

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DENNIS CHANT



Dear Readers,

*In the last edition of **The Passion Vine** we expressed our disappointment at having to cancel the field days scheduled for all growing regions earlier this year, but looked forward to getting together for the Annual General Meeting and field day in Murwillumbah on 16-17 October.*

Unfortunately, the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent counter measures put in place by respective state governments has necessitated cancellation of that event as well.

Your committee is exploring options to facilitate holding that event as an online forum, either as individual growers or as regional groupings if appropriate venues are available. All members will be kept informed to maximise your involvement.

All members are encouraged to be actively involved in the activities of your association. It is appreciated that current restrictions have limited face to face interaction between growers and other industry stakeholders this year but it is important that you have your views known on where the industry needs to focus its resources to ensure its sustainable future.

All committee positions are up for election at the AGM. Most of the current committee members are available for re-election, but even so there are vacant positions to be filled. Information on the AGM and committee elections will be sent to members in the near future.

Annual production statistics for the last few seasons are shown on PAGE 6 in this edition of The Passion Vine. You will see that production is at least stagnant or falling. Whilst we all understand the climatic and other challenges we have had to contend with over that period, production levels translate directly into the funds the industry has available for important marketing and research projects.

Again, we need to work together to foster a unified industry approach to meeting and growing consumer demand and sustaining a profitable industry.

This edition will also update you on marketing initiatives in conjunction with Hort Innovation. At the time of going to press, the new Breeding Program (PF19000) is still being negotiated and so we do not have any news to share. As soon as we are able to, we will invite the team from the new project to provide an article for all growers. We may even be able to provide more details at the upcoming Virtual AGM day on Saturday 17th October (SEE PAGE 3).

Recently PAI have become a signatory to Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD). This follows a resolution to do so at the 2018 AGM and provides a framework for our industry response to an introduced pest crisis PAI is currently developing a Biosecurity Statement as required under the terms of the deed.

In closing I would again like to recognise the work of the secretariat, Amanda and Jane, in maintaining communications with our membership and various government and industry partners during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Whilst overall the passionfruit industry has generally proven resilient during the crisis there have been challenges to overcome, from securing labour supply and transportation corridors to changing distribution channels from food service to predominantly supermarkets.

Please enjoy this edition of The Passion Vine and we look forward to 'seeing' you participating with other members at the AGM, even if it is virtual this year.

Best Regards,
Dennis Chant