
TASMANIAN
WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE
BLUEGUM
October 2026
Photo: Alice Lang

CHAIR'S REPORT

Hello, and welcome to this edition of the Bluegum. I write this after a weekend where we have had a wonderful rain, which seems to have been reasonably widespread. It will add so much potential to crops and pastures. Let's hope the frosts stay away and we can capitalise on the water that fell. I can't stop the agronomist view of the weather events we have. This welcome rain hasn't changed the fact that it is looking like it will be dry in parts of our State. Reach out to the great networks we have, no one needs to navigate challenging seasons alone.

Since the last edition in July, we have had our successful AGM at the end of August. Our changes to the Tasmanian Women in Agriculture Inc. constitution have been registered by the Department of Justice. Our current executive is up and running. I would like to say welcome to our new members Donna and Kristi, and welcome back to our returning members Deb, Jeanette, Anne and Belinda.

In recent months I've been representing Tasmanian Women in Agriculture at several key industry activities. One of these is the Industry Supply Group, formed by NRE to keep us informed about Government strategies and developments in fuel and fertiliser supply chains. This group is not meeting now, but we will be informed if required in the future.

I have also been attending updates, as scheduled on the H5 bird flu. These have been very useful to keep all informed of the status of bird flu and the response that is occurring in Tasmania.

Another important area of engagement has been the Agriculture Strategy Roundtable discussions. I attended another valuable roundtable discussion on 6th October. It is positive to sit at the table and contribute on behalf of our organisation to the strategy that informs the future of agriculture in Tasmania via the 2050 Vision, which is to achieve $10 billion in annual farm gate value by 2050. We have had the opportunity to comment on the draft document again.

And for something a little different but a passion of mine, trying to support locally produced. Where do your frozen potato products come from? I am noticing more and more in the supermarket freezers, the reduced offerings of Tasmanian or Australian grown products (not just potatoes). Many products are imported from Belgium or India. Tasmania produces around 31% of Australia's potato crop and makes a big contribution to our agricultural farmgate value. Potatoes are the 4th highest land-based farmgate value contributor to Tasmania's economy. If you can check the back of the packet and if possible, buy Australian grown, help our growers.

All the best for the next few months.

Sue Hinton



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meet the Tasmanian Women In Agriculture Executive Committee for 2026 - 27.



Sue Hinton
Chair & Public Officer

Joined TWiA: 2024

Occupation: Retired agronomist and extension person with a passion for working with soil and water (irrigation) to support our farmers manage the intensification of our farming systems in an efficient and effective way. I am a proud independent member of the Poppy Advisory and Control Board (PACB).

Anne Cresswell
Treasurer

Joined TWiA: In 2000, attending my first gathering at Poatina.

Occupation: We run a cropping/ beef farm as well as growing Raspberry and Blackberry canes in the Deloraine area.





Donna Jones
Secretary

Joined TWiA: 2024

Occupation: We have a hobby farm in Tea Tree, as well as breeding, training and working sheepdogs.

Belinda Hazell
Emertius Chair



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Deb Morice
Secretary Support

Joined TWiA: I've been a member of TWiA for so long I can't quite remember when I joined - but I do know I was part of the very first gathering committee held in Scottsdale back in 1994.

Occupation: Together with my husband Greig and our son Marcus, we run a beef property with 100 breeding Angus cows. We also operate an agricultural contracting business. In addition, I currently work off-farm as an Area Manager for Fonterra Australia.

Kristi Chapple
Communications Officer

Occupation: Deputy Mayor of Break O'Day Council

How did you become involved in the rural industry? I was raised in Springfield on a potato, onion, beef farm and cool storage business. I now live in St Helens, breeding Shorthorn cattle and now cropping on my husband's family farm (est. 1880s)





Jeanette Reader
Scholarships Officer

How did you become involved in the rural industry? We started farming in 1989 at Bishopsbourne. We had a herd of Angus cows for beef breeding. We also cropped poppies, onion and Hemp seeds, fennel and dill for oil. We grew carrots, parsnips, Japanese squash and potatoes. Our son still farms at Westbury, but our farm was sold in 2020.

SERPENTINE LEAFMINER

By Sue Hinton

Serpentine leafminer (Liriomyza huidobrensis) was detected in Tasmania for the first time in June 2026. The invasive pest attacks more than 200 plant species, including potatoes, and has since been found at multiple locations in north-west Tasmania. Authorities have transitioned from eradication efforts to long-term management due to its apparent establishment and broad host range."

The serpentine leafminer (Liriomyza huidobrensis) is an invasive leaf-mining fly that was first detected in Tasmania in June 2026 at a commercial growing property in north-west Tasmania. The detection was confirmed by Biosecurity Tasmania following laboratory testing.

Why It Matters

Serpentine leafminer is considered one of the world's most significant vegetable pests and can attack more than 200 plant species. Its larvae tunnel inside leaves, creating distinctive white, squiggly mines, reducing photosynthesis, plant growth, yield, and quality.

Major host crops include:

- Potatoes
- Beans and peas
- Brassicas (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage)
- Lettuce
- Celery
- Tomatoes
- Cucurbits (cucumbers, pumpkins, zucchini)
- For Tasmania's potato industry, which is the state's highest-value vegetable sector, the pest presents a significant biosecurity and production risk.



SERPENTINE LEAFMINER

Current status in Tasmania
After the initial detection, Biosecurity Tasmania conducted surveillance and tracing activities. Subsequent findings showed the pest was present at multiple locations in north-west Tasmania and breeding on unmanaged host weeds. Authorities concluded that eradication was not technically feasible and moved from an eradication response to long-term management.
The Tasmanian Government states that:

- SLM has been found at several locations in north-west Tasmania.
- It is capable of surviving on many crops and common weeds.
- Tasmania's climate is suitable for establishment and spread.
- Eradication attempts in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland were unsuccessful.



For further information from the Department of Natural Resources & Environment Tasmania, scan the QR code or click here.

Key identification signs
Look for:

- Winding white or pale tunnels ("mines") inside leaves.
- Heavy leaf-mining damage.
- Reduced plant vigour and yellowing foliage.
- Increased damage on susceptible crops such as potatoes, celery, cucurbits, and leafy vegetables.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

By Anne & Stacy Cresswell

10 eager participants attended the Defensive Driver Training course held at Symons plains on Wednesday 9th September. The morning was spent discussing how to assess and manage risks, identify hazards, evaluate road, weather and traffic conditions , and discussing the importance of maintaining safe distances between vehicles to avoid collisions and give us more time to react in unexpected situations.

After lunch we all took to our vehicles for the practical part of the day. This was fair to say a little bit daunting, as we started to practice our emergency braking. We did this at 40km, 60km, 80km then 100km per hour to see if we could stop in a required distance of not. We learnt that when the ABS braking kicks in and shudders bringing us to a stop the Hazard lights also come on in the vehicle. We knew we were doing this right when they came on. After this we then had to travel at 60,km 80km, and then 100km into the coned area, making a stop and either turning left or right depending on instruction and not hitting the cones.

We are so glad that we did this course, and I think everyone should do it at least once, as the skills that we learnt could save our lives, but they also made us more aware of recognising risks, and making us identify them.

Thankyou to Tasmanian Women in Agriculture for sponsoring this course.





DEFENSIVE DRIVING

By Michelle Williams (Rural Business Tasmania)

I recently had the opportunity to take part in the PDA Defensive Driving Program at Symmons Plains, along with other members of the Rural Business Tasmania team and participants from other organisations, with support from Tasmanian Women in Agriculture.

We started the day with some theory training run by Performance Driving Australia, including discussions, videos of different driving situations and a test on what we had covered. We also went through a vehicle safety check before lunch, which was kindly provided by Tas Women in Ag.

After lunch, we headed out onto the track for the practical side of the course. We practised emergency braking at different speeds, which really gave you a feel for how a vehicle reacts, as well as brake-and-avoid manoeuvres that simulated situations you could easily come across on the road.

This was the second time I have done defensive driving training and I still found it really worthwhile. It is one of those courses where being able to experience the situations for yourself makes such a difference. It gives you a much better understanding of how quickly things can happen and how your vehicle will respond.

The training is particularly valuable for our team, as our staff travel all over Tasmania visiting farms and working with rural clients. With so much time spent on the road, having the skills and confidence to respond safely in an unexpected situation is especially important.

I think this type of training would benefit drivers of all ages and experience levels.

A big thank you to Tasmanian Women in Agriculture for helping make opportunities like this accessible. As a not-for-profit organisation, being able to access valuable training through our membership is a real benefit and something we really appreciate.



AGRIFUTURES SCHOLARSHIP

There's only a few days left to get in your application for the Agrifutures Rural Women's Awards.

These awards celebrate the inclusive and courageous leadership of women involved in Australia's rural and emerging industries, businesses and communities, now and into the future.

The overall Tasmanian winner will recieve $15,000 grant for their project, business or program, access to professional development opportunities and alumni networks.

Tasmanian Women in Ag are proud to sponsor two awards: the TWiA Encouragement Award and the TWiA Rural Women's Development award.

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Alyssia Kennedy, Founder of Life After School Australia, was the winner of our 2026 Encouragement Award.

She's created an initiative dedicated to helping young people in rural and regional Tasmania successfully transition from education to adulthood. Alyssia is equipping young people with the practical skills and confidence they need to not only navigate adulthood but truly thrive within it.

Laura-Jude Johnson OAM, Founder of THEIRS (Talk, Hear and Help, Educate, Inform, Refer and Support), was the winner of our 2026 Rural women's Devlopment Award.

Laura runs a youth-led mental health and suicide prevention organisation based on Tasmania's North-West Coast. Drawing on her lived experience and deep commitment to community, Laura works to create safe, empowering spaces where conversations spark change and young people feel seen and supported.

We encourage all Tasmanian women to apply. You don't have to work in the agriculture space; if you're a woman in a rural area, give it a go!

For more information, head here or scan the QR code:



RURAL BUSINESS TASMANIA 40TH ANNIVERSARY

By Jeanette Reader



It was great to attend the 40th Anniversary celebrations for Rural Business Tasmania on Friday 16th October.

In attendance were stake holders former chairs and politicians. From its start through Rural Youth and beyond, RBT and its many formats have helped many rural businesses survive, reshape and transform. Having independent views come in confidentially to assist has been a real benefit for those that needed assistance.

It was great to see the old staff represented in the photographs and speeches.

Elizabeth Skirving has headed the organisation for 20 years. RBT has supported and encouraged organisations like Tas Women in Ag and assisted in our organisations background work.

Thank you RBT for celebrating such and outstanding contribution to the rural community.

We look forward to working alongside you with more projects.



LOW STRESS STOCKHANDLING SCHOOL

By Sue Hinton

TWiA were the major sponsor of the event held at Exeter High School on 15-16 October 2026.





The two-day Low Stress Stockhandling School, delivered by Nic Kentish at Exeter High School, provided young people with practical training in safe, effective and low-stress livestock handling. The school was fully subscribed, with all 24 available places filled. A total of 23 participants attended, with one enrolled participant unable to attend.

The participants ranged in age from 11 to 21, with a median age of 15. Gender was almost evenly divided. It is great to see the school's success in engaging young people at an early stage of their agricultural education and development.





JOIN NOW

We run a number of events and activities during the year including workshops and training, networking events and field days and farm tours. TWiA actively advocates for policies and practices that benefit women in agriculture. We work closely with industry stakeholders and government bodies to address issues affecting our members and the broader agricultural community.

Members can be from any profession, and new faces are always welcome.

Jump onto our website here Membership Plans | Tasmanian Women in Agriculture and follow the steps to become a member.

BLUEGUM OCTOBER 2025
Kindly printed by Guy Barnett MP, 76 Emu Bay Road, DELORAINE TASMANIA, 7304