

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DENNIS CHANT



I am pleased to be able to share my initial President's Report with a tribute to our long serving, outgoing President Tina. With the loss of Tina's leadership together with that of other well-established executive members including Ian Constable, Anton Stretch and Jim Gordon, it is very encouraging to see a new cohort of younger members stepping up to continue to further the interests of the industry and our members collectively. At the AGM in Maroochydore on 18th October new committee members Jarod Agostinelli, Brad Millard and Matthew James joined continuing members Cynthia Barbagallo, Jane Richter, Aidan Hutton and myself.

Tina leaves the association in good shape and we are fortunate to retain the ongoing services of Jane and Amanda. I am sure you will agree they have raised the bar in terms of the services and assistance provided to our members in recent years. They have established a solid program of initiatives for the year ahead including the ongoing projects addressing Breeding, Post-Harvest Best Practice, Communications and the LEAD program. A particularly noteworthy initiative is the establishment of the Noel Day Scholarships to allow growers to further their horticultural knowledge.

As this edition goes to print many of our members are challenged by dry weather and resulting extreme fire conditions. Even those not directly exposed to fire risks are experiencing challenging circumstances. For example, many growers are having to cart water to maintain new plantings and transport operators are experiencing delays in delivering produce, equipment and other supplies. In these times, it is even more important we work together to strengthen the resilience of our industry.

In the year ahead there will be numerous opportunities for you to join with other growers and industry specialists, both in person and online, to network, learn, share experiences and develop personal contacts. We encourage you to participate in this learning process and to provide your feedback on how best the association can meet your needs.

Thank you Tina

Tina joined the Management Committee back in 2012 – taking over the family mantle from her husband Bruce. From the very beginning, Tina has actively contributed across all areas of passionfruit business but her first love has always been championing continuous improvement in the quality and marketing of our fruit. She was a key part of the Marketing Sub-Committee right from its inception and has worked tirelessly with Hort Innovation (then HAL) to ensure that we have got the best return on investment for our industry marketing spend.

At the AGM in 2015 Tina stepped up into the President role taking over from Ian Constable. Both Ian, and the previous President Keith Paxton, had left Tina with very big shoes to fill. And fill them she certainly has done with her trademark humour, diplomacy and positive energy.

Tina has guided us through the rapidly changing funding environment with a steady hand and a sensible head. It has been a turbulent time where control and influence over how our levy money gets invested has shifted away from us as a peak industry body representing our industry through the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) structure towards a less consultative model dictated by the Hort Innovation SIAP model.

Throughout these quite challenging times, Tina has kept a level head, has consulted widely and gone well above and beyond her role to continue to champion the cause for our industry. Unless you have played an active role on the Management Committee,

it is hard to grasp just how much work goes on behind the scenes by our Committee members, and the President in particular.

Tina has spent many, many hours on the road driving to Brisbane for meetings; up at 3am to get to Sydney in time for a Hort Innovation workshop or simply listening to growers on the phone who wanted to bend her ear!

It is down to perseverance from Tina that we were able to win the tender to manage our own industry communication programme and not end up like many other industries with that role being fulfilled by a faceless PR agency somewhere in a capital city.

Seven years on the Management Committee and four years as President of the Association is a huge contribution for anyone to make and it has come at a personal cost for Tina – her limited spare time has been freely given on behalf of this industry when she has a successful multi-crop business, four children, two dogs and a demanding Kiwi husband to deal with!

I KNOW THAT I SPEAK FOR ALL OF THE INDUSTRY WHEN I SIMPLY SAY THIS; THANK YOU TINA – WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR ALL THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN TO THIS INDUSTRY.

