



President's Report

Dennis Chant, New South Wales

On behalf of Passionfruit Australia Inc (PAI) and Hort Innovation, our funding partner for the 'Passionfruit Industry Communications Program (PF22001)', I welcome all growers and industry stakeholders to the first edition of The Passion Vine prepared under a new three-year funding program.

The program incorporates provision for regional field days, regular e-newsletters and annual editions of this magazine, website updates and growers' surveys for the benefit of all contributors to the passionfruit levy fund.

All growers are encouraged to actively utilise and contribute to these initiatives to ensure the passionfruit industry is sustainable and profitable for growers and supply chain partners.

It has been some time since our last journal was published so we do have much to catch up on. I trust that you find this edition both interesting and informative. As always, your feedback is welcome to ensure the information provided is relevant to your needs.

After an extended period of below average rainfall, most of our growing regions experienced above average and even record-breaking rainfall over the last eighteen months. In most growing areas this has had an adverse impact on fruit production and growers are now working hard to recover after losing a large number of established vines during the extended wet period.

As an industry, it is important to share our experiences to foster a more resilient environment in which it can prosper in the face of increasing climatic extremes. To assist in this regard PAI has partnered with the Queensland Government to host two "Resilient Passionfruit" field days in Bundaberg on 15 August and at the Sunshine Coast on 17 August. All growers are welcome to attend and more details can be found on PAGE 11.

Our regular e-newsletters provide valuable insights into major capital city market trends and regional growing conditions. Both economic conditions for our consumers and some continued production shortfalls in selected regions appear to be having an adverse

impact on overall returns to growers in recent months. Under these conditions it is essential that our levy funds allocated to R&D and marketing are utilised in an optimum manner.

Hort Innovation has partnered with PAI to more effectively engage with growers in determining how our levy funds should be allocated for R&D and Marketing. The two have entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which encourages greater levy payer involvement in setting priorities for the use of levy funds and monitoring program outcomes.

Biosecurity is becoming a major consideration for all primary industry sectors, with passionfruit being no exception. The industry has long been engaged in preventative activities such as the National Exotic Fruit Fly in Torres Strait Eradication Program. More recently the Varroa mite incursion has also seen our involvement in the eradication program.

Whilst government is currently underwriting the passionfruit industry's share of the costs associated with these programs, these costs will have to be recovered from industry in the future. These costs are additional to the biosecurity levy recently announced by the Federal Government to contribute to the costs of border biosecurity activities. There will be extensive consultation with growers in the next few months on the most acceptable way of covering these costs through a levy mechanism.

Lastly, I would like to again raise the prospect of approval being given for the import of fresh passionfruit from Vietnam. PAI is following closely the development of this application and has had government representatives address recent field days. The draft report has just been issued for a public consultation period, closing on 11 September 2023. More details can be found in the article on PAGE 3.

Please enjoy reading this edition and, as always, we welcome your feedback on how we can make our communications program relevant to your needs.