

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DENNIS CHANT



Dear Readers,

It is a pleasant change to prepare this message at a time when we can look forward to the future with renewed optimism. With strong administration nationally and community compliance locally we can look forward hopefully to more normal times.

The opening of most state borders on the first of December and the easing of restrictions on numbers at gatherings should enable PAI to plan next year's program of meetings and events with some confidence that they will be able to go ahead. Your committee and the administration are very conscious of the value our members place on face-to-face interaction at events such as field days.

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 17 October, via Zoom Online, have been distributed to members. A big thank you to our members who took the time to participate in this virtual meeting. As recorded in the minutes, your committee members for the next year are:

- Aidan Hutton (Treasurer)
- Cynthia Barbagallo
- Brad Millard
- Jarod Agostinelli
- Matt James
- Dennis Chant (President)

As previously advised, Jane Richter is leaving the industry and did not re-nominate for the election. Jane will however still play an important role with PAI through the communications program until our current programme finishes in September 2021. She will also assist the industry to put in a proposal for the new tender which should follow this existing programme.

As you will be aware from the story in the latest addition of *Passiflora News*, our Industry Services Manager, Amanda Roy, will be leaving PAI at the end of the year to meet the increasing demands of her family's rapidly growing business. Amanda has performed the role effectively and efficiently under difficult circumstances. She will be sadly missed by our members and your committee.

A replacement for Amanda has been found after a short recruitment and interview process and you can find out more about your new ISM on PAGE 8.

We would also like to welcome the new Industry Strategic Partner for Passionfruit with Hort Innovation, Georgia Sheil. All things going according to plan you should get the opportunity to meet Georgia at one of next year's events.

Growers in most of our regions would no doubt be looking forward to the long forecast 'wetter than average summer'. Currently the extremely hot, dry and windy conditions are a risk to what should be a much better season for growers than we experienced during last summer.

The gradual opening of hotels and restaurants should stimulate demand from the food services sector, an important part of our market. For many growers the legacy impacts of COVID-19 will continue to hamper normal operations. This is particularly so for those producers who require additional labour for their operations.

Jane has been very diligent in keeping up to date with developments in this regard and sharing this information with our members. Keep an eye out for the latest information in the *Passiflora News* each month.

We finally have good news about our new Breeding Program – project PF19000 has now been fully contracted and I am pleased to say that the great work already completed by Southern Cross University (SCU) will be further built upon in this new project as it has also been awarded to SCU with the addition of another experienced plant breeder taking over from Peter Bundock who will be retiring in about six months' time. Find out more about the new project on PAGE 14.

Thank you for your continued support during the last year and we wish you and your families all the best for the festive season and a prosperous 2021.

Best Regards,
Dennis Chant