

TASMANIAN FARMERS AND GRAZIERS ASSOCIATION SUBMISSION

Tasmanian State Budget 2023-24
Community Consultation Process





INVESTING IN GROWING OUR FUTURE

The Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) is the leading peak industry body for the agriculture sector in Tasmania, representing our broad membership base at local, state and national levels. Our vision is to create a stable and sustainable future for Tasmanian farmers, through providing a united voice for Tasmanian farmers to ensure the growth, sustainability and profitability of the agriculture industry in Tasmania.

Under the new strategic direction of the organisation, the TFGA aims to lead positive change, drive industry innovation, promote farming's role, value and contribution socially and economically. We aim to protect the needs of farming businesses and families across Tasmania.

Agriculture continues to be an important economic pillar for the state's economy, with its contribution also benefiting other key industries, such as tourism and retail. Agriculture also contributes greatly to the Tasmanian brand and to the rural and regional communities across the state.

The agriculture sector needs policy support, projects and investment targeted at driving growth and boosting on-farm profitability and competitiveness, if it is to effectively capture its full potential. Implications for agricultural expansion need to be considered to enable our membership to continue to meet the expectations of our community and provide food, fibre and pharmaceuticals needed across the world, without increased operational restraints.

The TFGA looks forward to a positive ongoing relationship with the Tasmanian State Government and welcomes the opportunity to discuss these recommendations and how they fit strategically into investment in greater detail. Together, we can better help grow Tasmanian agriculture as a vibrant industry that sustains successful business and contributes to our state's health, wellbeing and prosperity.

Ian Sauer
TFGA President

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Executive Summary

Tasmanian agriculture is facing a never before experienced collection of 'uncontrollable variables', resulting in the need to grapple with a very different set of production risks. The ramifications of a dramatic weather systems, infectious animal disease outbreaks in tourist hot-spots, global pandemic and a war being waged in the northern hemisphere sees Tasmanian farmers facing operational constraints such as the fundamental breakdown of the global freight system, volatile input prices (including, but not limited to skyrocketing fuel and fertiliser prices) and dramatic fluctuations in cereal, milk, produce and seed pricing, to name just a few.

Tasmanian farmers are, as we know, adept at assessing risks on the go and constantly adjusting operations in response to global influences. And whilst we have little control over risks associated with freight and input pricing, access to a reliable supply of water, traceability, investment in employment and education are influenced on a state level and could benefit from a renewed budgetary focus. Whilst there is the perception that some areas are flourishing due to viability being measured in higher commodity prices, in order for the agricultural industry in Tasmania to continue a momentum towards growth and sustainability, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) outlines below what we see as the key strategic priorities for the State Government to action to drive on-farm profitability and competitiveness. With this investment in the 2023 budget, industry will stronger, more sustainable place to achieve the State Government's target of \$10 Billion by 2050.

This submission details a range of recommendations to assist the growth and prosperity of Tasmania's agriculture industry across the supply chain. These recommendations have been broadly categorised under four key priorities: labour and training, water infrastructure and resources, sustainability and traceability/biosecurity.

By no means does this submission attempt to capture the entirety of issues that need attention within the farming community. It does, however, aim to provide strategic and proactive initiatives, projects and policy prescriptions to make progress on a number of issues across the various agricultural industries in Tasmania. It is expected, if progress can be made within these four priorities, significant flow on impacts and benefits will be felt across a broader suite of challenges faced by our members.



Summary of Recommendations

Priority 1: Investing in Education and Training for the Future of Tasmanian Agriculture

Recommendation 1 – That TFGA would receive funding from the State Government of \$25,000 to travel expenses for a cross section of TFGA representatives and other industry organisation representatives from Tasmania

Recommendation 2 – That TFGA would receive funding from State Government of \$10,000 to recover wage costs for TFGA to develop a summary report of meetings held, key findings, outcomes and industry recommendations to the Tasmanian Government to inform Skills Tasmania and TasTAFE

Recommendation 3 – That the State Government investigate, in collaboration with the TFGA, an annualised program to bring farmers and agricultural service providers to secondary schools across the state, to discuss the value, options and benefits to careers in agriculture.

Recommendation 4 – A review of the Tasmanian Workers Compensation Scheme and investigation into the feasibility of a government-underwritten scheme to make workers compensation insurance more affordable and accessible for employers

Recommendation 5 – To ensure continued delivery of a safe and sustainable workforce, TFGA would like to see additional resources provided to Safe Farming Tasmania for two project officers

Priority 2: Securing the Future for Irrigation in Tasmania

Recommendation 6 – That the State Government provide the TFGA with \$75,000 funding grant to engage an independent consultant to conduct a detailed economic assessment of the current and forecast value that irrigated agriculture provides to Tasmanian communities

Recommendation 7 – That the Tasmanian Government continues to advocate for and invest in the development of irrigation infrastructure in Tasmania, consistent with the existing funding model

Recommendation 8 – That the Tasmanian Government ensures specific funding is available to provide for adequate operational and technical resources are available across compliance, licencing and resource management functions of the Natural Resources and Environment Water Operations team

Priority 3: Increase on-farm sustainability and productivity through technology, innovation and market access, that is deliverable and measurable

Recommendation 9 – Provision of funding with initial scoping indicates that a project of this magnitude will require a commitment of at least \$960,000 and delivery over a three year time frame to ensure optimal outcomes

Recommendation 10 – That the Tasmanian Government provide funding to run the On-farm Energy Audit and Capital Grant Program for additional rounds, in response to the previous levels of demand. Funding for these supplementary rounds should exceed previous commitments and adjustments should be made to project timeframes/round numbers accordingly

Recommendation 11 – Tasmanian State Government, in consultation with the TFGA, to introduce a system for game fencing subsidies

Recommendation 12 – Introduce a 1:1 cost sharing agreement for the development and maintenance of game fencing for all boundaries between private agricultural or forestry land and Crown land where there is a wildlife problem

Recommendation 13 – Upon finalisation of the ‘Felixer’ cat poisoning trials currently underway on King Island, that the State Government purchase multiple traps to be available to lease to farmers for a small cost-recovery fee

Recommendation 14 – Introduce a permit system for the use of sound suppressors for crop protection

Priority 4: Safeguarding Tasmania’s Primary Industries

Recommendation 15 – Continuation of the sheep and goat EID implementation study through the Tasmanian Red Meat Industry Development Project

Recommendation 16 – Funding for educational workshops for sheep producers to support the implementation and utilisation of EID on farm

Recommendation 17 – Investigation of an equitable cost-sharing arrangement and support from both the State and Federal governments for the implementation and maintenance of any proposed system

Recommendation 18 – Funding for a feasibility study to consider the development of a central portal for primary producers to store and access compliance data and information for their individual businesses, akin to the myGov initiative

Recommendation 19 – Investigation into tools to better manage on-farm biosecurity record keeping

Recommendation 20 – To ensure public safety, biosecurity and animal welfare, appropriate funding provided to develop additional truck wash and effluent dump facilities in the North-West, North East and Southern regions of Tasmania

PRIORITY 1: Investing in Education and Training for the Future of Tasmanian Agriculture



1.1 Industry lead review of agricultural training

Both industry and Government organisations across Australia have grappled with how to help alleviate the burden of labour shortages in the agricultural sector. Urban drift and interstate migration proves to be a challenge for Tasmanian agricultural business owners, ever-competing with the increasing perception that there are limited viable career pathways in the agricultural sector, and Tasmania more broadly. To combat this, Tasmanian farmers have traditionally relied heavily on migrant workers and backpackers to fill critical seasonal gaps.

If we want to drive local employment though, how best to train unskilled workers, attract them to regional Tasmania and retain them for long-term periods remains a key point of contention amongst interested parties.

The TFGA is aware of a selection of programs that have seen investment from industry and government organisations in recent years that have struggled to meet the anticipated uptake levels, which is resulting in the programs needing to be adjusted and re-evaluated by TasTAFE, in the hopes to garner a higher degree of interest.

As part of this revaluation, it has been a long period of time since the agriculture sector in Tasmania got together and collaborated on a grassroots assessment of what is needed by farmers, and then worked closely with TasTAFE and other Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) to design a training system that is fit for purpose and structured on a needs basis.

The TFGA is keen to lead a collaboration with Fruit Growers Tasmania (FGT), Primary Employers Tasmania (PET) and other industry groups to engage in an interactive learning exercise to evaluate the relationships between other industry peak bodies, state

farming organisations (SFO's) and their RTO's (e.g. Victorian Farmers Federation and TAFE Victoria, Agforce and TAFE Queensland etc.). Unlike Tasmania, many other SFO's have strong working relationships and ongoing collaboration with their RTO's, informing trainers on a regular basis about the feedback farmers provide and where they are seeking trained personnel.

Seeking out and championing high level agricultural VET teaching and assessment practices from across Australia and New Zealand, would assist Tasmanian farmers and RTO's to develop and promote rural learning pathways. This collaborative exercise between TFGA and other industry bodies would involve a five day 'tour' to at least three state's to engage with SFO's and RTO's across Australia and to:

- observe best practice TRO teaching and assessment
- better understand truly collaborative SFO and RTO relationships
- observe high level farmer and RTO relationships

This will allow TFGA, and any other accompanying industry organisation representatives, to observe how other RTO's manage industry consultation and student learning, what practices and training methods work (or do not work) for other regions and will allow the TFGA to develop a summary report of recommendations to Skills Tasmania/TasTAFE.

Recommendations:

- 1. That TFGA would receive funding from the State Government of \$25,000 to travel expenses for a cross section of TFGA representatives and other industry organisation representatives from Tasmania**
- 2. That TFGA would receive funding from State Government of \$10,000 to recover wage costs for**

TFGA to develop a summary report of meetings held, key findings, outcomes and industry recommendations to the Tasmanian Government to inform Skills Tasmania and TasTAFE

1.2 Showcasing agricultural career pathways in secondary schools

The TFGA currently facilitates “Kids to Farms”, a Commonwealth supported Project that aims to assist primary school educators to engage and excite children in food and fibre production learning. While this project has proven a highly successful initiative to introduce children to agriculture, it’s become apparent that more work needs to be done in the secondary school/college sector in Tasmania to inspire young adults to see the value in choosing a career pathways in agriculture.

Exposure to agricultural pathways in secondary schools is often limited, and where efforts *are* made, they are typically done so by spokes-people from education and training institutions, such as universities. Students in secondary schools and college (year levels 7 - 12), ages where they are setting up for themselves course subjects and training/degree pathways, are not frequently coming into contact with industry personnel and those directly employed in the sector.

The National Farmers Federation (the national industry representative body for agriculture) has a series of initiatives that aim to facilitate the exposure of high school students to jobs in agriculture, such as the “AgVenture Careers Expo”. While these opportunities are excellent, they lack a localised approach to promoting agricultural career pathways.

For Tasmania, connecting the vocational training system to high school/college students in an effective manner is sorely needed. A joint collaboration between

industry organisations, such as TFGA, DairyTas, Nutrien, TasTAFE or PET, to travel to a selection of schools across the state to hold discussion forums may prove an effective strategy to give students real-world exposure to agriculture career pathways.

Recommendation:

- 3. That the State Government investigate, in collaboration with the TFGA, an annualised program to bring farmers and agricultural service providers to secondary schools across the state, to discuss the value, options and benefits to careers in agriculture.**

1.3 Workers Compensation and Safety

Workers compensation premiums have increased exponentially for Tasmanian agricultural businesses in recent years, particularly for primary producers who are required to employ contractors such as shearers. The majority of insurance providers view the agricultural industry as high risk and shearing activities as an ‘undesirable’ risk due to increased injury numbers and high claim costs. Of the very few insurers who are willing to provide cover for shearing activities, the rates vary between 25% to 40% of wages and charges, with minimum premiums of \$10,000 - \$15,000. For small producers, the insurance premium is often more than the cost of shearing.

The WorkCover Tasmania Board monitors the performance of the Tasmanian Workers Compensation Scheme, including premium rates, however it is not able to influence the premiums charged by insurers directly. Each year the Board publishes a list of suggested industry premium rates which serve as a guide for the market and employers. The suggested rate for shearing services in 2022/23 is 4.73% and as a suggested rate there is a variance in

what primary producers are actually required to pay.

These exorbitant insurance premiums, coupled with a national shearer shortage are pushing the sheep and wool industries in Tasmania to breaking point. Workers compensation is a compulsory form of insurance for all employers, however insurers are not required to provide cover to an employer. Employers therefore have no choice but to pay astronomical premiums to legally carry out their business activities.

The TFGA understands that each State Government regulates its own workers compensation scheme, with each scheme administered in different ways and insurers playing varying roles within the schemes. In Tasmania, along with Western Australia, the Northern Territory and ACT, insurers privately underwrite the scheme, in contrast to New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, insurers operate as scheme agents on behalf of the government authority and in Queensland, the scheme is operated entirely by the state. This will continue to require a dedicated focus, inclusive of timing for case closures.

Recommendation:

- 4. A review of the Tasmanian Workers Compensation Scheme and investigation into the feasibility of a government-underwritten scheme to make workers compensation insurance more affordable and accessible for employers**

A key aspect of a productive workforce is ensuring employees safety and well being. The efforts of Safe Farming Tasmania in this space has resulted in material improvement to on farm safety in Tasmania.

This has been through a combination of one-on-one engagement with landowners so that they understand their obligations and the risks on their properties, through to training

courses covering high risk activities such as four wheel motorbike operation and cattle handling.

The continuation of this program will have direct benefits to the profitability and sustainability of Tasmanian farming enterprises, whilst also having the benefit of contributing to reduced workers compensation premiums through reduced frequency of workplace incidents.

Recommendation:

- 5. To ensure continued delivery of a safe and sustainable workforce, the TFGA would like to see additional resources provided to Safe Farming Tasmania for two project officers**

**PRIORITY 2:
Securing the Future for Irrigation in Tasmania**



2.1 Assessing the value of Tasmania's irrigated agriculture

Tasmania's irrigated agriculture has grown significantly over the last decade, increasing the production capacity of many primary production enterprises in Tasmania. TFGA has continued in recent years to call on the State Government to continue its investment into irrigation development under the agreed 50/25/25 cost sharing agreement between Federal, State and Private investment.

The TFGA believes that as part of advocating for this continued growth and the sustainability of water entitlements given the range of competing needs (including environmental and potential 'optimisation' of hydro station operation to focus on generation at the expense of reliable irrigation water), that there is an independent assessment conducted to develop a contemporary understanding of the significant contribution irrigated agriculture makes to the Tasmanian economy.

A high-quality economic assessment, conducted by an independent third party, that captures the value that each dollar invested into irrigated agriculture provides to commodity outputs will provide a better understanding of the value that flows on into the broader economy. This evidence base will allow the importance of irrigation to be understood across all sectors, allowing the informed development of water management policies that will give our farmers better certainty for water planning and investment.

The TFGA hopes to secure from the State Government a source of funds to engage an independent consultant to undertake this assessment.

Recommendation:

- 6. That the State Government provide the TFGA with \$75,000 funding grant**

to engage an independent consultant to conduct a detailed economic assessment of the current and forecast value that irrigated agriculture provides to Tasmanian communities

- 7. That the Tasmanian Government continues to advocate for and invest in the development of irrigation infrastructure in Tasmania, consistent with the existing funding model**

2.2 Departmental resourcing for monitoring and compliance

With the continued focus on water through ongoing development, increased variability in climates and the need to ensure sustainable resources for future generations, it is more important than ever that the Natural Resources and Environment Water team, the custodians of this resource, are properly resourced.

This will not only ensure that there is fair, equitable and transparent management of the resource, it will also ensure that adequate resources are in place to ensure that oversight of the resource when the next drought hits is done in a respectful and collaborative approach during times of stress.

Recommendation:

- 8. That the Tasmanian Government ensures specific funding is available to provide for adequate operational and technical resources are available across compliance, licencing and resource management functions of the Natural Resources and Environment Water Operations team**

PRIORITY 3:

**Increase On-farm Sustainability and Productivity
Through Technology, Innovation and Markets, that is
*Deliverable and Measurable***



3.1 *Tasmanian Sustainable Agriculture Recognition Systems*

Australia has committed to numerous international agreements that rely on 'sustainable agriculture', particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) outcomes by 2030. In response to these commitments and other global market drivers, value chains are requesting evidence of agricultural sustainability, including on-farm carbon abatement. New agricultural policies of our global trade partners indicate a shift towards carbon adjustment schemes in the very near future, whilst high profile investors have expectations of sustainable agriculture supply chains.

There is clearly a trend in both government and the market for demonstration of agricultural sustainability that encompasses harmonised metrics, standards, recognition and equivalence processes. While there are agricultural industry sustainability frameworks at the industry level in Australia, none have been operationalised to a farm scale, leaving a vacuum in policy and practice for on-farm sustainable agriculture recognition.

Tasmania is renowned for its clean and green image for food and agriculture, with an international reputation and existing trade relations, particularly with China, characterised by the recent growth in exports. Brand Tasmania is the first statutory place-branding authority to be established in Australia, with this reputation existing as a brand (based on state jurisdiction), which does not exist elsewhere in the country, making Tasmania the obvious leader to instigate the formalisation of farm scale sustainable agriculture recognition systems for both the domestic and international markets.

In order to strengthen Tasmania's brand, the TFGA sees value in the development and implementation of a Tasmanian Sustainable

Agriculture Recognition System that demonstrates delivery of the SDG's from the farm gate. Benefits include supporting Tasmanian 'sustainable food and fibre' farmers to be business ready for:

- Value chain requirements of agriculture sustainability
- Banking pre-requisites for on-farm national capital and;
- Ecosystem service market opportunities

Other benefits include the harmonisation of farm agri-environmental metrics which will address red/green tape in sustainable agriculture by reducing the current transaction costs for farmers, such as duplication, lack of equivalence, overlap, costs of compliance and the proliferation of schemes.

TFGA will lead the research (working in partnership with the Tasmanian Government, value chain organisations and the financial sector) to create a harmonised recognition system for Tasmanian Sustainable Agriculture, consistent with state, national and international standards/methodologies. This will be achieved through further development and testing of Tasmanian Property Management Systems (PMPS) to be piloted on six farms spanning the different Tasmanian agricultural commodities, operationalising sustainable agriculture to be measured and monitored at the farm scale.

This project aligns with the Tasmanian AgriVision 2050 through baseline assessment of on-farm natural capital assets supporting farmers to be 'business ready' for sustainable agriculture markets including food, fibre and ecosystem services (carbon, biodiversity, water quality, stewardship etc.) The project also aligns with the PESRAC Council 2021 'Environment and Sustainability' recommendations by focusing delivery of the SDG's via sustainable agriculture from the farm gate.

The benefits of this project have the potential to support greater value and trade of Tasmanian agriculture through transparent, tested, verified and validated system that is consistent and harmonised with national and international standards to respond to multiple markets, government, community and financial sector requirements.

Recommendation:

- 9. Provision of funding with initial scoping indicates that a project of this magnitude will require a commitment of at least \$960,000 and delivery over a three year time frame to ensure optimal outcomes**

3.2 Additional Rounds: On-farm Energy Audit and Capital Grant Program

During 2018/19 – 2020/21, the Tasmanian Government lead an initiative call the On-farm Energy Audit and Capital Grant Program, which provided grants to Tasmanian farmers for energy audits or capital infrastructure upgrades.

The TFGA understands that this initiative was successful, with more applications lodged than funds available, meaning many farmers missed out on securing funding during those rounds. The dairy industry in particular had a high degree of interest, with many farmers reporting to the TFGA that they would like to see further funding allocated towards this program for further rounds.

Given the high degree of interest, the TFGA believes that the program should be delivered again at a larger scale and with greater levels of funding available for each financial year/funding round to ensure maximum benefits for dollars spent can be achieved.

Recommendations:

- 10. That the Tasmanian Government provide funding to run the On-farm**

Energy Audit and Capital Grant Program for additional rounds, in response to the previous levels of demand. Funding for these supplementary rounds should exceed previous commitments and adjustments should be made to project timeframes/round numbers accordingly

3.3 Greater resources for wildlife management on farm

In order to effectively manage wildlife pest species, such as Wild Fallow Deer, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Bennetts and Rufus Wallaby, farmers are often required to adopt several wildlife management tools simultaneously as simply shooting or trapping pest species (without, for example, erecting appropriate fencing as well) is much less effective. This, particularly in a State such as Tasmania where wildlife numbers are currently booming into plague-like populations due to the expansion of irrigation, is one of the most costly and time-consuming exercises for farm operators across the state.

Game fencing (often referred to as exclusion fencing) is a helpful tool to mitigate the encroachment of macropod species into primary production land. However, game fencing is extremely costly (anywhere from \$10,000 - \$20,000 per kilometre depending fence design and material/labour availability) and requires ongoing maintenance due to wildlife pressure which can be financially and logistically challenging.

In the 'Alternative's to 1080' report dated April 2011, the Tasmanian State Government itself identified the importance of shooting as a primary means to control wildlife populations. The report identified that the use of specialised equipment, such as sound suppressors, infra-red scopes and thermal imaging scopes would improve the effectiveness of shooting.

For many Tasmanian farmers, bird species (such as the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo) significantly contribute to the destruction of high-value crops, but are obviously uncontrolled by game fencing. The best means to manage bird pest species is shooting, however without the use of suppressors farmers would be hard-pressed to take more than 1-2 birds from a flock of several hundred due to the muzzle blast of the firearm. The 'Alternative to 1080' report notes that sound suppressors increased the effectiveness of shooting as a control option.

The State Government needs to better assist farmers to make as many management tools readily available and inexpensive as possible. Farmers cannot continue to be expected to reach increased production growth targets set by the State Government while simultaneously bearing the burden of wildlife populations resulting from this increased production that often move onto properties from public land.

The TFGA and its' members want to work collaboratively with the Government to manage these impacts of increasing wildlife pressure so that they can continue to provide food, fibre and pharmaceuticals in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner.

Recommendations:

- 11. Tasmanian State Government, in consultation with the TFGA, to introduce a system for game fencing subsidies**
- 12. Introduce a 1:1 cost sharing agreement for the development and maintenance of game fencing for all boundaries between private agricultural or forestry land and Crown land where there is a wildlife problem**
- 13. Upon finalisation of the 'Felixer' cat poisoning trials currently underway on King Island, that the State Government purchase multiple traps to be available to lease to farmers for a small cost-recovery fee**
- 14. Introduce a permit system for the use of sound suppressors for crop protection**

**PRIORITY 4:
Safeguarding Tasmania's
Primary Industries**



4.1 Traceability

The TFGA recognises the vital importance of traceability in the agricultural supply chain and the significant role it plays with regard to biosecurity, domestic and international market access and preserving Tasmania's reputation for producing safe, high-quality food.

The TFGA is delivering the \$1m Tasmanian Red Meat Industry Development Project in collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania which is responsible for setting and implementing actions from the Tasmanian Red Meat Industry Strategic Plan. As part of the ongoing investment by the state government in the red meat industry, \$250,000 has been earmarked to explore the implementation of individual electronic identification (EID) for sheep and goats in Tasmania, to be delivered through the project.

It is understood that since the announcement of this funding in November 2021, the progression of the implementation of national mandatory EID for sheep and goats by 1 January 2025 is being discussed by state and territory agricultural Ministers. The continuation of the implementation study is vital to ensure that the needs of Tasmanian sheep producers are heard and receive adequate financial and technical support. The outcomes of the implementation study will help guide future investment in livestock traceability however cost and producer awareness has been identified as major barriers.

Recommendations:

- 15. Continuation of the sheep and goat EID implementation study through the Tasmanian Red Meat Industry Development Project**
- 16. Funding for educational workshops for sheep producers to support the**

implementation and utilisation of EID on farms

- 17. Investigation of an equitable cost-sharing arrangement and support from both the State and Federal governments for the implementation and maintenance of any proposed system**

4.2 Streamlining compliance measures for primary producers

The vast majority of Tasmanian primary producers operate mixed farming enterprises, and most are part of an industry quality assurance program (in some cases, multiple programs) based on what they produce and which processor(s) they supply. In addition to various quality assurance programs, producers must also adhere to legislative requirements such as the National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS) which involves the mandatory recording of livestock movements. There is also a range of voluntary programs such as the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program, the Fair Farms program and the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) which producers can choose to participate in. This wide range of industry programs can create a heavy administrative burden on primary producers and impact the day-to-day running of their businesses, and as a result the need to streamline and reduce duplication of reporting systems has been identified as a necessity.

Tasmania has some of the strictest biosecurity regulations in the world, and primary producers have been at the forefront of protecting the industry from a range of pests, weeds and diseases. Since the recent outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease and Lumpy Skin Disease in Indonesia, there has been an industry-wide push to further enhance our biosecurity system. In partnership with the state government, the TFGA is delivering the Enhanced Biosecurity

Project with a specific focus on raising awareness of the current biosecurity threats that are knocking on our doorstep. The implementation of a successful farm biosecurity program relies on detailed record-keeping which further increases the administrative burden placed on primary producers.

Recommendations:

- 18. Funding for a feasibility study to consider the development of a central portal for primary producers to store and access compliance data and information for their individual businesses, akin to the myGov initiative**
- 19. Investigation into tools to better manage on-farm biosecurity record keeping**

4.3 Expanding infrastructure to support better biosecurity

Transporting livestock by road is an essential activity within the supply chain, resulting in effluent management being an unavoidable undertaking. Whilst not mandatory, most livestock transport trucks are fitted with effluent tanks to catch and contain waste however there is an insufficient number of effluent dump facilities in the state to service the industry. Truck drivers must not only comply with work and rest requirements but also opening hours of saleyards and abattoirs. The increasing focus on biosecurity also results in a general expectation that trucks will arrive clean at a property to pick up livestock, in order to minimise the risk of transferring disease and weeds onto the property or infecting livestock.

Effluent spillage on public roads has also been a point of contention for many years, with industry agreement that this should be avoided. However, there are very limited options available to them to manage this

without access to an effluent dump facility. Tasmania has the added complication of livestock trucks arriving fully loaded into the state after several hours on a ship and being forced to continue to their destination without being able to responsibly empty their effluent tanks, due to the absence of dump facilities. This is also relevant for trucks travelling to the Bass Strait Islands from both Tasmania and Victoria.

Due to the recent centralisation of livestock selling facilities in Tasmania, the distances that livestock is travelling by road has also increased, making it more likely that effluent tanks may fill before a truck can reach its destination.

The TFGA understands that the Federal Government provided the Cradle Coast Authority with a \$4m in 2019 to establish new or improve farm vehicle wash down and effluent dump facilities in Smithton, Burnie, Devonport and Kind Island. Whilst these facilities are still in various stages of planning/construction. This addition/upgrading of truck wash and effluent dump facilities is concept that has been welcomed by the local communities.

Despite these recent advancements, it still leaves the North-West, North East and Southern regions of Tasmania severely underserved with regard to truck wash and effluent dump facilities, impacting on our transport industries to manage both biosecurity risks and having adequate hygiene facilities will be crucial in the event that a significant disease, pest or noxious weed enters the state.

Recommendation:

- 20. To ensure public safety, biosecurity and animal welfare, appropriate funding provided to develop additional truck wash and effluent dump facilities in the North-West, North East and Southern regions of Tasmania**