



would like to thank



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.

www.taswomeninag.org
taswomeninag@outlook.com
ABN: 30 181 120 393



August 2021



CONNECTING, SUPPORTING & CELEBRATING
TASMANIAN RURAL WOMEN

Mandy Cooper



The evenings are getting colder but the days are warm and sunny and the grass continues to grow! It has been an amazing pasture season and as we start to lamb at Wilmore's Bluff there is plenty of feed for all. Welcome to the first Bluegum for 2021.

It has been an incredible year as Chair and when I stepped into the role in September 2020 I was full of trepidation as I was following in some amazing rural women's footsteps. However the Executive I have been surrounded with, have made me feel well supported and it's been an enjoyable 8 months.

As we emerged from the pandemic last year the push was on to reconnect and we held nine face-to-face events between the AGM and Christmas! There were 3 bus trips and numerous regional group events. You will find all the reports on the following pages.

One of the highlights of the 2020-year was winning the **Fonterra Australia Agriculture Award at the Tas Community Awards**. We celebrated the win in February 2021 with an awe-inspiring long table lunch on the veranda at the incredible Vaucluse homestead in the Midlands. It was one of the best meals I have ever eaten! Thank-you to Larna our Deputy Chair for everything you did to make our celebration such a memorable occasion.

I am a strong believer in cooperating with other organisations and I am proud of our joint venture this year with Rural Alive and Well (RAW) and Rotary Tasmania Community Care (RTCC). Our partnership is named "**Boots on the Ground**". All money raised is being invested into mental health and wellness projects on the ground in rural Tasmania. You can read about Mary O'Brien's visit and the pilot program at Grumpy Goat Co Care Farm in this bulletin. A special thank you to Deputy Chair Rebekah Francombe for leading this project in the Smithton region. Indeed it is the first Care Farm pilot project in Tasmania and will be evaluated by the suicide prevention team at UTas.

On the 30th October 2020, with great anticipation following restrictions being lifted from the epidemic of Covid19, I boarded Sharp Airlines for a flight to the majestic and wild King Island, located in the Bass Strait between Victoria and northwest coast of Tasmania, a place well-known for its world-class cheese, beef, fresh seafood, very clean air and incredible golf.



King Island

Trip

a report from
**Rebekah
Francombe**



Tasmanian Women in Agriculture's mission to connect, support and celebrate rural women was well and truly received, with over 40 King Island women attending. There were conversations around learning new skill sets for industry and those wishing to tap into the Ag-Tourism industry, health care for women on the island, support for wellbeing and mental health on the island and also the isolation that comes with being on the island, for individuals, families and industry alike.

Following this trip to the island there has been planning around a "Home Grown" bus tour on the island including a tour of the island, the community garden, King Island Distillery, preserving of goods, tour of lighthouse ending at Ana Pimentas – "Meet your Beef" for dinner and an outdoor fire pit.

The entire event was organised by Anita Poulsen, who is participating in a the 2021 "Creating Rural Excellence" program, thanks to a scholarship from TWiA.

**Communities
in Control
Conference
Think Bigger:
Fix Everything**

**17-18 May, 2021
Melbourne**

**A report by
Rebekah
Francombe**

**Successful
Incredible
Influential**

We face big problems - inequality, climate change, health, education... But “we can cope” with big changes. We have all proven that with the changes we have made since the beginning of the pandemic. The theme for the conference was, no more band aids, excuses or bullshit. Our time is now, let’s do what has to be done. Let’s seize the day.



The inspiring keynotes included 2021 Australian of the Year, Grace Tame, author and investigative journalist Jess Hill and Dr Hugh Mackay. They shared personal journeys of abuse, power and control, the “kindness revolution”, the #LetHerSpeak campaign, how our emotional security comes from belonging, that kindness is our power for change.

Attendance to conferences such as this helps to create an environment within our organisation that inspires both personal growth and professional development (which are often overlooked in a rural farm setting). My sincere thanks and appreciation to Murchison Independent MLC Ruth Forrest and Tasmanian Women in Agriculture for the opportunity to attend this conference.

The Executive is moving to embrace sustainability of the Executive throughout my term as Chair. Volunteers to this organisation have traditionally given many hours of time. The Executive has recognised this and has outsourced the preparation, and printing of Bluegum, the AGM report and other printed matter.

The Book Committee wound up earlier this year. All funds raised will be used for an art installation in Scottsdale and a new committee has been formed to oversee this project.

Marcus Oldham Scholarship selections are in progress and we look forward to sending 2 rural women to the Leadership course in September. We are grateful to support from Tas Alkaloids to fund a third place. We have also provided 3 scholarships to the Rural Business Tas CRE course and are supporting 3 Sprout scholarships.



Governance training, Chemcert and First Aid courses will be delivered this winter and please hold the date of 31st August for our AGM. Any member wanting to volunteer on the Executive please complete the nomination form enclosed with this edition of Bluegum. I guarantee you will learn new skills, meet new friends and feel a real sense of connection to this vibrant organisation.

Cheer Mandy

Photo: Chair Mandy (In red) with TWiA members at Vaucluse Estate wearing their boots for Boots On the Ground initiative. Reports on both events on pages 4 and 5.



Tasmanian Community Achievement Award

February 2021 saw TWiA members come together to celebrate winning the Fonterra Australia's Community Achievement Award for Agriculture with a four course long table lunch at the picturesque Vacluse Estate.

The award applauds our unsung heroes and high achievers working on land or marine farming who work tirelessly to provide us with food and drink. Receiving this award was a timely reminder of the dedication, hard work and ongoing contributions past and present make to the Tasmanian community.

A highlight was hearing from a number of previous TWiA chairs about what this award had meant to them. Their talks all touched on not only what they had given to TWiA in terms of the projects they had championed over the years, but also on the support, camaraderie and sense of purpose TWiA had given in return. Lifelong friendships had been forged, skills learned, confidence instilled and a self-belief provided through their experiences in TWiA.

Another highlight of the day was the superb catering by Grazing Tasmania featuring produce from the Tasmanian Produce Collective and the chance hear directly from the producers about what they were eating and its providence.



The day was a huge success and we thank all those who attended, as well as all those who have, and are, contributing to TWiA, making it the wonderful organisation it is.

Boots on the Ground is funding a pilot project with Grumpy Goat Co. Care Farm to use the therapeutic use of animals and farming practices to aid and assist in the recovery and healing from some mental health, social and physical challenges or conditions.

By investing in this innovative pilot project, Boots on the Ground will be able to provide a weekly visit to Grumpy Goat Co. Care Farm for local pre-adolescent school children, who have been identified as benefiting from animal therapy. The project will be supported by the University of Tasmania Suicide Prevention Team.

It is hoped that the project will enhance participants social, emotional and cognitive functions, and improve the efficiency of mental health treatments and outcomes in pre-adolescent aged students through sensory and holistic therapies.



TWiA's Rebekah Francombe is leading the project, saying that she "cannot wait to see the results of the project and that *Boots on the Ground* welcomes the opportunity to be a part of the pilot project".



Boots on the Ground supports Grumpy Goat Co. Care Farm



Boots on the Ground

Boots on the Ground is a partnership between Tasmanian Women in Agriculture, Rural Alive and Well (RAW), and Rotary Tasmania Community Care.

It's focus is to raise awareness and to provide practical on-the-ground support for rural Tasmanians to improve their well-being. The partnership allows the three organisations to combine their capabilities and expertise with a common purpose of assisting and improving rural Tasmanian's mental health and wellbeing.



Boots on the Ground funded Mary O'Brien's "Are You Boggled Mate" workshops across the north of the state in March. All nine workshops were well attended, with TWiA providing sponsorship to support the catering at three of the workshops. A fundraising lunch, held in May at Cataract on Paterson in Launceston, was also a success, bring the fundraising total to-date to over \$50,000. Be on the look-out for other Boots on the Ground initiatives as these funds are now being distributed by the organising committee, represented by two TWiA members, Mandy Cooper and Rebekah Francombe pictured above with Mary O'Brien during the "Are You Boggled Mate" workshops.

A 'drought hub' will be established in Tasmania to improve regional drought resilience, with the support of \$8 million in funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund successfully secured by the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA). TWiA is seen as a key partner contributor to this project providing in-kind support over the life of the Hub, with Belinda Hazell acting as our Project Lead.



Drought Hub

The 'Tasmanian Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub' will comprise of researchers, primary producers and community groups, working together to enhance drought resilient practice adoption and research in Tasmania. It will be part of a strong national network of eight hubs located in key agricultural and climatic zones around Australia, funded under the Commonwealth Government's Drought Resilience Research and Adoption program.

With a strong focus on collaboration, each hub will be regionally focused and aim to ensure agricultural research is useful and accessible, increasing opportunities to commercialise innovation. Tasmanian Chief Project Investigator, TIA's Associate Professor Kathy Evans, said the hub would provide a unique opportunity to establish a strong community network to improve drought resilience.

"The hub, for the first time, brings together the major players, farmers, land and water managers, researchers, and Tasmanian Aboriginal people, who, together can reduce the risks associated with drought in Tasmania," she said. "As hot and dry years increase in number, a multi-stakeholder partnership is needed to innovate for drought resilience, optimal water management and self-reliance".

Once all the hub documentation is signed, a strategic process will commence. TWiA will reach out to our Network to see what research is needed which will be fed back into the planning process to develop research actions that are community/needs driven. Whilst the main focus will be on drought, this Hub will also cover other climate events such as flood.



Beyond the Farm Gate Tours

Tasman Peninsula

Our Beyond the Farm Gate (BTFG) tours have proven to be highly successful in keeping us connected – we just love checking out what others are doing!

On 31 October 2020, a tour to the Tasman Peninsula, sponsored by the Australian Government and the National Drought and Flood Response and Recovery Agency, showed what would have been on offer if our 2020 Gathering had occurred Face-to-Face. Their farming community is bursting with opportunity and is just waiting for Tasmanians to explore more fully. Our day started aboard our bus leaving from Cambridge Park. It was a chance to catch up with friends, and to connect with new ones.

Our first stop was Boomer Bay, where we were hosted by Susie and Ruby Daly from the Daly Potato Company and Hell Fire Distillery. The Daly family grow and process about 600 tonnes of potatoes a year, with approximately 20 per cent of the crop considered second grade. We listened to a great story of where frustration about feeding unwanted potatoes to cows, turned into amazing potato-based salad products and gin and vodka spirits for us to enjoy.

Premaydena Hill Farm, hosted by Ella Haban Kelleher, was our next stop. It is a first generation farming family who settled in the Tasman Peninsula after searching for the perfect place for their farm. Their property stood out due to its carrying capacity, historic rainfall and loamy soil type which is a great advantage for pasture growth. They have established native vegetation and increased the water storage on farm to carry approximately 100 Black Angus breeding cows and a three hectare vineyard. In 2019, they transitioned into direct-to-consumer beef sales, delivering professionally butchered sides of their beef to Tasmanian consumers. Their story is one of maximising the most out of their farm including their produce – their beef sales initiative certainly held them in good stead during the COVID-19 disruption, which showed the wider community's desire to reconnect with locally grown produce.

Most of us woke on Sunday with feelings of trepidation, wondering what the weather would be like, would the rain hold off or spoil our time at Marion's Vineyard...? Thankfully the weather played along and our time at Marion's was wonderful.

Cynthea gave us an overview of how the family came & settled in Tasmania from Cyprus, via San Francisco & Melbourne. Her story was sprinkled with humour and was really interesting. She talked in detail about her wines & the methods she uses to grow her grapes...biodynamics, a holistic, ecological & ethical approach applied to farming, gardening, food & nutrition rooted in the work of Rudolf Steiner. We were given an opportunity to "dynamise the 500, look at the flow form & see how the horn manure is made!" (You will have to visit Marion's & ask Cynthea to explain exactly what all that means!)

Lunch was served in a beautiful taverna style space with awesome views of the Tamar River (the views from anywhere on the property are incredible). The Greek buffet lunch was delicious...beautiful flavours paired with beautiful wines.

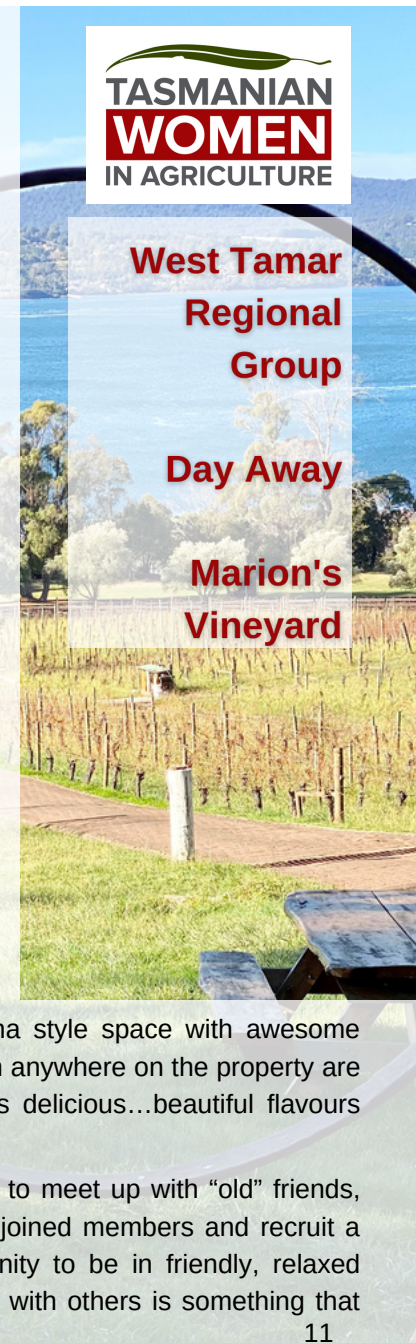
This sell out event was another chance to meet up with "old" friends, make new ones, welcome some newly joined members and recruit a new member on the day. The opportunity to be in friendly, relaxed surroundings & be able to chat & laugh with others is something that we all valued.



West Tamar Regional Group

Day Away

Marion's Vineyard





West Tamar Regional Group

Day Away

Fork n Farm Homestead

Huge thanks to Fork n Farm Homestead for providing us, the West Tamar Regional Group, with the platform for our “Day Away” event. It was exactly what we wanted it to be...a chance to get away from normal routine & in relaxed & friendly surroundings reconnect with old friends & make new ones.

We had a perfect setting with views across to the Tamar River. The weather played along nicely. Cool & a bit blustery to start with, but bright...and dry! We were served delicious home locally made/grown food & drinks. The whole event showcased many of the workshops that Fork n Farm hold...food included cheese, smoked meats, charcuterie, sourdough bread & pastries, preserve & pickles. Drinks were flowing...champagne, various wines & cider from Swinging Gate Vineyard, & home-produced gin. And we all received a “party bag” with home-made soap.



After lunch, we travelled to the Port Arthur Lavender farm, where we heard from Clare Dean the struggles of starting an innovative business that transformed their family farm struggling through drought conditions to remain viable. Clare spoke about their leap of faith in 2012, where they planted their first 10,000 lavender plants.

They purchased the Port Arthur waterfront property and planted in 6,500 lavender plants in 2014, establishing a visitor centre and essential oil distillery to value add their lavender. The Dean's now grow about 50,000 lavender plants and offer a quality range of over 70 lavender products at their interactive visitor centre and café.

In mid 2019, the Deans purchased a 1850's cottage in Bridge Street, Richmond, where they have restored this building to its former glory. If you are ever in Richmond, you will see this beautiful building showcasing all their handmade products. A great example of resilience and transformation.

Our group included long established members, some that had fairly recently joined, some who had heard of the organisation & wanted to find out more. Everyone was really impressed with how friendly & interesting TWiA members are...I think membership will go up in the next days or so! Some had travelled across from Rocky Cape; others were up from Hobart. We all chatted & laughed, exchanged stories, found inspiration to try new things...all a very worthwhile & enjoyable experience.



The Northern Beyond the Farm Gate tour was a fantastic day hosted by East Tamar TWiA. There was plenty of time to relax, chat and enjoy the variety that comes with farming.

We visited 6 wonderful locations and enjoyed a delicious long table lunch featuring produce from the farms we visited. The menu included Tasmanian Devil Mountain Pepper from Bronzewing Farm at Lalla, heritage bred, free-range port from Fork it Farm and wine from Brook Eden Vineyard at Labrina, single origin beef courtesy of Summerlea Farm and produce from Felds Farm market garden at North Lilydale, and a beautiful tour of the historic gardens at Lalla Flower Farm at Lalla.



On 12th November 2020 we embarked on our first “beyond the farm gate” tour since Covid. It was great get together again, welcome some new members and visit 3 unique agricultural enterprises, all within 10 minutes of Deloraine.

Tasmanian Berries was our first stop, where owners Andrew and Stephanie Terry took us on a guided tour, sharing stories of the admiration they have for their Pacific Islanders workers and punnets of the most delicious strawberries.

Next we visited Tim and Pip Schmidt’s mixed farming operation “Woodlands” to learn about hemp. Tim shared his passion and range of products from their “Hemp Shop” helping to inform us of its many uses. Lunch followed at Villarett Gardens, where Graeme and Linda Chugg served a sumptuous feast. Our final stop was at Elgaar Organic Farm where Joe (pictured) and Antonia Gretschnann and their extended family produce organic milk, cream, cheese and grains on their Moltema farm using traditions dating back over 600 years to Joe’s Bavarian ancestors. Their motto is “Healthy Land for Good Pasture for Happy Cows for Perfect Milk”. A treat at the end of the tour were platters of cheeses, nuts and dried figs.

We appreciate the TWiA mini grant that subsidised this great day and for generosity of the our farm hosts for their hospitality.

