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for their ongoing support



Meet Rachel, your WFI Local Area Manager for Northern Tassie. Born and raised with country values, Rachel's approach to insurance is nothing less than down to earth.

“At WFI we take insurance seriously, but not ourselves. Tasmanians are genuine, and I think we're all just one big country town. As a passionate veggie gardener myself, I enjoy seeing our rural clients diversifying and operating niche farming enterprises. The paddock-to-plate culture we have in Tasmania means we're a vibrant community of growers.”

Rachel would love to hear from any TWIA members to see how she can partner with you to protect and support your agri-business or personal property.

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**Bluegum**  
January 2022

CONNECTING, SUPPORTING & CELEBRATING  
TASMANIAN RURAL WOMEN

A message from Chair  
**Rebekah  
Frankcombe**

**Sharing  
Rebekah's  
'New Chair'  
speech**



I'm Rebekah Frankcombe, the incoming chair for 2021/2022 Tasmanian Women in Agriculture. I'm a mum of three children, Matilda 10, Hurley 8 and Elliott 3. I'm passionate about the wellbeing of our families, communities, region and state. I'm involved in our local football and also an Ambassador for the Naked Farmer, an initiative for good mental health in both rural and regional areas.

I'm our organic family farm dairy shed manager, or in layman's terms, I'm the cups on cups off girl, I feed the calves, paddock rotation, HR and administration. I work alongside my brother Emmett and my Dad, Kevin. You see there is no significant financial investment from me as such, but I'm emotionally, mentally and physically invested on the operations of our fully certified organic family farm. We are a third generation farm at Mt Hicks. Working in this agricultural industry allows me to be able to have a lifestyle were I am able to meet my children's needs at school and attend their extra-curricular activities. I love that I can show my children, that to be successful and a woman in life, you don't need to have a specific title, a university degree, and that leadership qualities are

not something that you can purchase, leadership qualities are learned experiences that help guide and educate us. I was first introduced to the Tasmanian Women in Agriculture organization when I received the Marcus Oldham Rural Leadership scholarship in 2019.

Attending MORLP has exceeded my potential with the skills & knowledge base that I currently had and has inspire myself and others to be part of the solution, networking opportunities with agri-related industry and community leaders who face a range of similar leadership challenges in their work, family and community lives. This programs was value adding and aided a united front with enabling other farmers and business advocates to have a greater say in their industry, community, region and state.



**Training Workshops at  
The Van Diemen Project**

**This year we've held some very interesting & worthwhile training workshops at The Van Diemen Project, each workshop led by Chris Davis. The Governance Program was designed for directors, managers, board members and others interested in learning how a board should work, and what the roles and responsibilities of a board and committee members are. It explained what governance is, the purpose of boards, the legal requirements, and the process, protocol and policy of meetings as well as a basic overview of financial board reports. Our second training session provided us with a fantastic opportunity to build confidence in communicating in a range of settings. The workshop was full of tips and trick to help us develop our message.**

**Finally, the last workshop focused on Digital Branding. We learned what that was & how to harness it. We also learned how to use Facebook & Instagram effectively and to the advantage of our businesses. We look forward to arranging and attending more informative workshops next year.**



## Toastie Competition

Being local on the North West Coast of Tasmania, the hub of the dairy industry, I understand that we are chronically under serviced up here, and state wide. That people are reluctant to ask for help, be it too proud or they just don't know who or where to go to. I want to enable and advocate to local individuals that they can make a difference, that they matter and can contribute to their communities and regions.

We are all on a journey, developing confidence within ourselves, we are seeing the industry differently, following the past 18 months of the pandemic, we have been plagued with floods and draughts, but we have had record high livestock prices, dairy prices and land value alike. We are also seeing the opportunities that are around us, The Tasmanian Produce Collective a virtual farmers market formed during the pandemic, agri tourism is leading with gusto, with an announcement of \$1 billion dollars under the Recovery for Regional Tasmania Covid 19 relief and recovery fund.

Tasmanian Women in Agriculture mission is to connect, support and celebrate rural women. I'm extremely humbled and to be frank a little petrified to be the incoming chair of Tasmanian Women in Agriculture 2021 but I know that I am fully supported by our executive board, by our past executive and those that have left a legacy before us. Together we are acknowledging that women in agriculture are contributing to the viability and sustainability of our industry both in our state and nationally.

I look forward to working with the new executive, forging new and existing connections and support within our state, I look forward to continuing our projects from 2021 and new initiatives forming in 2022. Thank you



## MEANDER VALLEY GROUP ORCHID GARDEN & ROCKY GARDEN CAFE



15 members of TWIA and one gentleman visited the garden and orchid houses of Warren Brooks at Ulverstone on Thursday 11th November. Warren Brooks and his partner Val have an extraordinary collection of many varieties of orchids and along with their Friend Terry, they took us through the warm and cool growing orchid houses.

You had to look down, up and under all the different collections to find some beautiful flowering orchids. They have something flowering in each orchid house all the time and we all learnt so much about the care, flowering and life of this beautiful plant. We spent two hours with our hosts not only looking at the orchids but around their beautiful garden. The knowledge they were willing to share was extraordinary. Quite a few purchases were made not only of orchids but other lilies and bromeliads on the day.

Heading to Cate & Rupert's farm "Karooolalla" on Oct 17 was an absolute delight. The farm sits on 14 acres in Lalla where they farm sensitively and sustainably producing tube stock plants and fresh, free-range eggs. They also keep 3 jersey cows and dream of farming a range of fruit and vegetables to sell at their farm-gate stall.

It was a cracking day...really lovely. TWIA members enjoyed meeting new people, hearing about Cate and Rupert's plans for the farm, their vision of producing for the community and their year on the Sprout Producer Program.

It was such a simple format – low key and no budget. Sharing our BYO picnic lunches at the end was really very nice...a great way to relax together and chat in a beautiful setting. We have another day planned for the Autumn so watch this space!

## EAST TAMAR FARM VISIT KAROOLALLA FARM



We then travelled to Rocky Garden Café at Shearwater for lunch and Tim spoke to us on how they started in the jam and pickle making business 9 years ago and how it has grown from their converted garage to now the premises at Shearwater. They still make the jam in small batches which testifies to the wonderful flavours they still achieve with 52 varieties of jam, jellies, sauces and pickles and their prize-winning whisky marmalade. Tim and Alison also make fruit cakes and puddings which are renowned for their exceptional flavour and moisture.

Everyone enjoyed the day and there was plenty of chatter around the lunch table and the wonderful friendships made, thanks to TWIA, continued well into the afternoon.

Ad





## Vale Jenny French (1949-2021)

*A Tribute by  
Libby Taylor,  
Jeanette Reader &  
Annette Reed*

TWiA's purpose is to connect, support and celebrate Tasmanian rural women. Jenny was the embodiment of that ethos. For a brief period in the early years, she was an Executive committee member, but her passion was not so much in the talking and planning from a distance as the doing and connecting right here and now. Jenny was a connector.

"Jenny recognised two quiet souls with a lack of confidence and social skills in a group that already had social networks. She took us under her wing and included us in anything she was involved with, such as Beyond the Farm Gate Tours. These became great adventures and a focal point for meeting other members outside our area. Jenny made sure we mixed." (Libby & Jeanette)

She was an organiser of practical face to face events, including TWiA Gatherings when they came to her region. For many years she brought the Quamby Regional Group members together for regular catch ups and outings. Whether a meal at the Longford Pub, a gathering in someone's home or a tour around someone's farm, Jenny was always pulling people together. For many years, the Bracknell Pub, then Carrick Pub was packed full for dinner on Agfest Thursday thanks to Jenny.

On 26th June 2021, Tasmania's agricultural community lost a powerhouse and TWiA lost an important and influential member, representative and role model in Jenny French. Despite growing up in Launceston, Jenny's love was always for the land. After they married, Jenny worked side by side with her husband, Doug, on their farm at Whitmore. She loved farming and raised their two children, Ann and Stuart to love it too. Jenny was very actively involved in her local community, so when the opportunity came along in the nineties to join a women's farming organisation that was all about grassroots connection, she was all in.



West  
Tamar  
Regional  
Group  
Cabbage  
Tree Hill  
Wines

After a really slow start with ticket sales & wondering whether or not to cancel, then a week of really awful stormy weather, we were a little anxious as to how the West Tamar Regional Group's event at Cabbage Tree Hill Wines would turn out. We needn't have worried. It was wonderful...!

The sun shone, we were able to sit comfortably outside, we had delicious food, lovely wines, pleasant company...a really lovely way to spend a few hours on a Sunday. Julie, Rohan & their staff were fantastic hosts...friendly & welcoming. We enjoyed listening to Rohan's account of their journey from Darwin to Beaconsfield & how Cabbage Tree Hill Wines evolved. And, we hope to welcome Julie as a new member of TWiA. We thank TWiA for the mini grant that supported this event.



“In 2008 the Nebraskan Women in Agriculture came for an exchange visit and we organised a dinner at the Agfest site. Jenny threw herself into helping with the organising.” (Libby).

Jenny was a supporter. “She encouraged us to take on the Gathering at Poatina in 2000 and was an organiser for this event. In my role as Poatina’s Committee Chairperson, I found her a great support, always prepared to have a say and support me and help in other areas.” (Jeanette)

She was a part of the 2005 Fair Dinkum Food Campaign – a national campaign that pushed for clearer country of origin food labelling. She volunteered year after year for the TWiA Agfest roster and could always be counted on to turn up for Bluegum folding evenings (where volunteers rocked up at someone’s house to manually fold up to a thousand printed quarterly Bluegum newsletters in preparation for posting).

And Jenny loved to celebrate and have fun – other people’s achievements, special events from TWiA Gatherings to celebrating and showcasing Tasmanian produce at Parliament House (Canberra 2006).



The TWiA AGM was held on 31st August at the beautiful Windows on Westella. Thank you to all those who attended, it was amazing to see everyone.

We said a big thank you to Mandy Cooper for all her work as the Chair for TWiA over the previous year and welcomed Rebekah Frankcombe as the new chair of the TWiA Executive.

We also elected our new executive team: Rebekah Frankcombe, Belinda Hazell/Derani Power, Sigrid Nelson, Di Barr, Lesley Pycroft, Rachel Marshall, Chris Bishop, Deb Morice, Linda Groombridge and Laurie Krauss

As well as the regular features of an AGM we took the opportunity to introduce our scholarship recipients to our members. It gave us great pleasure to hear a little about each recipient and meet most of them. We were thrilled that Noel Beven from Extractas Bioscience and Jan Richardson from TWiA Rubicon Group (both Extractas BioScience and the Rubicon Group sponsored a Marcus Oldham Scholarship place) were able to attend and present awards.

Our scholarship recipients this year were:

**Cultivating Rural Excellence:**

Emma Jones/Anita Poulsen/Ella Hoban-Kelleher

**Sprout:**

Chris Bishop/Katt Ferrero/ Libby Graham

**Marcus Oldham:**

Lesley Pycroft/Rachel Gill/ Ashley Downie

Four Outstanding Contribution Awards were also presented. OCAs are given to acknowledge the unselfish and giving support of volunteer members who have gone above and beyond the call of volunteerism and have been overwhelmingly generous with their time, input and/or talents. Our OCA recipients were: Ella Anderson/ Mandy Cooper/ Larna Pittiglio/ Sam Sullivan.

For more details of the new executive team and OCA recipients please see our website: [taswomeninag.org](http://taswomeninag.org)





## King Island Visit

On Friday 19th November, TWiA were pleased to host a tour of King Island. The event was organised by Anita Poulsen, a member of TWIA's regional King Island group, and a local producer of beef cattle who runs a large family farming enterprise that spans across King Island and also north eastern Tasmania. Her commitment to support and raise the profile of women working across the agricultural industry is testament by pulling together such an impressive grassroots event on the Island.

Several mainland Tasmanian TWIA members took the opportunity to enjoy the hospitality extended by its Island members. The new TWIA chair, Rebekah Frankcombe, and other executive members were in attendance. Rebekah has a long association with women on the Island and took the opportunity to listen to the concerns and issues faced in the industry which is a key focus of TWIA. The start of the day was at the King Island Museum and a personalised tour was kicked off by local history expert Matt Archer. His knowledge of the key events and happenings in the community provided a 'locals' insight for visiting guests and he also shared anecdotes, and facts not even known to residents.

Next stop was the multi-species abattoir where Tammy Muir walked the group through the processes and shared how the facility was formed. The impressive community collaboration to get shareholders on board to make the abattoir a viable and successful operation gives insight into the tight knit rural community. She also noted that unemployment on King Island was virtually non-existent and the gap for commercial shooters was a current concern. The abattoir has ongoing demand for wallaby meat for both human consumption and pet food export.

The Scheelite mine at Grassy was a great chance to see what opportunities are about to develop with re-opening of the mine scheduled for early next year. The ladies were interested in how this may change the landscape of the town and any questions were expertly answered by Ernie our local contact for the mine.

The second part of the day consisted of a long table lunch elegantly set up in a paddock and catered by gourmet grazing boxes, & finished off with a private tasting of Native Gin with Heidi from King Island Distillery. After a short trip back on the bus, the remainder of the afternoon was spent at the recently established King Island Brewhouse. Sarah and Corey shared their story of construction of the local watering hole and the science behind the brewing. Claire Perry representative from King Island dairy also gave a knowledgeable cheese tasting.

Many of the participants of the tour then attended an evening dinner and presentation, "Foundations 2 Flourish", by Mary O'Brien from "Are you bogged mate". Mary is passionate about supporting rural men's mental health and tours the country sharing her message of support. Mary had also joined the bus tour and generously gave insights from the work she was doing for the group. Rebekah Frankcombe applauded the hospitality of the day and confirmed that these types of events that provide opportunities to network, learn and support each other are paramount to the mission of TWIA.





**might be more Jenny  
French**