

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TINA MCPHERSON, BUNDABERG

*Dear Readers,*

Sweetheart growers seem to have been run off their feet over the last few weeks and Misty growers are waiting for the great winter crop to come! There is no doubt that farmers would have to be the greatest group of collective optimists on earth!! Much has been happening industry wise over the last few months with breeding, export reports coming to fruition, regional field days, leadership opportunities and marketing initiatives. It is exciting to be part of such a cohesive and progressive industry and to be able to bring this information to growers and industry stakeholders alike regularly and in such great formats as **The Passion Vine** and our regular email updates with **Passiflora News**.

Margie Milgate has decided to make some major changes in her life and has resigned from her role as our Industry Services Manager. She is downsizing after 25 years in her wonderful Tarragindi home and starting a new and exciting chapter in her life with a bit more freedom to explore some of her passions. Margie will still be working with the Management Committee in the medium term assisting with some specific projects. We have taken the decision at this point to do a thorough review of our needs as an industry association to ensure that we take advantage of technologies that can dramatically reduce the time spent on administration work by our Services Manager, maximising the time available to invest in the activities that really deliver value for us as a small industry association. To that end, we are installing membership management software into our website which will manage the Association membership renewals this year and offer the option of payment via credit card. We are also removing the 'bookkeeping' element of the duties and having these handled by an expert who also can act as our Tax Agent, making the process of ensuring we meet our fiscal reporting requirements cheaper and faster to achieve.

In the short term, all industry enquiries will be handled by Jane Richter, who has volunteered to do the review of our needs and make a recommendation for how to move forward that will be presented and discussed at our next AGM, which is tentatively scheduled for September 7-8 in North Queensland. Jane has invested a lot of time as part of the Communication Programme, adding information and reference materials to the new industry website, and I would strongly encourage you to have a good look through the site at those resources before you contact Jane as you may very well find what you need faster that way!

*I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Margie for her passion and commitment to our industry over the past two years and wish her the very best for the exciting new chapter of her life that is just beginning.*

Men's Health Week 11-18 June provides a platform for challenging and debating key issues in men's health and to raise the profile of men, their health outcomes and health needs around the country each June. This year's theme "MEN AND FAMILIES: MAKING HEALTHY CONNECTIONS" explores the different ways families support the health and wellbeing of men and boys, and the positive contributions men and boys make to their families.



As we're all aware, mental health issues for men in rural areas have been in the spotlight after a number of tragic incidents where individuals simply didn't know where to turn for help with struggles they had – be those financial, emotional or physical – and took drastic action as a result. Farming can be a brutal occupation, with high financial risks and unpredictable climate conditions keeping many of us awake at night. There will be a large number of events you can support in your local community during Men's Health Week – and if there aren't, why not create something yourself? You can find more information at [www.menshealthweek.org.au](http://www.menshealthweek.org.au)

You will have read about the LEAD program, funded by the Australian Federal Government and designed to develop rural leaders by growing their business and leadership skills. There are still further places available, but the original two places allocated to Passionfruit have been awarded to Melissa Smith and myself, who both submitted applications fulfilling the selection criteria. I see this as a great opportunity to further champion agricultural issues with rural authenticity; investigate opportunities for international trade and grow existing markets and investigate how best to protect our industry against biosecurity threats. Additionally, as this programme is an alliance between melons, persimmons, pineapples, avocados and mangoes there is the chance to increase cross-industry collaboration and take advantage of synergies that exist between industries and research. If you would like to join this program, please get in touch with Jane and she will provide you with the application details.

In November 2017, levy payers amended the Hort Innovation constitution to ensure a levy payer would be appointed to the Hort Innovation Director Nomination Committee. Over the last month Voice of Horticulture has conducted a roadshow to receive expressions of interest from eligible levy payers to be appointed to the committee. All these initiatives serve to give levy payers more influence over where and how our levy funds are spent and are vital to the greater good of horticulture and its advancement in Australia.

The first regional field day, held under the Passionfruit Communication Programme, was a resounding success and the details of this are on PAGE 22. It was inspiring and exciting to see so many interested growers and industry participants all in one place together. Mark the next regional field day in Bundaberg on 25th July in your diaries! And pencil in 7-8 September for a regional field day & our AGM in Northern Queensland.

Enjoy this edition and may you have a successful and fruitful winter wherever you are!

Best wishes,

*Tina*