



President's Report

Presented by Ben Grubb
2022 Annual General Meeting

15th June, 2023

Members,

I present to you the Presidents Report for Primary Employers Tasmania for the financial year 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

As at 31 December, 2022 we had 485 members. We had 35 new members join for the first time during the year and after resignations due to retirement or selling of their business, achieved a net increase of 10 members compared with the previous year.

Our Workplace Relations Director- Mr Andrew Cameron provided the following services to members during 2022:

- 114 Employment Contracts
- 11 Individual Flexibility Agreements
- 36 Occupation of House Agreements
- 28 Assisted Terminations
- 3 Matters before Fair Work Commission
- 436 Incoming phone calls from members

Andrew also gave numerous employment related presentations to the following organisations in 2022:

Safe Farming Tasmania, Fruit Growers Tasmania, Dairy Tas, RBT, TasTafe.

Andrew also represented PET at meetings throughout the year with: Safe Farm Reference Group, Forum of Rural Stakeholders, State Government Ag Co-ordinators, NFF Council, NFF Workforce committee (1 in person 5 on-line) and Four Farmsafe meetings.

Primary Employers Tasmania had representation and community engagement at the following events;

AgFest, Campbell Town & Flinders Island Shows, TAPG AGM & Expo, Rural Business Tasmania AGM, Farmsafe national conference in Canberra, Lunch during Farm safety week and an Ag Field Day at Jericho.

Winners of the two \$5,000 **Agri-Development Scholarships** offered jointly by PET and Tasmanian Pork Industry were:

1. TAPG (Tasmanian Agriculture Productivity Group)- who used the funds to bring down Michael McQueen, multi-award winning speaker, trend forecaster and best selling author of 9 books in October. In his presentation he emphasised that Gen Z were reluctant to communicate in writing and liked instant messaging. Technological improvements were fast tracked during Covid and Artificial Intelligence and machine based learning, such as virtual reality were big items for the future.

2. Tasmanian Agriculture Educators Network- which funded members to attend the Biannual conference of the national association (NAAE) in Toowoomba.

While initial interest and applications for these substantial scholarships can best be described as “slow”, word has got around that the application process is not onerous and there is fair degree of flexibility around how the funds are utilised. Any organisation or individual can apply to attend a conference or event, participate in training, facilitate the attendance of a guest speaker or organise an agricultural event in Tasmania.

AgCard

AgCard started from an initial idea by PET committee member at the time Michelle Lawrence, from Janefield Dairies who suggested Agriculture needed an industry recognised on-line training tool similar to what had been implemented in the construction industry via their White Card which had a significant impact reducing injuries in the building & construction sector. It was launched in July 2020 to assist farmers to achieve best practice. The practical online training portal was funded by WorkCover Tasmania and supported by Safe Farming Tasmania, Australian Wool Innovation, Tasmanian government and most recently Rabobank via Rabo Client Councils and Rabo Community Fund who have come on board as major sponsor. Since its launch, there have been over 3,300 individual users and 5000 enrolments in the five modules. Once a module is successfully completed a certificate is issued to that person which they can attach to their resume. Employers can also use it as an initial basic induction tool, especially for those employees working in Agriculture for the first time who have little knowledge. Agcard does not replace the need for business's to provide their own workplace induction. 50% of the users are school aged students across the country, with 30% being employees currently in agricultural workplaces and 20% are employers or teachers assessing the content for their own use. AWI have been using the Wool Harvesting module, which they funded in their school based careers program.

Feedback from Employers, employees and students considering different career options has been overwhelmingly positive. Teachers of Agriculture in high schools around the country have given feedback that Agcard is a great tool to spark initial interest in Agriculture as a career option while also making them aware some of the basic health & safety practices to consider. It starts the conversation. There is a new module being launched June 30 and Agcard is

about to expand and be rolled out nationally ... so stay tuned. Led by our incredible Project Officer – Clare Peltzer, we are very proud of the strong foundation we have formed to call Agcard a successful initiative of Primary Employers Tasmania.

IR Reforms

The Federal election held in May, 2022 saw the Federal Labor party elected to government and with it the beginning of the largest Industrial Relations reform in over a decade. At the end of the year the government passed the *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022*. This legislation amends the Fair Work Act to change a number of existing rules and introduces a range of new workplace laws. The new laws start on different dates, with the first, fairly innocuous laws commencing on 7th December, 2022.

- Changed objectives to promote job security and gender equality
- Prohibition on pay secrecy
- New protected attributes including breastfeeding, gender identity and intersex status
- Removal of Zombie agreements timeframe.

It was the undue haste and lack of consultation by the government pushing through these changes to the Fair Work Act before parliament rose for the year that unsettled most employers, not just those in agriculture. It caused a lot of stress for employers and managers with many scrambling to keep abreast of changes and mitigate potential compliance risk.

The other big changes will occur in 2023 with a second tranche of major reforms to happen in 2024. It is during these unsettling Industrial Relations times that we rely on organisations like PET to keep us fully up to speed with any changes, so we don't inadvertently breach any act. And to lobby on our behalf via National Farmers Federation to ensure our employer voice is heard.

TFGA Collaboration

The Primary Employers Tasmania Committee works hard to create good working relationships with other peak agricultural bodies across Tasmania, with the ultimate goal of providing a more powerful and unified voice for Agriculture in Tasmania. Throughout 2022 we worked very hard to form a collaborative alliance with TFGA. By the end of the year the board of TFGA and PET committee had signed off on a guiding principles document that will be the foundation for signing a formal Memorandum of Understanding. I might be a

bit bias, but I think agriculture is the best industry in Tasmania. We are an industry that grows things. We grow the food people eat, and sometimes we grow the clothes people wear. But we can be a scattered lot, with photocopiers, offices and ideas dispersed across multiple organisations. We need to stop duplicating resources, churning through volunteers time or talking about the same topics across multiple meetings. We need to lobby together, because our industry deserves a united voice on one of the largest issues facing our sector- employment and workplace relations.

Snapshot of our Strategic Plan that guided us in 2022

Our Vision: Making employment fairer, safer and easier for employers and employees

Our Mission: To be the first point of contact for the Tasmanian agriculture sector for workplace advice

Our Values:

- **We are industry experts** - We have extensive knowledge and experience that we bring to every conversation with our members
- **We are committed to you** - Let us be your HR department. We see ourselves as an extension of your business and are here to help.
- **Our reputation precedes us** - We have been helping Tasmanian agriculture businesses for over 60 years. Trust, respect, professionalism and integrity is at our core

We are here to help Tasmanian businesses in agriculture, agribusiness and agritourism, navigate the complexities of employment. We also provide a voice for Tasmanian agri-employers through our advocacy efforts.

In closing, on behalf of the committee, I would like to sincerely thank Andrew Cameron for his roles as both Executive Officer to Primary Employers Tasmania and continuing to provide our members with excellent workplace advice as our Workplace Relations Director. We also owe a great deal of gratitude and thanks to Lindie Lupo our Finance and Administration officer, Clare Peltzer-Project Officer for Agcard and Locky West- Wool Industry Development Project Officer (up till June '22)

Lastly, to the volunteer committee for 2022:

Steph Terry, Melissa Fergusson, Sophie Greenacre, Marcus James, Ferdie Foster, Daryl Lohrey, Monique Lubiana, Kate Gofton, Ailsa Hooper ... thank you to all of you for your time, contribution and dedication to Primary Employers Tasmania.

In particular, I would like to make mention and thank, Steph as Vice President and Melissa as Treasurer making up the executive team for 2022 which involved a number of zoom meetings outside of scheduled committee meetings. Both also Chaired sub-committees during the year. As an organisation PET would not have achieved what it did without your invaluable contributions. THANK YOU!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Grubb', written in a cursive style.

Benjamin Grubb
President