through the Tasmanian Grown website we received 32 trade enquiries over the 12-month period, 75 per cent of which were to supply international markets. We shared these with growers.
- Achieved greater prioritisation of cherries through the DAFF request for export permit clearance process during the peak export season.
- Prepared a brand book for the use of the Tasmanian Grown brand.



Taiwan cherry season launch Jan 2026

Marketing and Promotion

International promotions

A range of events helped to raise international awareness of Tasmanian fruit.

- In September 2025 we participated along with four fruit growers at Asia Fruit Logistica. We received 35 trade enquiries and shared these with Tasmanian exporters.
- In September 2025 we participated in Fine Foods Australia in Sydney. This resulted in national and international exposure and 42 trade enquires which we shared with growers.
- In January 2026 we participated in and supported a group of 20 international buyers into Tasmania hosted by Trade Tasmania. We arranged grower visits, and a networking opportunity, resulting in exposure for 10 growers.
- In January 2026 we held our first Tasmanian cherry season launch in Hong Kong for importers and retailers. This was followed by participation in the national Taiwan cherry launch event arranged by Hort Innovation.
- In January 2026 we participated in an instore launch event at APITA stores in Hong Kong. This was supported by Trade Tasmania and focused on the launch of the Tasmanian cherry season.
- In April 2026 we participated in Food Hospitality Asia - Singapore. We provided samples of fresh Tasmanian apples and berries and received 37 trade enquiries and shared these with exporters. One enquiry resulted a new and ongoing trade relationship.
- Worked with Hort Innovation and Cherry Growers Australia on the launch events for Australian export cherries in four key markets.



Marketing and Promotion (cont.)

National promotions

We also raised the profile of Tasmanian fruit in the domestic market.

- We launched a Tasmanian Grown Instagram page.
- We ran a social media cherry campaign in Melbourne and Sydney during January and February via Tasmanian Grown, including three social media influencers. It received **1.49 million views** of the posts and reels, 15,654 interactions with the content, and 2,000 new followers.
- Our attendance at Fine Foods Australia 2025 also provided wider exposure to a national audience.
- We posted weekly about Tasmanian fresh berries at the beginning of summer on the Tasmanian Grown Facebook and Instagram profiles.

Local promotions

We raised awareness and promoted the industry in Tasmania benefiting all growers.

- We launched the 18th annual Tasmanian Seasonal Produce Guide at Spreyton with Minister Gavin Pearce and local growers. The guide connects locals and tourists directly to Tasmanian producers and fresh produce.



- 12,000 physical copies of the Guide were distributed across the state via growers, tourism businesses, airports, the Spirits of Tasmania and Visitor Information Centres.
- We developed and launched the new interactive digital seasonal produce guide which has received strong engagement.
- We distributed over 235,000 Tasmanian Grown branded cherry bags to growers across the state.

Industry Development

Key to the role and activities of the association is supporting and connecting with growers around the state.

- We completed the Coir Reuse Project which investigated opportunities to extend the lifespan of coir and to find suitable alternative options for strawberry production. The final report is available on our website including a coir reuse assessment tool.
- In April 2026 we delivered two blueberry rust management workshops, reaching 19 growers across the state. The webinar covered crop protection products, factors that affect their performance, and how to get the dose right.
- We continued work on the Industry Census with the aim of collecting reliable information on the size, value and future growth of Tasmania's fruit industry. This work is ongoing.
- We strengthened the relationship with the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) with regular meetings and improved communication around biosecurity strategy, project coordination, and grower engagement.
- We secured representation on all TIA-led project reference groups and worked with researchers on topics including protected cropping systems, biological control releases, bumblebee pollination, integrated pest management, and sustainable agriculture practices.



Industry Development (cont.)

- We supported APAL winter and spring Future Orchards Walks, a resilient farming workshop and the PIPS4Profit Research Roadshow.
- We provided nominations for the APAL industry awards. Two nominees went on to be finalists in the Hort Innovation Awards for Excellence.
- We supported a workshop on managing for future climate variability for berry growers in October.
- We supported a national cherry vigour management workshop in February 2026, in conjunction with Muir's post harvest field day.
- We 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.
- We supported the cherry communication and extension project with NSW Department of Primary Industries. This included delivery of a cherry workshop in Jericho with presentations from Marek Matuszek (AgLogic) and Leticia Rees (TIA).



Industry Development (cont.)

- We joined with other Tasmanian farming groups to establish an agricultural plastics project with Pinion scoping out recovery and recycling opportunities for on farm plastic material.
- We raised awareness about the industry at a range of events and supported the Ag Innovation Expo in April in conjunction with the Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group.

Grower Services

- We conducted 118 grower visits to more than 78 different growers around the state. Visits aim to connect with growers, understand seasonal and ongoing challenges and identify key priorities.
- We facilitated 81 maximum residue limit tests in fruit and more than 30 water tests.
- We supplied export tape to growers to meet requirements for protocol markets.

Communications

- We kept growers informed through our Fruit eNews and state updates for The Australian Berry Journal, Cherry newsletter and APAL's industry juice.
- We issued more than 10 media releases including seasonal launches for berries, cherries and apples. These were picked up by local, domestic and international news media platforms.
- We published our 300th edition of our industry newsletter, the Fruit eNews in May 2026.

Fruit eNews edition 300

Fruit Growers Tasmania | Thursday, 28 May 2026, 6:00pm

In this edition

- Accreditation workshop for apples and cherries
- Costa career leads Henry to China
- Fuel Supply Update
- Fruit Growers Tasmania Cherry Workshop
- New report highlights research driving Tasmania's agriculture and food sectors
- Online Seasonal Update Webinar with Ag Logic
- Upcoming Orchard Convos webinar series
- Data Insights Shaping the Freshcare Standards
- Payday Super - change coming soon
- Nominations for the 2026 Tasmanian Biosecurity Awards are now open
- Applications are now open for the 2026 Tasmanian Export Awards!
- Fruit Growers Tasmania Fruit Industry Census
- Fruit and water testing services
- Summerfruit Australia Conference 2026
- WorkSafe Tasmania Conference 2026
- Safe farming - farm machinery retrieval awareness sessions
- Save the date for the 34th Fruit Growers Tasmania Conference

[Read more...](#)



Industry Development (cont.)

- We continued our work as partners in the national projects '*Facilitating the Development of the Australian Berry Industries*' and '*Cherry Extension and Communication*' throughout 2025-26.

Fruit Profitability Project

- Working with consultants AgFirst, the Fruit Profitability Program aims to support growers to make better informed decisions regarding their businesses. Its inception was driven by the profitability challenges within the apple industry.
- The Pilot has focussed on data collection by block and/or variety and benchmarking these with fellow growers.
- With an initial focus on apple growers, year two will expand to included cherry growers.



Fruit Growers Tasmania Honours Scholarship

Lilli Steel is the 2026 recipient of the Fruit Growers Tasmania Honours Scholarship.

- Her Honours project focuses on the physicochemical, biochemical and sensory profiling of 13 Tasmanian sweet cherry cultivars grown under the same orchard conditions.
- This research aims to build detailed quality profiles for each cultivar, improving understanding of how physicochemical traits relate to overall sensory quality using electronic tongue analysis.



Policy and Advocacy

Fruit Growers Tasmania makes the most of opportunities to shape government policies and programs. In 2025-26 we submitted to no less than 10 state and federal government strategies and reviews.

Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme

Following the lead role played by Fruit Growers Tasmania in achieving a Federal Government commitment to an interim 25 per cent increase in assistance under the Scheme, 2025-26 was the first of two years this increase will apply.

Worth some \$45 million a year, this increase aims to address the significant sea freight cost disadvantage faced by Tasmanian companies shipping across Bass Strait.

The 30 plus year old scheme was grossly inadequate and had not been updated or indexed since its inception in the late 1990s.

This interim increase in assistance will apply while the Independent Review is undertaken and long-term changes agreed.

We have been active throughout the Independent Review period, attending consultations, providing submissions and comments on the Reviewer's draft recommendations.



We are awaiting the release of the final Independent Review recommendations and the Federal Government's response.

Horticultural Code of Conduct Review

Fruit Growers Tasmania provided a submission to the independent review of the Horticulture Code of Conduct, launched by the Australian Government in January 2026.

The submission highlighted the importance of improved market transparency, access to reliable market intelligence and ensuring growers receive fair value within horticulture supply chains. It was based on consultation with growers capturing feedback on price transparency, market signals and supply chain returns.

Policy and Advocacy (cont.)

Tasmanian Government Agricultural Strategy

In November 2025, Fruit Growers Tasmania responded to the Tasmanian Government's Agricultural Strategy discussion paper.

We focussed on the important role government plays in creating a competitive business environment and its impact on business profitability.

We reiterated the importance of robust biosecurity system.

We highlighted the significant regulation overreach growers are experiencing for their on-farm activities and the need for smarter, streamlined regulation.

We recommended key areas for improvement including:

- **reduced levels of payroll tax**
- greater advocacy and support by the government on the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme
- a freeze on charging by government owned entities such as TT Line
- continued support for irrigation infrastructure in Tasmania.

We continue to be closely involved in the Government's strategy development.



Workforce and migration

We engaged with governments and industry stakeholders on the migration pathways, visa requirements and workforce options under the Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) to provide growers with seasonal planning information and details of compliance requirements.

The Tasmanian Government is exploring a DAMA with the Federal Government to enable access to a broader range of overseas workers by allowing variation to standard occupations and skills lists and/or negotiable concessions to visa requirements.

There are currently 13 DAMA agreements in place across Australia.

Policy and Advocacy (cont.)

Australian Government's Export Cost Recovery Program

In February 2026 the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) commenced a disappointingly short consultation process on its proposed move to 100 per cent cost recovery of export regulatory charges.

After more than doubling the revenue it extracted from horticulture exporters from 2020-21 to 2024-25, the Australian Government decided to increase its revenue in each of the next three years so that by 2029-30 revenue will almost triple the amount raised in 2020-21.

Despite our extensive feedback, DAFF would not consider reviewing its operational areas to identify any efficiency gains that would reduce its expenditure, leaving Australian agricultural exporters to fund their ongoing unchecked spending.

Fruit Growers Tasmania believes the impact will be significant on our exporters with some charging points increasing by more than 300 per cent.

The new cost recovery implementation schedule for exporters was due to be released 1 July 2026 but due to the current fuel cost crisis, has postponed until July 2027.



Tasmanian Payroll Tax

We lifted the profile of Tasmanian payroll tax in 2025-26. With Tasmania placed poorly at 5th amongst all states and territories, payroll tax will remain a focus for the fruit industry in the year ahead.

Tasmanian Government Support

As an industry with specific Tasmanian challenges, in a complex and often competing national environment, support from the Tasmanian Government remains essential for our fruit industry.

We recognise and appreciate the support we received in 2025-26, in particular for:

- Priority Pest & Disease (ongoing)
- Marketing & Promotion (ongoing)
- Fruit Profitability Pilot (ongoing)
- Future Fruit (concluded)
- Coir Reuse (concluded)
- Online Seasonal Produce Guide (concluded)
- Trade Development Activity (concluded).



Thank you to our:

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