

TASMANIAN WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE



Bluegum

Winter 2023

CONNECTING, SUPPORTING & CELEBRATING
TASMANIAN RURAL WOMEN

Chair Report

Deb Morice



As I write this, we are halfway through the year and into another financial year. The next TWiA AGM is coming up on the 1st September at Longford, yet to me it feels like we only just had our 2022 AGM. And as I begin to collate information for this year's AGM Report, I am astounded at what we have achieved in 2023.

Since our April Bluegum edition we have already had our first events (on Driver Safety) under the SIPP program and will have more events (covering Financial Structures, Fire Safety and Future Digital Technology) rolling out in the next couple of months. We also continued our connection with Flinders Island in June and were present at the Furneaux Futures Forum.

In June I had a holiday in the UK and would like to thank the Executive for covering the Chair role during my absence. As Chair I represent TWiA at many industry events and meetings, so it was a great opportunity for other members of the Executive to see the range of commodities the different agricultural groups deal with, to meet the various groups' representatives and to voice our members' thoughts on a range of subjects that affect all of us on and off farm.

On a very serious subject, I am deeply concerned about the future of TWiA as we need to have more Executive members on the team to continue to function without burning out the ones we have. We have only had 7 women on the Executive team (plus Belinda) after the resignations of 2 women earlier this year.

Despite repeated advertising for more, we still have failed to attract any nominations. We have lifted the profile of the organisation and with the SIPP program we have some funds available to provide the training that members requested, but even with the recent appointment of an administrative individual we need more people to help drive the initiatives. Please consider taking on a role either on the Executive team or just to offer a helping hand with a particular role. For example, we always need help to produce the Bluegum or E Gumnuts, Regional Group Leaders would love help with putting on events, and help with the organisation of the upcoming Gathering would be very welcome. Please contact me on 0408 990 927.

On a more positive note, we can look forward to our 30th Anniversary in 2024. My report is short because you'll find further information of all the things we've been involved with in the following pages of this Bluegum edition - sit back, read and enjoy.



Strategic Industry Partnership Program (SIPP) Update by Di Barr

TWiA has now received the first SIPP payment from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE) for the Beyond the Farm Gate Skills Development Program. Thank you to the NRE for this welcomed funding.

Beyond the Farmgate will run for four years from July 2023 offering a series of Skills Development programs. The initial 2023 programs will focus on Safety – Road and Vehicle Safety; Fire Safety; Financial Safety and Succession Planning; Farm and Dam Safety and the Safe use of Digital Technology to improve productivity.

The first two Road and Vehicle Safety programs have been successfully delivered during July at Symmons Plains and Wynyard (Burnie Airport). A third Road Safety program will be offered in the South at Baskerville later in the year. One TWiA member purchased this important Road Safety course for her two grandchildren. Money well spent to help keep our loved ones safe.

The initial Fire Safety Program will be held on Saturday 12 August 2023 at Rowella Community Hall. The second Fire Safety event will be on 2 September at Kettering.

Learning about Fire safety may cost you time but what it can save you is priceless!!!

TWiA is still confirming dates and venues for the other Beyond the Farmgate programs so keep an eye out on the TWiA website (<https://www.taswomeninag.org>) and/or our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/taswomeninag/>).

Beyond the Farmgate is:
Partially funded by the Government of Tasmania through the Strategic Industry
Partnership Program (SIPP)





Annual General Meeting 2023

The Executive Committee of Tasmanian Women in Agriculture wish to invite members to the Annual General Meeting of Tasmanian Women in Agriculture.

TASMANIAN WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

AGM

1 September, 2023
10:30am - 1:30pm

The business of the AGM will be to:

- receive annual reports from the previous year
- appoint an auditor for the coming year
- elect new executive committee members
- recognise and honour our MORLP scholarship recipients
- consider changes to the Rules of Association

(A general meeting will be held immediately after the AGM to vote on proposed changes)

JJs Bakery

52 Wellington St, Longford

Morning tea provided.

Lunch may be purchased at venue.

RSVP by 21 August, 2023

chair@taswomeninag.org

Ph: 0408 990 927



GUEST SPEAKER

Melissa Duniam

2023 Tasmanian Winner

AGRIFUTURES RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD



TWiA Website and Membership Audit

by
Di Barr

The TWiA Website and Membership data base are managed through a cloud-based software platform called Wix. As of 2022, Wix had more than 220 million registered users in more than 160 countries and is available in 17 languages.

Many TWiA members are already familiar with the updated TWiA website. The website is now more eye catching, user friendly and informative. Thanks go to TWiA Chair, Deb Morice, TWiA Secretary, Sasha Brightman with professional support from Sandra Astill.

TWiA is continuing to upgrade our online tools by improving the accuracy of information on our Wix membership database. Executive Committee member, Di Barr, is working through the Wix member database removing duplicate records, confirming contact details and payment status as well as identifying members by regional group. This work has become much quicker and easier thanks to the support of the TWiA Administration Officer, Tania Cornwall, who is familiar with the Wix platform and has been guiding Di's efforts.

Some of the interesting statistics supplied by Wix regarding TWiA members includes:

- **408 Subscribers to the TWiA website;**
- **272 Active members;**
- **71 Five-year memberships (at \$100 this is a 20% discount from annual subscriptions);**
- **22 Lifetime members (\$250.00 for lifetime subscriptions – especially good value for younger members!)**
- **18 Outstanding Contribution Award lifetime members.**

If you have any concerns about your membership status, e.g. you don't receive emails or you receive the same email multiple times, please contact Di on: memberships@taswomeninag.org.

Membership fees fall due during the month in which you originally joined TWiA. For example if you are an annual member who joined in August your membership will be due in August each year. If you have paid for a five-year membership in September 2018, your next membership fees will be due this coming September 2023.



Silent Auction

by

Hannah de Bomford
and Sasha Brightman

As a not-for-profit organisation, TWiA relies on member contributions, business partnerships and Government funding and grants to continue its work in the agriculture space. In an effort to fundraise, the Executive Committee are planning a silent auction to be held in the weeks prior to the 2023 Annual General Meeting at the beginning of September.

Currently TWiA contributes sponsorship to organisations such as Sprout Tasmania and Marcus Oldham Rural Leadership program to facilitate opportunities for Tasmanian women, while also organizing subsidized training for members – rural driver safety programs, fire safety and succession planning - just to name a few.

Donations to be auctioned would be greatly appreciated – it would be spectacular to be able to auction Tasmanian goods such as:

- meat and produce hampers
- textiles
- tourism experiences
- books
- gift vouchers
- homewares
- apparel (especially suited for our Tassie farming)

If you have any of the above you can donate to the auction (or anything outside those listed), great or small, it would be greatly appreciated. Donors will have the opportunity to be publicised in TWiA newsletters and on social media pages. Please direct any questions or potential donations to Hannah at scholarships@taswomeninag.org.

The Executive are aiming to have the auction open for the AGM in September, with options for in-person and online bidding. Stay tuned for more information!





Marcus Oldham Rural Leadership Program 2024

by
Hannah de Bomford

TWiA, now in partnership with Simplot Australia, are once again offering scholarship places for two Tasmanian women to attend the MORLP running from Sunday 5th May until Friday 10th May 2024 at Marcus Oldham College in Geelong.

It is an intensive workshop that aims to develop the leadership skills of those attending while facilitating networking and confidence-building.

Applications are open NOW and will close November 2023 (date to be confirmed). Please contact scholarships@taswomeninag.org for your application form.

Please note preference will be given to current TWiA members

For further MORLP information, follow this link:

<https://marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/courses-enrolment/leadership>



MARCUS OLDHAM

We mean business.



Marcus Oldham Rural Leadership Program Review

by

Kate Petrie ~ *2023 Recipient*

One of the biggest mistakes you could make before attending the Marcus Oldham Leadership Program would be to ask a previous participant what to expect. I highly recommend the program to anyone who is in the agricultural sphere, wherever you sit, I guarantee that you will gain something. It is a program you must attend with an open mind and willing to participate in every activity that the week throws at you.

The phrase 'it will push you out of your comfort zone' is one that is often associated with the week, I would go further and say that it takes all your knowledge of leadership and opens your mind to exploring every aspect of it. It helps to challenge your own values, and how they may impact others, in both personal and professional settings.

The week-long course provides a safe environment for you to be challenged, meet fantastic like-minded people within the agricultural industry and grow your skills. Every day was an exciting new challenge.

When you ask me 'what did you learn', I may respond with the ability to play the harmonica and that I am not a natural with horses but, I have learnt so much more. I have learnt new skills that I can use both in my personal life, but also within the community and in my career.

I would like to thank the Tasmanian Women in Agriculture for not only allowing me to attend this fantastic program, but the many women before me and the women to attend in the future. I recommend that you apply for the next course as soon as you can, and not wait many years like me. You have so much to gain from attending the leadership program.

Book Launch

Saddleback Wife

Slow food in Tasmania



Fiona Stocker is well known to many in TWiA, having written the book A Place in the Stockyard. In 2018 Fiona released her own memoir about leaving city life and coming to live in Tasmania, Apple Island Wife - Slow Living in Tasmania. This month sees the release of the sequel, Saddleback Wife - Slow Food in Tasmania, about the farm and food venture she ran with her husband.

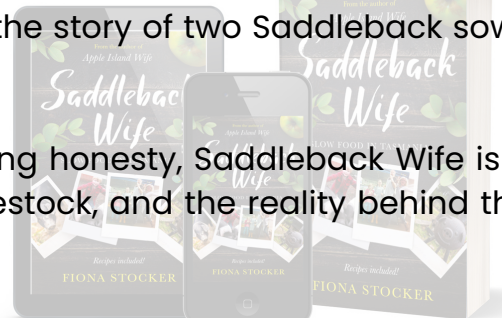
After watching too many television chefs from the safety of their sofa, new Tasmanians Fiona and Oliver Stocker turned their five acres into a free range, gourmet pig farm.

Raising Wessex Saddlebacks among the eucalyptus trees, they took their premium pork to the local award-winning farmers' market. There they learned what it's like to be behind the counter in a food business. What's the most you can charge for a pork sausage? And what's it like to be called 'the pig lady'?

Struggling to keep business, family and marriage together, they found that things aren't always easy behind the farm gate. But they also found a deep love and respect for those most magnificent of creatures - pigs.

Saddleback Wife is a book for foodies and those who want to know more about where their food comes from. It's for anyone who wants a behind-the-scenes look at the foodie-haven of Tasmania, and the pork 'underbelly' of farming life. It's also the story of two Saddleback sows called Rosie and Bella, and a boar called Co-Pilot Bob.

Told with trademark wry humour and at times heart-breaking honesty, Saddleback Wife is a story about the struggle to make a living from land and livestock, and the reality behind the dream of gourmet farming.





Upcoming Driver Training in Baskerville

by Jeanette Reader

Driver Training at Baskerville with Performance Driving Tasmania is being run on the 22 August. This will be the last of our driver training courses for this year. The course is subsidised to TWiA members through our SIPP funding.

Members who have attended the courses at Symmons Plains and Burnie have commented that the course was excellent. The course instructors are informative and very professional. The participants found that they have left the course much more aware of their driving skills and considerate of the actions they take while driving.

Get your sons, daughters, grandchildren, or even yourself onto it now by emailing treasurer@taswomeninag.org.

Digital technology and transformation to increase agricultural efficiency, resilience, and sustainability.

Making farm management and food production decisions efficiently and cost-effectively relies on accessible and available data. TWiA is excited to offer its members a valuable opportunity to participate in a workshop focusing on digital technology and transformation, which aims to enhance agricultural efficiency, resilience, and sustainability. The workshop is planned for Tuesday, 12th September 2023.

Leading this workshop will be esteemed industry experts, Dr. Richard Rawnsley and Dr. David Henry. Dr. Richard Rawnsley serves as the Lead Research Scientist for the Beyond 2012 project at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) within UTAS. Also presenting is Dr. David Henry who holds the position of Chief Research Scientist at CSIRO and leads the Climate Smart Agriculture Group within the Agriculture & Food Business Unit. Over the past five years, Dr. Henry has been instrumental in spearheading the Digital Agriculture initiative, playing a significant role in developing the Digital Ag strategy and leading the Digi Ag Strategic Investment Portfolio.

Throughout the workshop, participants can expect to gain the following:

1. A basic understanding of digital foundations, encompassing the Agricultural technology ecosystem, network coverage, connectivity, topography, and location. Additionally, participants will acquire the necessary digital literacy and knowledge of digital terms to effectively use digital tools in agriculture.
2. Insight into various metrics and how digital tools can inform farm decisions, helping participants make informed choices in their agricultural practices.
3. A practical understanding of how digital tools are applied to improve farming practices, equipping participants with hands-on knowledge and skills to enhance their farming efficiency.

This one-of-a-kind workshop will take place at The Dairy Research Facility, located at The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) on Tasmania's North-West Coast. TIA is renowned as an Australian agricultural industry leader, known for applying innovative technologies to support efficiencies in the dairy sector. As the number of available spots is limited, interested participants are encouraged to secure their place promptly to avoid missing out on this valuable opportunity.

Photo Competition

by
Hannah de Bomford



Brigid Langley / Carol Jackson



Kristy Rattray

TWiA wants to build a collection of photographs of real Tassie Women which tell the story of Tasmanian Women in Agriculture. We want photos from you which depict daily Tasmanian rural life and tells stories of Women in the agriculture sector. We are hoping you will be willing to help TWiA collect a library of photos which tell your stories. We want to see Tasmanian Agriculturists living their life - show us what our members do best!

There will be 3 Cash prizes awarded at the close of the competition in early 2024. Please reach out for a consent form and send all high-resolution entries to scholarships@taswomeninag.org.

Entries from last photo competition:



Elizabeth Taylor

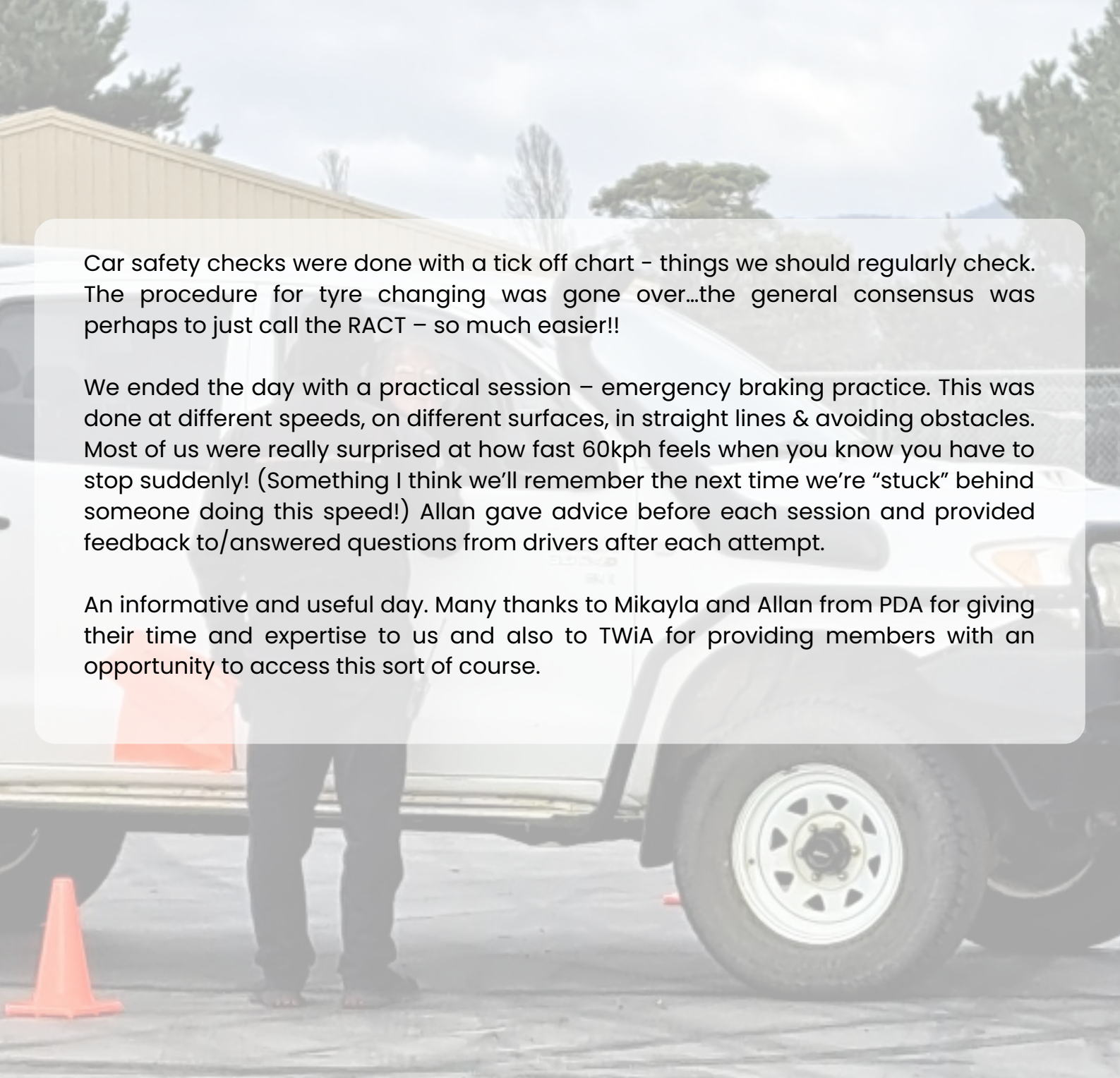
Safer Driving Course – July 2023 Symmons Plains by Sigrid Nelson

We were a small mixed group – differing ages and driving experience (a couple had passed their tests in the '70s & '80s and one had just passed his test a few days earlier!) with different types of vehicles, but all keen for the day ahead.

The first part of the day was discussion based, led by Allan the PDA instructor. We talked about all sorts of scenarios, what we would do in certain situations, how things could be done more safely, how we could pre-empt situations.

The atmosphere was pleasant, relaxed and we felt confident enough to ask/answer questions and give examples of how we'd dealt with situations we'd been in.





Car safety checks were done with a tick off chart – things we should regularly check. The procedure for tyre changing was gone over...the general consensus was perhaps to just call the RACT – so much easier!!

We ended the day with a practical session – emergency braking practice. This was done at different speeds, on different surfaces, in straight lines & avoiding obstacles. Most of us were really surprised at how fast 60kph feels when you know you have to stop suddenly! (Something I think we'll remember the next time we're "stuck" behind someone doing this speed!) Allan gave advice before each session and provided feedback to/answered questions from drivers after each attempt.

An informative and useful day. Many thanks to Mikayla and Allan from PDA for giving their time and expertise to us and also to TWiA for providing members with an opportunity to access this sort of course.



RAW Training Session

by Kaye Walters

On Tuesday 11th July 2023 TWiA in partnership with RAW (Rural Alive and Well) held a training session for friends of RAW at the Parkham Hall.

Meander Valley TWiA hosted the event and two lovely ladies from RAW, Ash and Bec, gave us a PowerPoint presentation.

One of the first things we learnt was how to recognise the signs that someone is needing help and, if you feel like you can start up a conversation, encouraging them to talk to you. Actively listen without judgement, recommend immediate help if needed, and encourage them to seek support.

Mental Health and suicide is a public health issue that requires a combined effort from all levels of government, health care systems, frontline health, community workers, workplaces, schools, and other educational settings, community groups and the media, as well as individuals and families.

On average there are 9 deaths by suicide each day across Australia. It's widely understood that 30% of suicide deaths have no related mental health issues.

We all enjoyed our morning and afterwards we had a lunch at the hall provided by members, and we all had a chat around the table. We all went home feeling we had learnt something from our morning.



Papua New Guinea Female Farmers' Visit to Tasmania

by Di Barr

Twia is working with Tasmanian Textile Artist, Jen Eddington, to host a visit to Tasmania by a group of 10 - 12 female farmers from Eastern Highlands Province in Papua New Guinea. Florence Jaukae Kamel is organising the visit from the PNG side. Florence lives in Goroka and runs the PNG Bilum Meri program and is a dedicated Women's Rights advocate. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Jaukae_Kamel. Florence has a role with the Government of PNG in promoting PNG women's issues.

Meri is the PNG Pidgin term for woman. Bilums are the uniquely PNG, intricately woven bags which carry everything from babies to garden produce, fire wood and even small pigs. No one should go through life without a bilum! Modern Bilums are often adapted with mobile phone pockets!

The trip is planned for early May 2024 and there are several interesting activities being discussed including farm and market visits, sightseeing and a PNG traditional MUMU dinner (similar to a Māori Hangi or a Fijian Lovo).

If you would like to be involved in the organising committee, or host a farm or market visit please reach out the PNG Visit organising committee Chair: Liese Fearman at: lfearman@gmail.com or Secretary: Jen Eddington at: tjeddington57@gmail.com



Bilum images were downloaded from a google search on 26 July 2023 from <https://oneoftwelve.com/shop/bilums/>.

Sprout Coaching Day ~ July

by Hannah de Bomford

Tasmanian Women in Agriculture are proud sponsors of the Sprout Producer Program. The Sprout Producer Program (SPP) is a one year program that aims to support and develop small-scale Tasmanian producers to achieve their goals, creating significant future benefits for them as individuals as well as their business and the Tasmanian community. SPP participants are guided with an online learning hub and monthly online tutorials, visit each other's farms and other farms for field days and participate in regular workshop days.

The SPP participants engaged in a coaching day in Campbell Town on the 3rd of July, where TWiA's Hannah de Bomford attended and got to see what the SPP cohort are up to. The discussions in the room were vibrant, with the participants talking passionately about their journeys and their plans for their enterprises into the near and distant future – goals are so important!

An interesting discussion was facilitated after many participants mentioned they were 'just a small scale producer' or 'just had a few chickens currently'. This 'just' is so easy to slip into conversation – so often the phrase "I am just the farmer's wife" is used, but no-one is ever 'just' anything – we are farmers, we are producers and we are women in agriculture; not 'just' anything!

From Hannah's attendance at the coaching day, it is clear that Jennifer and Ollie and the rest of the team at Sprout Tasmania are doing great things in the small-scale producer space. TWiA are proud to contribute to their efforts and look forward to seeing what this years SPP's participants achieve.



The Flinders Island Furneaux Futures Forum (FFF)

by Chris Bishop

The Flinders Island Furneaux Futures Forum (FFF) aims to promote entrepreneurship and business development in the Furneaux Islands community. They sought support from TWiA to gain expert advice on Regenerative Agriculture (RA) principles and practices. This included a practical workshop on composting methods and biological applications, held during their Regeneration Conference on 7th – 9th June 2023. This initiative aligns with TWiA's broader goals of enhancing farm productivity and adaptivity, with the intermediate outcome of improving farm management practices and skills.

The workshop was co-facilitated by TWiA and Sprout. Tony Scherer, a seasoned expert with over 50 years of experience in composting and promoting sustainable farming, co-founded Sprout Tasmania to expand organic and sustainable farming. He is also the founding owner of Frogmore Creek Wines, known for producing organic wines. Tony presented composting methodologies and applications. Chris Bishop, Vice Chair of TWiA, shared insights on Regenerative Agriculture principles and practices, drawing from her experience with a goat stud in Southern Tasmania, where she is currently pursuing a Graduate Certificate in RA.

To cater to the specific knowledge needs of the participants, TWiA conducted a survey. The survey results highlighted critical concerns related to RA, including salinity, loss of native plants and animals, changes in weather patterns, herbicide resistance, and declining soil health. Soil-related concerns encompassed issues like soil erosion, non-wetting soils, declining nutrient availability, soil acidity, soil-borne diseases, low organic carbon, and biological activity, as well as the impact of pesticide use on soil biota. Key topics associated with regenerative agriculture, such as the benefits of biological soil supplements, composting, permaculture, organics and biodynamics, and natural pest control, were identified as crucial. Tony addressed these key issues throughout the conference, while Chris briefly introduced RA principles and practices.

The workshop included the following sessions:

1. A presentation on Regenerative Agriculture and composting
2. A facilitated panel discussion on Regenerative Agriculture and Agritourism
3. A 3-hour practical workshop on compost techniques, market gardening, and community networking.

The workshop received significant interest and appreciation from the participants, and TWiA is enthusiastic about continuing to support the Flinders Island women in agriculture!

Sprout Cross Pollinate Conference


by Chris Bishop

TWiA's Vice Chair and Sprout member, Chris Bishop, had the privilege of attending the Sprout Cross Pollinate Conference held on the 25th and 26th of June 2023. The Cross Pollinate Conference is an annual event organized by Sprout to empower small-scale farmers and individuals dedicated to building resilient, local food systems. This year's theme, 'cultivating success,' recognized the challenges small-scale farmers face in achieving financial viability while upholding sustainable practices and values that prioritize environmental care, animal welfare, and ecosystem enhancement.

At the conference, TWiA's presence was highlighted, generating significant interest in the organization. The attendees were keen to learn more about TWiA and its endeavors. Moreover, TWiA's ongoing support for Sprout was acknowledged and appreciated during the conference's opening session. The collaboration between TWiA and Sprout has played a crucial role in accomplishing shared objectives and making a positive impact on women within agricultural communities.

TWiA takes pride in supporting Sprout and remains committed to fostering this partnership for continued growth and progress. Working together, both organizations are making strides in advancing sustainable agriculture and empowering women in agriculture, bringing positive change to our farming communities.





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partner of Tasmanian
Women in Agriculture
(TWiA)**



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