



President's Report

Dennis Chant, New South Wales



Welcome to your annual edition of The Passion Vine produced by Passionfruit Australia Inc (PAI) on behalf of the whole industry. Growers and other industry stakeholders who regularly attend passionfruit field days and events often comment on how valuable they find the information in our printed journal. It has become an important reference resource for the industry.

For those in the industry that do not have access to earlier copies, informative articles from those publications can now be found in the new Passionfruit Australia Resource Library on the website at bit.ly/PAI-RL along with a host of useful resources. Many of the previous editions of The Passion Vine can also be read digitally via the website at bit.ly/PAI-TPV

As will be noted in the market reports and regional roundups, the extreme wet weather conditions in the first half of this calendar year have proven challenging across all of the major east coast growing regions. After the record production figures achieved in the 2024 financial year of 5,654 tons it will be of great interest to see if our growers can achieve the same results in FY25.

If you are interested in seeing more data about the passionfruit industry, you can access the Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook online at bit.ly/HSH-23-24. The annual Handbook provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date data on 75+ horticultural products, including fruit, vegetables, nuts, nursery, turf, and flowers. It draws on multiple supply chain sources to cover retail and foodservice use, exports and imports, state-by-state production, wholesale value, and volume. The handbook for the year ending 30 June 2024 is published by Hort Innovation and was produced by the multi-industry levy investment Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2021-22 to 2023-24 (MT21006).

Many of our levy paying growers will be aware from information provided in the Passiflora e-Newsletters and discussions at our industry forums, that PAI has commenced consultation with industry stakeholders.

This is to assist in preparing a submission to facilitate changes to the existing levies to fund obligations associated with biosecurity response and activity components through the introduction of biosecurity levies. The proposal originally put forward for consultation by PAI suggested a reduction in the marketing levy currently set at 20 cents per carton to 15 cents and 5 cents being assigned to the biosecurity levies, leaving no net change to overall levy amounts deducted from growers.

Following initial consultation with growers and other industry stakeholders it has been suggested that it would be in the industry's best interests to take this opportunity to reallocate all levy funds, except those required for biosecurity purposes, to Hort Innovation's R&D programs. This would, to some extent, improve outcomes for the industry which has a comparatively low level of industry funding that is spread 50/50 between R&D and Marketing activities. It is PAI's intent to review its original discussion paper to reflect this increased emphasis on R&D funding and consult further with industry before a submission is finalised. Whilst the proposed changes would mean that no levy funds would be available for marketing to consumers, there would be a significant increase in funds available for R&D projects. This opens up the opportunity to initiate priority research projects including supply chain and market research and development.

This edition of The Passion Vine is the last under the current Hort Innovation funded three-year (PF22001) Passionfruit Industry Communications Program 2022-2025 delivered by PAI. PAI would like to acknowledge the many contributions from our growers and other industry stakeholders who have given freely of their time to ensure the relevance of the content of the various publications and particularly the success of the very well supported industry field days and farm walks. At the time of publication, Hort Innovation has issued a new request for tender to manage the industry communication program and we will inform growers of the outcome of that process when a new contract has been awarded and contracted. PAI has made a tender submission on behalf of the industry.

Wishing all in our wonderful industry a successful winter and spring season and thank you for your continued support.