

Strive

For Excellence in Agricultural Workplaces



March 2024



Sun Sense

How regular skin checks can save lives

Domestic Violence Leave

Do you comply with the new legislation?

Workplace Culture

Becoming an employer of choice



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Primary Employers Tasmania's Strive newsletter is published three times a year to inform, inspire and encourage innovation and best practice in Tasmania's agricultural workplaces.

If you have family members or employees who would like to receive an electronic copy of Strive or other Primary Employers Tasmania communications, please email their details to pet@primaryemployers.com.au

Front cover: Frost Batten Director Michael Batten with Bracknell dairy farmer Grant Archer

Partners

 **SAFE FARMING** Safe Farming Tasmania is a Tasmanian Government initiative providing free health and safety advice regarding how we talk, think and act about safety on farms. www.nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/safe-farming-tasmania

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Jo Palmer
Minister for Primary Industries
and Water

Ministerial Matters...

It's often easy to talk about the things we are doing well in primary industries in Tasmania.

But it's equally, if not more important, to acknowledge where there are shortcomings and how we are working to address them.

Late last year some deeply distressing footage obtained from five livestock processing facilities in Tasmania was released.

The Tasmanian Government demands the highest standards of animal welfare in all our livestock processing operations.

There is no place for anything less and significant work is underway to improve animal welfare outcomes in livestock processing in Tasmania, particularly in our abattoirs.

Biosecurity Tasmania immediately commenced an investigation when the footage was first provided in November last year.

The footage has since been reviewed frame by frame by qualified animal welfare experts, including the Government's veterinarians. The footage has also been discussed with operators, employees and owners to inform further lines of inquiry.

While a detailed investigation is ongoing into the five premises, it's important to acknowledge that inspections and unannounced visits into other processing facilities continue to be undertaken by Biosecurity Tasmania.

The Liberal Government has committed to make video surveillance mandatory in every Tasmanian processing facility. The Taskforce I established in late 2023 and includes representation from the RSPCA, TasFarmers, Sprout, Dairy Tas and the Australian Meat Industry Council, is looking into the mechanisms to mandate video surveillance as a priority.

To support this work Biosecurity Tasmania is looking at what legislative changes may be required. This work will also consider the conditions of video surveillance, including viewing and quality requirements.

I have also asked the Taskforce to look at workplace culture in our livestock processing facilities. This includes how we can better train and support those working in the sector, what strategies are needed to ensure that the highest standards are upheld by every employee and what has worked in other jurisdictions.

The Taskforce is developing a new Tasmanian standard, guidelines and a strategy to achieve strong animal welfare practices and meet the expectations of both the Tasmanian livestock processing industry and the community. A Reference Group has been established with industry to support the introduction of the changes.

“We know that farmers support this work, we know that industry wants to see change and it is absolutely critical that we get this right.”



President's Perspective...

Stephanie Terry

Primary Employers Tasmania

President

Stephanie Terry was appointed President of Primary Employers Tasmania in August 2023 and brings extensive experience across the areas of law, agriculture, business management, employment and industrial relations. Stephanie and her husband Andrew own and manage Tasmanian Berries, which employs more than 450 PALM workers in Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia.

As an employee, I often wondered if my employer knew what I was doing day to day and whether they valued my contribution to their business.

Having worked in an industry (law) where time was measured closely, I assumed my employer could easily 'track' my performance, both financially and through use of time, as I was recording my time which then translated into billing.

However, without communication through mentoring, team meetings or performance reviews, it was often hard to gauge if I was valued as an employee, particularly when I was first starting out as a young lawyer.

Fast forward to 2024 and being a large business owner, employee satisfaction and retention are key pillars of how we measure whether our business is performing well.

As a business, we strive to be an employer of choice by providing a fair and respectful workplace that engages and excites employees. We want to be a workplace where everyone enjoys coming to work and has the ability and support to grow in their chosen career, or equally, to stay put if they are content in a role.

Some ways we have chosen to engage with our team is through sharing key business performance metrics. For example —

Irrigation and horticulture teams benefit from knowing yield metrics based on harvest data. At the end of each growing season, each department collates key performance data and presents it, including harvest yields, plant health and crop production figures (including crop yields and waste percentages), along with learnings and recommendations to the whole business for future production.

In 2023, we opened our books to our management team to share financial metrics after a particularly difficult season in 2022 / 23. It was our view that sharing this information would better inform our managers as to why certain decisions had been made, and why it appeared capital investment was continuing and how it had been done with careful consideration for specific reasons and that other investment may need to be budgeted into the future.

It also helped our team to be more operationally efficient to save money on task-based jobs by prioritising what is necessary to ensure plant health and good yields, rather than tasks that don't necessarily increase production.

Disclosing more traditionally confidential data to employees showed those employees that we trust and respect them and in turn they felt empowered that they are valued and trusted employees.

Afterwards, many of them individually contacted us to thank us for sharing the information.

President's Perspective Continued...

Socialising has always been an easy way to allow a workplace to better understand one another and consequently, work together better. During my university days, I worked in hospitality and it was custom to have a 'knock off drink' with those you had worked with, particularly after a long shift on a weekend. However, the morale of the team was always lifted following a social function outside of the workplace.

It seemed to reset everyone's mood, by allowing everyone to interact on a personal level, without barriers or hierarchies. Upon returning to work, everyone always seemed more relaxed and comfortable around one another.

This approach has stayed with me and it is important in our workplace to create social opportunities for employees to have a non-work related conversation and to learn about one another on a personal level, rather than only in a work setting.

Being able to ask an employee how a significant event in their life went or understanding that they have a commitment that may occupy their time outside of work, goes a long way to creating a good rapport and a good working relationship with that person.

In our business, we have employees from in excess of 15 different nationalities, working together. We often arrange for social outings to show employees around Tasmania or host cultural nights where groups perform cultural dances, ceremonies or share traditional cuisines. It helps bring everyone together to enjoy each other's company and cultures.

We aim to provide opportunities to employees who want to develop personally and create a career path within our business. We encourage employees to seek out continuing professional development opportunities and attend on behalf of our business; or to travel interstate or overseas to visit other similar operations and to bring the learnings from those opportunities

back to our business and apply those learnings in their day-to-day work.

We invest in new technology and infrastructure to provide an innovative and current workplace, in order to attract both the younger generation and experienced workers who want to work in a business where they are happy to work and grow.

Always being respectful of people and their circumstances is also important. We have had employees leave for various reasons over our time as business owners. It is very rewarding when an employee leaves and then seeks to return because they missed our workplace and their job.

The key to the matters set out above is good communication. Being able to say hello to employees, knowing what their role is and a little bit about their personal life makes it easier to be able to have hard conversations and work out a way to resolve that problem. It will always go a long way to having a good workplace culture.

From an operational perspective, we operate with eight departments. The department heads meet once a week and it allows each department to understand the workings of the business, including future planning, celebrations and problems that arise. It allows communication from the ground to come up to a high level when required. We all work together to problem solve when needed.

Toolbox meetings and 'line app' messaging helps managers communicate with their teams to implement strategies from management, including on farm safety, policies and procedures.

Nothing is ever perfect so we are always striving to communicate better and more efficiently – and the right information. But getting around people and having a physical presence is always the best way to encourage a collaborative workplace and showing that you value your team.



Workplace Relations...

Andrew Cameron

Primary Employers Tasmania
Workplace Relations Director

Andrew has more than 38 years' experience advising people and business in law, industrial relations and human resource management. He has a Bachelor of Commerce (Industrial Relations), Bachelor of Laws, Graduate Diploma in Business Administration, Certificate IV Assessment and Workplace Training, Diploma in Human Resource Management and is a Qualified Small Groups Trainer.

For several years now, Australia has provided for a form of leave known as "domestic and family violence leave".

This leave allows employees to take time off work to deal with the impact of domestic violence. The specific provisions may vary depending on the applicable industrial instrument (such as an award or enterprise agreement) or company policy.

Domestic violence can take many forms and includes such things as:

- Physical violence;
- Sexually abusive behaviour;
- Financial abuse;
- Damaging property,
- Emotional abuse;
- Stalking;
- Deprivation of liberty;
- Causing injury or death to an animal; and
- Causing a child to be exposed to the effects of any of the above behaviour.

Under the *Fair Work Act*, employees who are experiencing domestic or family violence, or who need to support a family or household member who is experiencing domestic or family violence, are entitled to paid leave.

The leave can be taken for reasons such as doctor's appointments, arranging for their own safety or that of a family member, or attend relevant court proceedings.

For an employee to access paid family or domestic violence leave, you can ask the employee to provide suitable evidence of the need to actually take the leave. This may include information from the police, a court, a support service, a lawyer, or even a statutory declaration.

Some modern awards and enterprise agreements may also include provisions for paid domestic and family violence leave.

Additionally, some employers may have their own policies in place to support employees experiencing domestic violence, which may include provisions for paid leave or additional support services.

It's important to check the specific provisions in relevant industrial instruments or company policies to understand the entitlements and rights regarding domestic and family violence leave.

Under the National Employment Standards (NES) an employee is entitled to up to 10 days per year of paid domestic or family violence leave,.

Workplace Relations Continued...

This entitlement extends to all employees, be they full-time, part-time or casual. The 10 days do not accrue from year to year, and can be taken as single day absence or a number of days at a time. However, it is limited to 10 days. After that, the employer has a discretion to let the employee take another form of leave or unpaid leave.

The leave is to be paid at the employee's full rate of pay for the hours they would have worked had they not taken the leave.

As indicated this applies to casuals and the hours that they would have worked had they been in the workplace.

As set out in our recent newsletter about pay slips, there are requirements concerning how to reference the leave on pay slips.

Wages that you pay for a period of paid family and domestic violence leave must not be reported on a pay slip as an amount paid to the employee for taking a period of such leave.

Instead, the paid family and domestic violence leave must be reported on the pay slip as wages for ordinary hours, an allowance, a bonus, or a payment for overtime.

However, the employee can ask you to set it out as taking a period of leave, e.g. annual

leave, personal leave or even long service leave, but it cannot state that it was for family and domestic violence leave.

Further, an employee can ask for flexible working arrangements if they are experiencing family and domestic violence or providing care or support to a member of their immediate family or household who is experiencing family and domestic violence.

This can include changes to their hours of work or start or finish times. In certain circumstances, and where available, they can even ask to change the location of their work.

Before you make any decision as to providing flexibility you must discuss the situation with the employee, and genuinely try to reach agreement about making the requested changes. It is unlawful to discriminate against an employee who is experiencing family and domestic violence, and also unlawful to terminate their employment because of the family and domestic violence and a request to take leave or arrange flexible working conditions.

If anyone has any questions about the family and domestic violence leave requirements, please contact Andrew Cameron on 0407 200909 or andrew@primaryemployers.com.au.

Do you manage a large property in Tasmania? Do you want to reduce your bushfire risk?

Red Hot Tips offers **FREE** practical advice and support:

- Farm visits to discuss your fuel reduction options.
- Developing burn plans.
- Identifying equipment needs.
- Planned burn training and on-ground mentoring.
- Advice on alternative fuel reduction treatments.
- Practical materials and resources.



RED HOT TIPS
Practical bushfire management

CONTACT US:

South 0459 908 539
North 0417 153 620
NW 0417 635 164
redhottips@fire.tas.gov.au
www.sfm.tas.gov.au/redhottips



Tasmanian
Government

Meet the Member

Mark Wadley

Deloraine farmer

Deloraine dairy farmer Mark Wadley always thought skin cancer resulted from too much time in the sun.

But in July 2022 when he was diagnosed with a basal cell carcinoma on his head, Mark quickly changed his mind.

“I had always worn a hat as I didn’t have much hair, so the top of my head had hardly ever seen the sun,” he shared.

“But the doctor told me you only have to get sunburnt once for a cell to metastasize.

“He said you can even get a melanoma on the soles of your feet or in your mouth. It’s amazing where they can appear.”

The death of a 50-year-old nearby farmer from skin cancer was the prompt for Mark and his wife Jo to visit a doctor for a skin test.

With no family history of skin cancer, Mark was expecting a quick check and the all clear.

However, he was both surprised and alarmed to learn that he needed a biopsy for a 5mm oblong-shaped purple discoloration that he wasn’t aware existed.

“I felt fine and had no idea this was on top of my head.

“I had the biopsy to confirm whether it was cancerous or not.

“Once it was confirmed that it was a basal cell carcinoma, I

went in to have it removed under local anaesthetic.

“They used about 15 or 16 staples to close my scalp as there’s not as much skin on your head to shut the wound.

“There is a risk that it could spread, but not a massive one, so it was important to get enough margins around the site.

“As the doctor said, if I was going to have a skin cancer, then this was a good one to have.





Meet the Member Continued...

What is skin cancer?

Skin cancer occurs when skin cells are damaged, for example, by overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

There are three main types of skin cancer:

- Basal cell carcinoma (BCC);
- Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC); and
- Melanoma - the most dangerous form of skin cancer.

Both basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma are known as non-melanoma skin cancer or keratinocyte cancers.

Keratinocyte cancer is more common in men, with almost double the incidence compared to women.

Melanoma is the third most common cancer in Australians, excluding keratinocyte cancers, as data on incidence is not routinely collected.

There are also rare types of skin cancer including Merkel cell carcinoma and angiosarcoma. These are treated differently from BCC and SCC.

Every year, in Australia:

- Skin cancers account for about 80 per cent of all newly-diagnosed cancers
- The majority of skin cancers are caused by exposure to the sun
- The incidence of skin cancer is one of the highest in the world, two to three times the rates in Canada, the US and the UK.

Source: www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/types-of-cancer/skin-cancer

"I was a bit worried, but the doctor told me not to panic due to the type it was, not being a melanoma."

Today, Mark has a sizeable scar on his head, he is booked in for annual skin check ups and he has changed a number of practices on his farm.

He no longer wears a cap to work, replacing this with a wide brim hat, ensuring sun does not reach his face.

With six employees on his dairy, beef cattle and cropping farm, Mark ensures all staff have access to sunscreen.

Bottles of 50+ are in the dairy, on the tractors and in the workshop.

Whether milking 350 cows, checking his 300 beef cattle or working ground for seed potatoes or cereals, sun safety is a high priority.

"One thing I have learned from my experience and from talking to doctors and other people is how important it is to get your skin checked regularly," Mark said.

"Make sure you, your family and your employees cover up as much as possible and apply sunscreen every time they go outside."

"You never know what is around the corner so it's up to us to proactively manage risks and to look after ourselves and our employees."



Safety Spotlight

By Cancer Council Tasmania
and Stuart Beams
Safe Farming Tasmania

Working safely in the sun

It's harvest season and the time of the year when we need to consider the risks associated with working outdoors and the harmful effects of the sun's ultra violet radiation (UVR).

If you work outdoors, you are at risk.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Despite being an almost entirely preventable disease, at least two in every three Australians will develop skin cancer before they reach the age of 70. Around 200 melanomas and 34,000 non-melanoma skin cancers are caused by occupational exposure to UV each year in Australia.

Of all new cancers diagnosed in Australia each year, 80 per cent are skin cancers.

Whenever you work outdoors, even on cloudy dull days, you are exposed to UV radiation from the sun. All the sunburns, tans and daily hours spent outdoors when you haven't used sun protection add up, increasing your long-term risk of developing skin cancer.

Managing the risks of UVR

Whether you're an employer, contractor, or self-employed person, you have an obligation to provide a working environment for your workers that is safe and without risks to health.

This includes taking steps to reduce the risks to health and safety from UV rays, such as having

a sun protection policy, providing adequate personal sun protection including sunscreen, sunglasses, broad brimmed or bucket style hats, appropriate clothing covering as much skin as possible, and providing designated shaded areas to perform tasks and take breaks.

Where possible, plan the working day so you and your workers are inside when the UV is at its most extreme. Plan most exposed work for early morning or later in the afternoon, and take breaks in the shade.

Workers have a responsibility for their own safety and health, and must follow UV protection policies and use sun protective measures provided.

Know your UV

As an outdoor worker, you need to think about sun protection whenever you are working outdoors, even when the UV is below 3.

This is because outdoor workers are exposed to UVR for much longer and more frequently than people who work indoors, and it is this accumulation that increases your risk of skin cancer.

To keep track of UV levels, download the free SunSmart Global UV app: sunsmart.com.au/resources/sunsmart-app. For guidance implementing a sun safety policy, contact Stuart Beams at Safe Farming on 0400 140 146



Working with Tasmanian farmers to reduce
farm-work related death, injury and disease

Stuart Beams 0400 140 146
stuart.beams@safefarming.tas.gov.au



Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

Department of Justice





Strengthening our Workforces

AgCard

After several years developing and building AgCard, the online farm safety induction platform, Primary Employers Tasmania is proud to hand over management of AgCard to FarmSafe Australia.

Although AgCard has been picked up around Australia and even overseas, by handing the programme to FarmSafe Australia it is envisaged it will reach further across the country.

Another module was added to AgCard in late 2023. The new online Personal Finance tool was launched to assist primary producers and students interested in a career in agriculture.

The module was developed with the support of Rabobank's Southern Victoria and Tasmania Rabo Client Council. The Personal Finance tool is the sixth unit to be housed on the free, simple-to-use, AgCard platform.

The other five units provided on the platform are:

- Safe Farming — an introduction to workplace health and safety on farms;
- Human Resources — a basic outline of

employee's rights and responsibilities;

- Wool Harvesting — highlighting the risks and hazards that are found in shearing sheds;
- Managing Livestock for Red Meat Production — management practices and record keeping obligations to ensure that red meat is safe to eat and fully traceable; and
- Biosecurity — designed to help strengthen awareness of the biosecurity system, biosecurity threats and the concept of biosecurity being a 'shared responsibility'.

The new Personal Finance module covers wages, benefits and entitlements, starting a new job, personal taxes, superannuation, managing debt, insurance and protecting yourself against scams.

AgCard remains free to use for everyone, and remains an industry-focused, flexible and practical tool for future generations of students, farm families, employees, managers and owners.

Primary Employers Tasmania encourages all members, their families, employees and contractors to complete the units, which can be found at www.agcard.com.au

AgCard — Creating Safe and Fair Workplaces

More than 6,500 people from around the world have enrolled to access AgCard since it was launched in July 2020, sharing positive and proactive feedback about the benefits of the online workplace health and safety portal.

Almost 40 per cent of users are students, many of whom aspire to work in agricultural careers. Farmers, teachers and industry representatives believe AgCard will be instrumental in reducing the number of injuries and fatalities in the rural sector, as AgCard-certified employees identify, call out and manage potential risks.

With new modules set to be added, it is vitally important that AgCard remains an industry-focused, flexible and practical tool for future generations of farm families, employees, managers and owners.



Instruction Simplification

Grant Rogers
Knowby

If you were going to abbreviate the saying “don’t bring me problems, bring me solutions” then surely the term would be “Knowby”.

Grant Rogers, a veterinarian and former Ouse dairy farmer, has developed an app to alleviate one of his most frustrating time wasters – showing people over and over again how to perform a task.

Instead of continually repeating instructions to new and short-term staff, he decided to create a platform to enable business owners to capture knowledge and share how-to-guides via photos and short videos in a step-by-step guide.

Knowby is the result – replacing endless manuals, PDFs and time-intensive briefings.

“I was sick and tired of staff constantly ringing up to say something was broken, or not working or they couldn’t remember how to do something,” Grant shared.

“And it was a struggle to remember how to do some tasks that I hadn’t done for a year.

“I was going to write a farm manual, but then realised the manual would never be where it was needed and no one would read it anyway.

“So, I started playing around with videos. I built a couple, such as how to get a pivot unstuck, and showed it to a few mates who said a three-minute video was too long. I then came up with the step-by-step concept.”

Now, Knowby is an affordable, simple and powerful application that has been embraced by people across endless industries, including agriculture, hospitality, construction, health and manufacturing. Short, practical and illustrated instructions can be created and shared through the online platform.

From how to treat mastitis and how to stomach tube a calf to connecting a mower attachment to a tractor and pre-start checks for two-wheel motorcycles, Knowbys are being created and viewed by thousands of workers around the world.

Grant said any type of instruction can be created on the platform, ensuring it is instantly available when and where it’s needed.

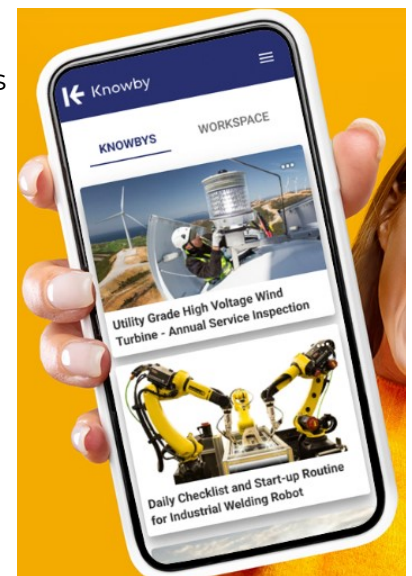
“Some of our clients’ senior staff were spending up to 40 per cent of their day on the phone, providing repetitive instructions to junior workers. That’s around \$400 a day of uncharged time,” he said.

“With Knowby, employees can access the online step-by-step guides, quickly solve their problem and complete the task safely, without having to stop work and phone a supervisor or manager for help.

“It is very easy to create a Knowby and we recommend users start with the absolute basics, such as this is a teat and this is an udder, as when you have seasonal or short-term employees with limited experience, they can reference this online material at any time.

“Knowby is also great for inductions and ensuring that all workers have accessed the material and signed off on the content.”

To create a Knowby, you add a title, a description and a cover image.



Knowby Continued...

You then add short videos or images and text to each step, such as “connect the hydraulics into the left-hand side green fitting” and “lift mower on three-point linkage and then pull this lever up”. You can then share a link to your workers or place a QRT code on packaging or equipment.

Clients currently include fruit growers and beef farmers in New Zealand, and a growing number of local and interstate dairy farmers. Grant is also currently building an induction Knowby for side-by-side use.

When asked if he will soon retire from his vet work to focus on Knowby, Grant laughed!

“There’s no such thing as an overnight success,” he admitted.

“You have to be a little bit crazy and really believe your idea will work.

“But we are on a sales trajectory and are bringing on new customers every day.”

Knowby offers a free 30-day trial, which can be accessed from www.knowby.co.

And Grant is about to create about 30 dairy Knowbys, which will be provided free of charge to anyone who signs up.

Time Saving Techniques

Tasmanian dairy farmer James Greenacre is passionate about up-skilling staff and reducing key man risk in his dairy operations.

Key to achieving this goal has been the introduction of Knowby to his 1,300-cow dairy business near Cressy, run in partnership with his wife Sophie and Rob and Jo Bradley.

They now have almost 50 Knowbys set up to provide clear, step-by-step instructions for their team.

Even straightforward tasks, like closing a valve or opening a tap, that are difficult to explain over the phone are easily completed by staff members following Knowbys.

“We use Knowbys for simple things like if there is no water in the tanks at the dairy, there are seven things they need to check before they give someone a call,” James said.

“When the power goes down, we have a generator. There is a QR Code next to the generator so our staff can access the Knowby at any time of the day or night, go through the checklist to check for oil and coolant, know which switches to turn on and how to flick the power over.

“I may not even know that the power has gone off until I go down to the dairy as our staff have been able to access the Knowby on their phone, follow the instructions and fix the problem. Previously I could have been called any time between 3am and 9pm.”

James said it takes about 15 minutes to create a Knowby, including a short video or picture for each step, of a simple 10-minute job.

“We have a problematic pivot that is really hard to get going. I wanted to test how good Knowby was so we sent a backpacker, who had no mechanical experience, down to start it using the QR Code to following the Knowby directions and they were able to start the pivot.”





Training for Wool Industry Success

Lachlan West
Wool-TAG

Tasmania witnessed a remarkable stride in shearer and wool handler training in 2003, orchestrated by the Tasmanian Wool Harvesting Training Advisory Group (Wool-TAG).

The collaborative efforts of industry stakeholders and local Government has paved the way for a sustainable, relevant and effective future for wool harvesting training.

Industry-Wide Collaboration for Sustainable Success

Chaired by Charles Downie from Glenelg Estate, Wool-TAG has brought together a diverse group of industry leaders to ensure that shearer and wool handler training in Tasmania remains relevant and effective for years to come.

The committee, which includes representatives from Primary Employers Tasmania (PET), TasFarmers (formerly TFGA), Shearing Contractors' Association of Australia (SCAA), Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), TAFE Tasmania, and prominent Tasmanian wool growers, operates with a focus on long-term success. Additionally, the Tasmanian Wool-TAG has a seat at the National Wool-TAG (NWHAT), chaired by AWI's Don MacDonald, ensuring that the State's concerns are considered in the national context.

Training Investment: Building a Skilled Workforce

The Wool-TAG's commitment to fostering talent and ensuring a sustainable future for the industry was evident in securing funding from the Tasmanian Government through the Department of State Growth.

This funding facilitated the implementation of eight accredited novice shearing and wool handling courses spanning from 2023 to 2025.

This training initiative was made possible by leveraging the success of the Workforce Development Project delivered by PET between 2020 and 2022.

Under the coordination of SCAA-SWTI, these novice courses, delivered by experienced Tasmanian trainers Anthony Monks, Mathew Haney and Petrisse Leckie, attracted a diverse group of participants.

Notably, the courses attract substantial interest from female participants, with women making up at least half of each course.

Graduates like Ellen McIntosh, Emma Kline and Daniel Fellows represent the success stories emerging from these training initiatives.

AWI's Support: Nurturing Skills in the Shed

Australian Wool Innovation plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of in-shed shearer and wool handler training. AWI provides all the funds for in-shed training, including an average of 13 learner toolkits per year.

This support also extends to funding the management of training and administration. The in-shed training budget is strategically allocated to conduct two five-day improver level schools annually and offer follow-up training for novice, intermediate, and advanced shearers and shed hands.



Graduate Emma Kline in the woolshed

Wool Training Update Continued...

AWI also provides learner toolkits at no cost to new entrant shearers who complete an SCAA-SWTI novice course and secure a full-time stand with a shearing contractor. This initiative aims to ease the entry of new talent into the industry and ensure a seamless transition into the workforce.

Global Expertise Locally: Workshops by Industry Legends

In 2023, Tasmania had the privilege of hosting three esteemed guest trainers – former Sports Shear Australian wool handling champion Mel Morris, former lamb shearing world record holder Trevor Bacon, and former Sports Shear shearing world champion Shannon Warnest.

These trainers conducted a series of workshops and in-shed training days in May and November. The focus of these sessions extended beyond technical skills, emphasising the critical importance of delivering a high-quality job for wool growers.

Wool Harvesting Ambassador Program: Fostering Professionalism and Representation

The year 2023 witnessed the launch of the Wool Harvesting Ambassador Program, a testament to the industry's commitment to professionalism and representation.

Generously sponsored by PET, AWI, SCAA-SWTI, Heiniger, I-O Merino, and Next Level Elite Mentoring, the program selected two shearers, Emily Spencer and Tom Pitchford, and wool classer Cally Spangler as the inaugural ambassadors for 2023 / 24.

These ambassadors, recognised for their high levels of professionalism, are set to represent Tasmania in Sports Shear competitions and on

the international stage at the Golden Shears in Masterton, NZ, in March 2024.

The thorough preparation by trainers Petrisse Leckie and Steve Rigby ensures that these ambassadors are well-equipped to showcase Tasmania's talent and skills on the global platform. Moreover, the program plans to continue this tradition by choosing three new ambassadors every year.



L-R: Steve Rigby, Cally Spangler, Emily Spencer, Tom Pitchford, Petrisse Leckie, and Shannon Donoghue

“In conclusion, 2023 was a year marked by collaborative efforts, significant investments in training, and the establishment of initiatives aimed at nurturing talent and professionalism in Tasmania's wool harvesting industry.”

The successes achieved in this period lay a robust foundation for the industry's sustained growth and excellence in the years to come.

Please contact Lachlan West for more information at lachlan.west@wool.com



Partner Profile

FrostBatten Accountants
Grant Archer, Mountain Vale

At Mountain Vale, we run a 1400-cow rotary dairy operation and cattle rearing business along the banks of the Liffey River.

After 35 years of active farming on dairy properties in Tasmania, we recently entered into a share farming arrangement on our 628-hectare Bracknell property.

With the rising cost of inputs and the potential volatility of milk prices, it is imperative that we understand how these variables impact our business.

We rely on Michael, Chantelle and the team at FrostBatten to provide us with regular reporting and analysis such that we can adjust our approach if required to align with market conditions at any stage.

Our share farming agreement requires an accurate and transparent financial performance analysis of our business to be conducted at regular intervals. FrostBatten has assisted with the development and provision of a quarterly reporting model that provides all parties to the agreement with the information they require to make decisions.

As Kim and I transition to a less active role on the farm, we also rely on the FrostBatten team to provide us with proactive advice relating to broader investment and taxation planning matters, business succession considerations, and retirement and estate planning.

“Michael and his team have taken a keen interest in our business, have been able to provide us with prompt advice and assistance in a clear and concise manner.”

We greatly value our current and future relationship with FrostBatten.

*FrostBatten
Director Michael
Batten with
Grant Archer at
Mountain Vale*



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ACCOUNTANTS

Highly experienced:

- Accountants
- Business Advisors
- Taxation Consultants
- Estate/Succession Planners
- Financial Analysts

Our dedicated team has the experience to assist you during all stages of your personal or business life cycle with regular reporting, analysis and assistance

Contact Michael Batten or Dallas Frost for a confidential conversation about your accounting and financial needs:
dallas@frostbatten.com.au michael@frostbatten.com.au
(03) 6333-0660 46 Canning Street, Launceston



Meet the Member

Monique Lubiana
Stefano Lubiana Wines

Bio-dynamics is our choice of farming at Stefano Lubiana Wines.

Biodynamic farming means we are unable to use synthetic herbicides and we work with the cosmic forces.

Alternatives to synthetic herbicide are hand hoeing, organic herbicides or cultivation. The first two are expensive and hand hoeing is time consuming.

That leaves us with the last option, mechanical cultivation.

Our Granton vineyard is approximately 26 hectares and it takes between six to 10 days to complete one cultivation cycle depending on the weather and breakdowns.

The last two, wetter than average, seasons have seen an explosion of weed growth. One way we tried to keep on top of the weeds under vine was with a machine called an Olmi.

Whilst this does a good job at whipper snipping tall growth, it does not remove the roots and tufts of weeds and grasses. Our soil type is very poor so we cannot afford weeds to go unchecked.

Timing, as all farmers know, is paramount. When deciding to cultivate I check the biodynamic calendar for the barren moon phase.

This phase commences on the first day after a full moon and concludes on the day before the new moon, the fertile phase is the opposite.

By selecting this phase, the seed is sending down its roots, tilling at this time is more likely to extinguish the weeds.

The opposite phase is where moisture is rising with the moon and thus stimulating growth above ground. Tilling at this time will stimulate seed germination.

We have more than one type of cultivator, but the one I have been using over the last three barren phases is the Braun, manufactured in Germany.

It has several cultivation attachments, as per photos on this page:



This machine is mid mounted on the tractor and has a blade with a wing that has a sensor arm attached.

As I drive down the row, the sensor arm hits the vine and the blade swings in between the vines pulling out the soil and weeds placing the material under the wheel footprint.

I control the depth and side shift with a joystick allowing me to have full control over uneven ground and irregular row widths.

At the next barren phase, I use the same machine but change the implement to a star tiller. The star tiller, like the blade, is controlled by the hydraulics giving full control over depth and width.

This tiller is set at a slight angle and tils the soil that was extracted with the blade returning it to the under vine space.

The next barren phase, I revert to the blade attachment and continue this method until weeds are completely removed. It takes several cultivation cycles in cooler weather to achieve complete weed control as weeds can reattach but in hot and or windy weather results are better.

By controlling the under vine weeds it saves water, directs nutrients to the vine rather than the weeds, discourages wild life (hares, snakes and native hens) from settling in the vineyard, removes habitat for snails, weevils and millipedes and gives clear vision to monitor irrigation.

The vineyard rows appear neat and tidy, which promotes pride in our work and is something essential to agri-tourism.

I recommend *Ute Muller's Bio-Dynamic in the backyard and Beyond, A practical guide* for more information about Biodynamics.



Partner Profile

Telstra

Telstra is committed to working with Tasmanian farmers to improve mobile coverage to improve safety and boost agri productivity via technology adoption.

To assist farmers in rural and remote areas Telstra offers and suggests a number of alternatives to improve connectivity:

Wi-Fi Calling

An alternative to using the mobile network is accessing a Wi-Fi signal. This is a free setting on most popular mobile phones and allows your mobile to use a Wi-Fi network to make and receive mobile calls.

Telstra GO Repeater

The Telstra GO Repeater is a network coverage extension device that maximises mobile signals in areas of low coverage. The repeaters receive a signal from a nearby Telstra mobile base station before amplifying and distributing an improved mobile signal to the desired area via an antenna.

If you have a low signal level, this device can extend voice and data usage to places that were previously difficult to reach, improve call and video call experience, and prolong handset battery life.

Blue Tick Handset

The Telstra Blue Tick identifies phones that are certified to give superior voice coverage in rural and regional areas.

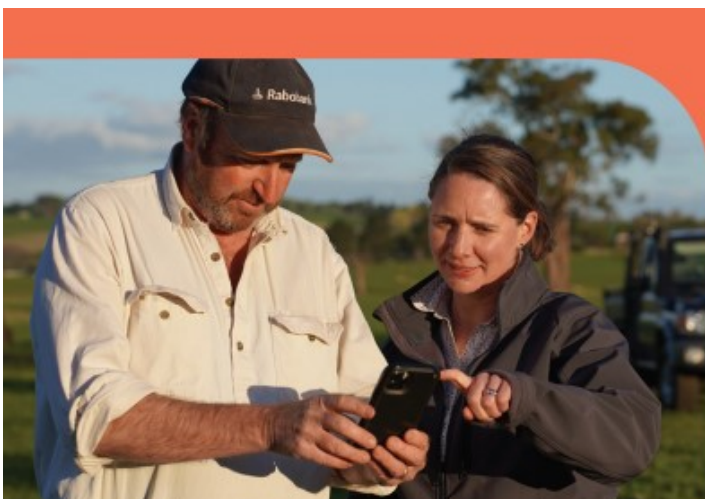
When you shop for your next phone, look for this tick. Then you know that engineers have tested the device and it provides superior coverage.

It's useful to know that obstructions, such as hills, trees and some solid built houses, limit mobile phone coverage and that the number of bars on your phone is not a great indicator of coverage. Instead, performing a speed and data test via the MyTelstra app or at speedtest.telstra.com is more accurate.

Telstra's 3G Network is shutting down

Telstra's 3G network closes on 30 June 2024 and it is important that farmers check their devices and sims are on the 3G network as they will need to transition to the 4G or 5G network by this date. This includes IoT devices, such as some weather stations, water or moisture sensors, phone or modem devices and EFTPOS machines using the 3G network.

If you need assistance to improve your connectivity, email the local Regional Australia team on telstratas@team.telstra.com



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Telstra Profile Continued...

TESTIMONIAL — TASMANIAN BERRIES

I raised concerns about closing off the 3G network with Federal Communications Minister Michelle Rowland when I toured Parliament House with my NFF Diversity in Ag Leadership Program in mid 2023.

As our farms were generally running off the 3G network, I had concerns regarding how we would run our business that operate many programs through cloud based / live networks. We rely on internet connections to manage our payroll system and our task-based system which records picking, packing and other piece rate tasks, our irrigation systems and live data tracking for operational purposes.

We are also committed to providing reliable internet connections for our PALM workers, of whom about 400 work on site and about 160 live on site.

We had also raised some Black Spot issues with Deputy Mayor of Meander Valley Council, Stephanie Cameron, and she had added our farm addresses (Exton and Christmas Hills) to the register.

After a follow up with the Minister's Senior Advisors, we were promptly contacted by Sarah Ebbelaar, who advised Telstra was willing to work with us to investigate our network connectivity, including some Black Spots, the 3G network and areas where 4G showed up but calls didn't successfully connect or messages failed to send.

Corey and Marcus from Telstra were tasked with site visits at both of our properties to investigate and implement hardware to help resolve some of our concerns.

We also discussed future options with Sarah for longer term solutions for the area and provided a letter of support for a proposed new tower in Exton.

As a result, we now have better connectivity in our head office, as well as connectivity to the 4G network.

We are hoping the Westbury tower upgrades and nbn improvements in our area will continue to help our workplace be a safer site with reliable connectivity around the farm, that our platforms will have reliable connectivity at all times to ensure plants are irrigated, payroll and picking data is recorded and uploaded accurately and workers can call home at all times.

“I encourage other farmers to reach out to Telstra to address any connectivity issues to ensure you can run your business as safely and productively as possible.”



Telstra's Regional Network Advisor Corey Smith with Primary Employers Tasmania President Stephanie Terry

Keep Farmers Farming

The National Farmers Federation has launched a campaign targeting anti-farming policies that threaten to slash billions from farm production.

Primary Employers Tasmania has backed the campaign, calling for Federal parliamentarians to stand up for farmers to ensure water, land and workers remain available to grow food.



Key issues include water buybacks in the Murray Darling Basin, the proposed ban of live sheep exports to the Middle East, worker shortages on farm and in the food supply chain, environmental laws, transmission lines and competitions policy.

Balanced reform of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act to maintain productive land use, a dedicated visa pathway for agricultural workers, and reform of Australia's competition laws to protect farmers from unfair practices, limit market consolidation and improve supply chain transparency are key focus points.

Contact your local MP or make a donation to the National Farmers Federation #keepfarmersfarming campaign. A loud voice is required to ensure the Federal Government reverses policies which restrict farmers' access to water, land and workers.

More information can be found at www.keepfarmersfarming.org.au

On Farm Connectivity Program

\$15 million has been made available for the On Farm Connectivity Rebate Program, which encourages farmers to extend digital connectivity and take advantage of advanced farming technology.

Grant objectives include supporting access to new communications equipment by offsetting some of the cost, improving farm safety and increasing use of advanced farming technology.

The minimum grant rebate is \$3,000 and the maximum is \$30,000.

Safe Farming Tasmania recommended farmers investigate personal locator beacons as an eligible item, which is a great tool to help manage the risk associated with working alone.

Personal locator beacons are similar to Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) used on boats, but are designed for use on land, and are small and portable.

The On Farm Connectivity Program grant guidelines can be accessed here:

www.grants.gov.au/Go/ViewDocuments?CoUuid=833d3eb4-e6dc-4aaa-87a9-df016c0bbc60

Round One closes on 31 May 2024.

Energy Efficiency Grants

These grants for small and medium sized businesses provides support to upgrade or replace inefficient equipment to improve energy efficiency.

Grants of \$10,000 to \$25,000 are available. Applications close on 8 April at 5pm.

Guidelines and application forms are available from: www.business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/energy-efficiency-grants-for-small-and-medium-enterprises-round-2



Committee Conversation

Ferdie Foster

When did you join the PET Committee?

Many years ago!

What three words would you use to describe Tasmania's agricultural industries?

Productive, price takers and demanding.

What are the Tasmanian rural sector's greatest strengths?

Private enterprises.

And challenges?

Being price takers, we are at the mercy of the big supermarkets in setting what we can sell our produce for.

How do we inspire the next generation of agricultural leaders to be involved in agri-politics?

Re-organise the lobbying system to more highly reflect the individual commodities, thereby ensuring members feel they are directly benefiting for their own businesses.

What advice would you give farmers to improve workplace culture to recruit and retain workers?

Lead by example.

What measures have you implemented on your farm / business to improve workplace safety?

Continuously monitor and refer to workplace safety and make the necessary adjustments to improve safety.

How do you engage your employees to identify and manage risks?

Continuously refer to "it is their safety".

Why is it important that all Tasmanian farmers are members of Primary Employers Tasmania?

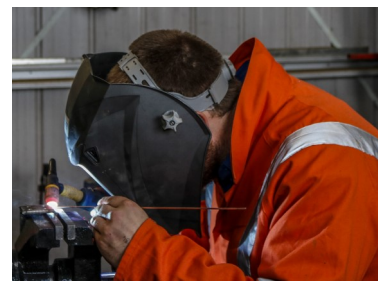
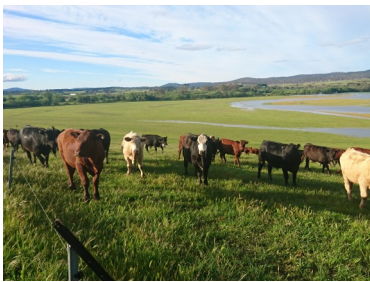
Two reasons: Industrial Relations support and continuous training / knowledge of employment requirements.

If you could ask the Tasmanian Premier to make one change for the betterment of the Tasmanian agricultural industries, what would it be?

Better understanding and efficiency within the bureaucracy.

\$5,000 Agri Development Scholarship Opportunity

Tasmanians passionate about agriculture are encouraged to apply for a \$5,000 Agri Development Scholarship, sponsored by Primary Employers Tasmania and the Tasmanian pork industry. Details on the scholarship and application forms can be downloaded from: www.primaryemployers.com.au/news#new-primary-employers-tasmania-scholarships



Primary Employers Tasmania Successes

Primary Employers Tasmania continues to assist its members on all workplace relations matters, tailoring advice and assistance to each inquiry. Activity from 1 January to 1 March 2024 includes:

- 17** **Number of contracts prepared**
- 1** **Number of Individual Flexibility Agreements prepared for members**
- 6** **Licence to occupy agreements**
- 3** **Assisted terminations**
- 1** **Unfair dismissal matters in Fair Work Commission**
- 132** **Incoming phone calls from members**

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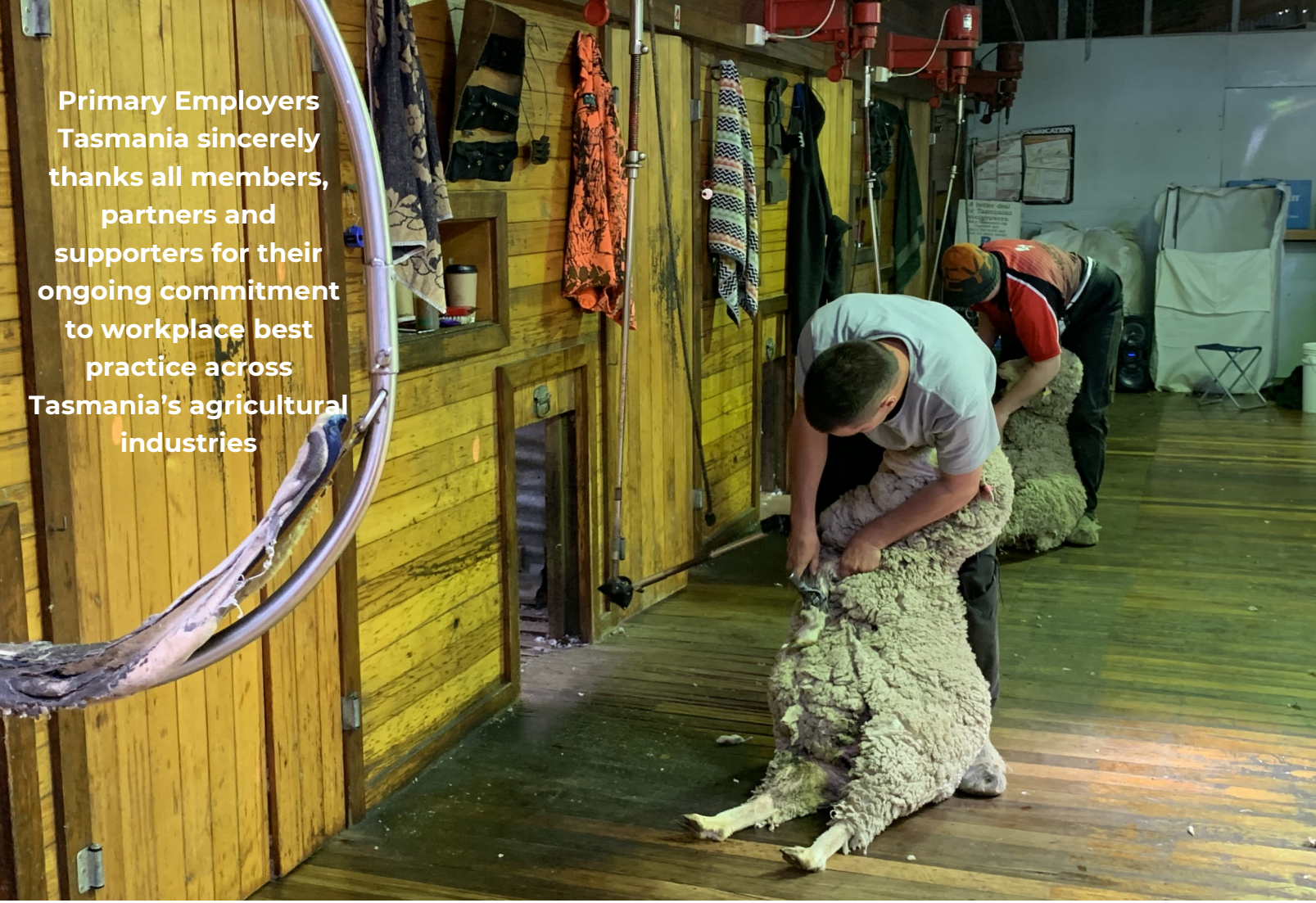


Primary Employers Tasmania

Membership benefits

- ✓ Professional, personalised, practical and prompt advice
- ✓ Expert team of industrial relations and workplace health and safety advisors
- ✓ Industry specific advocacy provided on behalf of members at Local, State and Federal Government levels
- ✓ Access to online members-only portal with the latest award information, contract templates and policy and procedures
- ✓ Invitations to industry specific on-farm events focused on global best practice
- ✓ Opportunity to apply for two \$5,000 scholarships each year to access training or attend industry conferences / events
- ✓ Regular News Bulletins ensuring all members have access to the latest relevant workplace information
- ✓ Exceptional value for money

Primary Employers
Tasmania sincerely
thanks all members,
partners and
supporters for their
ongoing commitment
to workplace best
practice across
Tasmania's agricultural
industries



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