

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Readers,

Sweltering heat is how many of us will remember February of 2018 as we rush headlong into March. Various plants in my garden are telling me that rain is coming, and I hope when it does it is kind and consistent and not chaotic and furious!

We have been busy already as an industry association working on plans for regional field days, getting updates on current projects and their progress and discussing how our levies should be directed!

At the Passionfruit SIAP (Strategic Investment Advisory Panel) meeting earlier in February, I heard our industry described in two ways that struck me. The first was as a "young industry" and the second was as an industry with possibly "the purest inverse relationship of supply to price (demand)".

Relative to other primary production crops I guess the commercial passionfruit industry could be described as young! I am sure, however, there are some growers who have been growing passionfruit for over 30 years that may disagree! And supply and price... well, we all live that curvy rollercoaster every day!

The role of the SIAP is to discuss where our levies are spent and directed, and what the best return on investment is for our levy spend. It is important to keep these two things in mind to guide us as we discuss future projects and progress our "young" industry and try to smooth out that supply so that the peaks of production are not our troughs of returns!

The SIAP is one of those meetings that appears to take place behind closed doors with faceless men and women directing the industry that WE are all a part of. I want to assure growers that this is not the case and explain a little about this process, so we can all have a say in our future, a future that we as levy payers fund.

On the SIAP, we are fortunate to have a diversity of experience around the table; growers who have been growing for closer to the 30-year mark and growers that have been growing for less than two or three seasons and everything in between. This diversity enables us to bring together a wealth of experience from both within the industry and from the wider world of research, agriculture and business.

In addition to our industry relationship manager from Hort Innovation, Brad Mills, and the independent chair, the members of the SIAP are all growers!



Melissa Smith, Ross Brindley, Jane Richter, Brian Westwood and myself do our very best to gauge what industry want and be sure that our levy funds head in that direction. Under discussion are all current projects and which issues are most vital for the industry into the future.

How can you help us as a grower? Well, each of these members is more than happy to listen to what you think our most critical issues are and try to see that they are addressed by research and development and marketing projects.

Want to help more? There are vacancies on the SIAP currently and, if you are interested, you will be pleased to know that the time commitments are only a couple of days a year.

A better geographical representation of growers would always be welcome as different issues are experienced in different regions! SEE PAGE 3

It is with great excitement that Passionfruit Australia are bringing together our first regional field day in March. This will be held on the Sunshine Coast and is the first of a series of field days to be delivered by Passionfruit Australia over the next four years. **Soil Health** is the topic of the day with some fantastic presenters lined up and a farm visit. The other opportunity that a field day brings is the networking with other growers, sharing ideas and knowing you're not alone! Please come along and work with us to build a cohesive, collaborative industry with all our best interests at heart! SEE PAGE 16 for details

These field days will come to all regions and we will be working with you to establish the best time for delivery and best locations! So, don't be shy about letting us know what you want to learn more about and how and when you'd like to learn it!

I am an eternal optimist, so it is with real conviction that I believe that 2018 will be a great year for our industry and for us as growers.

Best wishes,

Tina