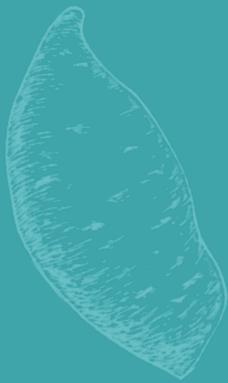




AUSVEG Purpose



We will identify and prioritise the issues of our members and advocate on behalf of horticulture growers to ensure their needs are heard and understood by decision makers.



We will run the business to enable advocacy by ensuring we have a strong business model and growing profitability.

We will actively compete for and deliver funded projects to deliver outstanding results to growers and to build our skills, resources and credibility as an organisation.

As a peak industry body, we have an important facilitation role to play in driving innovation and bringing disparate groups together where there is common purpose.

& Values

Integrity: AUSVEG will be approachable, open, honest, accountable and ethical in all business practices.

Industry: AUSVEG will commit to the best outcome for growers and industry at all times, and will actively communicate with industry to build strong relationships with stakeholders.

Respect: AUSVEG will be considerate and mindful of the opinions and values of others, and will recognise and support all stakeholders.

Professionalism: AUSVEG will continue to be at the forefront of the industry through teamwork and leadership, and will uphold the highest quality of professionalism at all times.

Innovation: AUSVEG will value the importance of innovation, and will actively foster a culture that embraces change and new ideas.



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**AUSVEG
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Chair & CEO's Report



We've had an extremely busy 12 months at AUSVEG to ensure we are delivering the best value for growers in our industry. The focus for the AUSVEG Board going into 2018 centred on 'internal improvement and external engagement' to help realise our core purpose of representing growers. To this end, we have looked at how we can better function as a Board and have worked with the entire industry to ensure our representation is well-informed and coordinated to increase the effectiveness of our advocacy.

— AUSVEG Chair Bill Bulmer

Internal Improvement

Governance and strategy workshops

The AUSVEG Board undertook a strategy and governance workshop at its June Board Meeting. This workshop provided the Board with the opportunity to review its performance and provide its feedback and opinion on:

- The strategic plan for the company;
- The areas of focus for the Board and the Leadership Team;
- Skills and expertise that the Board should recruit and foster; and
- The roles and responsibilities for each Director so that the Board can operate effectively and with the best interests of the industry.

The lessons learnt from this workshop have been instrumental in ensuring we are improving our ability to represent the industry and will help ensure that the AUSVEG Board has an ongoing legacy of retaining, attracting and fostering talented grower and skills-based Directors to effectively advocate on growers' behalf.

Company Director Training

Board members who had not undertaken a company director's course with the Australian Institute of Company Directors completed the course to ensure they were fully aware of their obligations to the company and the broader industry and to provide effective management and leadership training so they can better represent the industry. This training has now been undertaken by every AUSVEG Board member and will become a requirement for all future AUSVEG Board members.

External Engagement

Closer engagement with State Members

Improving our relationship with State Members has been a key area of focus for the AUSVEG Board in 2018 – if we do not have a strong relationship with all of our State Members we are not doing our job effectively to best represent growers. The AUSVEG Board relies on its State Members to not only advocate for their growers on state-specific issues, but to also provide on-the-ground information about what is happening in their regions so that we can be a well-informed and effective national advocate.

The Board has been in close consultation with all State Members throughout the year for advice on advocacy activities, guidance on how we can better represent their state's growers on a national level and to better understand the issues and concerns that their growers are facing on-the-ground. In 2018, AUSVEG Board members attended farm tours with State Members in different states to better understand what is impacting growers in each area in their efforts for their businesses to be more productive and more profitable.

Many of the issues being faced by growers in one state are also being faced by growers around the country, and this ranges from water quality and availability, to labour cost and reliability, food safety, red tape and biosecurity. These farm visits have helped the AUSVEG Board to form its advocacy agenda so that we can go back to these growers in 12 months' time and hopefully see that we have made a difference to their businesses.

The Board has also signed off on an internal strategy to be executed by the AUSVEG Leadership Team to improve State Member engagement on an operational level, working closer with state bodies in advocacy and policy development, as well as in all other areas of the business so that our member bodies are getting value out of their relationship with AUSVEG.

Farm visits

The AUSVEG Board spent a number of days as a group visiting farms across the country to learn about the issues that are affecting growers. This has been important so that we can have an agenda as a Board to ensure we are best representing the needs of our growers.

AUSVEG Board members visited farms in the following regions prior to Board Meetings in the respective states:

Tasmania

- Launceston
- Devonport

Northern Territory

- Darwin

Western Australia

- Gingin
- Perth
- Pemberton
- Myalup

Closer engagement with other industry bodies

AUSVEG has made a concerted effort to have stronger engagement with other industry bodies in 2018 to help advance the cause of the wider Australian horticulture industry. AUSVEG became a member of the

National Farmers' Federation's Horticulture Council in 2018 to help the horticulture industry better advocate for its members on important industry issues, including the critical labour shortage and the Horticulture Award. This Council has been successful to date in presenting a more unified

message to government and we will continue to contribute towards its success for the benefit of the wider industry.

AUSVEG has also maintained a strong relationship with Hort Innovation in ensuring it effectively invests grower levies in projects

that provide the best returns on investment for growers. Our relationship with Hort Innovation is strong at a Board and operational level and allows us to provide honest and robust feedback on its performance, which we see as vital in ensuring grower levies are invested appropriately.

What do you think?

At the end of the day AUSVEG is here to serve growers. Our core purpose is to act as an effective advocate on behalf of growers to government and the wider industry so that our industry can do what we do best – **grow healthy, nutritious vegetables for Australian and international consumers.**

Contained in this report is an overview of the ways that AUSVEG represents growers and provides value to the industry in every activity that we undertake. If you think we need to do anything better I want you to get in touch with us so that your views and issues are heard.

The best way to contact AUSVEG is on 03 9882 0277 or at info@ausveg.com.au. I would also encourage you all to get in touch with your State Members (details are listed on page 52).

2018 Board Members

Name	State	Grow
Bill Bulmer (Chair)	Victoria	Leafy vegetables
Belinda Adams (Deputy)	Queensland	Leafy vegetables
David Addison	Tasmania	Potatoes, onions
Danny De Ieso	South Australia	Asian vegetable varieties
Geoff Moar	New South Wales	Potatoes
Michael Nixon	Western Australia	Onions, pumpkins
Michael Quach	Northern Territory	Cucumbers, tomatoes, mangoes
Simon Bolles	Victoria	Skills-based Director





CEO's report — James Whiteside

I am delighted to provide this update of the activities of AUSVEG over the last 12 months, and sincerely hope you find it useful: of course, your feedback is very much encouraged.

You will see considerable detail of our work throughout this report, though it's important to explain one of our overarching objectives: Across horticulture there are many more common issues than there are unique ones, and our challenge and obligation is to find opportunities to collaborate and share our scarce resources wherever we can.

Examples of where we have done this in 2018 include the role we have played in establishing the Horticulture Council of the National Farmers' Federation (NFF). The Board was of the view that, whilst we have a primary responsibility to lead the advocacy activities of our industry, having access to the resources of the NFF and providing input into its policy settings is entirely consistent with our purpose. To date, this has been a very effective platform to advance the issue of the chronic shortage of labour in the industry. Changes to a number of current visa settings announced by the Prime Minister Scott Morrison in November have been directly as a consequence of this alliance.

We also continue to "connect" the industry via Hort Connections, the industry's major annual convention, which we run each

year in conjunction with the Produce Marketing Association Australia – New Zealand. Next year's event, in Melbourne from 24-26 June 2019, will invariably be even bigger and better than the hugely successful event we held in Brisbane in June of 2018.

It is also very important that we connect with our members, particularly our State Members (listed at the end of this report). We have initiated the AUSVEG Policy Committee, which meets at least monthly, to ensure our policies and significant activities are aligned with, and support those of our State Members. This improved engagement with our State Members significantly contributes to the success of the business.

You will see throughout the report that most of our work is at a grassroots level with growers, helping them manage the increasing complexity of the biosecurity landscape, to access export markets and to adopt new technology and practice. Much of this work is funded by grower levies matched by taxpayers, as administered by Hort Innovation. Our relationship with Hort Innovation is very strong and our staff and Board actively participate in a number of their Strategic Investment Advisory Panels that oversee the allocation of funds and performance of projects. We also work closely with Hort Innovation to ensure the performance of the Vegetable and Fresh Potato R&D Funds is as strong as it should be.

A significant project completed in 2018 was the development of a business case for the establishment of a marketing campaign for vegetables. As the year ends, we have begun defining the consultative process that will need to be held with growers if we are to ask the Minister to establish a marketing levy to fund such a campaign. As well as defining how such a campaign would work, so that growers can make an informed decision, we need also to engage with a number of other commercial and government organisations that we know are interested in contributing financially to a campaign to promote the consumption of vegetables. This is likely to be a project you will hear considerably more of in 2019.

Finally, I would like to record my sincere thanks to the Board and management of AUSVEG. Each member of the Board is tireless in their contribution to the industry, through both their commitment to AUSVEG, and to the horticulture industry more broadly. These organisations simply can't exist without their insight, energy and commitment. I'd also like to acknowledge the work of the AUSVEG team. To achieve all that we have is only possible because of their commitment and professionalism. Their hours are long, the travel commitments often heavy and invariably they go above and beyond to find ways to deliver value to growers.



2

Public
Affairs

AUSVEG significantly increased its advocacy activities in 2018 following the appointment of Tyson Cattle to the role of National Manager – Public Affairs in February 2018.

Tyson was previously editor of the Fairfax publication *Stock & Land*. He brings with him a great appreciation for the value of Australia's rural and regional industries, including the Australian vegetable industry, as well as an understanding of the hard work and commitment that growers and all farmers put into feeding Australia.

This appointment, along with AUSVEG joining the National Farmers' Federation's Horticulture Council, represents a renewed investment in AUSVEG's role representing the interests of Australia's vegetable and potato growers and the broader industry – a role which is at the centre of everything we do.

Tyson's role will continue to focus on building strong, evidence-based cases that AUSVEG can take to government and other stakeholders to advocate for growers on the issues that are impeding their growth and prosperity. As our industry continues to grow in value and importance to the Australian economy, this work will be vital in ensuring our growers get the support they need to tackle the challenges affecting our sector, including major issues like access to a reliable supply of labour and water.

Labour Issues

The chronic shortage of labour has dominated AUSVEG's advocacy activities in 2018 with growers from around the country highlighting the difficulty of accessing a stable, reliable and competent workforce and the challenges they face getting this workforce to remain on-farm.

It has been made clear to AUSVEG that there is a gap in a range of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled jobs in the sector, which is substantially impeding the industry's capacity to develop.

Agriculture Visa

One potential solution industry has raised, which has been heavily reported throughout the media, is the Agriculture Visa.

The Visa proposed to government is designed to complement existing visas such as the Seasonal Worker Program, Pacific Labour Scheme and the Working Holiday Maker Visa, which all have aspects that have been proven to be beneficial for parts of the industry.

None of the existing visas have been developed to solve agriculture's workforce issue, whereas the Agriculture Visa is designed to specifically address it.

The Agriculture Visa is designed to be a dedicated tool to assist growers to access a reliable, stable and competent workforce to ensure the industry can reach its full potential.

Significant features of the proposed Agriculture Visa, which at this stage are not available from existing visas, are as follows:

- Flexibility and portability, so that workers may move from one accredited employer to another;
- Improved traceability through an industry-led accreditation that links to a government register;
- Expanded access for neighbouring nations particularly in South East Asia;
- Continuity of a workforce for growers; and
- Access to a dedicated labour pool that wants to work in agriculture.

Additional benefits of the Agriculture Visa are increased productivity and improved confidence of the horticultural industry, greater economic benefits for regional communities and increased presence of Australia delivering more quality, fresh and safe produce on a global scale.

Industry has proposed the visa would complement existing visas such as the Working Holiday Maker Visa and the Seasonal Worker Program, as there are a number of horticulture regions and businesses that heavily rely on those programs.

The Agriculture Visa is proposed to include a stream that allows low-skilled migrant workers to stay for at least two years, with the flexibility to stay for up to four years. It is proposed that the visa would only be available to accredited agricultural employers, potentially through an industry-led initiative such as Fair Farms (a Growcom initiative to educate and accredit growers to ensure they understand and adhere to their legal obligations as employers and which AUSVEG is in discussions to assist in expanding its coverage to a national level), which then could

also link to a government register for traceability purposes and to remove the risk of abscondment.

That connection would also provide the opportunity for workers to be mobile, so that once they finish at one farm, or region, they can move to another Fair Farm-accredited farm or location to continue to work – all fully traceable and trackable back to government.

The register, together with Fair Farms, could also assist with executing effective labour market testing that could be collaborated in real time given the request for labour, and the data on the number of workers applying for the Agriculture Visa.

There would be a greater vetting process for applicants for the visa, given they are applying to come to Australia to work specifically in agriculture. It is important that the name of the visa directly relates to the role they will be doing in Australia, so the workers themselves are prepared for the work and deliver confidence for the grower that they are there with the right intentions – to work on a farm.

It is proposed that the visa would also need to have a re-entry or multiple entry component, therefore allowing workers and growers to foster a beneficial working relationship to increase the efficiency and productivity of growers' businesses.

To alleviate the concerns that the Agriculture Visa may cannibalise other existing visas, such as the Seasonal Worker Program, it is proposed that the Agriculture Visa would only be open to countries that are not included in the Seasonal Worker Program.

This has been an ongoing conversation with government, multiple departments and other industry bodies. AUSVEG will continue to work with all parties to get the best result for growers.

Changes to existing visas

AUSVEG and other industry bodies, including those represented in the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) Horticulture Council, have also presented some potential changes to existing visa programs to government, which could help growers fulfil their labour needs.

While our priority is to get a dedicated Agriculture Visa in place for the long-term, changes to existing visas could assist growers in the short- to medium-term.

Working Holiday Maker Visa

- Increasing the age restriction to 35 years
- Expanding the number of countries whose nationals can apply (particularly through South East Asia)
- Increasing the cap of allowable backpackers, particularly from South East Asian nations
- Expanding the number of postcodes eligible for backpackers to work their additional 88 days to extend their visas (this would need to be done in consultation with industry on a case-by-case basis, in order not to remove the benefits many regions get from this initiative)
- Lengthening the stay (e.g. allow a third year working in any regional postcode).

Seasonal Worker Program

- Increase the number of SWP migrant workers available

- Providing funding for infrastructure to support the program (e.g. short-term accommodation) in the regions
- Assisting with upfront costs (e.g. airfares, accommodation)
- Streamlining the application and registration process
- Facilitating a transition between approved employers to allow portability and mobility
- A more accommodating, transparent and accessible agency/unit with links to the agricultural sector (e.g. the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources) to manage the program.

AUSVEG has also made it clear the existing visa programs are a critical part of how the industry currently operates and that while industry supports changes and improvements to existing programs, new programs must be in place and operational before removing or changing any existing visas.

In November this year, the Federal Government has agreed to make a number of the changes proposed by AUSVEG and the NFF Horticulture Council to both the Seasonal Worker Program and the Working Holiday Maker Visa, though it has not agreed to introduce the Agriculture Visa.

The government has acknowledged that more changes may be required with the Prime Minister saying that an Agriculture Visa is not off the table and that government will continue to work with industry on its development.

Consequently, we will continue to engage with growers to ensure we understand how the recent amendments are working, and with government to continue to press for a more accessible workforce.



Horticulture Award – Overtime for casuals

AUSVEG has worked with a number of industry bodies including the NFF Horticulture Council, to minimise the impact on growers of the application of overtime for casual employees under the Horticulture Award.

At the time of writing, the Draft Determination, handed down by the Fair Work Commission (FWC) on changes to the Horticulture Award has been accepted by the industry bodies.

The Draft Determination followed extensive negotiation between the unions and industry bodies over a number of years.

While the result itself is not a positive one for industry, the outcome of the negotiation process could have been a lot worse for growers.

A very real and likely outcome, if the Draft Determination was challenged in a hearing, was a higher percentage loading for casuals, the removal of a spread of hours and a shorter averaging period.

As a Final Determination has not yet been made, an implementation date of the changes has not been set, but industry has requested a minimum of six months before the changes are applied.



Labour Hire

AUSVEG recognises the importance of growers being able to use labour hire firms that can demonstrate their compliance and so supports a national labour hire accreditation scheme.

Whilst this has been made more difficult with states such as Queensland, Victoria and South Australia introducing their own labour hire schemes, AUSVEG is committed to delivering a national scheme that would provide greater consistency for labour hire companies and growers.

Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA) has developed a program 'Staffsure', an accreditation for labour hire companies, which AUSVEG also supports, but a national labour hire scheme needs to be properly endorsed and committed to by government through legislation.

Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the single biggest threat to the prosperity of the industry, and the risk is growing daily, as the movement of people and goods around the world similarly grows.

With the recent experiences of the tomato-potato psyllid, Fruit Fly and Citrus Canker outbreaks at the front of industry's mind, it is important that AUSVEG continues to reinforce to government the important role they play in ensuring Australia keeps exotic pests and diseases that have the potential to substantially disrupt our industries, out of the country.

AUSVEG has been active in working with all of the state government agriculture departments to help the Western Australian potato industry get back on its feet by re-opening pathways for the transport of Western Australian potatoes and other plant material through the country.

AUSVEG has also been sending two very clear messages to governments, highlighting the lack of proper coordination of biosecurity events, either by the Federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources or Plant Health Australia.

At a state level, and in conjunction with its state members, AUSVEG has been advocating for a greater investment in biosecurity resources and capabilities, given the growing threat. It has been pleasing to see a number of state governments respond by increasing expenditure in their state budgets, however these are all from an historically low base.

Fruit Fly

Fruit Fly has also been high on AUSVEG's advocacy agenda as it looks to ensure long-term solutions to the trade risks from med-fly and QFly. AUSVEG has been working with relevant stakeholders to look for a solution to the risks that Fruit Fly poses to Australia's horticulture industry.

Fruit Fly poses a biosecurity and a trade risk to various horticulture crops, and as seen in Tasmania earlier this year, has the potential to put Pest Free Areas (PFAs) at risk.

AUSVEG has sought to work with government and the relevant stakeholders about a coordinated national approach that would ensure long-term stability to trade in the event that Fruit Fly spreads further.

One such option being discussed is the eradication of med-fly, which would then remove the need for the east-west protocol and allow an additional buffer for trade nationally, as opposed to relying heavily on the existing PFAs. This is an area still being worked through by AUSVEG and the relevant parties.

Food & Grocery Code of Conduct

AUSVEG made a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) in August following a draft review of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct.

AUSVEG has been a vocal supporter of the Code since its inception in 2015 and backs the code to become mandatory, as it is the only truly effective option to check unconscionable and anti-competitive conduct.



In its submission, AUSVEG also highlighted the need for the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct to have greater synergies with the Horticulture Code of Conduct in order to make it simpler for industry.

It was also noted there was a need for an Independent Code Adjudicator and a clear dispute resolution process where suppliers feel comfortable to air their concerns, without fear of retribution.

Agvet Chemicals

AUSVEG provided a submission on Harmonised Agvet Chemical Control of Use Task (HACCUT) Options Paper, declaring that neither option was suitable for industry to adopt.

AUSVEG supports a harmonised approach to Agvet Chemicals in Australia, but has asked for greater detail on the options presented, and that it needs to be heavily discussed with industry prior to any decision on implementation.

It has also recommended that any implementation of a harmonised model be reviewed after 12 months.

Upcoming Federal Election

With the Federal Election likely in the first half of 2019, AUSVEG has worked with its state members to develop an election advocacy plan that clearly identifies key policy areas for government to act on for the benefit of the industry.

The result is SPROUT, as outlined on the following page.

SPROUT signifies that while the horticulture industry has come a long way, it is yet to flourish and reach its full potential.

This document sets the platform for which AUSVEG will conduct its advocacy activities in the lead-up to the Federal Election and act as a reference point for government action over the next term.

NFF Horticulture Council

The NFF Horticulture Council has finished its first year in operation, which AUSVEG has been an inaugural member.

The Council provides an opportunity for many industry bodies across horticulture to come to the table and discuss areas of concern for industry, as well as collective action plans going forward. It has also provided the horticulture industry with the opportunity of feeding onto the policy development of the NFF more broadly.

The Council has been focused on areas such as the Horticulture Award – Overtime for Casuals, where the NFF has been heavily involved in the negotiation process, as well as the Agriculture Visa.



Sharing our story

- Building trust
- Social media
- A voice for growers
- Right to farm
- Education
- Paddock to plate
- Social license
- Chemical use
- Healthy eating
- Consumer expectations



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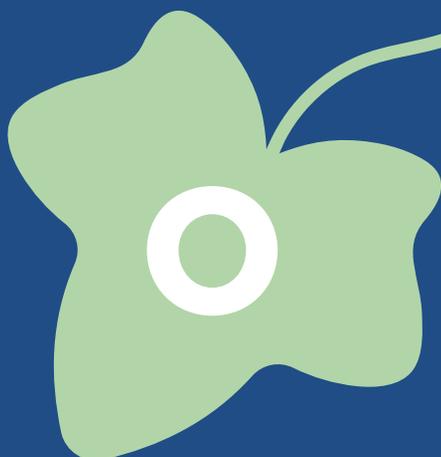
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Protecting Australia

- Biosecurity
- Domestic and International preparedness
- Efficiency values
- Confidence
- Quality and safe water use

Resourcing our sector

- Attracting people
- Upskilling
- Career opportunities
- Training
- Visa programs
- Foreign aid
- Higher education
- Succession planning



Opening doors

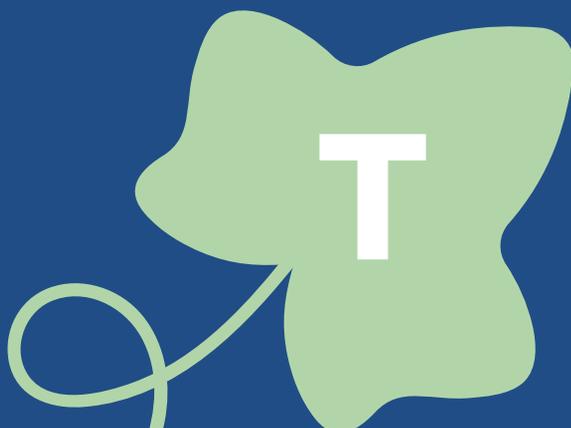
- Export growth
- New markets
- Increased domestic consumption
- Marketing



Utilising technology and innovation

- Global leader in efficiency
- Data usage
- Growing profitability
- Chemical access

Transforming the industry



- Competition
- Transparency
- Market pricing
- Representation
- Sustainability
- Code of conduct



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Media & Communications

AUSVEG has a team of highly-skilled editors, journalists, online and social media specialists to ensure information is shared across the industry as widely as possible.

The team uses a combination of traditional hard copy media and online and social media to communicate the outcomes of research projects, industry news and updates from a wide variety of local and international sources. This helps to increase the awareness of issues and knowledge that growers can adopt on-farm and in their businesses to boost their productivity, profitability and competitiveness.

AUSVEG is the service provider for the vegetable and fresh potato industries' communications programs (VG15027 *Vegetable Industry Communications Program 2016-19* and PT15007 *Potato Industry Communications Program 2016-19*). These programs are strategic levy investments under the Hort Innovation Vegetable and Fresh Potato Funds.

The two projects are delivered efficiently and to the highest possible standard. Over the 12 months leading to 20 August 2018, the two projects communicated a combined total of 153 Hort Innovation-funded research and development projects.

Traditional Media

Vegetables Australia and Potatoes Australia

Vegetables Australia and *Potatoes Australia* are the leading publications in the Australian vegetable and potato industries. Each edition includes the latest industry news on research and development projects that can help growers improve their productivity and profitability, as well as updates from industry members about relevant events, activities and initiatives.

In 2018, AUSVEG published over 310 pages of R&D information (194 in *Vegetables Australia* and 117 in *Potatoes Australia*), featured profiles on 24 of the country's leading producers and industry members and provided regular comment from the AUSVEG Chair and CEO with updates about what AUSVEG is doing on behalf of industry.

Vegenotes

Vegenotes is published with each *Vegetables Australia* and profiles two levy-funded research projects to obtain more detailed and practical information about projects that impact Australian growers.

In 2018, AUSVEG featured 12 strategic levy investments from the Hort Innovation Vegetable Fund. The projects that were featured included research into the following areas:

- Consumer engagement.
- Vegetable breeding and seed viability.
- Post-harvest best practice.
- Greenhouse production and protected cropping.
- Market opportunities for vegetable juices.
- Improving processing vegetable yields.
- Food consumption through food service organisations.

Grower Success Stories

Grower Success Stories is an annual publication that highlights the potential real-world benefits and business success that growers can enjoy by being involved in levy-funded R&D. These are produced for both the vegetable and potato industries.

The 12 growers across both booklets who were featured in 2018 benefited from their involvement in programs in the following areas:

- Communication and extension.
- Soil health and DNA testing.
- International study missions and knowledge transfer.
- Training and leadership development.
- Pest and disease identification and control.
- Growing practices including cover cropping and Integrated Pest Management.
- Consumer fresh produce purchasing insights.

SIP Publication

AUSVEG is currently producing a one-off publication that focuses on each of the five outcomes in the vegetable industry's Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021 and highlights previous and current research projects that address these outcomes. This publication will feature around 25-30 profiles of R&D projects and will be published in early 2019.





Online

Weekly Update

The AUSVEG Weekly Update provides growers and industry members with the latest information on industry research, news and events. The newsletter is designed to provide useful and timely snippets of information in an email that is published each Tuesday evening. Stories also link to more information (either on the AUSVEG website or a relevant external source) for those who want to find out more.

In 2018 over 620 stories ran in the Weekly Update, including 300 stories about work being done by levy-funded projects, like new research reports, fact sheets, workshops and scholarships.

We have also expanded the newsletter to include more relevant and interesting information for the industry, including industry-related media stories of the week (both local and international), weather updates from the Bureau of Meteorology, industry minor use permits and project tenders from Hort Innovation.



InfoVeg Services: Database, TV and Radio

AUSVEG produces a variety of podcasts and videos that provide information on levy-funded projects, events and grower profiles. These feature interviews with researchers and other service providers, Hort Innovation representatives and growers to provide an explanation of levy-funded projects and the benefits they have for the industry.

Areas that videos and podcasts have covered in 2018 include:

- Product innovation and consumer insights.
- Soil health.
- Industry training and communications.
- International study missions.
- Strategic Investment Plans for the vegetable and potato industries.
- How the vegetable and fresh potato levies are invested.

AUSVEG also hosts the InfoVeg R&D database, which compiles all of the research reports generated from Hort Innovation-funded research projects and makes them freely available to industry. The password protection barrier was removed from this database with the re-design in 2017, so accessing R&D reports is now easier than ever.

AUSVEG website

The AUSVEG website is a useful repository of industry information, research and AUSVEG communications content.

AUSVEG undertook an extensive re-design of the website in 2017 to make it more user-friendly and more mobile-friendly. This has resulted in increased traffic to the website and a more intuitive, and enjoyable experience for users, as well as better integration of AUSVEG's communications channels with its levy-funded and advocacy work.

All of AUSVEG's communications materials from the vegetable and potato industry communications programs are available on its website, including each publication, newsletter stories, the InfoVeg R&D database, InfoVeg videos and podcasts and information on its social media activities – visit ausveg.com.au.



Social media

AUSVEG uses a range of social media platforms to communicate with vegetable and potato growers and the wider horticulture industry, as well as consumers. AUSVEG was only active on Twitter until early 2017, and has since expanded to develop profiles on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

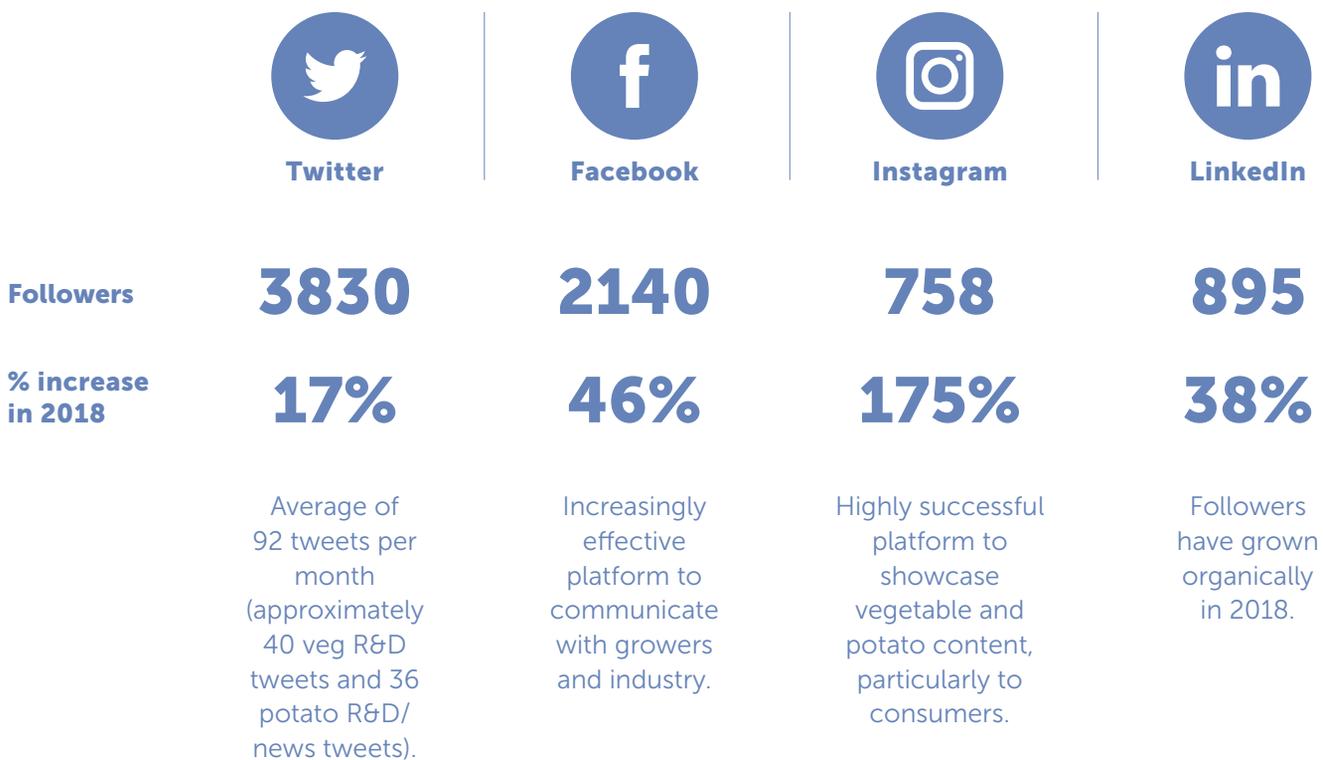
AUSVEG’s social media activities successfully complement its existing traditional and online communication outputs. It effectively allows AUSVEG to communicate with growers and the wider industry on research, advocacy activities and general news or industry updates, and has increasingly facilitated greater

two-way communication with growers and the industry. Social media is also a useful platform to target consumers regarding topics such as the nutritional value of vegetables and the need to support growers by purchasing locally-grown produce.

The social media team monitors and analyses social media activity including followers, reach and engagement on a weekly basis. Engagement peaks during Hort Connections across all platforms where conference content is posted; this is also the case when AUSVEG posts content relating to topical or breaking news involving the industry.

Twitter is a popular platform for many segments of the Australian horticulture industry, including levy-paying growers, supply chain members, researchers, government and the media. Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn allow AUSVEG to reach a wider audience and post a greater variety of content relating to growers and the industry.

AUSVEG has witnessed a steady increase in social media followers, engagement and reach of posts, and in 2019 it will focus on continuing to deliver higher quality and relevant social media content that raises awareness of the Australian vegetable and potato industries.



AUSVEG in the Media

AUSVEG uses its extensive network of journalists across regional and metropolitan media to extend its messages to the public. In 2018, AUSVEG conducted a targeted media engagement strategy to efficiently and effectively advocate on behalf of industry on matters of importance.

Agriculture Visa/labour

A proposed Agriculture Visa to relieve the chronic labour shortage on farms was a hot topic of discussion for much of 2018. In addition to its behind-the-scenes advocacy with industry and government, AUSVEG was visible in the media advocating for the need to address the shortage of labour that was affecting the industry's productivity and profitability.

AUSVEG appeared extensively across print, radio and TV advocating for a targeted, industry-specific visa category to address the labour shortage in the wider agriculture industry.



"What we really are looking for is a workforce that wants to work in our industry and that has the flexibility to be able to move as the work moves." – James Whiteside, ABC PM Tuesday 9 October 2018

"Growers will always seek to employ Australians first. That is just good sense – farmers are patriotic, farmers are looking for a reliable workforce that lives in close proximity to their farms, and there are costs associated with bringing labour into the country."

"But the fact is that in many parts of the country, the domestic workforce simply isn't there."
– James Whiteside, The Australian Financial Review 29 March 2018

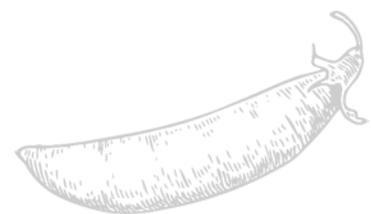
Hort Connections

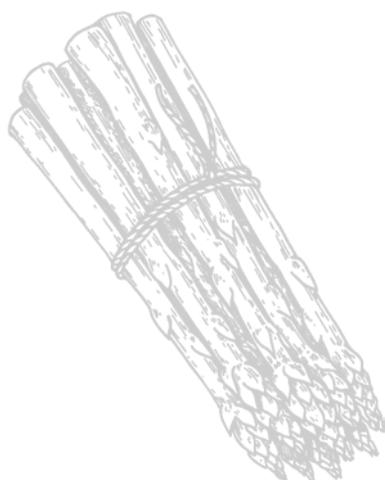
Hort Connections 2018 was well-covered in the media, featuring in many regional and rural media outlets. Topics that were covered included the winners and nominees for the National Awards for Excellence, speaker presentations and many wrap-ups of the entire event.

Highlights included:

ABC Country Hour – live broadcast of Queensland's Country Hour from the Trade Show floor on Wednesday 20 June. The broadcast featured interviews with AUSVEG Chair Bill Bulmer and some of the event's presenters.

ABC Breakfast with Craig Zonca and Rebecca Levingston – AUSVEG Deputy Chair Belinda Adams and former Women in Horticulture award winner Sharron Windolf featured in a live-to-air interview for ABC Brisbane's morning radio show, discussing their backgrounds, their growing operations and the challenges that they face on-farm.





ABC Landline – Grower of the Year winner Scott Samwell, a Brussels sprout grower from Eastbrook Farms in South Australia, featured on Landline following the announcement of his award. Scott



spoke about his company's Kalette variety and the successful use of integrated pest management on his farm.

The Weekly Times – AUSVEG CEO James Whiteside penned an opinion piece for Victoria's regional newspaper discussing the theme of Hort Connections – 'Halving Waste and Doubling Productivity by 2020' and how the industry can work towards achieving this ambitious goal.

Footage for a story on *ABC Landline* and *7.30* report on the Horticulture Award was taken at Hort Connections.

Extensive coverage of the event featured in *Good Fruit and Vegetables*, *The Weekly Times*, *Rural Business* and other regional, rural and industry publications, as well as television coverage of some Awards for Excellence nominees.

Export/Trade

A number of export- and trade-related stories appeared in the media in 2018, with AUSVEG providing comment on important issues that have the potential to impact vegetable and potato growers.

Highlights included:

RTM/Fresh Produce Showcase

The Reverse Trade Mission and Taste Australia Fresh Produce Showcase, which aligned with Hort Connections 2018, featured on ABC radio and in industry media in June. AUSVEG National Manager – Export Development Michael Coote spoke about the success of the program, which involved a group of 40 international buyers (including 35 first-time delegates) visiting some of Queensland's leading fruit and vegetable growers to witness the high quality produce that our growers have to offer.

IA-CEPA

AUSVEG featured across print media welcoming the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in September commenting on the potential benefits that vegetable and potato growers could achieve with the deal.

"The finalisation of this important deal is timely, given the industry's increased activities in market development, which included Indonesia's participation in the recent annual AUSVEG Reverse Trade Mission that allowed buyers from key export markets to visit Australian vegetable growers and see first-hand the high quality produce for which our growers are renowned around the world." – James Whiteside, AUSVEG CEO

Hort Innovation

Communication of levy-funded research and development is conducted as part of VG15027 Vegetable Industry Communications Program and PT15007 Potato Industry Communications Program, and is funded by Hort Innovation using the vegetable and fresh potato research and development levies and funds from the Australian Government.

4

Export Development

The 2018 Reverse Trade Mission at Moffatt Fresh Produce



The *Vegetable Industry Export Strategy 2020* encompasses seven target areas for investment to assist the industry in developing fresh vegetable exports. The AUSVEG export program incorporates a number of these target areas for development and is tasked with the role of managing the implementation of the strategy.

Export update

The vegetable export growth target identified by the *Vegetable Industry Export Strategy 2020* is a 40% increase to AUD\$315 million by 2020. For the year ending June 2018 fresh vegetable exports **increased 9% to AUD\$262 million and 208,505 tonnes.**

- The 2017/18 financial year saw 9% growth in volume to 208K tonnes, and 3% growth in value to \$262 million for the Australian fresh vegetable industry.
- The top five markets for fresh vegetable exports by volume in 2017/18 were: the UAE, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Saudi Arabia. With these top five markets making up just over 60% of Australia's total export volume, the remaining 40% of the industry's export trade is spread across over 20 other predominately Asian and Middle Eastern markets.
- The top five markets for fresh vegetable exports by value in 2017/18 were: Singapore, the UAE, Japan, Malaysia and Hong Kong. The top three markets make up over 50% of the industry's total export value.

Top 5 Australian Fresh Vegetable Export Markets 2017/18

	Value (AUD)		Volume (Tonnes)
Singapore	\$49.4m	UAE	39,906
UAE	\$37.4m	Singapore	28,334
Japan	\$30.4m	Malaysia	21,436
Malaysia	\$22.0m	South Korea	20,718
Hong Kong	\$17.1m	Saudi Arabia	15,789
Other	\$106.1m	Other	82,322
Total	\$262.4m	Total	208,505

Project Update – VG16061 Vegetable Industry Export Program

Export Readiness

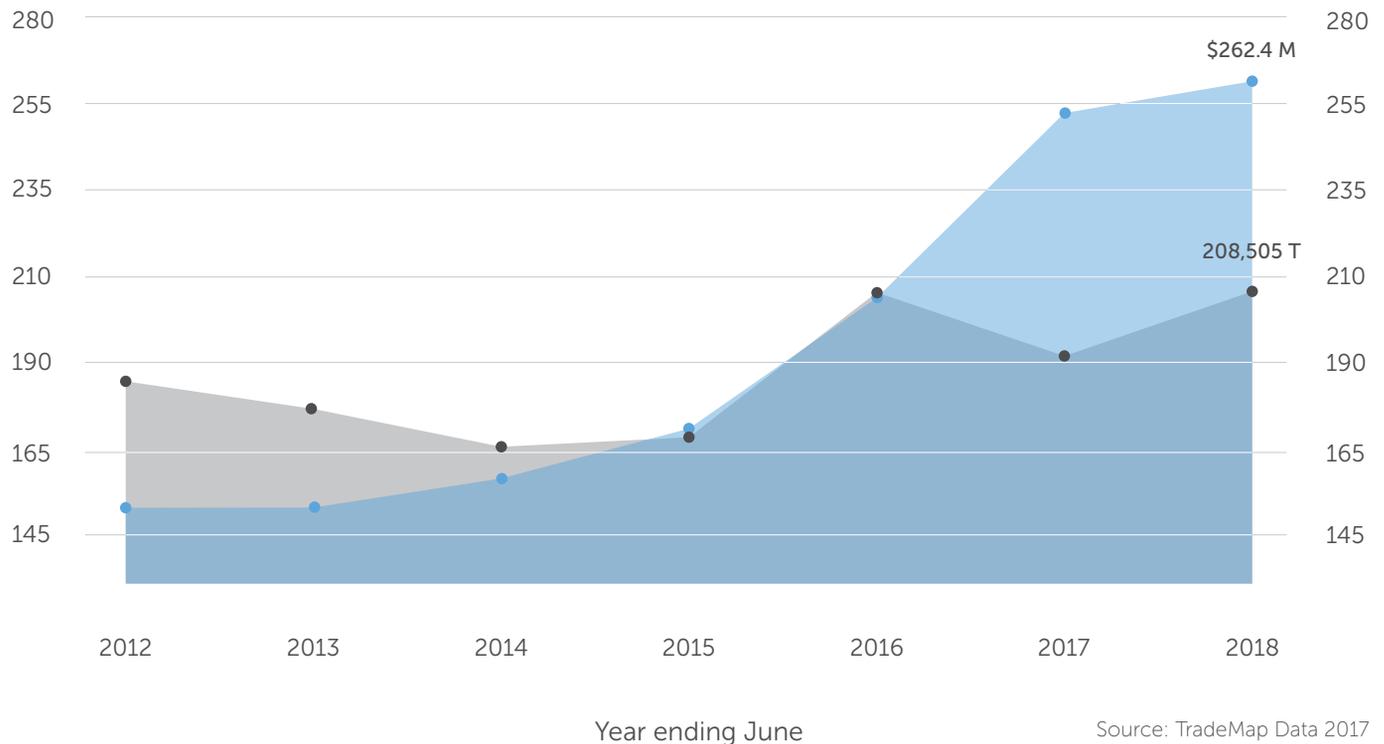
AUSVEG, in collaboration with the Export Council of Australia, deliver export readiness workshops aimed at upskilling vegetable growers by providing the training and information needed to commence exporting, or improve their exporting capability in a practical manner.

In 2018, AUSVEG delivered six workshops across the country in conjunction with the Export Facilitators network. These workshops were run in South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania with over 40 attendees. The coming year will see an increase in the number of workshops, with a focus in extending to regional areas which have not previously been serviced.

Market Development - Outbound Trade Missions

AUSVEG coordinates levy paying vegetable growers to attend five international trade shows annually. This facilitates the development and strengthening of trade relationships and often leads to direct sales orders. In 2018, AUSVEG facilitated over 40 growers to attend the following five trade shows:

Australian Fresh Vegetable Industry Export Trends



● AUD\$ (millions)

● Tonnes ('000)



- Gulfood – Dubai
- Foodex – Japan
- Food & Hotel Asia – Singapore
- Asia Fruit Logistica – Hong Kong
- World of Perishables – Dubai

Outcomes

These trade missions help increase direct exports through new connections being made by growers. Growers benefit from developing an understanding of international supply chains, building international networks and relationships, and knowledge sharing between experienced and less experienced

grower-exporters. This outbound trade activity contributes to building capabilities for emerging grower-exporters and has seen strong results with immediate and medium-term trade outcomes achieved. Growers continually report that networking with other growers in the Australian industry is hugely beneficial from these trade missions.

Market Development – Reverse Trade Mission

A key element of market development in VG16061 is the Reverse Trade Mission (RTM), which hosts international buyers from target markets to showcase production systems, farm practices and supply capacity of a different region each year. The RTM also aims to highlight the research and development activities that underpin Australia's claims of a 'clean and green' image under the *Taste Australia* banner.

The 2018 RTM was held in Queensland from 14-19 June, in line with Hort Connections. Forty international delegates from seven countries participated on the RTM, which were:

- Indonesia
- Thailand
- Taiwan
- South Korea
- The Philippines
- Japan
- Saudi Arabia

Three of these markets were involved for the first time and over 85% of delegates were first-time RTM participants.

During the mission the delegates visited seven vegetable producers, a number of treatment and research facilities and attended a private product showcase event with vegetable growers from around the country.

Outcomes

The inbound market development activities increase growers' understanding of how to demonstrate their capabilities to international buyers. It also helps to demonstrate the industry's production capabilities and farm practices, highlighting why Australia has an image of 'clean and green'. Trade is continuing to develop with multiple buyers following the 2018 RTM.

Market access

AUSVEG is continuously working on improving market access for Australian vegetables.

In 2017, AUSVEG submitted four market access business cases:

- Potatoes to Japan
- Carrots to Korea
- Carrots to China
- Potatoes (WA) to Korea

These four applications have been approved by Hort Innovation's Trade Assessments Panel (TAP) and now sit with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) to commence market access negotiations.

In 2018, AUSVEG submitted the following four market access business cases, which are currently progressing through the market access application process:

- Beans to Japan
- Cucurbits to Korea
- Cucurbits to Taiwan
- Capsicums to Japan





The 2018 Reverse Trade Mission at Dicky Bill Australia.



5

**Hort
Connections**

Bringing the horticulture industry together

Hort Connections 2018 was held in Brisbane in June and was the highlight of the Australian horticulture calendar. Delivered by AUSVEG and the Produce Marketing Association Australia – New Zealand, along with 17 other industry partners, the event was a tremendous success, with nearly 3,000 horticulture growers, supply chain members and industry representatives attending speaker presentations from industry leaders and spokespeople, visiting the Hort Connections trade show and celebrating the achievements of industry at the Gala Dinner.

Trade Show in numbers

290

Booths

195

Exhibitions

10000m²

Floor Space

1

**Sponsor
(FMA CMAA)**

2

**Prizes
Awarded**

3000

Visitors

Speaker Sessions

Key speakers (and topics) included:

- **Fiona Simson** – NFF’s vision for agriculture in 2030 and horticulture’s role in this industry’s growth
- **Chris Riddell** – The future of technology in the fresh produce industry
- **Drew Yancey** – Business disruption and innovation
- **State of the Industry** – James Whiteside/Darren Keating/ Julian Cribb/Dr Jimmy Botella
- **Tommy Le** – A second chance at life
- **Coles Panel Discussion on innovation and consumer trends** – Matt Hood, Natalie Bell, Rocky Varapodio, Daniel Williams
- **Bayer panel discussion on boosting vegetable consumption** – Lucinda Hancock, Tony Worsley, Fiona Baxter, Anthony Staatz, Richard Dickmann
- **Hort Innovation Panel discussion on consumer-focused research projects funded by the Hort Innovation Vegetable Fund** – Chanel Day, Dr Mary Ann Augustin, Dr Denise Hamblin, Heather Smyth, Alice Zaslavsky

And many others – visit hortconnections.com.au for more information on all of the enlightening speakers and presentations.



Women in Horticulture

A sea of pink lit up the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre on Wednesday 20 June as delegates came together to celebrate the essential work of women in Australia's horticulture industry and simultaneously raise much-needed funds for breast cancer research.

The annual Women in Horticulture event, sponsored by Boomaroo Nurseries, encouraged all delegates to don pink clothing in celebration of the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF)'s GO PINK Week, and dig deep to raise money to support its important work in breast cancer research.

A generous cheque for \$1,000, presented by Emily White on behalf of Boomaroo Nurseries on the day, took the fundraising total to \$7,133.80, which will help NBCF in its quest to reach zero breast cancer-related deaths by 2020.

Speakers:

- Rachael Robertson, the youngest and second ever female expedition leader to Antarctica's Davis Station.
- Museums Victoria's Liza Dale-Hallett, who discussed the Invisible Farmer project, the largest ever study of Australian women on the land.
- ABC Landline's Pip Courtney, who brought a simple message to the audience: you don't need an official title to lead.

- AUSVEG Deputy Chair Belinda Adams, who reflected on the recent Women in Horticulture Industry Leadership and Development Mission to Europe in April, and recognised the 10 nominees for the Women in Horticulture Award, also sponsored by Boomaroo Nurseries. The winner was announced at the National Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner later that evening, with Growcom Chief Advocate Rachel Mackenzie receiving the honour.

Global Innovations in Horticulture and Export Seminars

Hort Connections featured two seminars to help Australian vegetable growers learn more about the latest global innovations that have the potential to reshape the outlook of Australian horticulture and to help vegetable growers export their produce to expand and diversify their businesses.

Global Innovations in Horticulture speakers:

- Erik Pekkeriet from Wageningen University in The Netherlands
- Kevin Walsh from Monsanto
- Urban Crop Solutions – Japan Country Manager Nicolas Tsurukawa
- Multi Tool Trac International Affairs Manager Maarten Van Ham

- Sandon Adams from Oritain Global Limited
- Keon Research CEO and Founder Michael Manion
- Professor Salah Sukkarieh, Director of Research and Innovation at the Australian Centre for Field Robotics
- Jesse Reader from Bosch
- Dr Peyman Moghadam, Senior Research Scientist at CSIRO Data61

Export Seminar speakers:

- Agribusiness expert Dr David McKinna
- Export Council of Australia Chair Dianne Tipping
- Citrus Australia Market Access Manager David Daniels
- Momack Produce Export Coordinator Richard Birtill
- Hort Innovation Trade Manager Jenny Van de Meeberg
- Virginia Farm Produce Commercial Business Manager Ryan Densley
- Odeum Farms Export Manager Nick Paterniti

Visit hortconnections.com.au for more information on the speakers and presentations from these two events.



Global Innovations in Horticulture and Export Seminars were funded by Hort Innovation using the vegetable research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government.



Hort Connections 2018





2018 National Awards for Excellence Winners



L-R Grower of the Year Scott Samwell and Young Grower of the Year Chris McLoghlin

Winner	Award	Sponsor
Scott Samwell	Grower of the Year	Syngenta
Chris McLoghlin	Young Grower of the Year	Corteva
East Gippsland Vegetable Innovation Days	Community Stewardship	E.E. Muir & Sons
Terry Martella	Innovation Partner	Boomaroo Nurseries
Jessica Page	Researcher of the Year	Bayer
Rachel Mackenzie	Women in Horticulture	Boomaroo Nurseries
Frank and Dianne Sciacca	Environmental Award	Butler Market Gardens
Danyang Ying	Industry Impact	VISY
Dicky Bill Australia	Exporter of the Year	NAB
Lotatoes Potatoes	Marketer of the Year	PMA – Produce Plus
Paul Pogas	Meritorious Service (Posthumous)	Fresh Markets Australia

Sponsors and Partners

Leading Strategic Partners



AUSVEG values the support of its strategic partners, which are vital to ensuring that the organisation can provide a high level of support on behalf of its growers.

Strategic Partners



Agribusiness Partners



Convention Partners



Regional Partners



A photograph of a young green plant growing in a field of similar plants, with a large white number '6' overlaid on the bottom left. The plant is in the foreground, showing its leaves and stem. The background is a blurred field of similar plants under a bright sky.

6

Grower Tours

AUSVEG ran four international Industry Leadership and Development Missions in 2018 to provide opportunities for 35 of Australia's leading vegetable levy-paying growers to increase their awareness and knowledge of the research and innovations in the global horticulture industry.

February – Europe Mission

Mission Leader: Nathan McIntyre
Locations visited: Berlin Fruit Logistica,
The Netherlands

Overview

The 2018 European Industry Leadership and Development Mission was held from 5-13 February and provided an opportunity for eight vegetable levy payers to visit the Berlin Fruit Logistica trade show – the world’s premier international meeting place for the fresh produce trade – as well as the Berlin wholesale market Berliner Großmarkt and leading researchers and agribusinesses in The Netherlands.

Giving Australian vegetable growers access to worldwide industry knowledge through attending the Berlin Fruit Logistica, as well as visiting the Berliner Großmarkt and Dutch companies Koppert Cress, Rijk Zwaan and Wageningen University offered participants the ability to increase existing industry networks and gain new insights into growing production and technologies and innovations that are being used and researched overseas.

While attending the Berlin Fruit Logistica, participants attended a number of presentations, meetings and networking events. This gave the group exposure to influential contacts from leading international businesses and allowed them to increase their knowledge of global horticulture trends to ensure Australian horticulture is at the forefront of the international industry.



Hort Innovation

Participation on Industry Leadership and Development Missions is funded by Hort Innovation using the vegetable research and development levy, voluntary contributions from Australian vegetable growing businesses and contributions from the Australian Government.

February – U.S.A. Mission

Mission Leader: Dimi Kyriakou
Locations visited: Arizona, Florida, California

Overview

From 3-17 February 2018, a group of nine vegetable industry members travelled to California and Florida – the two biggest vegetable growing regions in the United States – as well as Arizona, a key vegetable production area in winter, to visit innovative growing operations, research facilities, agribusinesses and the World Ag Expo, the world’s largest agricultural exhibition.

Meetings were organised to ensure a diverse range of topics were discussed throughout the two-week mission. This included on-farm production practices and innovations (both conventional and organic), packing house and processing developments, key areas for vegetable research, labour sourcing programs, agri-tourism initiatives, agtech innovation, biological crop protection and a visit to the World Ag Expo. In addition, participants also visited fresh produce retail outlets to see how produce is presented to consumers and the value-adding options that growers have created to minimise waste and increase profitability.

The mission allowed participants to experience the large scale of horticultural production on the east and west coasts of America, providing a clearer insight into industry nuances, production practices, new technologies and issues facing growers in the United States. Participants were exposed to farming practices in a range of horticultural crops, as well as the ways that growers in the United States are incorporating sustainable initiatives and value-adding elements to their businesses. Most importantly, participants were able to expand their local and international networks and broaden their knowledge and understanding of the vegetable and wider horticultural industries.



April – Young Grower Mission

Mission Leader: Shaun Lindhe
Locations visited: New Zealand, California

Overview

The 2018 Young Grower Industry Leadership and Development Mission provided an opportunity for a group of 11 emerging leaders in the Australian vegetable industry to visit innovative growing operations, research facilities, agribusinesses, markets and retailers in New Zealand and California.

The importance of developing the skills, knowledge and leadership capabilities of the industry's young members was a key objective for the mission. The mission provided an opportunity for young Australian vegetable growers to learn from their international peers and forge long-lasting networks with growers and agribusinesses in these countries and allowed future leaders in the Australian vegetable industry to gain a fresh insight into new production practices, machinery, technologies and strategies that are currently being used to advance the horticulture industry in these two countries.

To ensure participants received the greatest benefit from the mission, the itinerary included visits to key growing regions in New Zealand and California, including Horowhenua, Hawke's Bay and Pukekohe in New Zealand and Bakersfield and Salinas in California. These areas are all major vegetable growing regions in their respective countries.

The group met with growers, researchers and agribusinesses to ensure a diverse range of topics were discussed, including on-farm production practices and innovations, packing and processing developments, innovative vegetable research areas, labour sourcing programs, agtech innovation, biological crop protection and vegetable seed protection and production.



April/May – Women's Mission

Mission Leader: Carol Knight
Locations visited: France, Belgium, The Netherlands

Overview

The 2018 Women's Industry Leadership and Development Mission provided an opportunity for seven female Australian vegetable levy paying growers to participate on a tour of innovative vegetable growing operations, farms and different areas of the supply chain in France, Belgium and The Netherlands.

The primary objective of the mission was to provide current and potential female industry leaders with insights into international vegetable trade and growing operations and enable them to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes, procedures and issues faced around the world to provide a different perspective on their own growing operations. Participants obtained knowledge into production and harvesting methods, export development, food safety practices, marketing, issues sourcing labour and using labour hire, and planning practices used. It allowed the growers to compare and contrast the practices and technologies on their own farms with those in the region.

The mission also recognised the vital and changing role that women play in the Australian vegetable and wider horticulture industry. The group consisted of a diverse range of participants from across Australia, each holding varying roles within their respective companies. Roles included co-owners, farm managers, marketing and product development, as well as on-farm responsibilities in processing and production. Importantly, this allowed participants to share their diverse and broad range of knowledge and expertise with each other and provided a valuable professional development opportunity for all involved.



**Science &
Extension**

New appointment to role of National Manager - Extension and Engagement

Zarmeen Hassan joined AUSVEG in September 2018 in the role of National Manager – Extension and Engagement, replacing Dr Jessica Lye who had been in the role for around three years. Zarmeen comes to AUSVEG with a wealth of experience across industry and the private sector, having worked for global organisations including Monsanto, FrieslandCampina, Reckitt Benckiser and Coca-Cola.

Recently, she has spent time in Pakistan to develop transformative solutions for the agricultural sector, working with multiple stakeholders from industry, government, finance, growers, academia and donor agencies to forge public private partnerships for the development of the sector.

Zarmeen also has extensive leadership experience, holding multiple roles managing teams and projects across a wide range of disciplines, including agriculture, marketing, communications, business and policy development.

Zarmeen' role includes leading the variety of projects undertaken by the AUSVEG Science Team, as well as representing the vegetable and potato industries on various biosecurity and industry-related matters.

<p>What is EnviroVeg?</p>	<p>Encourage good management: Sustainable, environmentally responsible and profitable practices. Provide benefit to growers: Recognition, membership advantages and ongoing improvement. Inform industry: Direct and extend research, expertise and resources.</p>	
<p>Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase sustainability of the environment to secure the future of Australian food production • Save growers time and money through aligned industry accreditation programs • Efficient resource use – one-stop-shop for information and advice • Improve business perception with buyers and the community 	
<p>Target audiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable production businesses • Industry: extension services, researchers, supply chain, regional services • Consumers 	
<p>When & where</p>	<p><i>The EnviroVeg Program 2017-2022 (VG16063)</i> is a strategic levy investment under the Hort Innovation Vegetable Fund, with the goal of becoming self-sustaining after 2022.</p>	
<p>Project Details</p>	<p>Program</p>	<p>Membership pathway: Self-assessment, feedback report, training, certification. Continuous improvement: Support, benchmarking, expertise, advice.</p>
	<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>This project aligns three industry programs (EnviroVeg, Hort360 and Freshcare Environmental) through project partners AUSVEG, Growcom and Freshcare.</p> <p><i>Growcom – Hort360 platform</i>; online tool</p> <p><i>Freshcare – Freshcare ENV 3 certification</i>: recognised standard, independently verified through third-party audit.</p> <p><i>AUSVEG – coordination, communication, leadership</i>: Program contact point including project extension and management.</p>
	<p>Project resources for growers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Coordinator • The EnviroVeg manual (management guidelines) • Self-assessment • Feedback report • Training • Certification pathway • Website • Logo use • Program membership • Expertise follow-ups • Templates
	<p>Engagement and adoption</p>	<p>Pilot program (25 growers funded to use program and provide feedback)</p> <p>Program History (15 years of development, 480 previous members)</p> <p>Ease of use (improved program resources)</p> <p>Extension hub – EnviroVeg enables research adoption</p> <p>Regular engagement with growers on-farm</p>
	<p>Grower champions to encourage adoption</p>	<p>Extension – research and industry resources are integrated within EnviroVeg</p> <p>Program coordinator – speaking at events, visiting growers and stakeholders</p> <p>Recognition strategy – six projects to influence major stakeholders and achieve recognition and advantages for EnviroVeg members</p>
	<p>Industry-owned</p>	<p>Hort Innovation is the grower-owned research and development corporation that funds EnviroVeg. EnviroVeg is managed by a steering committee of growers and industry members.</p> <p>Technical advice is provided by a committee of best-practice experts.</p>

Update on 2018 EnviroVeg activities

EnviroVeg has historically been a flagship program for the Australian vegetable industry. In 2018, EnviroVeg has redeveloped its structure and majorly overhauled many useful grower resources, such as:

- The EnviroVeg manual (180-page best practice guidelines)
- EnviroVeg website
- Self-assessment
- Certification pathway
- Logo and branding
- Rules for membership
- Fact sheets

- Recognition strategy and projects
- Training delivery

Ongoing improvement of resources and increased collaboration continues to drive the success of EnviroVeg. Twenty-five growers from around the country have begun piloting the revamped program, with their feedback vital in ensuring the program can deliver tangible benefits to growers

Communication, extension and engagement of EnviroVeg through

grower champions is an important component of promoting the program to industry. In 2018, this has included:

- Visits to growers and industry nationally (focusing on major vegetable production regions)
- Presenting and participating at industry events (conferences, workshops, field days, webinars and forums)
- Written communications through industry channels (*Vegetables Australia*, *AUSVEG Weekly Update* etc.)

Vegetable Agrichemical Pest Management Needs and Priorities

Project Officer: Patrick Arratia

This project's objective is to identify and prioritise pest, disease and weed issues, and identify potential gaps through an effective prioritisation process. Identified pest priorities and gaps will assist in directing research and development funding for crop protection purposes that will translate into better agrichemical access for vegetable growers.

Since commencement of this project in mid-2017, extensive grower and agronomist consultation has taken place in several vegetable growing regions in Australia, and 12 regional workshops have taken place in 2018, resulting in over 180 growers and agronomists being consulted via workshops and/or one-on-one visits. In addition, an online crop

specific survey has been developed to complement data gathered from grower consultations.

As part of this project, the Project Coordinator has organised a Chemical Access Advisory Group (CAAG) to hold meetings twice a year. The CAAG comprises experts in relevant technical and scientific disciplines who provide technical advice and expert knowledge to the Project Officer and review minor use permit applications. The first CAAG meeting took place in March 2018 and the second meeting took place in November to discuss outcomes from the 2018 Agchem Forum.

A Top 5 Pest Priorities list (pest, disease and weeds) was developed in conjunction with Hort Innovation, using information gathered during

industry consultation and online crop specific surveys, for vegetable commodities and submitted for further discussion with registrants at the October 2018 Agchem Forum. At this forum, plant-based research and development corporations, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority and commercial chemical registrants came together to agree on a list of cross-industry priority needs and solutions for the use of agricultural chemicals.



Vegetable Agrichemical Pest Management Needs and Priorities (VG16060) is a Strategic Levy Investment under the Hort Innovation Vegetable Fund.

Research, Development and Extension Program for Control, Eradication and Preparedness for Vegetable Leafminer 2017-2020 (MT16004)

Project Officers: Zarmeen Hassan, Nikita Chawla, Madeleine Quirk

This project was developed in recognition of the extensive impact that vegetable leafminer (VLM, *Liriomyza sativae*) could have on the vegetable and nursery industries if it were to move into production areas with no management plan in place. The program has five partners: Cesar (project lead), Plant Health Australia (PHA), the University of Melbourne, Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) and AUSVEG. Nursery and Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) is a project steering committee member.

AUSVEG facilitates the extension program to improve awareness of VLM and educate growers about methods of control as developed throughout the project. AUSVEG and Cesar have designed

awareness information brochures, hosted grower mock surveillance field days, as well as community education workshops and school kitchen garden surveillance classes in Seisia, Queensland.

In May 2018, Dr Jessica Lye (ex-AUSVEG) and Cesar undertook a monitoring field study to Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait Islands to raise awareness of VLM and share pest surveillance and reporting skills in the Cape, so that project partners and growers remain aware of VLM's movement and continue to inform tourists about good plant biosecurity practises and the duty of care measures.

In 2018, AUSVEG delivered eight workshops to growers and industry in Victoria and Queensland, supported by communication

materials including two brochures, a *Have you seen the Vegetable Leafminer?* video, a *Protecting Our Vegetable Industry* podcast, and three articles in *Vegetables Australia*. Program information is published in AUSVEG print and digital publications and on various social media channels.

In 2019, AUSVEG will continue to deliver workshops in high risk regions and key vegetable production regions across Australia and develop relevant resources for our industry, growers and community.

Hort Innovation

Research, Development and Extension Program for Control, Eradication and Preparedness for Vegetable Leafminer 2017-2020 (MT16004) is a Strategic Levy Investment under the Hort Innovation Vegetable and Nursery Funds.

Farm Biosecurity Project

Project officers: Callum Fletcher, Madeleine Quirk

The Vegetable and Potato Biosecurity Program is funded by the Plant Health Levy.

Grower engagement and farm biosecurity training

The Farm Biosecurity Project is a training, extension and communication program that aims to raise awareness of high priority exotic and restricted pests for the vegetable and potato industries, increase on-farm biosecurity practices and provide information

to growers to support and improve their farm biosecurity and pest and disease management practices.

In 2018, the project officers Callum Fletcher and Madeleine Quirk, visited approximately 200 vegetable and potato growers across Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland to discuss pest and disease issues and general biosecurity, both one-on-one and in groups.

During one-on-one meetings, grower information and other findings from these visits are

recorded. The AUSVEG biosecurity team will continue to periodically follow-up growers and work directly with them into the future.

In addition to individual grower visits, the project officers facilitate on-farm biosecurity training workshop sessions for growers, associated industry members and advisors. These sessions support growers in developing their own farm biosecurity planning programs by using a clearly understandable step-by-step process. As it stands, training sessions are specifically targeted and generally cover topics, as outlined on the next page.



- An overview of the Australian biosecurity system and current challenges;
- The impacts of new pests and diseases on Australian horticulture industries;
- The purpose and benefits of farm biosecurity planning;
- Important pests and diseases in the vegetable industry; and
- A facilitated farm biosecurity planning session.

Each session is typically tailored to suit the needs of the audience, which may include discussion around common pests and diseases in the respective regions and topical exotic pest and disease issues across industry.

A train-the-trainer initiative has also been developed, providing vegetable industry extension officers with the resources necessary to properly deliver a Farm Biosecurity Planning Workshop. This training is a strategic way to expand delivery of workshops across Australia, with flow-on effects such as improving industry capabilities and increasing collaboration between extension officers across different regions. To ensure the initiative is successful, the AUSVEG project officers provide in-person training and supply a complete training package, consisting of a broad range of appropriate resources. When an extension officer successfully delivers a workshop, the results and feedback are supplied to the AUSVEG project officers, which then inform the future planning and layout of the ongoing program.

Communications

A key focus of the program is communication, with the aim of providing relevant information to biosecurity stakeholders.

- Writing articles for vegetable and potato industry magazines (The Front Line articles in *Vegetables Australia* and *Potatoes Australia*);
- Writing biosecurity media releases;
- Publishing e-newsletters (The Front Line e-Bulletins);
- Contributing to print and broadcast media;
- AUSVEG biosecurity webpage (ausveg.com.au/biosecurity); and social media (Twitter handle – [@biosecurityveg](https://twitter.com/biosecurityveg)).

If you would like to subscribe to the biosecurity e-Bulletins and stay up-to-date about biosecurity in the industry, please email science@ausveg.com.au.

Industry involvement

AUSVEG project officers regularly attend and speak at industry events, strengthen relationships with government and researchers, and assist with the development of biosecurity resources for industry, among other activities. In 2018, more than 20 biosecurity-focused presentations on pests and diseases were given; biosecurity conferences and roundtables were attended, along with several meetings with state and federal governments. The vegetable and potato industries now have a designated liaison officer at the federal government level who works with AUSVEG to better coordinate the biosecurity work and industry communication being conducted.

In July 2018, an Urban Biosecurity Pilot Program was initiated in Melbourne. The pilot program supports the industry by educating community stakeholders who live in the city about major pests and diseases that could pose a threat to the vegetable and potato industries. The intent of the program is to identify new incursions in a timely manner so that they can be eradicated before they become a significant issue for industry.

Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed

To ensure that industry has the capability and capacity to meet their requirements during plant pest incursions, four AUSVEG employees are trained in the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed. This training supports AUSVEG's ability to contribute to decision-making processes on behalf of the vegetable and potato industries during incursions, with these employees able to provide advice and representation at government level when an exotic pest incursion occurs and when an eradication response is required. Currently there are 19 open status response efforts underway.

This work also involves providing oversight to the various eradication efforts of exotic pests as they are being conducted by the federal or state governments and ensuring that the allocated resources are being appropriately spent and managed. The purpose of AUSVEG's involvement is to provide a constant voice for industry at all stages of an incursion and at all levels of government so that levy money is spent in an effective manner.

ST16010 iMapPESTS Sentinel Surveillance for Agriculture

Project Officers:
Shakira Johnson, Nikita Chawla

Industry collaborates for plant pest and disease surveillance across Australia

iMapPESTS: *Sentinel Surveillance for Agriculture* (ST16010) is a national program of research, development and extension designed to put actionable information relating to major agricultural sectors' pest and disease dynamics into the hands of Australia's primary producers, industries and governments. The timely delivery of this information will support enhanced on-farm pest management, biosecurity response efforts and proof-of-freedom claims. Work began on the project in early 2018.

Over a five-year period (2017-2022), the iMapPESTS program will research, develop and validate advanced pest and disease surveillance, diagnostics, and forecasting technologies, including custom-designed and built mobile surveillance units (termed 'sentinels') that incorporate specialised trapping equipment and technology. The sentinels will be deployed at various locations across the country and will capture samples

for laboratory identification and analysis. Computer models will then predict the abundance and spread of target pests and diseases. The data and information generated across the program will be transitioned and extended to its stakeholders in the form of tailored information products, an activity being led by AUSVEG, in collaboration with the extended research and industry network.

Specifically, AUSVEG's communications and engagement activities include establishing a vast extension network to raise awareness, build support and promote adoption of the program's outputs and outcomes across each industry. We will target the program's key audience: growers and their advisors involved in the major cropping agricultural sectors of cotton, forest products, grain, horticulture, sugarcane, wine grape and emerging plant crops. The AUSVEG project team will host regional consultation workshops across Australia to gather information, raise awareness and provide updates and information on the different component of the program, including when and where the sentinel units will be deployed.



**Hort
Innovation**

This project is supported by Hort Innovation, through funding from the Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources as part of its Rural R&D for Profit Program and funding from 16 partner organisations.

Tomato-potato psyllid – update

Project Officer: Alan Nankivell

As can be expected, this past year has been focused on learning more about the incursion of tomato-potato psyllid (TPP) in Western Australia, understanding the impact of chemical TPP management on potatoes and vegetables and preparation of management plans.

Following the incursion of TPP, it was resolved that it was not eradicable. A Transition to Management (T2M) plan commenced in September 2017, which was scheduled for completion in May 2018.

The major themes of the T2M plan were the trapping and testing of TPP for the zebra chip complex, *Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum* (CLso), a review of the latest international literature and the testing of chemical and biological agents for the management of TPP.

The outcomes from the T2M included:

- determining that CLso is not present in the TPP population in Western Australia; and
- identifying several chemicals and biologicals that were found to be successful in managing TPP in a controlled environment.

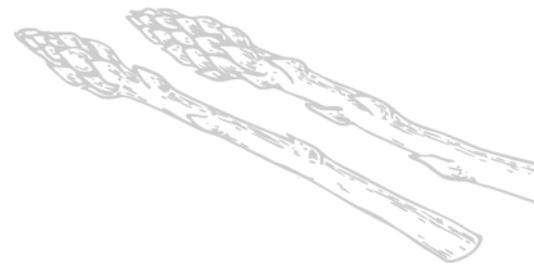
Due to the TPP incursion, market access from Western Australia to other jurisdictions ceased. However, as CLso was not found and TPP as a vector for CLso can be well managed, Western Australia has gained area freedom from CLso and market access has been granted for all jurisdictions except South Australia at the time of writing.

Secondly, extensive engagement has been undertaken to achieve a harmonised approach between New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria to ensure the movement of potato tubers between jurisdictions if (or when) TPP is found in any of the jurisdictions. The Plant Health Committee has released a Communique to industry outlining its collective approach.

Future planning includes the development of a CLso preparedness plan, reviewing the current 2008 pest risk assessment, having the TPP host list nationally endorsed and advocating for field trials for chemical and biological agents.

Hort Innovation

Tomato-Potato Psyllid (TPP) National Program Coordinator has been funded by the fresh potato, potato processing and vegetable research and development levies and contributions from the Australian Government.



A close-up photograph of several green grass blades. The blades are covered in numerous small, clear dew droplets that catch the light, creating a sparkling effect. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a field of grass. The overall mood is fresh and natural.

8

**State
Members**

As the national representative body for the Australian vegetable and potato industries, AUSVEG relies heavily on its state members for guidance and feedback on advocacy issues at both the state and national level. AUSVEG has member organisations in each state and territory (with the exception of two in Western Australia and none in the A.C.T.).

Growcom

Growcom is the peak representative body for Queensland horticulture and strives for the long-term growth and profitability of horticultural farms and the industry. Its core membership consists of Queensland's fruit and vegetable producers and individuals, groups and industries that have a stake or interest in the future of Queensland horticulture.

Growcom delivers services across the entire horticulture industry to businesses and organisations of all commodities, sizes and regions, as well as to associated industries in the value chain. Although Growcom is Queensland-based, the organisation's ability and expertise hold no boundaries and it is dedicated to leading the horticulture industry towards greater success. Growcom's national Fair Farms Initiative demonstrates its commitment to lifting standards across the sector to ensure that horticulture can meet its potential. If you are interested in more information about this initiative.

Primary Contact:
Rachel Mackenzie, Growcom
Chief Advocate
07 3620 3844
rmackenzie@growcom.com.au



NSW Farmers

The NSW Farmers' Association is Australia's largest state farming organisation representing the interests of its farmer members. NSW Farmers is Australia's only state-based farming organisation to represent the interests of farmers of all agricultural commodities – from avocados and tomatoes, apples, bananas and berries, through to grains, pulses and lentils to oysters, cattle, dairy, goats, sheep, pigs and poultry.

Its 100-plus regional branch network ensures local voices guide and shape positions on issues which affect real people in real communities. Its issue- and commodity-specific Advisory Committees are elected by members to provide specialist, practical advice to decision makers on issues affecting the sector. NSW Farmers is proudly apolitical – it puts members' needs first.

NSW Farmers has partnerships and alliances with like-minded organisations, universities, government agencies and commercial businesses across Australia, and is a proud founding member of the National Farmers' Federation.

Primary Contact:
Robert Hardie, NSW Farmers
Policy Director – Cropping and Horticulture
02 9478 1000
emailus@nswfarmers.org.au



AUSVEG VIC

AUSVEG VIC was established to ensure effective agripolitical representation and links to national industry programs. AUSVEG VIC is the new name for the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria (VGA), and is building upon the work done by the VGA on behalf of Victorian vegetable growers since it was established in 1923.

The State Manager works closely with the AUSVEG VIC Executive Committee – formerly known as the VGA Executive Committee – to assess key priorities for representation and potential on-farm services to assist the industry.

AUSVEG VIC extends the strong model for advocacy on industry issues that AUSVEG has established at the national level to Victorian growers. AUSVEG VIC has the goal of using its experience in effectively representing grower interests with government and the community to further the development of horticulture in the state.

Primary Contact:
Tom Cohen, AUSVEG VIC State
Manager
03 9882 0277
info@ausvegvic.com.au



Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association

The Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) is the peak body representing the interests of Tasmanian farmers. Its purpose is to provide a united voice to communicate with governments at all levels, along with other industry stakeholders. It has a proud history of successful advocacy, fighting for the needs of Tasmanian farmers for over 50 years.

TFGA is committed to ensuring that the Tasmanian agriculture sector is sustainable. TFGA achieves this by promoting the vital contribution agriculture makes to Tasmania's environmental, social and economic fabric.

Primary Contact:
Nick Steel, TFGA Policy & Rural Affairs Manager
03 6332 1800
reception@tfga.com.au

AUSVEG SA

AUSVEG SA is the state-wide representative body for South Australia's \$700 million vegetable industry. It works with governments of all levels to advocate on key issues and deliver a number of key industry development programs which support hardworking South Australian growers to reach their potential.



AUSVEG SA is underpinned by a strong membership of growers from throughout the state who have joined the organisation to grow the industry and present a strong, unified voice to government.

Primary Contact:
Jordan Brooke-Barnett, AUSVEG SA Chief Executive Officer
08 8221 5220
jordan.brooke-barnett@ausveg.com.au

vegetablesWA

vegetablesWA is the state peak industry body actively representing vegetable growers for over 70 years. It works with growers, the broader industry, and government to develop a profitable and sustainable industry for growers.

vegetablesWA has a team of skilled people to help growers address the key areas affecting their business profitability, including: advocacy and representation; R&D extension; value chain and export development; benchmarking and business improvement; quality assurance; and business services.

Primary Contact:
John Shannon, vegetablesWA Chief Executive Officer
08 9486 7515
office@vegetableswa.com.au



WA Potatoes

WA Potatoes is the peak industry body representing potato growers across Western Australia.

The association represents around 100 potato growers across the state in various growing regions, including northern Perth, Myalup, Busselton/Marybrook and Manjimup/Pemberton. It provides the following services to industry:

- Advocacy and Representation
- Research and Development
- Marketing and Promotion
- Communications, including regular Grower Updates

Primary Contact:
Simon Moltoni, WA Potatoes Executive Officer
08 9481 0834
potatoes@vegetableswa.com.au

NT Farmers

The Northern Territory Farmers Association (NT Farmers) is the peak body for plant-based industries in the Northern Territory, and is an amalgam of the former Northern Territory Agricultural and Horticultural Associations. NT Farmers commenced operation on 1 July 2012.

NT Farmers' membership comprises a wide range of tropical and arid region horticultural, agricultural and forestry enterprises and associated agri-businesses and it currently has more than 100 members in its organisation.

Primary Contact:
Greg Owens, NT Farmers Chief Executive Officer
08 8983 3233
info@ntfarmers.org.au



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AUSVEG
in 2019

As the Federal Election approaches in 2019, an increased focus for the organisation will be to continue to advocate strongly on behalf of growers. AUSVEG has launched its election advocacy platform, which it has branded "SPROUT", and which will form the basis of its pitch to politicians on policy priorities that will benefit Australian horticultural industries and their communities and help secure the future productivity and competitiveness of our industry.

S

Sharing our story

Right to farm, paddock to plate, social licence

AUSVEG will actively increase engagement with key political figures in government, opposition and on the crossbench in the months leading up to the Federal Election to ensure their policies reflect the needs of our growers and their communities. Following the election, AUSVEG will also hold politicians to account to enact their policies.

P

Protecting Australia

Biosecurity, reputation of quality and safe produce, protecting borders and domestic quality, water use, sustainability

We will also continue to engage with the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) Horticulture Council to ensure that our industry's capacity to advocate on behalf of our growers is as effective and unified as possible. This platform will give AUSVEG and the other industry bodies represented on the Council the opportunity to have their issues considered as part of the NFF's national election platform, which will increase the exposure that our issues receive by all sides of politics.

R

Resourcing our sector

Attracting people to our industry, visa requirements, training, education, career pathways

O

Opening doors

Increasing exports, market access, increasing domestic consumption

U

Utilising technology and innovation

Data integration on-farm, continuing and growing R&D

T

Transforming the industry

Market pricing, transparency, infrastructure, supply chain, succession planning

Biosecurity

As the worldwide movement in people and goods steadily grows, so too does the risk to agriculture of the arrival of exotic pests and diseases. These incursions can have a devastating impact, not just on production quality, but also interstate and international trade. As we have witnessed with past incursions, they also take a

tremendous toll on the economic and personal welfare of affected growers and the wider industry.

The focus of biosecurity preparedness efforts is to ensure the industry can adequately deal with exotic plant pest issues as they arise. Building a capability in advance is an ongoing priority

for industry and one that AUSVEG takes a lead on to help shape how the country responds to plant pest issues that have such a significant impact on growers. Our focus is always to make sure that the interests of growers are fully understood, and taken into account by decision makers.



Labour issues

AUSVEG will continue to advocate for better access to a competent and willing workforce that is flexible enough to accommodate the seasonal variability in demand. We will continue to demonstrate the opportunity cost that the industry incurs by not being able to access labour, and articulate the benefit of adapting visa settings to reduce the pool of illegal workers in the country.

We will work with growers across the country to ensure they understand their obligations as employers, and encourage distributors and retailers to apply robust ethical sourcing practices to ensure growers acting responsibly are supported.

Export market development

In 2019, AUSVEG will continue to work with growers to grow export markets for vegetables and potatoes. This program has several elements to it, and delivers benefits to all growers, whether exporting or not, by developing new demand for domestic production.

Increased industry collaboration

There is a growing sentiment that the fragmented nature of Australian horticulture is substantially limiting its ability to influence and engage. While the great diversity of production drives innovation and growth and keeps the industry at the forefront of providing nutritious, healthy

food to meet the needs of an increasingly inquisitive consumer at home and abroad, when it comes to representing growers, it can also be a liability.

The consequences are hidden, as they are largely “opportunity costs” – what could have been achieved had the industry been more articulate and persuasive in demonstrating its value to the broader economy?

In 2019, AUSVEG will be making a greater effort to shape the entire horticulture industry to increase its effectiveness and efficiency through greater collaboration and consolidation.

Some questions that will be explored include:

- Will a consolidated model for industry representation improve grower advocacy and service delivery?
- How can we ensure a more consolidated and collaborative model be driven by growers for the benefit of growers?
- How can we get a coalition of like-minded horticulture growers together to drive this change and lead it?
- Where do existing peak industry bodies fit in the industry’s advocacy model if we wish to consolidate services and advocacy?

These may be difficult questions to consider, but they need to be explored – we know there will be pushback, but the potential benefits that a consolidated model for representation could provide to industry are too significant to ignore.

Hort Connections 2019

As you would have seen earlier in this report, Hort Connections 2018 was a tremendous success and provided the opportunity for nearly 3,000 horticulture growers, supply chain members and industry representatives to attend speaker presentations from industry leaders and spokespeople, visit the Hort Connections trade show and celebrate the achievements of the industry’s leading contributors at the National Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner.

Hort Connections 2019 will be held from 24-26 June at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, with the bold theme of “**Growing Our Food Future**”. We encourage everyone from all areas of the horticulture supply chain to take part.

Registrations are now open, so visit hortconnections.com.au to find out more details on the program, speakers and to register for tickets. Be sure to get in before the Early Bird rate closes on 28 March 2019, but if you miss this rate, tickets can be bought online at any time.





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