



## Welcome to the October edition of *Member News!*

### 26TEN

Last week was 26TEN Week runs which highlighted the importance and benefits of having a workforce with the skills needed today in a workplace more complex than in the past.

Literacy and numeracy mean more than being able to read, write and add up. It means being able to speak, listen and think creatively when interacting with each other and in a digital or online environment.

Unfortunately, one in two adult Tasmanians don't have the literacy skills they need to fully engage with family, community and work. Even more have low numeracy. Already over 100 Tasmanian business, community and government organisations have joined, or have received a 26TEN employer or community grant.

If you have workers who could benefit from increased literacy and numeracy skills you can find out more at [www.26ten.tas.gov.au](http://www.26ten.tas.gov.au) (Further info— see pages 3, 4 & 5)

### AG VISA

PET has been supporting the National Farmers Federation in seeking a dedicated agricultural visa that would support labour demand in agriculture.

A dedicated ag visa would allow workers to return year on year for up to five years and avoid the necessity to train new workers from scratch every year.

After previous rejections, at the NFF Congress last week the Morrison government [recommitted](#) to the idea of a dedicated ag visa. However, we need you, as farmers, to engage with the National Harvest Labour Information Service (NHLIS) to provide the information about labour shortages. The NHLIS is the data-collection service being used by the government to measure labour challenges in the agriculture sector and it is crucial that farmers register their labour statistics/issues with them.

Without more data it will be difficult to get support for the proposed ag visa.

Please contact the NHLIS via their [website](#). You will be required to complete the one-page [Harvest Form](#) and email it to [mildura@madec.edu.au](mailto:mildura@madec.edu.au). Alternatively, they can call 1800 062 332 between 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday.

Unfortunately, the service's focus is on current and future labour shortages, meaning growers whose crops have already been harvested this year are unable to register their labour shortfalls through the service.

We would appreciate if members could provide details directly to us at [pet@primaryemployers.com.au](mailto:pet@primaryemployers.com.au) outlining the **location of their property, crop type, number of workers required, number of workers used, and timeframe of the harvest**. We will then pass it on to the NFF.

### EMPLOYMENT MYTH

Paying a salary is often seen as an easy way of running a payroll, the employer knows how much to pay each week without working out variables as to overtime, allowances, etc., and the employee knows exactly how much will be going into their bank account. However, it is not the case that by paying a salary the award does not apply.

If an employee is covered by an award then the provisions of the award, such as overtime, allowances, etc. still apply and the salary paid must at least be equivalent to what the employee would have been paid in accordance with the award.

If you are looking to use a salary for an employee, then you need to work out what is expected of the employee in relation to overtime and allowances in striking the rate of pay. It is also important that the employee keep a record of hours worked so that at any time it can be determined if the salary is covering what would otherwise have been payable.

The most important aspect of having a salary is to have a written contract of employment clearly setting out what the salary covers in terms of monetary entitlements.

PET can assist you in preparing written contracts of employment that cover all aspects of having a salaried employee who would otherwise be paid pursuant to the Award.

### AWARD UPDATE

The review of modern awards continues, with new provisions in relation to domestic violence leave and **casual conversion clauses already being inserted into most awards**.

However, the Fair Work Commission has not yet determined when the changes to the overtime provisions for casuals under the Horticulture Award will commence. PET has supported the National Farmers Federation submissions that there should be an adequate lead time to allow growers to prepare. **(The Casual Conversion Clauses to be distributed to employees can be found on our website in the Member's area).**

## FARM HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE

The Farm Household Allowance (FHA) is a government initiative providing a payment for farming families in financial hardship

Applications need to be in by November 30 to receive the 2 x \$6,000 payments (which are for this year only) in addition to the fortnightly allowance. Farmers should look at the [FHA Website](#) as eligibility criteria apply. Alternatively, the Rural Financial Counselling Service

(RFCS) can also help you claim FHA. You can call them on 1800 686 175.

## Meet Your Committee

Your Committee is continuing to facilitate meetings around the state to allow members to catch up.

On 21 February, 2019 we will be meeting in Deloraine. More details closer to the date.

\* \* \*

*Felicity Richards*, President



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## BIG ON LEARNING, BIGGER ON EXPERIENCE

### STUDY AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE AND ADVANCE YOUR CAREER

For Mady Muirhead, the flexibility of an Associate Degree means she can fit her study in and around her work and farm duties.

"It's suited me really well. It's meant I can keep doing things like work with my horses and teaching as well as get my Uni degree and it makes it feel like a lot less work.

"Two years isn't a lot to commit to and it's definitely a course that you can be doing with something else in your life."

The new two-year associate degrees offered by University College are ideal for students who are already working in industry, as they can be studied full-time or part-time.

**To find out more about studying an associate degree or supporting your staff to undertake study, visit [utas.edu.au/college](http://utas.edu.au/college) or phone 1300 363 864.**



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**Get your workers the reading, writing and maths skills they need ...**

**and watch your farm and business thrive**



Do you ever wonder why an employee doesn't follow through on your request? Mixes fertiliser incorrectly? Doesn't fill in an important form?

Perhaps your team needs a literacy and numeracy overhaul. Skills good enough only five years ago often don't meet current needs.

Or you might know there is a problem, but aren't sure what to do.

### ***A 26TEN grant may be just what you need***

Building reading, writing, maths, and communication skills means more confident workers, less injuries and improved productivity.

26TEN offers grants of up to \$50,000 to make sure your workers have the skills they need to do the job right.

Companies that have benefitted from grants include Blue Hills Honey, Statewide Independent Wholesalers, Treloar & Son and Houston's Farm.

*"We're really glad we've collaborated with 26TEN on these grant projects...if it's successful for us and our people, it will be good for everyone."*

*Anthony Houston, Houston's Farm*

Contact Jennifer Dunbabin on 03 6165 6122 or [grants@26ten.tas.gov.au](mailto:grants@26ten.tas.gov.au).



Stakeholders:  
Communication Channel:

Potential 26TEN members (business)  
Direct Contact/website/social media/mainstream  
media

## Key Messages

- Your business will benefit if we work together to raise adult literacy and numeracy levels in Tasmania (*targeted to particular sectors*).
- 26TEN is a network that can help you as you help others.
- Only by working together as a state can we raise adult literacy and numeracy levels – government can't do it alone.

## Talking Points

### What's the problem and what are we doing about it?

- The 2011-12 Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) survey found only 49.8% of adult Tasmanians had adequate literacy skills for work and life.
  - Tasmanians are not reaching their full potential, and neither is our state.
- The figures are bad for the rest of Australia (only 53.5% of Australians have adequate literacy skills) and other OECD countries
  - But they are slightly worse for Tasmania
- The difference is, in Tasmania, we are doing something about it, through 26TEN.
- A new ten-year framework, *26TEN Tasmania: Tasmania's Strategy for Adult Literacy and Numeracy 2016-2025*, was launched by the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP, on 27 October 2015.
  - It builds on the progress made as a result of the *Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan 2010-2015*.

### What does low literacy look like?

- People find it hard to believe that 48% of adult Tasmanians don't have the reading, writing and maths skills they need to participate fully in family life and employment.
  - To understand this statistic, we need to think about the things people are now being asked to do to get by in life today
  - The huge demands on people in today's world to use technology, do things online, comply with workplace health and safety etc, means level of functional literacy and numeracy the average person needs today is higher than it was 50 years ago.
- In real terms, it means that one in two Tasmanians has difficulty with everyday literacy



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and numeracy tasks like applying for a drivers licence, booking a ticket online, reading a bank statement, understanding safety signs or reading to their kids.

## What is 26TEN?

- 26TEN refers to the 26 letters of the alphabet and the 10 digits we use for reading, writing and counting. The tools for literacy and numeracy. The tools for life.
- 26TEN focuses on building a genuine collective effort to raise adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania. Engaging business, community, government and individuals to make a difference together.
- Over 100 Tasmanian business, community and government organisations have joined, or have received a 26TEN employer or community grant.
- 26TEN helps to connect Tasmanians with a range of programs and services offered by member organisations and it helps businesses and organisations find out how they can take their own action to contribute to the collective effort.
- 26TEN is supported by:
  - an broad 26TEN Coalition – a group of Tasmanians committed to motivating a broader range of sectors in Tasmania to join the effort
  - an accessible and friendly website [www.26ten.tas.gov.au](http://www.26ten.tas.gov.au) that focuses on building collective action for the 26TEN Network and informs Tasmanians about adult literacy programs and services and how they can get involved.
  - a targeted 26TEN grants program to fund projects to improve the literacy skills of Tasmanians in workplaces and 26TEN communities
  - free literacy awareness workshops to raise awareness and promote action
  - free plain English workshops to encourage a commitment to clearer communication
  - easy access to a 1300 00 2610 service providing a free and confidential guide to refer Tasmanians seeking help.

## Why should my business be involved?

- Improving adult literacy and numeracy is key to the economic future of Tasmania.
- Every business has a role to play, and every business can benefit.
- Improving the literacy and numeracy skills of your workforce will improve productivity, compliance, reduce safety incidents and help your business adapt to change.
- The 26TEN members and grants programs can help you take action. Join businesses like Nyrstar and Taswater that have already seen the benefits.