

FOOD ALLIANCE WA DPIRD TRUST IN PRIMARY PRODUCTION PROJECT

WA Primary Industries Stakeholder Interviews Report

NOVEMBER 2019

A report on conversations with
20 key stakeholders and thought
leaders on their perceptions of WA
primary industries and food.

AGKNOWLEDGE



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development



WAFARMERS



WAFIC
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN FISHING
INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC.



GIWA
Grain Industry Association
of Western Australia

Primary Production

For this project *primary production* includes all the major Western Australian production sectors of grain, field crops, horticulture, viticulture, beef cattle, sheep and wool, dairy, poultry, pork, honey, seafood and aquaculture. The description 'food, farming and fishing' is used to include all industries.

Social Licence

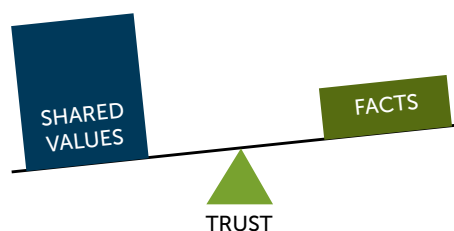
Social licence is defined as: the privilege of operating with minimal formalised restrictions – either regulation, legislation or market-based mandates – based on earning and maintaining public trust by doing what is right. Public trust enables social licence. For the purposes of this project, the terms social licence and trust are used interchangeably.

Trust

Earning and maintaining social licence depends largely on building trust. This begins by demonstrating ways in which an industry's values align with those of consumers. Three primary elements drive trust; confidence (shared values and ethics), competence (skills and ability) and influential others (family, friends and credentialed individuals). The Centre for Food Integrity's research shows that confidence, or shared values, is three-to-five times more important than competence in building trust.

Source: www.foodintegrity.org

WHAT DRIVES CONSUMER TRUST?



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WA Trust In Primary Production Project Overview

The Food Alliance WA DPIRD Trust in Primary Production project aims to establish a baseline understanding of the level of community trust in Western Australian primary industries, share insights from best practice approaches to building and maintaining social licence, and identify opportunities for industries to align and collaborate on future trust building initiatives.

The Food Alliance WA Working Group provides leadership and oversight of the project. This group includes executive staff of WA food, farming and fishing bodies, working with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and the Grain Industry Association of WA (GIWA) which administers the project through a services agreement.

The Trust in Primary Production project focussed on three key areas during 2019:

1. Establish a **baseline understanding of community trust in WA primary industries** through quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis of both the community and the industry's perceptions.
2. Conduct a desktop **review of current issues, industry data and research efforts, and social licence initiatives** from around Australia and best practice international case studies.
3. Conduct a second Masterclass in December 2019 to **present the project outcomes and establish industry commitment** to future trust building initiatives.

This paper reports on the conversations conducted with 20 key stakeholders and thought leaders on their perceptions of WA primary industries and food.

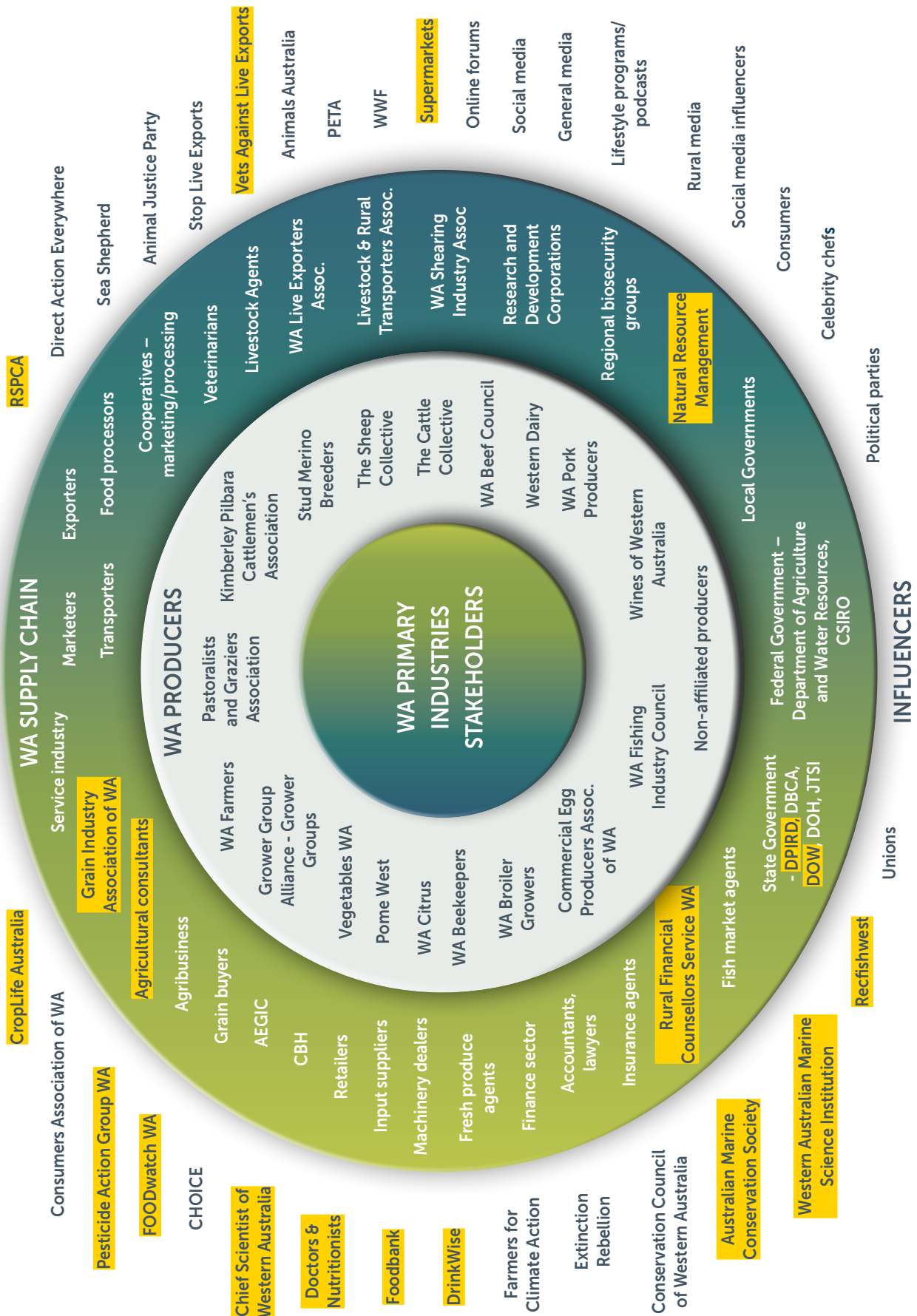
The conversations were conducted September-November 2019 as part of the first phase of the project to establish a baseline understanding of community trust in WA primary industries.

KEY INSIGHTS FOR THE WA TRUST IN PRIMARY PRODUCTION PROJECT:

- There is **huge value in maintaining ongoing conversations** with key stakeholders and thought leaders to listen to the current concerns and issues.
- **Stakeholders are keen to maintain a conversation** with industry on areas of common concern.
- **Ongoing 'listening' and engagement** are essential to any industry effort to build and maintain trust.
- **Industry needs to learn to listen to how it sounds**, outside its own echo chamber, when it is defending an industry practice that is challenged by community expectations. (The language, the attitudes and behaviours.)
- Industry can do much to **improve how it communicates** with the wider community, and how it **develops consistent and clear messages** the public can relate to and understand.
- **There is broader support for the primary industries sector** from a range of influencers and thought leaders who identify with the importance of safe and sustainable local food production as critical to public health and the economy of WA.
- **Engage third party and independent advocates** who can present clear facts and information about farming, fishing and food and provide a credible reference point without a perceived conflict of interest.
- **People want to know more** about what we do, they want transparency about how we do it, they want to better understand their food, they want to be confident about their food choices.
- **People do not want PR videos or campaigns.** They just want the real facts, from real people.

Highlighted stakeholders were interviewed for this report

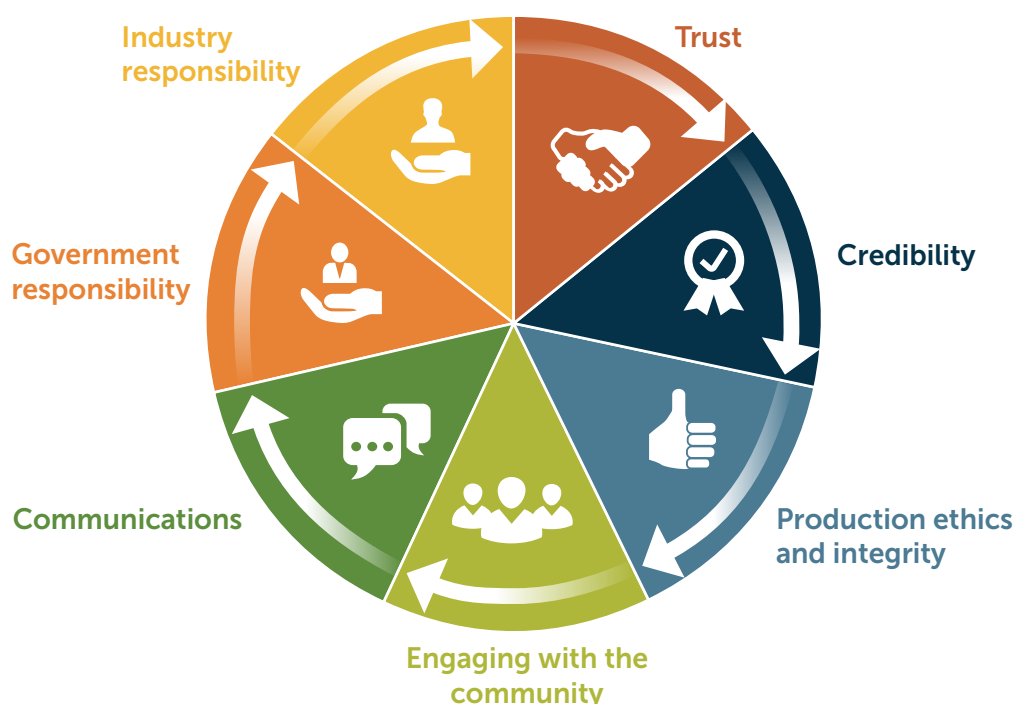
Highlighted stakeholders were interviewed for this report



Strengths, issues and opportunities identified by stakeholders

The stakeholders, influencers and thought leaders interviewed outlined strengths across the WA food, farming and fishing sectors but warned there are key issues confronting primary industries that may be addressed by a range of opportunities for all parts of the value chain to be engaged in future solutions. This project provided an important listening opportunity for industry and the main messages have been distilled directly from stakeholder's comments into the following summary.

The key areas of discussion are identified in the following diagram to demonstrate the complexity and imperative for collaboration for all stakeholders with an interest in the food industry.



TRUST



STRENGTHS

- ✓ Consumers do want to trust the farmers and their food.
- ✓ WA consumers respect and trust WA farmers and fishers and the food they produce.
- ✓ In the history of humanity food has never been as safe, nutritious or affordable as it is now. This is as good as it gets, but the reality of the food system and what it delivers is lost in the noise.
- ✓ Community trust in any business or industry is critical to its sustainability.

ISSUES

- » Trust in WA primary industries is actually high, but as time moves forward and the community has access to more information, trust is becoming more precarious.
- » Trust implies to a degree that people understand the people producing their food; it is hard to trust things that you don't really know.

ISSUES CONT.

- » When resistant farmers are a mouthpiece for a toxic industry, that erodes trust.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Working off a strong evidence base is critical, but also understanding the need to adapt to changed expectations where possible and not ignorantly trying to compete against irreversible trends.
- Providing evidence of how your product is more sustainable and arrives on their table in the best condition possible for the consumer will build trust; that applies to all industries and makes them sustainable.
- It is all about understanding public perceptions, building public knowledge and increasing trust.

CREDIBILITY



STRENGTHS

- ✓ If we value nothing else, we have to value our primary producers and our safe food supply in WA.
- ✓ WA consumers are immensely proud of WA-produced food.
- ✓ There is a good level of credibility and that is strengthened by the fact most farms are still family owned in WA.

ISSUES

- » There is a huge gap between the public perceptions of the WA industry and the reality.
- » We have a real problem because food production has become more political than ever.
- » Nothing damages trust more than when the public feels they have been taken for a ride.

OPPORTUNITIES

- We need to build capacity in the commercial fishing sector at the local level and engage those local advocates and champions.
- It is critical the industry gets the next generation involved in becoming advocates for their industry.
- Often women are perceived as more trustworthy, so if you have women telling their story they may also be connecting with the people (women) who are making decisions for their families.

PRODUCTION ETHICS AND INTEGRITY



STRENGTHS

- ✓ Farmers are resilient, resolute and resourceful and they usually find a solution to a problem and a way to carry on.
- ✓ The Australian community generally assumes that the food on their plate is from animals that have been treated humanely and not harmed in the production process.

ISSUES

- » We are not investing in demonstrating our food integrity credentials.
- » Consumers don't care if the farmer goes broke, but they do care that they look after their workers and their animals.
- » Support has taken a hit in WA by the continued support for live sheep export during the Middle East summer months. People see the footage of conditions on ships and then they see farming leaders say it is all fine; so even for people with no interest in live export it has knocked public confidence in the livestock sector.
- » Practices that cause harm and suffering to farm animals will continue to come under greater scrutiny in the years ahead.
- » The lack of farmer openness to another group's significant expertise, trusting only information that supports their incorrect or limited views and experience, is a serious impediment to productive discussions.

OPPORTUNITIES

- I'd like our WA commercial fishers to be celebrated and not denigrated; I've seen other international fishing industries that are celebrated and I think we have a long way to go. The commercial fishing industry in WA should be celebrated – these people fish sustainably, and they deliver a great product.
- We would support farmers transitioning to sustainable agriculture with reduced reliance on chemicals that we believe are having an adverse impact on public health.
- There needs to be a higher level discussion with farmers and consumers to find solutions. We need to keep working together, sharing ideas, being transparent and not being afraid to say that things don't have to keep working the same way.



ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

STRENGTHS

- ✓ Consumers would be interested in dialogue with industry to work towards solutions.
- ✓ There are lot of people in urban areas who would like to work more closely with farmers and government needs to be part of that process.
- ✓ Our members value honesty about what is in their food, health, fairness in the whole chain of production and sustainability – the way the earth and the people are treated, that producers make a profit and consumers get fair value.

ISSUES

- » Everyone is so busy getting on with the job they forget to inform people what they are doing and in the absence of informing people all sorts of inaccurate information get the airplay. The vacuum of factual information is a breeding ground for activists.
- » We have to be better at engaging on the other side of the fence.

ISSUES CONT.

- » Agriculture is not good at understanding what the other side is saying; it takes the view that if we tell the facts and hit them with science it will all be ok.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Once we understand what consumer's concerns are, we can demonstrate we are addressing their issues.
- Transparency is key.
- We need to find a new way of engaging and it needs to be the farmers and local people to engage in that dialogue to build the authenticity of the messages.
- We have to up our game in engaging with school students and 18-25 year olds.
- Industry needs a continuing program of engagement so people build a greater understanding of how agriculture works.

COMMUNICATIONS



STRENGTHS

- ✓ The consumer is always right, that's the nature of the business.
- ✓ We often see a disconnect between the conversations on social media and consumer behaviour at the checkout.
- ✓ We (major retailer) believe we can help shine a light on the wonderful things our WA suppliers are doing to continually build the connection between customers and their food.

ISSUES

- » We just don't tell our Western Australian stories well enough.
- » Social and general media is impacting on the public's confidence in food.
- » The global conservation movement often sucks the fishing industry up into issues that are occurring in other parts of the world, but are not occurring in WA.
- » There is no understanding that WA had the very first Marine Stewardship Council accredited fishery in the world!
- » You can't sit on your laurels; you need to engage in discussion and get the risk management communication mobilised earlier.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Farmers need to communicate their beliefs and values to their customers. In marketing that is what people buy – the person or the values the produce represents.
- All the work goes into getting that message really right and then being really persistent to get that across so consumers understand why they support WA farmers and local WA food.
- There is a lot more that can be done to build trust in food by using the media to highlight producers and the value of our WA food.
- Consistency of messaging is the key to promoting better understanding and trust.



GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY

STRENGTHS

- ✓ Government does have a role to ensure consumers are informed, otherwise they will be driven to decisions that will actually undermine food production and we are seeing that already in Europe.

ISSUES

- » We need a baseline of consumer understanding on food established so the ag sector is able to engage with the public on food and farming issues in the future. The responsibility for that is on government.
- » There is a need for government support for farmers and we don't always see that. Farmers alone can't do this; they need support from consumers too and I think consumers would be prepared to pay more as we rely on farmers to feed us and provide choice.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Government has a role to ensure the community is informed, so they respond from a factual basis. It needs to start in school so consumers can't be as easily misled and they understand why practices are used in food production, and that industrial farming is not a negative - it is the reason we get to live.
- If you want something done well, you have to do it yourself. Government has a role in supporting the industry to do this effectively, through both the health and agriculture departments it can provide funds to help industry do it well and that is important, but the industry has the greater interest in doing the delivery of the messaging, not a public department.
- Industry associations could work with the WA commercial agribusinesses and fishing businesses to put a compelling proposition for a shared trust in primary production and fishing initiative to government for co-funding.



INDUSTRY RESPONSIBILITY

STRENGTHS

- ✓ There are WA businesses in the fishing industry that are making a conscious decision to demonstrate best practice and sell their products off the back of that; to go beyond the regulatory requirements and to take the best of what is being done elsewhere and apply it, then talk about it.
- ✓ More and more businesses are doing more to stay ahead of the regulations and adopting best practice voluntarily, and putting themselves in a place where it is difficult for them to be criticised or attract the attention of an organisation like ours.

ISSUES

- » We can only export WA food if our local population believes we are producing to the highest standards and trust our technologies and standards. Gone are the days when you can just operate inside your value chain without being aware of inter-sectoral community trust issues in primary production.
- » Farming just has to deal with the rogue operators and if an issue comes out you need to admit that what has happened was wrong, emphasise it was a rogue operator and not the norm, and call them out.
- » Most people are doing the right thing, but those that see a wrong practice are scared of the impacts of calling it out.
- » One of the things leading to rising levels of activism is the 'head in the sand' attitude of industry. I think the first step is that the farming community has to acknowledge that the issues are present. Every forum I have attended starts with the message 'we have to deal with the activists', but they need to deal with the issues that cause the activists to take their stance.

OPPORTUNITIES


- Farmers and fishers have to recognise and acknowledge the problems, and commit to actually fixing them.
- Every industry needs to constantly improve its processes and focus on that, rather than a combative back and forth approach with those who have opposing views.
- It requires a mature holistic approach to ensure you've got growth across the whole sector and you can demonstrate a better result for the whole industry as well as the industry's back pocket.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- If people are open and transparent and step up early, there is a better chance of recovery for the whole industry and its reputation.
- Industry has to take control of an issue early, because if they don't the government gets involved to resolve the issue and their agenda will not be initially about the farmers.
- So much can be done in the instant of time to engage with people on the beach and make a better decision on how they interact with the public, which can save a lot of heartaches and avoids confrontation.
- Industries need underlying capacity that is always dealing with these issues so when there is a crisis you are not starting from zero. You need to be investing in it all the time even when you don't have a critical issue, then when one arises you already have capacity to respond.

Snapshots of what the influencers and thought leaders are saying

These snapshots of key insights from the 20 stakeholders and thought leaders interviewed are taken from the full interview scripts which commence on page 15.

 ***"Everyone is so busy getting on with the job they forget to inform people what they are doing and in the absence of informing people all sorts of inaccurate information gets the airplay. The vacuum of factual information is a breeding ground for activists.*** You can't assume everything you are doing is approved of; people will say and do stuff and if you don't tackle it head on it just keeps growing and eventually can take over public perceptions.

I think the level of trust is high, we are clean and green and we produce great food in Western Australia, but that message needs to be vocalised more. The more I see while I am working across industries around the State is that we just don't tell our WA stories well enough. On the east coast we are seen as a bunch of hillbillies that put rocks and crops on boats, when the reality is that as a State we can't be as economically successful as we are unless we are technologically advanced and highly efficient, and we need to tell that story better."


Professor Peter Klinken, Chief Scientist of Western Australia

 ***"I think the level of trust in WA farmers is really quite high. We did research on where people get their information from and farmers were thought of highly so there is a good level of credibility and I think that is strengthened by the fact most farms are still family owned in WA.*** I think public trust in the food systems is still pretty high and especially during a drought people do get behind farmers and what they do.

You can't sit on your laurels, you need to engage in discussion and get the risk management communication mobilised earlier. We need to find a new way of engaging and it needs to be the farmers and local people to engage that dialogue to build the authenticity of the story. We also need to engage the industry to talk about the food quality and promoting positive stories.

They talk about agriculture being the next industry after mining in WA. Where are the investments in the regulatory system that supports the story to China and other international customers that our food really is clean, green and safe? It is what makes us internationally competitive, but we are not investing in demonstrating our food integrity credentials."

Jim Dodds, Chief Executive Officer Safe Food

 ***"Trust implies to a degree that people understand the people producing their food; it is hard to trust things that you don't really know.*** If people think yes, these producers are local, we understand who they are and what they are doing, then we can trust them. People do need to be able to trust what farmers are producing. To build consumer understanding and trust it is better in my view for the producer to get out there and tell their own story.

If you want something done well, you have to do it yourself. Government has a role in supporting the industry to do this effectively, through both the health and agriculture departments it can provide funds to help industry do it well and that is important, but the industry has the greater interest in doing it well, not a public department.

You have to be one of the voices. You have to run your own race. There is little value in saying 'they are wrong'. You have to put your own case. There are a lot of echo chambers out there. Like all industries ***farming just has to deal with the rogue operators and if an issue comes out you need to admit that what has happened was wrong, emphasise it was a rogue operator and not the norm, and call them out.***

Consistency of messaging is the key to promoting better understanding and trust. A number of industries are under assault, some for good reason and others not so. The industry needs to say that 95% of producers are doing the right thing, and that those that aren't need to be held to account."

Dr Joe Kosterich, Adjunct Professor UWA, general practitioner



“Every industry needs to constantly improve its processes and focus on that, rather than a combative back and forth approach with those who have opposing views. If the community see conflict and can’t see rationale for the argument they take a negative view, but if they can see industry taking responsibility for itself they are bound to take a more positive view.

From my perspective outside of the industry **the level of trust in producers it is extremely high, so there is the opportunity to expand the narrative** around those stories. The producers I’ve talked to want to do the right thing and educate their consumers.

Working off a strong evidence base is critical, but also the understanding of adapting where possible and not ignorantly trying to compete against irreversible trends. In particular, do not compete in terms of messaging, rather look at it in terms of how can you optimise your industry and doing as much as you possibly can to achieve that.

If you look at any industry there is always the opportunity to do more: to enhance the product, the welfare of the consumer who walks through the door, how they consume the product, the entire experience for the consumer. **Providing evidence of how your product is more sustainable and arrives on their table in the best condition possible for the consumer will build trust – and that applies to all industries and makes them sustainable.**

There are so many of these environments where people are looking at it as competing with another food or producer. **It requires a mature holistic approach to ensure you’ve got growth across the whole sector and you can demonstrate a better result for the whole industry as well as the industry’s back pocket.**

I love what you are doing here in terms of changing the scope of how these messages are delivered and the collaboration of the industry.”

Simon Strahan, Chief Executive Officer DrinkWise



“If we value nothing else we have to value our primary producers and our safe food supply in WA.

The WA community has a high trust value on our farmers and our fishers; I think they recognise that the producers are up against the elements and don’t have predictability of income. I think where there is less trust is at the large retailer end, with a perception that they rip off the poor dairy farmers and market gardeners. The community trust is in the producers, not the retailers.

Social and general media is impacting on the public’s confidence in food, but also in a way the extreme activism of breaking into people’s farms has backfired and has been negative to the broader vegan movement.

I just think **there is a lot more that can be done to build trust in food by using the media to highlight producers and the value of our food,** and that if we didn’t have these local producers our food would cost a whole lot more.”

Roslyn Giglia, Nutrition and Food Security Manager, Foodbank



“Trust in WA primary industries is actually high but as time moves forward and the community has access to more information, trust is becoming more precarious.

There is a general perception that local food is good in WA, aided by the BWEB program, but when incidents occur like the strawberry growers not looking after backpackers for example that trust comes under pressure, and that reflects across the perceptions of the whole sector’s sustainability. The mistreatment of labour is an issue on an international scale; **consumers don’t care if the farmer goes broke, but they do care that they look after their workers and their animals.**

The consumer is always right, that’s the nature of the business, so if the consumer thinks glyphosate is a problem, then it is a problem. We can’t just push product out the gate and expect people to buy. Even now consumers make a big assumption on food integrity and safety.”

Keith Pekin, Manager Sustainable Agriculture Program Perth NRM


 **“One thing agriculture is not good at** is understanding what the other side is saying; it takes the view that if we tell the facts and hit them with science it will all be ok. Once we understand what their concerns are, we can demonstrate we are addressing their issues. We have to be better at engaging on the other side of the fence.

It is just about engagement, that takes time and energy but you need to look at what is at stake. When things go wrong you have an uphill battle to be heard in the noise, so the answer is to **have a continuing program of engagement so people build a greater understanding of how agriculture works**. It is always hard to be on the front foot, but you have to cop it and it is always hard to cop it early. But **with farming if people are open and transparent and step up early there is a better chance of recovery for the whole industry and its reputation**.

The important learning is that the **industry has to take control of an issue early, because if they don't the government gets involved to resolve the issue and their agenda will not be initially about the farmers**, it will be about the public giving them a hard time and them taking a decision to make the noise go away. They do what they need to do to achieve an outcome, it won't be in the industry's interests.

Most farmers absolutely love what they are doing and their level of dedication is huge, so even if their margins are pretty thin they will tough it out and find a way to keep doing it. Those in drought for four years are still there simply because **farmers are resilient, resolute and resourceful and they usually find a solution to a problem and a way to carry on.**

Ashley Herbert, President Australian Association of Agricultural Consultants (WA)

 **“We deal with two dimensions on trust** in farming: at the base level there is extreme trust because we see that at the consumer level, consumers go into supermarkets and shop with confidence and that is reflected in their buying behaviours. On the second dimension, that underlying trust can be lost in the second a food issue flares with the media and social media discourse that ensues. **We often see a disconnect between the conversations on social media and consumer behavior at the checkout.**

When you get back to actual consumer behaviour we know they have confidence in farming and food, and the reason is that the systems work: **food in the history of humanity has never been as safe, nutritious or affordable as it is now. It is as good as it gets. The reality of the food system and what it delivers is being lost.**

If we have genuinely informed consumers about how farming really works, how food is produced and the reality of the challenges around that and how we can do it better, if that is achieved then we can make progress to build trust in our food systems, but at the moment people are churning out of the education system and they don't even understand the fundamentals of food production.

Educating the public is too much to drop on the groups that are busy farming; they are being asked to compete on an un-level playing field against massive global activist organisations. **Government does have a role to ensure consumers are informed, otherwise they will be driven to decisions that will actually undermine food production and we are seeing that already in Europe.**

Teaching about the fundamentals of farming and food has to come back into the curriculum. **We need a baseline of consumer understanding on food established so the ag sector is able to engage with the public on food and farming issues in the future. The responsibility for that is on government.**

There is no silver bullet, **but you need underlying capacity that is always dealing with these issues so when there is a crisis you are not starting from zero. You need to be investing in it all the time even when you don't have a critical issue, then when it arises you already have capacity** as you have the resources and relationships established.

Our arguments at the moment are to put real pressure on political leaders that they can't just respond to campaigning by activists. There could be the scenario where decisions are being made that will genuinely compromise our ability to feed people and food security could become an issue.

We have a real problem because food production has become more political than ever. Ag policy should be bipartisan like defence policy, as feeding the nation has to be bipartisan. We do need to respond to consumers, but we need to ensure the positions they are asking for are based on facts and evidence.

If we say the agriculture sector will fix this we are saying we don't understand the strategic environment we are dealing in. We are an industry that tries to steer away from saying government has to do it, and we continue to invest in our stewardship, but the modern world means we can't operate alone in the modern era of communications and **government has a role to ensure the community is informed, so they respond from a factual basis**. We need them to be educated and **it needs to start in school so consumers can't be as easily misled and they understand why practices are used in food production, and that industrial farming is not a negative - it is the reason we get to live.**

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer, CropLife Australia



"The global conservation movement often sucks the fishing industry up into issues that are occurring in other parts of the world, but are not occurring in WA. That can impact on local perceptions and trust. The story of WA sustainable seafood is strong and it is up to industry to tell its own story. It comes down to the individual fisher to share their stories and advocate on their own behalf. It comes down to the people, the families and the livelihoods and promoting the value that consumers benefit and enjoy from the WA seafood industry.

We need to build capacity in the commercial fishing sector at the local level and engage those local advocates and champions who can best represent the interests of their industry and have them expose themselves and their fishing activities to the wider community. **So much can be done in the instant of time to engage with people on the beach and make a better decision on how they interact with the public which can save a lot of heartaches and avoid confrontation.**

Building individual's capacity is the key but it is hard to achieve. It is a big mountain to climb and it can be overwhelming; you challenge what the purpose is of investing in this space, but I'm a big believer in investing in people. **It is critical the industry gets the next generation involved in becoming advocates for their industry on the beach."**

Dr Andrew Rowland, Chief Executive Officer Recfishwest



"There are WA businesses in the fishing industry that are making a conscious decision to demonstrate best practice and sell their products off the back of that; to go beyond the regulatory requirements and to take the best of what is being done elsewhere and apply it, then talk about it. The industry is dragged down by the corners of the industry that are dragging their heels.

It is a case of business by business advocating for their industry; a lot are doing an outstanding job and it is pretty clear where the leaders are in the WA fishing industry. The northern prawn fishers were early adopters of sea certification, they are on the record as saying they did this to keep the greens off their back as they saw the environmental concerns as the most likely to impact, so they took the moves to be proactive in addressing bycatch and seafloor impacts. Full credit to them for staying ahead of the pack. **More and more businesses are doing more to stay ahead of the regulations and adopting best practice voluntarily, and putting themselves in a place where it is difficult for them to be criticised or attract the attention of an organisation like ours."**

Adrian Meder, Sustainable Seafood Program Manager, Australian Marine Conservation Society



"Fishers are embedded in their environment and are often excellent environmental advocates. Our fishers are stewards of their marine environment but if you say that to the average person they don't believe it. **There is a huge gap between the public perceptions of the WA industry and the reality.** People see farmers, but very rarely do you see fishers, so they get very little community support.

Consumer trust is impacted by poor perceptions of fishers and the industry. There is a huge lack of knowledge of the WA industry, and the **international media coverage highlighting unsustainable practices are often thought to be the same as in WA. There is no understanding that WA had the very first Marine Stewardship Council accredited fishery in the world!**

One way to get traction in building community understanding and trust requires promoting enough industry women and giving them a voice: we need to promote women and give them the confidence to speak up and become the voice of their industry.

Everybody's story is important, so it is important to have both men and women sharing stories about the fishing industry with the wider community. **Given the lower level of community trust in the industry, often women are perceived as more trustworthy, so if you have women telling their story they may also be connecting with the people (women) who are making decisions** around what to feed their families and tap into their interest in nutrition. Many years ago we had a catchcry that the fishing industry is a community of men and women, not just blokes in boats. It is sometimes overlooked that both women and men work in the fishing industry.

I'd like our WA commercial fishers to be celebrated and not denigrated; I've seen other international fishing industries that are celebrated and I think we have a long way to go. The commercial fishing industry in WA should be celebrated – these people fish sustainably, and they deliver a great product.

It is all about managing public perceptions, building knowledge and increasing trust."

Dr Jenny Shaw, Research Director, Western Australian Marine Science Institution



"My view on trust levels in farmers is that at least in WA the farming community has taken a big hit. Overall Australians like and trust farmers and have an almost idyllic view of them, which doesn't seem to be altered by any adverse information that is exposed. However, **that support has taken a hit in WA by the continued and irrational support for live sheep export during the Middle East summer months. People see the footage of conditions on ships and then they see farming leaders say it is all fine; so even for people with no interest in live export it has knocked public confidence in the livestock sector.**

One of the things leading to rising levels of activism is the 'head in the sand' attitude of industry. I think the first step is that the farming community has to acknowledge that the issues are present. Every forum I have attended starts with the message 'we have to deal with the activists', but they need to deal with the issues that cause the activists to take their stance. The do not enter for biosecurity risk signs appear very threatening to the public passing by; it is fine to say don't enter the property, but those signs hint at a suggestion there may be practices we don't want you to see.

Farmland practices are transparent in other countries but not in Australia. So I don't think farmers have got to that point as an industry to recognise the problems, acknowledge them and address them. The FutureEye report was all about how you can change perceptions, instead at looking at changing the unsavoury practices that led to those perceptions.

Farmers have to recognise and acknowledge the problems, and commit to actually fixing them.

My problem, as for any veterinary or welfare organisation, is that slaughter should take place as close as possible to where the animal was produced, and that not one of the countries we export to has animal welfare standards in place. Australia has no way of imposing our animal standards on those countries, which means we shouldn't send our animals into that system.

Farmers have trusted in the process, they have been told Australia has the best export standards in the world, they want to believe that because they want to believe their stock are looked after. The fact is the rest of the world has no live export standards i.e. it's not hard to be the best when being compared to zero! This successful government mantra has resulted in farmers assuming that things have been ok, and that organisations like VALE have been banging on about nothing.

The lack of farmer openness to another group's significant expertise, trusting only information that supports their incorrect or limited views and experience, is a serious impediment to productive discussions."

Dr Sue Foster, Spokesperson Vets Against Live Exports/Adjunct Associate Professor Murdoch University



"The Australian community generally assumes that the food on their plate is from animals that have been treated humanely and not harmed in the production process. We would like to think that we share many values in common with farming families. We know the majority of farmers care deeply about the welfare of the animals they produce and if supported they will, and do, improve their welfare practices. What constitutes good welfare is not always understood by farmers who have "always done it that way".

Community trust in any business or industry is critical to its sustainability. We believe trust in livestock agriculture has suffered in recent years as some industries have failed to keep pace with changing community expectations around animal welfare. Practices that were common and accepted in the 1950s may not be as acceptable today. **Practices that cause harm and suffering to farm animals will continue to come under greater scrutiny in the years ahead.** The farm sector must be conscious of the impact one industry can have on the public's perception of livestock agriculture as a whole. Often the public are not discerning in the negative perceptions they can form.

To put it simply, **the community loves farmers but hates animal cruelty.** Farmers enjoy widespread community support and respect but certain husbandry practices and production systems do not. Genuine transparency shows the warts and all, acknowledges limitations and the need to improve. This is what builds trust and this is what can bring the community along with the industry. Conversely, PR dressed up as transparency has the opposite effect, particularly if and when the PR portrayal is juxtaposed with the reality. **Nothing damages trust more than when the public feels they have been taken for a ride."**

RSPCA (WA)



"Our members value honesty about what is in the food, health, fairness in the whole chain of production and sustainability – the way the earth and the people are treated, that producers make a profit and consumers get fair value. A big one is health and what we are feeding ourselves and our families and the impact on them of mass production and industrial farming. Transparency is key.

I think ***consumers do want to trust the farmers and their food.*** The reason we have got to this point is that in the past we have trusted that what governments and corporations have put on their labels is true and they have been found out.

I think ***consumers would be interested in dialogue with industry to work towards solutions.*** I think the problem is that most people don't have the balls to call out poor practices and we need to ensure they don't get ostracised when they raise an issue. ***I do believe most people are doing the right thing, and those that see a wrong practice are just scared of the impacts of calling it out.***

Farmers need to communicate their beliefs and values to their customers. In marketing that is what people buy – the person or the values the produce represents. Marketing is really just communicating and selling, so marketing that message about WA farming and what they do, who they are, what they have achieved as an industry is so important but it has to be done really well. That involves money, but a lot can be done without investing a lot of money. ***All the work goes into getting that message really right and then being really persistent to get that across so consumers understand why they support WA farmers and local WA food."***

Alex Mijatovic, Spokesperson FOODWatch WA



"There appears to be a conflict of opinion between those involved in conventional practices with reliance on pesticides and those using more environmentally sustainable practices. There is a view that we can't feed the world if we don't use chemicals. We would support farmers transitioning to sustainable agriculture with reduced reliance on these chemicals that we believe are having an adverse impact on public health.

At an industry level, we are aware that ***there is a need for government support for farmers and we don't always see that. Farmers alone can't do this; they need support from consumers too and I think consumers would be prepared to pay more as we rely on farmers to feed us and provide this choice.*** We need government to acknowledge there are issues with how we produce food and that we can't keep polluting our environment and expect to have a healthy nation and healthy people.

The important thing from a consumer perspective is that we would like to see a transitioning to less reliance on agricultural chemicals and poisons in particular. That can only occur through highlighting the successes. Farmers who have had success in more sustainable practices should share their experience and share their stories with government.

There needs to be a higher level discussion with farmers and consumers to find solutions. So we need to keep working together, sharing ideas, being transparent and not being afraid to say that things don't have to keep working the same way. I think there are lot of people in urban areas who would like to work more closely with farmers and government needs to be part of that process.

When I hear some farmers being aggressive in their position that growing something can't be done without the use of glyphosate products, I think that erodes public trust. I say let's have a debate about it, let's find examples where people have done things differently. Where there doesn't seem to be the will to change, that is disappointing. There is less of that compared to years ago; there is more will to change but ***when resistant farmers are a mouthpiece for a toxic industry, that erodes trust.***

We all need to face the issues as a community and people will need to be compensated where the necessary changes to find a better way impact their business. We simply have to sort it out."

Alex Jones, Co-Chair Pesticide Action Group of WA



“WA consumers are immensely proud of WA-produced food and perceive local food as high quality.

I believe **WA consumers respect and trust WA farmers and fishers and the food** they produce. I think customers also appreciate that they work hard to produce great quality products.

We believe we can help shine a light on the wonderful things our WA suppliers are doing to continually build the connection between customers and their food.

We want to continue the conversation with the WA farming and fishing sector and continue to work through BWEB in Western Australia.”

Melissa Osterhage, Coles State Marketing Manager WA



“There will be a rapid switch from issue to issue so agriculture will face an ongoing barrage, which is a big shift from the previously blessed and revered position it has enjoyed in Australian culture. It is a fundamental change in what farmers do, and **the rate of change creates significant stress**. We could have a new wave of disenfranchised farming operators that could be denied access to income.

The **farmers that have not been planning for policy change are the ones that will struggle** with the rate of change and will arrive at our door. The unexpected and unplanned change can also occur with biosecurity impacts, the food contamination issues like strawberries and salmon, which calls government services into emergency responses. The escalation from farm trespass, social media coverage, outraged response through to legislative change has been rapid.

The overnight and immediate impact is the important aspect for RFCS – can we respond to a sudden shock or change? RFCS can have little influence or impact, it can only respond to match our service to a new high demand need which may be in different areas, industries and areas of expertise – we will need to be flexible and mobile.

Our role starts on day one of a disruption, we mobilise and get started.”

Rural Financial Counsellors Service



“WA has a trust ‘double whammy’. With a largely urban population based in Perth, we need our domestic population to trust that food production in Western Australia is safe and ethical, as we export 90 per cent of what we produce to middle class consumers in Asia who have different trust understandings around food. **We can only export that food if our local population believes we are producing to the highest standards and trust our technologies and standards. Gone are the days when you can just operate inside your value chain, without being aware of inter-sectoral community trust issues in primary production.**

We have to up our game in talking to the school students and 18-25 year olds as they don’t have the experience of agriculture or an understanding that we are globally competitive in terms of our technology and sustainability; that we produce their food, care about the environment and are sustainable.

If industry feels these issues are important, next year beyond this project I think we **the industry associations could work with the WA commercial agribusinesses and fishing businesses to put a compelling proposition for a shared trust in primary production and fishing initiative to government for co-funding**. The days of government solely funding these things are over. Some of us have some meagre educational or capacity building resources; we could contribute, combine or leverage what resources we have.”

Larissa Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, Grain Industry Association of WA

Influencer and thought leader interviews

1 Professor Peter Klinken, Chief Scientist of Western Australia

The Chief Scientist of Western Australia provides advice on topics that are important to the future of science in Western Australia. The Chief Scientist reports directly to the Minister for Science and provides independent, external advice to the State Government on: science and innovation in WA; broadening the economy through science; developing science industries in the State; promoting WA as a science leader in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Chief Scientist works closely with the department's Science and Innovation division and plays a key role in: enhancing collaboration locally, nationally and internationally; attracting Commonwealth and industry investment into Western Australian science; building leading-edge scientific capacity in the State; promoting science policies and initiatives at meetings across academia, industry, Government and the community; acting as an ambassador for science, helping the State Government raise public awareness of the importance of science.

1 How would you describe the value and importance of Western Australia's primary industries in local and international food production?

Absolutely crucial, what more can you say? We are viewed internationally as clean and green and we produce quality food products that are highly valued internationally.

2 Do we need to be better at sharing this story with the public, in the face of so many food fear campaigns by activists?

We are terrible at this, across the board in WA. Everyone is so busy getting on with the job they forget to inform people what they are doing and in the absence of informing people all sorts of inaccurate information gets the airplay. The vacuum of factual information is a breeding ground for activists. You can't assume everything you are doing is approved of; people will say and do stuff and if you don't tackle it head on it just keeps growing and eventually can take over public perceptions.

3 What harm do you believe activists are causing to children's perceptions of food?

This impact is hard to assess, but you can't help but think it won't have an impact as kids are sponges and soak up information from all sorts of sources. In the absence of someone saying something different and factual, the activists messages will be absorbed as fact.

4 What is the perception of the WA food, farming and fishing sectors from the medical and science fraternity?

Most of society see the industry as incredibly important for food security and that we are bloody good at producing high quality exports. The challenge is that we just don't have a narrative around how good and valuable the industry is. Humans are omnivores, we were designed to eat both vegetables and meat, so it is just wrong to say we are designed to be vegetarians and it makes it far more complicated for humans and their health when people promote these misleading messages.

To address the misinformation the industry could be looking to do more studies on the health benefits of different types of foods, and apply rigorous science behind the nutritional values of foods by engaging technologies like phenomics which can measure the chemical in any organism and enables us to evaluate human health in great detail. With phenomics you can look for markers around particular foods and their nutritional values that can be linked with good human health and provide data to verify positive messaging around why foods are good for you. We need to change the dialogues around what are the best foods and what is the quality of the food we are producing, so you turn the arguments and fear around food safety on its head and give people confidence in what represents a balanced and healthy diet.

5 What do you believe is the level of community trust in WA farmers and fishers (the people) to do the right thing when they produce our food?

I think the level of trust is high, we are clean and green and we produce great food in Western Australia, but that message needs to be vocalised more.

In any situation you do want the independent third party advocates to help verify your value, how you get to these advocates is the real challenge. Food has become a political issue and the way to deal with politics is you have to get clear messages to the community and to the policy makers, politicians and advisors. That is not easy, simple or quick, but if you don't do it others will and the policy makers will take on board what they see on television.

6 What do you believe is the level of community trust in the systems and methods we use to produce food in WA?

By and large people are trusting and supportive, but the more people hear questions around issues, like glyphosate, the more they think about it so there has to be some response to improve understanding of the general community of farming practices and why they are important. The narrative also needs to be around how we can do things better.

7 Does agriculture and fishing have a problem with the public understanding of science and technology?

There has been a growing concern and scepticism of science and in my view, it is because scientists haven't gone out and taken these arguments on. They don't like confrontation, they just want to get on and do their work. So in the absence of information there has been a lot of misinformation. This sense of growing unease in the community as to who do you believe extends to all sorts of institutions. These days with social media, it doesn't matter who you are or what your background or training is, you can make your views known to a wide audience without question or challenge. You can't just assume as a scientist or specialist that people will accept what you say without question any more – credibility has to be earned with the public.

8 How can our farmers and fishers address this gap in understanding?

It is no different to any industry that needs to communicate about what it does, there are lessons in the mining sector for how they are doing this. Every industry has pluses and minuses in how it operates, it is how you portray these to the community that builds understanding, trust and an informed view.

9 Who else can or should advocate for the integrity, safety and quality of WA food?

Test the market, have those conversations with a bunch of people, ask them if they are prepared to be an advocate. Most are likely to say no out of a fear of being shot down, but you will find some people prepared to say this is really, really important and they will support informed messaging about food.

A problem in society is that you can't have a reasoned debate anymore, as soon as there is disagreement people start 'shouting' and it becomes a slanging match, and that doesn't help. I despair when I see federal parliament's question time when our leaders resort to a constant slanging match – people see that behaviour and it sets the standard for society.

The more I see while I am working across industries around the state is that we just don't tell our stories well enough. On the east coast we are seen as a bunch of hillbillies that put rocks and crops on a boat – when the reality is that as a State we couldn't be as economically successful as we are unless we are being technologically advanced and highly efficient, and we need to tell that story better.

10 Can you provide an example of a country that does it well in promoting the quality, safety and pride in their food?

Denmark and pigs – they take great pride in Danish pigs, they have fantastic ways of farming pigs and they take pride in that as part of their culture.

Agri+culture® – I like that, to split that to say that agri is part of our culture that is a very clever marketing ploy. Like the very effective lamb ad campaigns it plays on the sentiments around food and the sense of pride, without taking ourselves too seriously.



"The more I see while I am working across industries around the state is that we just don't tell our stories well enough."

2 Jim Dodds, CEO Safe Food Queensland, formerly WA Health Department

Safe Food regulates the primary production and processing of meat, eggs, dairy, seafood and horticulture in Queensland, Australia. It's role is to ensure that: Queensland's food production systems meet national food safety standards; businesses along the food supply chain know and understand their responsibilities; potential threats to the integrity of food supply are identified and dealt with decisively; consumers maintain their confidence in the food produced in Queensland. Operating in the challenging environment of managing food safety risk since 2000, Safe Food deals first hand with the business of food, the people, the processes and products and how these elements fit together to make food safe.

Jim Dodds as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Safe Food has a wealth of experience in food safety and public health. He spent 15 years working for the Department of Health Western Australia in numerous positions, most recently as Director for the Environmental Health Directorate, overseeing the delivery of all its programs and leading the implementation of the Public Health and subordinate legislation for the Government.

"Jim's has extensive experience in senior leadership roles and in the national food regulation system, including as a member of the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Standing Committee."

1 How important is it for WA consumers to continue to have a safe and local fresh food supply?

It is really important and WA has special challenges that also make for local opportunities. The opportunities to get product into the local market through the independent retailers is really important to spread supply beyond Coles and Woolworths. We see a lot of focus on the cost and access to fresh produce to remote Aboriginal communities but the problem is just as challenging for the remote local towns as well. The provenance of local food has become an important part of the story for WA food and is an opportunity in the marketing of local produce.

2 How resilient do you believe that supply is to sudden shocks from social licence/food incidents?

This is a challenge for WA and a lot of effort was put in during Premier Barnett's time to understand this better, especially the fact that we are so reliant on one train line for east coast re-supply to the major supermarkets. But the geographical and climatic spread of the state does mean we do have options within the state for supply of a wide range of produce. It is not as grim as some would have us believe, I do think WA can manage self-sufficiency of supply if systems do come under pressure. There may be interruptions for consumers to access specific products due to seasonality, but we could make do.

3 What do you believe is the level of community trust in WA farmers and fishers (the people) to do the right thing when they produce our food?

I think the level of trust in WA farmers is really quite high. We did research on where people get their information from and farmers were thought of highly so there is a good level of credibility and I think that is strengthened by the fact most farms are still family owned in WA. It is a bigger challenge to maintain that trust as farms move to corporate models; once you become like McDonalds in your business model you become a target. International investment has taken on a real flavour in the east coast media at the moment so it will only be a matter of time before questions of farmland ownership become an issue in the west.

4 What do you believe is the level of community trust in the systems and methods they use to produce food?

I think public trust in the food systems is still pretty high and especially during a drought people do get behind farmers and what they do. Animal welfare is the challenge to that and with the live export trade you are only ever one mobile phone filming away from the next issue. The GM debate bubbles away and flared up with the Dardanup issue, and the glyphosate issue will continue to be a challenge for WA as there are real problems where you get activist and media interest. You can't sit on your laurels, you need to engage in discussion and get the risk management communication mobilised earlier. GM in broadacre crops was a classic case where there was no scientific evidence opposing its introduction but it became political around Monsanto being the American giant corporation and the issue became tarnished and impossible to progress.

5 Does agriculture and fishing have a problem with the public understanding of science and the systems in place to safeguard food integrity?

You do have a problem; the science is moving and farming is using a lot of technology, so you need to start to get the messages out there with scientists and engaging with regulators and public health people. When they get on the public health campaigns like sugar they automatically paint the whole food processing industry as bad, but the reality is that we do need to process foods to make them consumer ready and processed foods are not all bad. We need to find a new way of engaging and it needs to be the farmers and local people to engage that dialogue to build the authenticity of the story. A lot of the public health people are in an activist mode and they will swing from issue to issue; you need people like Chief Scientist Peter Klinken to provide balance and evidence to those dialogues. Then when something emerges people know the people who do have factual evidence and they start to tap into that knowledge bank you have established to verify the facts. There are many examples of positive bits of scientific work that are derailed because the scientist didn't engage with the community along the way to build public understanding, acceptance and trust.

6 How can our farmers and fishers address this gap in understanding?

I think the politicians could help; across Australia at the moment the politicians get polarised and issues get so divisive. The small business departments could also help in engaging in the stories around what happens in the food businesses and how good the food products produced in Australia really are. Food is not the enemy. There are a lot of good stories of what we achieve with local food.

7 Who can or should advocate for the integrity, safety and quality of WA food?

We do need to engage the industry to talk about the food quality and promoting positive stories. They talk about agriculture being the next industry after mining in WA. Where are the investments in the regulatory system that supports the story to China and other international customers that our food really is clean, green and safe? It is what makes us internationally competitive, but we are not investing in demonstrating our food integrity credentials.

Our organisation Food Safe in Queensland is moving from a regulatory space to become an agency that encourages best practice in food production and it's that sort of thing you need government and industry to invest in to secure the integrity of food. Being able to identify a problem and tell the story of how you fixed it does more for the credibility of the industry than trying to defend an issue once it is on the front page of the papers. There are silos between how state governments manage state development, agriculture, health and food safety. At the federal level they would be better to invest in a single point of approval, rather than the multitude of approval systems. I really wonder whether the horticulture industry has learnt anything from its multiple food safety incidents?

I think there is some really good thinking needed here: who should be advocating for food safety and how should we be organised around this? Australia is so much better than anywhere else around the globe, and farmers are busting their arse to produce the best quality food in the world and yet we pull down the individual producer or processor at the first sign of a problem. The media is only ever interested in the 'gotcha moment' and pulling the poor bastard down.

The public health people use social media a lot, but there is a lot of re-tweeting and patting each other on the back; there are better ways of using this medium but there is a lot of noise to break through. There are individual farmers like Nicolao down south who post stories about what is happening on the farm and he's really engaging and humorous – there could be more of these local advocates promoting authentic stories of local food and farming to build community engagement.

8 Does Western Australia need a Safe Food-like organisation?

I was trying to model this in WA but couldn't get horticulture engaged and it is difficult within the public health system. Our model in Queensland is far more efficient; we get the intensive animal industry/food safety data fed through electronically, they identify if they have a problem and call us for advice on what to do, so it has turned us more into a helper to solve issues rather than a regulator. If there is a problem with core temperatures they call us to help with their risk management and we help them find solutions quickly to head off any potential food safety issues.

3 Dr Joe Kosterich, Adjunct Professor (teaching) UWA, author and general practitioner

Doctor, speaker, author, media presenter and health industry consultant, Dr Joe Kosterich M.B.B.S (WA) 1985 writes for numerous medical and mainstream publications and is also a regular on radio and television. He is often called to give opinions in medico legal cases and he is also an adjunct professor (teaching) at UWA. He is supporting clinical editor of Medical Forum Magazine and an advisor to Reed Medical Conferences. He is also Medical Advisor to Medicinal Cannabis Company Little Green Pharma and sits on the board of Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association. He has self-published two books: Dr Joe's DIY Health and 60 Minutes To Better Health. Previously he held senior positions in medical associations and sat on numerous industry and government boards. He has extensive corporate experience in the setting up and management of medical centres and in helping businesses maintain a healthy workforce. He continues to work in General Practice.

1 How important is it to WA public health that we have a safe and local fresh food supply?

Ultimately one of the biggest drivers of good health is nutrition. Over the past 100 years better nutrition has driven human longevity, and fresh food is the best source of good nutrition. You can of course source food globally now, like avocados, and this is useful where some foods are not available year round as they are seasonal. The other aspect is that local food is generally less expensive so in terms of people not on higher incomes being able to access affordable and nutritious food, local food is very important.

Good quality protein is a vital part of health, so having good local farming practices and not relying on the intensive types of animal farms you see in the United States, and ensuring people have access to local grass fed beef and free range poultry are important contributors to health. We do know that iron deficiency is a major issue in health and so having a good source of fresh, local, good quality animal protein is very important.

2 Do you think society and governments appreciate the importance of this sector to public health?

I don't think governments do, more generally across society some do understand, but many do not. People are now more interested in slow food, local food, food miles, then the paleo low carb diets, and there is increasing activity from the vegan extremists, climate activists and extreme animal activists. I absolutely support ethical animal treatment, but that does not mean an animal will not die one day to provide an important source of protein for humans.

3 What do you believe is the level of community trust in WA farmers and fishers (the people) to do the right thing when they produce our food?

Good question. I think people buy and large vote with their feet. People tend, if price is not a barrier, to try to support local food. But if it is twice as expensive as an alternative, then there will be consumer resistance. Trust implies to a degree that people understand the people producing their food; it is hard to trust things that you don't really know. If people think yes, these producers are local, we understand who they are and what they are doing, then we can trust them. The milk price issue drove this, as consumers identified with the local dairy farmer and how the price war may be impacting them. People do need to be able to trust what farmers are producing.

4 What do you believe is the level of community trust in the systems and methods they use to produce food?

People tend to assume that what they buy, that if it is made available for me to buy, then it is ok - it is safe, and it is what it says it is. That is a function of their past experience. People have familiarity and a level of comfort with the food they buy, without really thinking about it. From the producer through to the consumer there are a number of processes that have demonstrated over time to have worked effectively to provide safe food, whether that is regulation or manufacturing processes, and people know that by the time the food reaches them it is ok.

I don't know that accreditations mean a lot to consumers since the Heart Tick was discredited when it was found to go to the highest bidder. The logo becomes a joke if it appears on a sugar laden product as well as fresh milk. If I see an RSPCA approved logo I will think 'they are a group that knows what they are doing', and I assume they are making sure producers are complying. I occasionally buy free range eggs and I like to feel that I am doing the right thing, but what does it actually mean? I'm not sure that most people really understand what that means. To build consumer understanding and trust it is better in my view for the producer to get out there and tell their own story.

5 Does agriculture and fishing have a problem with the public understanding of science and the systems in place that safeguard food integrity?

Yes, in so much as the public don't really understand it. I don't think they necessarily want to understand it, any more than I want to understand my computer other than that it is reliable and works, or than people want to understand the operation of their car - they just want it to go. People just want to know their food is reliable and safe, but they don't think much about how it happens which is why there is an outcry when something goes wrong as they mostly assume it just works.

6 How can our farmers and fishers address this gap in understanding? How can it break through the noise from the plethora of on-line 'experts' promoting their theories and personal beliefs?

It is a good question. The film Food Inc. threw battery hens and feedlots into the spotlight along with other food production practices. It is difficult because most people aren't that much more interested in how their food is produced than how their car is manufactured; so long as it works, how it works is not of that much interest. I suppose media remains a way to tell a story. For example, when chefs go around to farms and they end up cooking the produce, those TV shows are good at informing people about how food is produced. I'm not sure how effective advertising is, for example the BHP Think Big ad I'm really not sure what that achieves. There should be more activity on social media promoting a positive message for local food. It is more about PR rather than selling a deep understanding to the public.

7 How does the medical sector address these challenges, given the lack of public understanding of science and research, and the challenge that 'Dr Google' presents to professional advice to patients?

At the end of the day it doesn't. If the health sector generally was more effective, they would not be treating so many people with nutrition and eating problems. There was research on the role of diet and nutrition in preventing Type 2 diabetes and it spoke particularly about a low carb diet with a focus on meat, fish, chicken and vegetables. The general dietary guidelines are a problem in terms of getting people to eat more fresh food as there is simply not enough emphasis on fresh food as opposed to processed, and the Five and Two promotion doesn't have much cut through any more. Generally GPs talk to their patients about cutting down on processed food and eating more fresh food: I tell people to shop around the perimeter of the supermarket and you'll solve most of your eating issues.

8 A shared dilemma for agricultural and medical science is society's divergent attitudes to genetic modification/gene therapy – fine if it saves my child from illness, evil if it improves the nutritional value of rice and health outcomes in the third world – is it possible to progress with science with these contradictions?

I'll put my hand up and say I am not keen on GM food as I think it is a solution looking for a problem. The amount of food waste globally suggests there is not actually a food shortage. The Health Department use by date system has no scientific basis behind it so that is a problem that generates massive food waste. The farmer in Kojonup growing organically who was caught out by wind-borne GM material that cost him his organic certification brought these issues into the media. On one hand you have the vegans, on the other you have those who want organics. It doesn't have to be either/or, there is room for every sector of the market and consumers can make a choice of what they access. Both can coexist. But my personal view is that GM is the wrong solution, the problem is not a shortage of food, the problem is with distribution.

9 Who can or should advocate for the integrity, safety and quality of WA food?

If you want something done well, you have to do it yourself. Government has a role in supporting the industry to do this effectively, through both the health and agriculture departments – it can provide funds to help industry do it well and that is important, but the industry has the greater interest in doing it well, not a public department. If you want to enter the education path, the curriculum is already overloaded so it is challenging getting in there. Perhaps an option would be for the industry to offer school holiday activities, much like the Royal Show does just once a year. Various city market days, community street fair days like the Oxford and Angove street days, the farmers markets, these are all opportunities to provide talks by producers to build relationships and understanding around the local food story.

10 What impact do you believe the social and general media is having on consumer confidence in food, given the daily feed of messaging around food scares, food security, the latest diets and 'expert advice'?

You have to be one of the voices. You have to run your own race. There is little value in saying 'they are wrong'. You have to put your own case. There are a lot of echo chambers out there. Yes the vegans have a growing voice and they have been successful to a point, but there are also people who come out the other side of these trends and talk about why they are no longer vegan. People will always go for the latest diet and there is always a plethora of them on offer, and you won't stop the 'experts'. A consistent voice promoting the nutritional value of fresh local food and who is producing it, that is the message that needs to be driven in the media. Buy West Eat Best hasn't really had the traction it could have had, it needs to be driven more consistently across general and social media and supported with public talks. Any effort to be successful has to be consistent and driven over months.

With the strawberry and melon food scare issues, the public probably found it was easier to get behind strawberry growers where the offender was identified and the producers were seen as the victims, compared to animal welfare abuses where even if it is an employee that is offending, the producer is seen as the perpetrator. Like all industries farming just has to deal with the rogue operators and if an issue comes out you need to admit that what has happened was wrong, emphasise it was a rogue operator and not the norm, and call them out.

11 Do the public health promotions exacerbate consumer confidence in food?

The biggest one has been the low fat dietary guidelines that have been to the detriment of people eating more sugar. Public health messages can be like a horror movie: you jump the first time, but the more you see the message over time, the less you react. I think some of the messages just leave people scared, but not really knowing what they should be doing.

The public health messages tell you what not to do, but they are not good at telling you what to do. There is a role to play in telling people to eat fresh, nutritious food for good health. If messages like Five and Two worked, everyone would be doing it. The lack of consistency of the messaging around food and good health has exacerbated the problem.

12 How do you believe the confusing messaging and fear campaigns around food are impacting our children? Do you believe there may be a link to teenage eating disorders and anxiety?

Don't get me started on what is making kids anxious that the world is going to end next Tuesday fortnight! I think it is just a phase for some teenagers, and there has always been a lot of anxiety for teens as it is a challenging time for them, but the ramping of the extreme animal activists does create problems and you do see problems more in the teenage girls than the boys. The pointy end will be eating disorders, but beneath that there will be a lot more teenagers who are just worried about stuff. There is certainly a demographic that is more susceptible to these anxieties around food, it is probably less evident in the outer metro high schools than an all-girls private school.

13 As a medical practitioner, educator and communicator would you be interested in joining the conversation with WA's food producers to address some of these shared challenges?

Yes I would, this has been an interest of mine for over a decade and I have had informal chats with chef about doing a book around the importance of healthy food and what you can do with it in everyday cooking so it isn't too hard to be healthy. There is a lot of information that demonstrates that when you sit down with kids around a table with a proper meal of healthy food it has impact on their health and wellbeing, so this is an important area for public health and we all need to be part of the conversation.

Consistency of messaging is the key to promoting better understanding and trust. A number of industries are under assault, some for good reason and others not so. The industry needs to say that 95% of producers are doing the right thing, and that those that aren't need to be held to account.

"You have to be one of the voices. You have to run your own race. There is little value in saying 'they are wrong'. You have to put your own case."

4 Simon Strahan, Chief Executive Officer, DrinkWise

Established in 2005 by the alcohol industry, DrinkWise Australia is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with a primary focus to help bring about a healthier and safer drinking culture in Australia. DrinkWise aims to: promote a generational change in the way Australians consume alcohol, increase the age that young Australians are introduced to alcohol, as evidence has shown that alcohol can impact the development of the adolescent brain. To promote such significant behavioural changes, they develop and implement a range of national information and education campaigns, as well as providing practical resources to help inform and support the community about alcohol use.

As an evidence-based organisation, DrinkWise relies on key independent research and clinical advice. The information supporting our campaigns and our website has been gathered from a range of authoritative studies and sources. These include consultations with experts in public health, neuroscience, epidemiology, and child and adolescent psychology. The structure of DrinkWise is unique as it brings together the preventive health sector, community and industry. DrinkWise Australia is funded through voluntary industry contributions across the alcohol sector, and has previously been funded by both Coalition and Labor governments.

Simon Strahan CEO has over 20 years' experience working with leading Australian and international brands, including Cotton On, Australia Post, TAC and AWB. Simon's experience in social marketing, acquisitions, strategy and global retail e-commerce has provided insight into varied markets and the benefits of early digital technology adoption. Simon has developed and managed world-first behaviour change marketing programs that have been recognised with awards at Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, APAC Effie (Effectiveness) Awards and Australian Direct Marketing Awards.

1 DrinkWise Australia was formed by the alcohol industry in 2005 to promote a healthier and safer drinking culture in Australia. What drove the alcohol industry to embark on managing its social licence in this way?

There was an understanding that a portion of the community was misusing alcohol and the industry recognised it could play a viable part in effecting positive change through a range of education programs – and in doing so help improve the drinking culture in Australia. The industry role, at a preventative level, took to addressing binge drinking and misuse of alcohol, and to promote that if you are choosing to have a drink there is a right way and a wrong way to do it. The initial set-up funding for DrinkWise came from the industry and Federal

Government, with the government recognising that industry could be part of the solution. DrinkWise was delivering a clear message that if you choose to have a drink, do so wisely and in moderation. That was a message government could support.

2 What did it take to achieve collaboration on this initiative across the alcohol sector?

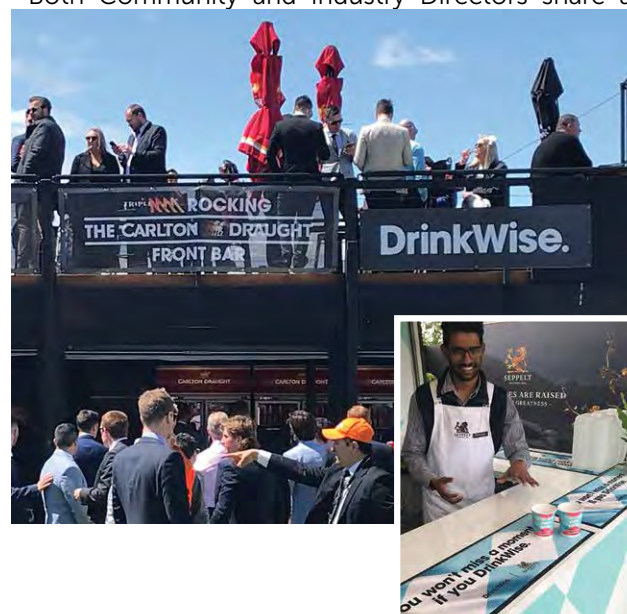
Companies compete at product level, but at industry level there are broader interests that go beyond category leadership. DrinkWise is an example of broader industry interests coming to the fore – namely, that consumption of alcohol products should be in moderation and in a responsible manner.

The producers who are members of DrinkWise have the same intent – and that is to develop programs that encourage a healthier drinking culture in Australia. No producer wants to see their products abused or consumed irresponsibly.

The DrinkWise Board is comprised of eight community and six industry representatives to ensure it is independent in nature. The Board includes, amongst others, a former Chief Commissioner of Police, past Federal and State Ministers, a previous Chief Medical Officer of Australia, all of whom have experience around community interests and experience in intervention programs.

Industry representation on the Board includes nominees from sectors (wine, beer, spirits) as well as the Australian Hotels Association and Retail Drinks Australia. The inclusion of industry not only provides an update on how their funding is used on education programs, but to also leverage additional assets they may have available to extend the DrinkWise moderation message within their own activities (as shown below).

Both Community and Industry Directors share a



common goal – minimising harms from alcohol consumption by ensuring that consumers (who choose to drink) do so in the safest way possible.

We want people to have their best life, and to have the healthiest and safest approach to alcohol, so if they are choosing to have a drink, then they do so wisely.

One of the key differences in the formation and approach of DrinkWise was that the education messages needed to resonate with consumers; they don't want to be told how to live their life, they want to have a conversation around how to live a better life. The DrinkWise advertisement showing the Dad asking his son to get him a beer resonated with the public because it wasn't telling parents how to parent, rather it was holding up a mirror for them to reflect on their own behaviours around alcohol. As a result, it resonated and created attitudinal and behavioural change.

3 What was the governance structure and funding mechanisms that industry agreed to support?

The funding model is based on voluntary contributions from industry; for this there is a prescribed method around DrinkWise members contributing, and our members are listed on our website. All of these contributions and the tens of millions of dollars of contributions made in the past have been around ensuring the right moderation messages are delivered.

All DrinkWise education campaigns are evidence-based, derived from statistical results, trend data and consumer accumulated longitudinal data around attitudes and behavioural change. We track behavioural change. We have a three-pronged approach: longitudinal research (including tracking how Australian drinking habits had changed and demonstrated behaviours had changed); short term research with benchmarking pre and post campaign tracking; and reviewing government data to look at trends and comparisons in the data. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is the government body that produces a comprehensive research report from a household survey to identify how things are changing more broadly over time. We also rely on government data to baseline our data. As an example, the AIHW data around underage Australians abstaining from alcohol shows a shift from 56% in 2007 to 82% abstaining in 2015, a substantial shift and illustrating that the approach from DrinkWise and others is helping to contribute to changes in behaviour.

Targeting segments of the populations most at risk

from alcohol harms is best addressed by a collective approach. In Australia, such multi-faceted and targeted tactics have assisted in more moderate and responsible consumption habits combined with declines in excessive drinking, drink driving and underage consumption, illustrating the benefits of a shared approach. As with any social cause, multiple parties providing expertise and resources are more likely to enable generation change.

We want collaborative relationships wherever possible and we ensure that engagement gets the best result; we engage across government, industry, police, health and education professionals to ensure where there are insights from other programs they can be best leveraged.

4 How did DrinkWise go about establishing its credibility and messaging, given it is industry driven?

As an evidence-based organisation, DrinkWise liaises closely with government, academics and industry to ensure that the preventative education most likely to deliver positive outcomes is harnessed, whether that be through public or private channels. While the majority of DrinkWise funding is from voluntary industry contributions, specific project government funding over the years is evidence that a collaborative and shared approach is logical. It also illustrates that innovation may come from different sources and governments alone should not shoulder the responsibility to develop all viable solutions to social cause intervention.

DrinkWise is steeped in being evidence based; we ensure the programs we run are evidence based, we gather statistics from Australia and around the world to ensure our programs are adding value in terms of achieving change. And we ensure our community directors have a level of expertise in a sector – health, government, education, policing. For example, a former Victorian Police Chief Commissioner on the Board brings a wealth of experience from what he saw on the streets during his time in policing, but also brings innovative ideas for where we are heading.

5 Are there lessons for the broader food, farming and fishing sectors from the DrinkWise journey?

Best practice organisational design is a great lesson. Prior to the formation of DrinkWise, comparative organisations globally were reviewed, with key structures, Board compositions, funding models and approaches all assessed to determine the optimal set-up for a new organisation.

The DrinkWise mission is to *contribute to a generational change in the way Australians drink alcohol by developing new, positive norms that encourage the adoption of a healthier and safer drinking culture and a consequent reduction in alcohol-related harms*. Organisational design centred around achieving: generational change, which required a long-term commitment; behavioural change, which required a long-term investment; and clear determination of how the funding would be spent was required to effect change. The majority of the funding is industry based; some view that this shouldn't be the case and that it is a role for government, but if DrinkWise is coming forward with viable and innovative approaches to address social issues, funding sources shouldn't be the concern – and thankfully government and most people have been prepared to acknowledge that.

We are in a fortunate space as the DrinkWise model is viewed as one of the best globally, in terms of what we do and how we do it. In particular for food, farming and fishing, if you look at other current and historical Australian industry sector models, the collective approach that provides greater certainty, an ability to control sector destiny and innovate with like-minded adjacent industries provide competitive advantage. These are the underpinning thoughts to be brought into a model that may see inclusion of a number of industries that can share both insights and capacity.

6 With animal industries increasingly under attack from the vegan movement, how has DrinkWise addressed the zealotry of the health advocates?

DrinkWise relies heavily on a strong evidence base and expertise. We exist in an environment where a multitude of research comes out every year, often research that is conflicting and contested. There was recently publicity on a report that there is no safe level of alcohol consumption, which was contested by lead researchers internationally as being incorrect.

Some people and organisations want to espouse their views regardless of evidence, largely to protect their financing, which also means not celebrating community behavioural changes or accepting

industry achievements. At DrinkWise, we believe positive social change should be celebrated; that we are helping to shifting perceptions of Australia having a binge drinking culture to an evolving culture of drinking in moderation, where individuals have changed to moderate their own behaviour.

A current example of an industry's social licence being challenged is in equine management. Every industry needs to constantly improve its processes and focus on that, rather than a combative back and forth approach with those who have opposing views. If the community see conflict and can't see rationale for the argument, they take a negative view, but if they can see industry taking responsibility for itself they are bound to take a more positive view.

7 The wine industry is challenged by constantly changing and conflicting health messages to consumers, how is the industry addressing this?

The recent work in WA with Larry Jorgensen and Grape and Wine Australia is a positive example of how DrinkWise and the industry is taking a proactive and progressive approach to educating consumers. We are leveraging industry assets, in this case the cellar doors throughout Australia to help inform consumers about alcohol volume in their wine tastings.

This helps consumers manage their consumption, reduces the potential for drink driving and helps build relationships between cellar door operators and consumers (looking after their welfare).

These practical applications are far more valuable at the point of consumption than detailed research (for more information, we point consumers to the DrinkWise website). We use evidence and provide guidelines from the national health bodies, with education designed to help consumers make early logical choices based on sound information.



DrinkWise came up with a voluntary labelling scheme in 2012 so the majority of alcohol sold in Australia now has the pregnancy warning and the Get the Facts website logos. This is about being proactive around self-managing these issues. The safest thing is for women to abstain from alcohol during pregnancy, so warnings on packaging is part of the solution but is only one part of it. We are ensuring the information is extended beyond the label to cellar doors, medical centres, web sites and other information sources. It is all about looking after consumers. Labelling cannot be the only channel to deliver the messaging and achieve the desired outcome. We even email doctors to remind them to have the conversation with their patients. Multiple touch points and innovative channels are the key to strong engagement.

8 How can wine be integrated into a wider all of agri-food message, so responsible consumption of wine is seen as part of a desirable lifestyle choice?

Moderation is the key. If you talk to any producer, they want to see their product consumed the right way. How it is served, the inclusion of food, and tying in the multitude of influences – tourism, wine, food, community groups to create the regional focus and intent of what that industry is trying to do. And that requires a collaborative approach. Tourism maps generally include winery pathways for a region, so they are absolutely part of the messaging.

Some of the WA work I've seen is about the different varieties of wines from a region matched with local foods from that region. It goes well beyond that, however, explaining how specific soil types are going to produce very different wines and styles, reinforcing to consumers that wine and food pairings are interesting, complex and well thought through – providing a much more robust and exciting experience. Consumers do want to hear about what they are consuming and how it's produced – telling stories about the journey is essential.

9. What do you believe is the level of community trust in farmers and fishers (the people) to do the right thing when they produce our food?

From my perspective outside of the industry the level of trust in producers it is extremely high, so there is the opportunity to expand the narrative around those stories. We've seen this across different categories, how vines are managed, how hops are collected, how long a product has been aged – the story is critical and the trust comes off the back of that. The producers I've talked to want to do the right thing and educate their consumers, with the story itself often helping that process. Talking about different soil quality types, the difference between Perth Hills and Margaret River, it all helps facilitate the message around why the product should be enjoyed in moderation and with food and, importantly, consumed for quality not quantity.

10 Who can or should advocate for the integrity, safety and quality of locally produced food?

Everyone! The reason I say that is you need everyone singing from the same hymn sheet around these issues. Sometimes local growers or producers have access to messaging and communication opportunities, as much as an industry body has, so consistency and a consumer-orientated approach can significantly enhance the sector. Other stakeholders e.g. government or trade organisations, at some stage they want to speak to industry organisations, but the on-the-ground producer perspective is often more engaging and, at the least, critical to the message.

“Consumers do want to hear about what they are consuming and how it's produced – telling stories about the journey is essential.”

11 What would be your advice to the agri-food sector on managing its social licence, given the number of challenges it faces weekly with social and general media comment around food issues?

Working off a strong evidence base is critical, but also the understanding of adapting where possible and not ignorantly trying to compete against irreversible trends. In particular, do not compete in terms of messaging, rather look at it in terms of how can you optimise your industry and doing as much as you possibly can to achieve that. If you look at any industry there is always the opportunity to do more: to enhance the product, the welfare of the consumer who walks through the door, how they consume the product, the entire experience for the consumer. Our research around the event space shows if a person has a negative experience they will attribute that to the event, not their own behaviour. That is the same for a region. Providing evidence of how your product is more sustainable and arrives on their table in the best condition possible for the consumer will build trust – and that applies to all industries and makes them sustainable.

If you are going into a combative environment or relationship and you are getting down to individual types of chemicals and how they are applied, most consumers don't understand that level of detail, and as a result you end up looking trivial. With alcohol, we are asking people to moderate their consumption, but we also acknowledge there are certain portions of the community that shouldn't be consuming alcohol at all (underage, during pregnancies, problems with managing consumption). If you deliver your message in a relevant and positive manner, consumers are more likely to take on those messages and are likely to endorse them in the longer term. For industries challenged by the rise of plant-based proteins, the approach that you present for your alternative is more likely to deliver the benefits at the end of the day if it is developed with the consumer in mind.

The lesson from the days of the wheat marketing single desk and the advantages it gave nationally needed to be viewed from that of the end consumer. It may no longer just be the person buying bread at the local bakery, it is the consumer in Tokyo who wants their Udon noodle to be a certain colour and texture (which can only come from blending wheat from two different states). If you can produce that product in the best possible way for their needs, you will have a more sustainable and profitable business; your business doesn't have to be only based on volume.

There are so many of these environments where people are looking at it as competing with another food or producer. It requires a mature holistic approach to ensure you've got growth across the whole sector and you can demonstrate a better result for the whole industry as well as the industry's back pocket. In particular sharing the learnings around dealing with issues, water conservation for example now resonates with consumers, if you can understand that and incorporate that into the narrative and overall messaging how producers are all working together, it enhances how consumers see the industry.

Australia relies on tourism but tourism is not a single campaign. It is a combination of many different experiences rolled up into a great journey: how the rock lobster was caught, how the vines were grown, how the wagyu was produced.

I love what you are doing here in terms of changing the scope of how these messages are delivered and the collaboration of the industry. Without a doubt, looking at it as an outsider, there is a view that in WA you have your own nation; you do control your destiny if you manage your messaging in a very logical way so you get traction and visibility from the stories of WA.

"In particular sharing the learnings around dealing with issues, water conservation for example now resonates with consumers, if you can understand that and incorporate that into the narrative and overall messaging how producers are all working together, it enhances how consumers see the industry."

5 Roslyn Giglia, Nutrition and Food Security Manager, Foodbank

Foodbank is the definitive source of information on food insecurity and food relief services in Australia. Foodbank conducts a number of surveys annually including individuals experiencing food insecurity, charities providing food relief and organisations donating food and groceries. Foodbank also maintains comprehensive statistics on its operations including detailed data on the food and groceries it collects and distributes.



1 How important is it for the WA community to continue to have a safe, local fresh food supply?

I always say that Australia has the best food supply in the world. People can be sceptical at times about our food, but I know as I work with the food standards and in the food legislation area and I know we have one of the safest food supplies and it is really important to continue to promote that. The stories around challenging the nutritional value of our food and specific claims around low selenium content in WA food for example are simply not true, so it is important we continue to promote the integrity of our locally produced food. I was a breast feeding researcher and the baby formula contamination issue in China plainly highlighted the vast differences in Australia's food standards and safety regulations that provide assurance for us to safely feed our families.

If we value nothing else we have to value our primary producers and our safe food supply in WA.

2 With over 40,000 people a month in WA requiring food relief from Foodbank, what role is the local food industry playing in helping you meet that need?

The local food industry is really important to Foodbank and we rely on our food industry to work with us, but I don't know that it is an equal partnership. It is more that they have the waste and we are a repository for that waste. We often don't have the power to say that we don't want some of the products that are not selling, but we would like their spinach that will wilt in two days, and that we really want their non-perishables, like grains. The food industry is really important but we don't have the power in the relationship to direct what is needed for Foodbank to feed people who are in need. That is the case with the retail sector.

We would like to work with the people producing the food, the growers, but it would be about having better infrastructure and systems in place to access what they are not able to sell. What doesn't go to market is often ploughed back into the ground and we just don't know when that is happening. Can we work with a food industry to facilitate the transport or process this waste into food so we can utilise it?

A lot of the food industry processors are based on the east coast so the transport costs to get processed food to WA for Foodbank is expensive. Where we would like to have the knowledge and resources is in how to access the waste fresh produce. It is good to know that most of the fresh produce is packed or processed in the metro area, that would make it easier to access.

3 What more could be done, given the fresh produce industry is working hard to find avenues for produce rejected by supermarkets?

Through initiatives like the Odd Bunch less than perfect fruit and vegetables, retailers are finding avenues for rejected produce but I imagine there is still a huge amount not finding its way into stores. It would good if we could access some of the rejected fresh produce, and if it could be taken to where the people are. We have a small van that goes out to outer metro areas but we simply can't take enough and people are there queuing early and people want the fresh fruit and vegetables – that is what they are asking for.

The independent retailers we have quite good relationships with, for example with IGA for their meat. Spudshed produce is often quite close to its use by date so by the time it gets here it is not great quality and we don't like to put that on people who can't afford it; if I wouldn't eat it why would I expect them to?

4 What do you believe is the level of community trust in WA farmers and fishers (the people) to do the right thing when they produce our food?

I think the WA community has a high trust value on our farmers and our fishers; I think they recognise that the producers are up against the elements and don't have predictability of income. I think where there is less trust is at the large retailer end, with a perception that they rip off the poor dairy farmers and market gardeners, and package food in all that plastic. The community trust is in the producers, not the retailers. Years ago it was about antibiotics and chicken, but I don't think they think that any more – it has moved on.

Farmers actually care for their livestock in the same way as we do for our pets, I don't think there are many at the producer level that are not valuing their livestock. And the fishers have done a lot of work to make sure we are not overfishing our oceans; the sustainability management has been managed well across the industry.

5 What do you believe is the level of community trust in the systems and methods they use to produce food?

There is a lot in the media around farmed chickens, but I deliberately make the choice to buy caged eggs because I know they won't be a salmonella risk to me.

A lot of the advocacy groups have exposed that we need better systems to produce livestock, but I think we do have good standards and I think they have been respected and adopted by producers, and that the penalties are so high now as well so I think that most farmers do the right thing. They can't afford to work against the system. One of my uncles was a pig farmer, he was old and in the end he hung up his boots as he acknowledged the need for the new piggery systems but couldn't keep up with the changes himself.

"Social and general media is impacting on the public's confidence in food, but also in a way the extreme activism of breaking into people's farms has backfired and has been negative to the broader vegan movement."

6 Social and general media content produces a daily flood of issues around food, its safety, nutritional value, security – do you believe this is impacting on the public's confidence in local food?

Not everyone recognises animals for their value as food. Social media influences food as a social issue, but the reality is that food is a nutritional issue; there is a social part to food, but social justice is not the driver – nutrition is the primary driver. I am a scientist, a nutritionist and dietitian, and the science demonstrates that you can't eat a healthy diet without animals. It is unsustainable through the life course to be a vegan – from a breast-feeding mum, a small infant, a growing child, a teenager, to an adult. You can't maintain your development through your life without a nutritious and balanced diet. Iron is critical for development of brain function so children need a balanced diet that includes meat.

Social and general media is impacting on the public's confidence in food, but also in a way the extreme activism of breaking into people's farms has backfired and has been negative to the broader vegan movement. I don't think the media works well to promote confidence in food. It is extreme in the issues covered; they will praise the quality of a premium food like rock lobster, then completely destroy the reputation of another food.

If we look at local and seasonal foods and cooking food simply, and getting support to learn how to make nutritious meals for our families, then we really are in a great place in WA for local food to support healthy lifestyles.

The popular television celebrity chef programs cook meals that are unattainable for the average person and while they have created interest in food, it is not food that people actually cook at home. It would be useful if they featured family meals, and how to use cuts of meat etc. to educate and inform their viewers. You can't buy a cut of meat with a bone in it from the supermarket any more, and people don't realise it is cheaper and nutritionally better for you to buy meat on the bone. All that knowledge about using different cuts of meat is being removed from general public knowledge because people buy meat pre-wrapped in a supermarket and have lost the opportunity to learn. They don't even have butchers in the supermarkets any more. People don't know what the cuts are because they don't learn about this at school; the home economics courses used to teach this.

7 How do you believe the confusing messaging and fear campaigns around food are impacting our children? Do you believe there may be a link to teenage eating disorders and anxiety?

I know that the evidence shows us that eating behaviours are developed in early childhood, so whatever you have at your house in your early years forms your later eating behaviours. You will likely depart from these behaviours in early adult or teenager years, but as a young adult in your early twenties you will return to your earlier established eating habits.

I think the impact is more around the peer pressure and though we tend to think that eating disorders are widespread, the actual evidence is that true diagnosis of anorexia nervosa and bulimia etc. is pretty rare. What we do need to invest in is good food education in early childhood. The challenge now is that we have young parents who didn't have that good foundation, so there is a considerable amount of rebooting required in that generation. There is also quite an immigrant population locally who can't access their traditional foods and are unsure of how to use local foods.

8 Would Foodbank like to be part of the conversation with the WA primary industries sector to better understand issues of social licence and trust in local food production?

That is something we would like to be involved with. I run a team of 18 dieticians and nutritionists who teach food literacy in the community which is all about learning about accessing and using food. This is all community-based with adult classes and schools programs as well. We run a program of food adventures for school kids where they see our kitchen garden, learn how to use food and cook it, and this is an important place to start in the learning. Our children really are our tomorrow.

I just think there is a lot more that can be done to build trust in food by using the media to highlight producers and the value of our food, and that if we didn't have these local producers our food would cost a whole lot more.

6 Keith Pekin, Manager Sustainable Agriculture Program, Perth NRM / RegenWA

Keith Pekin is the author of the WA Food Security Plan Situation Report September 2019.

www.regenwa.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/WA-Food-Security-Plan-Situation-Report-Sept-2019.pdf

RegenWA comprises the West Australian Regenerative Farmers Network which identifies and supports the adoption of on-farm sustainability practices. The RFN works in collaboration with all state NRMs. Existing grower groups and networks are encouraged to continue developing best management practices which the RFN will support independently to analyse, measure, and demonstrate outcomes of regenerative farming inputs and management options. The information will assist food producers at all levels of knowledge and use of these inputs to develop their own regenerative farming systems towards sustainable food production.

1 How important is it for WA consumers to continue to have a safe, local fresh food supply?

Local fresh food supply is extremely important given global food security learnings and also given that water supplies in the next ten years are going to become a challenge for a lot of countries. Wageningen University in the Netherlands has been looking at this and it cited Perth in its report of cities of concern. We still have a high ranking but for Perth the lower ratings are around access to fresh local food. Access is still very strong now but in future it will be driven by protected cropping for leafy greens and vegetables and water will continue to be the concern. The quality of the water comes into it too. It takes 10 years to transition production systems so we need to be looking ahead and planning now.

2 How resilient do you believe that supply is to sudden shocks from social licence/food incidents?

On a scale of 1-10 WA rates a 7 on resilience on fresh food as we still do supply a lot of our own fresh foods. Value added products will be more challenged by a transport disruption as we don't have the value adding in this state and rely on east-west transport. Our climate change is a slow and insidious decline in rainfall, but if we start getting more extreme events like the east coast is subject to, we may find greater disruptions to fresh food supply here.

My personal belief is that like any business sector, it is up to farmers and the industry groups that represent them to be pro-active in identifying and managing issues. The horse racing industry did/should have known what was happening to the racehorses that didn't make the grade, likewise with the greyhound industry and probably the same with the live cattle export to Indonesia. Ignorance isn't bliss or an excuse. Though modern slavery and use of glyphosate are looming challenges, trust with social and ethical licence expectations is a fickle and fast moving beast so surveys are very in the moment.

3 What do you believe is the level of community trust in WA farmers and fishers (the people) to do the right thing when they produce our food?

I think it is actually high but as time moves forward and the community has access to more information trust is becoming more precarious. There is a general perception that local food is good in WA, aided by the BWEB program, but when incidents occur like the strawberry growers not looking after backpackers for example that trust comes under pressure, and that reflects across the perceptions of the whole sector's sustainability.

The MLA has seen the writing on the wall and is moving to sustainability reporting and that is where we need to be heading to prove our clean and green credentials. The Marine Stewardship Certification is one of the better ones. Consumers generally want to trust the gatekeepers, they don't want to do the research themselves. Waitrose in the UK has taken that assurance role on for their consumers. Here consumers don't look at labels so much.

4 What do you believe is the level of community trust in the systems and methods they use to produce food?

It is pretty high; a certain percentage of the population is so disconnected from farming but there are also a lot of people who just don't care. When you set up the parameters for triple bottom line reporting consumers really don't care about profitability; what they care about is safe, ethically produced food. It is hard to raise the profile in a generic sense on these issues, whereas people will relate to milk more readily as a daily staple fresh food.

5 Where does regenerative farming fit in community trust building for agriculture?

It fits in two areas. Generally, the farming systems we have now are draining our natural resources like water and the rate of productivity improvements are in decline so we need to look at new systems anyway. Consumers are aware of looming food security issues. Carbon drawdown is a big talking point in the climate debate and as an option for regen ag we are looking at how we can demonstrate carbon drawdown in cropping systems. We are investigating if we can link consumer's purchasing habits with a capacity to drawdown carbon.

Regen ag is not organic, it is not conventional, it is somewhere in between. If you are actively looking to reduce glyphosate use, and farmers are achieving 60-70% reduced use, then those sorts of things will drive change. Carbon drawdown potential if it is managed correctly will also drive change. Carbon farming within regen ag means you are continuing to produce food, not locking up land in tree plantations.

6 Does agriculture and fishing have a problem with the public understanding of science and the systems in place to safeguard food integrity?

Residual chemicals is an issue challenging the industry now. NFF President Fiona Simson last year was adamant that glyphosate had no impact on health and the way she said that sounded like the tobacco industry in the 1980s. There is increasing evidence glyphosate does have a trickle through effect, you only need one piece of evidence to emerge and that argument will turn around completely. Public perception on these things can change very quickly and when chemical use is linked to gut health the public becomes very concerned. Glyphosate will become redundant anyway as drone technology with optical cameras will make today's machinery and techniques obsolete when weeds can be more closely targeted.

You need change agents like regen ag to get the change happening. The meat free alternatives will become cheaper in time and may become the food for the masses and only the wealthy may be able to afford meat. The consumer is always right, that's the nature of the business, so if the consumer thinks glyphosate is a problem, then it is a problem. We can't just push product out the gate and expect people to buy it.

The BWEB hasn't taken advantage of a changing market. You can be a really dodgy farmer and still be a member of BWEB, that is a massive failure when it could be so much more influential in the market. Stage two of the BWEB program could have been a verification and pull through reward mechanism to reward the better farmers for doing the right thing.

7 How can our farmers and fishers address this gap in understanding?

By identifying what consumers actually care about and working around those things, instead of trying to invent stuff. Map out exactly what consumers want in their produce, then stick to what they want and food safety is the main one. People are happy with food produced by an Australian; generally consumers are happy with that. The national peak industry bodies should be tasked with that story line.

8 Who can or should advocate for the integrity, safety and quality of WA food?

It has to be independent and verified information. Freshcare is ramping up their program. They want to switch to more of a sustainability program. Freshcare has always been in focus on the farm, but they could push it towards becoming consumer focussed. I'd like to see a system where consumers are given some responsibility through their purchasing habits to reward sustainable farmers. Even now consumers make a big assumption on food integrity and safety. The mistreatment of labour is an issue on an international scale; consumers don't care if the farmer goes broke, but they do care that they look after their workers and their animals.

The messaging has to be fairly consistent across all sectors. The little bits consumers pick up can be confusing. Generally people are lazy at accessing information so they grab at what is put in front of them, so you need consistent messaging so the facts are clear. You don't want individuals eroding that trust; consumers have much more ready access to information so you need to be consistent across the whole industry sector.

7 Ashley Herbert, President Australian Association of Agricultural Consultants (WA)

The Australian Association of Agricultural Consultants (WA) Inc. is a professional association providing training, professional development, mentoring and resources to agricultural and agribusiness consultants across Western Australia. The AAAC(WA) has been running in Western Australia for many years and continues to be one of Australia's pre-eminent and respected agricultural associations. AAAC(WA) has over 60 Members who work in agriculture and agribusiness across Australia and provide professional services to these industries.

1 What do you believe is the level of community trust in WA farmers and fishers (the people) to do the right thing when they produce our food?

Having lived in the country and moved to Perth it has given me an interesting perspective as I didn't realise how much of a disconnect there was between city people and the country. I think the willingness to trust farmers is quite high as long as people have access to information. Once I talked to people about live export it allayed their fears. I think people are ok with what the industry does so long as the person explaining has credibility. People do want transparency. I think most people do trust the industry; and they are largely the ones you don't hear from, as long as when there is an issue someone credible is able to explain the facts of the situation to them.

As an industry farmers have gone about their business and until a crisis pops up we don't think about communicating. It concerns me that our kids hear all these funny stories on the internet and they are susceptible to misinformation even though they have a farm background. If our industry is not sharing the facts then what is online is what the kids will believe.

If people have to pay, to choose between two products, that will really test their beliefs. If there is a premium on a product I think they will revert to the cheaper option as they really don't believe anything is wrong. If you ask people a question they will give an answer; do you like chemicals - no I don't like chemicals, but that may not translate into behaviours. The general public aren't in a position at the moment to understand the impacts of the removal of glyphosate and what that may mean to the cost of food.

2 What do you believe is the level of community trust in the systems and methods they use to produce food?

They are willing to believe it is all ok so long as someone credible continues to tell you so. People are naturally suspicious of corporate types, people are sceptical of their motivations and the money so I don't know if it helps if it is only Coles telling the food story on television. When Coles promoted its logo for hormone-free beef they did a great disservice to the beef industry as that move was all about marketing, it was a complete blow-up and had nothing to do with public health and safety. It just raised a seed of doubt in the consumers' minds. They say they are doing the right thing with nothing behind their strategy.

The live export issue is an example of the industry getting organised to tell its own story. One thing agriculture is not good at is understanding what the other side is saying; it takes the view that if we tell the facts and hit them with science it will all be ok. The live export example has shifted from defending farmers' actions to listening to concerns – once we understand what their concerns are, we can demonstrate we are addressing their issues. We have to be better at engaging on the other side of the fence. At the end of the day most people don't want to be bothered with stuff, they'd rather get on with life and not be fearful, they just want to go to the shops and buy their food.

DPIRD has a really important role in providing factual and current industry information to politicians, because politicians come and go but the department is consistent and they need systems in place to explain things like MRLs and the testing systems around food safety. The technology is so good now you can detect anything, so they can pick up the presence of something that may still be well below standards – this needs to be explained better. The politicians need to have somewhere to go when the public raises concerns so the science can be explained to build their understanding. The department has a role to facilitate the transfer of factual information.

3 Does agriculture and fishing have a problem with public understanding of the science and systems that safeguard food integrity and supply?

Most people don't understand the science of how things work which is why they are open to someone coming along with another story. Without a strong understanding of science they don't have a reference to decide for themselves.

We know that most farm chemicals get broken down and that their presence in soils is incredibly low as they are broken down through natural processes within 3 weeks and are undetectable in 6 months. Most people I explain that to relax considerably when it is explained to them.

The ag sector needs some sort of public relations vehicle to reassure the public with credible facts and to be a reliable source of information; a single point of reference so facts can easily be checked.

4 There is a lot of noise online and in social and general media from 'experts' espousing how farmers should be producing food in the future, and claiming that conventional and industrial agriculture is the 'problem'. How can WA farmers better explain the scale and efficiency of broadacre production to the public to improve perceptions of these practices?

People are a bit suspicious of corporations as they feel it is all about the money and you can't trust them. We should start in school with the kids to build understanding of what modern agriculture is about. When we were young most people had a relative on a farm so there was a direct link to learn about farming – years ago that was farming's link to the city. Now kids are always on the internet and there are all these influencers popping up with challenging views. The Rabobank schools program always gets fantastic feedback as does Muresk. Engagement with education is a very long term project, but ag must establish a profile so when people hear others challenging how food is produced they know where to go to understand what is happening and how to seek out the truth. As long as there is a presence somewhere that offers a buffer to all the noise that is what will make a difference for the perceptions of the industry.

DPIRD needs a marketing department of non-public servant communication professionals who can provide information in plain English, they are the constant and are non-political so are best placed to provide this role. Farmers are not the best people to do this as they are not marketers, they don't have the skills, so you need people who understand engagement with the public and marketing to promote the story of agriculture. Farmers definitely need to be in the story telling for credibility though, not public servants. It would really be useful to have an ongoing presence to manage all these things, so if someone wants to engage with the industry, in the media or in a school for example, they have one point they can go to and find contacts to engage with.

5 We often hear the public sector, policy makers, politicians and the public proclaiming what ‘farmers should be doing’ – for example prescribing a single crop type on a new land development – has agriculture failed to explain the economic part of its story; the business considerations and investment decisions, the market assessments for enterprise profitability required by individual business operators to run a successful business?

The department is positioned to give basic information on how things work. Ideally when there is a changeover in Minister you’d put their key people through a workshop that explains the ag sector; how things work, what is normal, what issues can arise and where to go for information. I think that would be an extremely valuable part of their role to keep politicians up to speed – it is all here, come and listen. Every time there’s a new Minister that brings new staff and a lot of these people have no understanding of the ag sector, so it would greatly help them in their role if they were all to receive the same briefing and establish a point of reference for future referral.

6 How can we do this better?

It is just about engagement, that takes time and energy but you need to look at what is at stake. When things go wrong you have an uphill battle to be heard in the noise, so the answer is to have a continuing program of engagement so people build a greater understanding of how agriculture works. The real test of effective engagement is firstly whether what they publish is readable in plain English, so it is critical to have mechanisms to make sure the communication is successful and having KPIs that measure if they are achieving what they intended. You need to know if you are doing the job or not, understanding what the KPIs might be is the key. That’s why it is not about public servants driving it; the motivation is created by having the right rewards in place, and being industry driven is key.

7 How resilient do you believe the WA agriculture sector is to sudden shocks from social licence or food incidents? (live export ban, food contamination/residues etc.)

Every time something happens in farming there is always a downturn in the business, but they always come back. Most farmers absolutely love what they are doing and their level of dedication is huge, so even if their margins are pretty thin they will tough it out and find a way to keep doing it. Those in drought for four years are still there simply because farmers are resilient, resolute and resourceful and they usually find a solution to a problem and a way to carry on.

When the needles in strawberries scare flared up the industry was able to recover because it was demonstrated to be an act of sabotage by an outsider creating mischief at great expense to the farmers, so people got behind the farmers. It also helped that the strawberry farmers came out and explained what was happening, they were quickly open and transparent; we are stopping selling strawberries because consumer safety is our first concern, it will cost us money and you’ll be without strawberries for a time, but we are not taking any risks on your behalf.

The cover up usually causes more damage than the act itself. The AWB fought allegations of corruption in Middle East markets all the way and the shenanigans afterwards were more damaging than the acts themselves. If the public gets a sniff of a cover up then they question what else is being covered up, so it damages the broader industry.

It is always hard to be on the front foot, but you have to cop it and it is always hard to cop it early. But with farming if people are open and transparent and step up early there is a better chance of recovery for the whole industry and its reputation.

“Most farmers absolutely love what they are doing and their level of dedication is huge, so even if their margins are pretty thin they will tough it out and find a way to keep doing it.”

8 What impact do these events have on the financial position of agricultural businesses, and how long can it take a business to recover from an event? (equity impact)

Live sheep export disruption is an example that has caused farmers more angst than financial hardship and no one went broke as most people have sheep in an enterprise mix as only part of their income. It just took a while for the money to come through so it was disruptive to their business cash flow, but it didn't put their business at risk. It certainly felt at risk to the individual with all the uncertainty of 'who will buy my wethers now?'. In the sheep instance the timing is key, if it means people have to carry stock over periods when they don't have any feed, the impact can be a lot greater.

If you look at the northern system with cattle exports it is entirely different as they have to get cattle off country in the dry season and they had a deadline to do this, so while the export ban dragged on it was monumental in impact on income and the businesses felt it for a very long time.


The important learning is that the industry has to take control of an issue early, because if they don't the government gets involved to resolve the issue and their agenda will not be initially about the farmers, it will be about the public giving them a hard time and them taking a decision to make the noise go away. They do what they need to do to achieve an outcome, it won't be in the industry's interests. The same applies to banks; if farmers take control of the process when things get tight and negotiate with the bank for a better outcome to manage their way out of debt, they can come out the other side of a tough time in a better position.

9 Do AAAC(WA) members have a role in contributing to the conversation needed to build public understanding and trust in the sector?

AAAC(WA) is a collection of individuals so the organisation doesn't take a position on issues; it is not a lobby group, and with 60 individual members it would be impossible to come up with a common shared view anyway.

Members individually absolutely do have a role in contributing to the conversation to build public trust. Within the membership there are members who are quite happy to take part in conversations like this. There are various issues that individuals will take on with support of other members. AAAC is happy to extend the opportunity to become involved in the conversation to its membership so they can make their decision to take up the opportunity.

The overriding theme is engagement, if people are engaged and they have a source to go to, then people may think "I know Ashley, I'll ask him about live export or glyphosate and I'll ask is it that bad really?" People are genuinely interested in food and farming, they love growing food in their backyard, learning about farming is the next best thing. And whether they get to visit a farm or not, there are always other ways of learning about farming and food.



"People are genuinely interested in food and farming, they love growing food in their backyard, learning about farming is the next best thing."

8 Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer, CropLife Australia

Matthew Cossey commenced as Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia in January 2011. He leads the organisation's strategic management and advocacy on crop protection, agricultural biotechnology and industry stewardship in Australia. He also currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia and previously served as a Director on the Board of AFL Canberra for four years and the CLC Group Board for seven years.

CropLife Australia represents the innovators, developers, manufacturers, formulators and registrants of crop protection and ag-biotechnology products. Our Mission: through industry leadership and advocacy, achieve a strategic regulatory environment that provides the plant science industry the freedom to responsibly operate, grow and enhance its ability to support Australia's farmers. CropLife is a not-for-profit organisation, wholly funded by membership fees. Our secretariat is based in Canberra with a small team that is experienced and trained in science, government relations, policy, communications and regulation. Our organisation's goals and objectives are collectively set by our members, with ongoing directions and priorities annually set by the CropLife Board. On our members' behalf we work with governments and others interested in the future of food and farming to maintain the benefits that flow to the Australian community from a strong and responsible plant science industry.

1 What do you believe is the level of community trust in farmers and fishers (the people) to do the right thing when they produce our food?

We deal with two dimensions on trust in farming: at the base level there is extreme trust because we see that at the consumer level, consumers go into supermarkets and shop with confidence, and that is reflected in their buying behaviours. On the second dimension, that underlying trust can be lost in the second a food issue flares with the media and social media discourse that ensues. We often see a disconnect between the conversations on social media and consumer behavior at the checkout.



The challenge we have from the agricultural perspective is that we have peak interest in food at a time we also have a growing and more concentrated and urban-based market. We see the obsession with Master Chef and cooking programs and books, but this is correlating with a peak ignorance around the fundamentals of farming for food. That is inherently a conflicting position that needs to be addressed. My concern is that we have celebrity chefs with greater public standing becoming authorities on the producing of food, rather than those that are actually doing it. That is one of the great challenges we have.

Cameron Diaz recently declared her great concern over glyphosate, then at the same time proclaimed she had no problem with people getting 'botoxed'. On one hand she's using her celebrity to make people concerned about one of the safest chemicals we have in agriculture, but on the other hand encouraging people to knock themselves out with a form of botulism. Unfortunately opinion now has the same ranking as actual scientific truth.

We know that farmers rank high (in the top 10 professions) on the standing of trust in public surveys. On issues where there is an activist campaign run, where there is concern over a breach of trust in farming, you generally only find them where a significant activist campaign has been run. Consumers naturally have trust in farmers until they are led astray by an urban-based activist run campaign. When you get back to actual consumer behaviour we know they have confidence in farming and food, and the reason is that the systems work: food in the history of humanity has never been as safe, nutritious or affordable as it is now. It is as good as it gets. The reality of the food system and what it delivers is being lost. As a science industry, we have positions based on scientific evidence, the rest is opinion and emotion, but for an activist if the science doesn't work for them they walk away from the conversation.

It is about connecting the production systems with the value systems of the community. With GM we need to connect to not only being a safe nutritious way to grow food, but that it reflects consumers' value system. I was invited to a vegan barbecue and a woman confronted me with 10 minutes of diatribe against GM food. I responded that I don't judge her position, but as a father the environmental sustainability of farming is important to me and that is why I am supportive of GM: what I said was true but completely complexing to her as she was suddenly on the other side of the values conversation.

2 What do you believe is the level of community trust in the systems and methods they use to produce food?

If we have genuinely informed consumers about how farming really works, how food is produced and the reality of the challenges around that and how we can do it better, if that is achieved then we can make progress to build trust in our food systems, but at the moment people are churning out of the education system and they don't even understand the fundamentals of food production.

Educating the public is too much to drop on the groups that are busy farming; they are being asked to compete on an un-level playing field against massive global activist organisations. For example, Greenpeace has a budget overspend that is multiples of my entire budget. Government does have a role to ensure consumers are informed, otherwise they will be driven to decisions that will actually undermine food production and we are seeing that already in Europe.

The term industrialised farming is used negatively against the industry, but my response to that is to say to the activists "so don't step foot in a supermarket from now on, grow your own food and barter with your neighbours if you are so opposed to the systems that produce your food".

This opposition to modern food production becomes a human rights issue: my African colleagues often comment that the most vehement opposition comes from overfed white people in the developed world who have no understanding of food security. Industrial farming means we are now feeding a population that has doubled but from the same amount of land. It is the reason we can even consider protecting forests – because we can improve production on existing farm land. It is a human rights issue if you are saying we are not going to allow industrial farming to feed hungry people; people in Africa and Asia are hungry.

Teaching about the fundamentals of farming and food has to come back into the curriculum. A child in a school in any city in Australia can go through their entire schooling and not step foot on a farm, which is a fundamental failure in their life education. We need a baseline of consumer understanding on food established so the ag sector is able to engage with the public on food and farming issues in the future. The responsibility for that is on government.

3 There is considerable online and social media noise around large, multinational corporate chemical companies – how does the industry address this?

We have had some success on those issues with GM an example where in WA a coordinated, and engaged long term program saw the moratorium on GM changed, and an understanding established that coexistence in farming is the absolute foundation that has made the industry successful for centuries; it is only when you put in artificial regulations that you create conflict. Farming groups working together is how it works; there is no quick fix and the GM moratorium process that the PGA, WA Farmers and CropLife worked on was five years in the making.

When I came across to agriculture from the military sector I understood that the real work is in the steady engagement. We are in the business of engaging with policy makers, regulators and politicians to extend the science. We are not in the business of hearts and minds; it requires hard slog individual engagement to build understanding of issues based on science.

4 Does agriculture have a problem with public understanding of the science and systems that safeguard food integrity and supply?

Absolutely, but you are never going to get that. The fact consumers shop every day and don't think about it means they just inherently believe their food is safe. What we need to address is the behaviours that seek to undermine that confidence in a particular area.

Never has food in this country, or in the developed world food systems, been safer due to the quality systems in place. Yet there is heightened concern. The live export industry identified there were failures when footage of overseas abattoirs emerged and industry recognised the need to address this. But if you showed consumers any world's best practice slaughter house they would also have a problem with it. If we have an ever diverging urban base this will increasingly become a problem. Just five decades ago nearly every urban person had a 'country cousin' and got to see where eggs come from and the reality of their food sources. We are not tasked to defend individual chemicals, we are tasked with ensuring there is a regulatory system that enables the industry to operate free of restrictions, but that is increasingly challenging.

5 CropLife is an example of industry investment in managing access, regulation and social licence, how can other industries learn from your experience?

Our members have a real commitment to buy-in and they contribute significant money to support not just our advocacy but also to a massive array of stewardship programs. We set up Drum Muster decades before government talked about recycling containers. We moved it to a shared system with farmer groups and it has become a world leading initiative.

There is no silver bullet, but you need underlying capacity that is always dealing with these issues so when there is a crisis you are not starting from zero. You need to be investing in it all the time even when you don't have a critical issue, then when it arises you already have capacity as you have the resources and relationships established. With glyphosate I can't change an urban person's mind, but when Four Corners does another program I ensure we have the relationships established with the other industry groups, and the strategy is in place to deal with the next issue. We work with the whole supply chain and all of the wide range of groups that use a product like glyphosate and provide them with the resources that provide the facts to ensure they are equipped to respond.

We are the coordinator, not the doer of everything. We identify who needs to be engaged, what resources they need, the scientific research paper or the flyer – we just coordinate, develop the materials and support others to progress the issue locally. We reinforce the message about safety and proper use. Our regulatory systems are world first, the technical competence is never questioned, and we seek to support that. We partner with farmer organisations and identify the benefits of why they need it. Some of the largest users of glyphosate are managers of natural parks and public lands so there is also a story there the public needs to understand around natural resource management.

The main job of farmers and producers is to produce. You are asking them to take on Animals Australia which has massive capacity and funds. We are at the point where government, and probably more State governments, needs to recognise the ball has been dropped and we really need some fundamental education on farming in the schooling system.

6 What is at stake if an industry does not invest in managing its social licence?

You lose access. That is why our arguments at the moment are to put real pressure on political leaders that they can't just respond to campaigning by activists. There could be the scenario where decisions are being made that will genuinely compromise our ability to feed people and food security could become an issue.

We have a real problem because food production has become more political than ever. Ag policy should be bipartisan like defence policy, as feeding the nation has to be bipartisan. We do need to respond to consumers, but we need to ensure the positions they are asking for are based on facts and evidence.

We are dealing with public perceptions that don't take into account that every regulator has declared glyphosate safe. IARC put out the glyphosate report at the same time it put out the same finding on aloe vera. The disconnect is that you have a fully regulated industry that has been proven safe, and another unregulated product in aloe vera that anyone can rub on their skin. It hasn't changed the assessment of carcinogenic risk. There is a fundamental misunderstanding of what IARC's purpose is. They say there might be a risk. There is a hazard in glyphosate and that is why it is carefully managed. It has led to litigation that is now essentially dealing with a false claim.

If consumers are going to take action, they need to be informed. There needs to be a balance or there will be nothing being produced. It is reasonable for consumers to ask for updated practices, but don't demand farmers be less environmentally sustainable, less profitable and less able to produce food.

“Farming can't be done on an ideological basis, it has to be done on a sound scientific basis. The idea that there is a single silver bullet is nonsense when farmers draw from a range of systems to best manage their resources produce safe food.”

7. There is a lot of noise online and in social and general media from 'experts' espousing how farmers should be producing food in the future, and claiming that conventional and industrial agriculture is the 'problem'. How can WA farmers better explain the scale and efficiency of broadacre production to the public to improve perceptions of these practices?

I don't want to be the naysayer and I'm not saying nothing should be done, but if we say the agriculture sector will fix this we are saying we don't understand the strategic environment we are dealing in. We are an industry that tries to steer away from saying government has to do it, and we continue to invest in our stewardship, but the modern world means we can't operate in the modern era of communications and government has a role to ensure the community is informed, so they respond from a factual basis. For example that conservation tillage requires glyphosate. We need them to be educated and it needs to start in school so consumers can't be as easily mislead and they understand why practices are used in food production, and that industrial farming is not a negative - it is the reason we get to live.

Every few years industry talks about what new campaign to run, but we are past that as the modern communication era has run over the top. We had scientific authority that came with the social media content that occurred when Four Corners went to air on glyphosate. We also need to be very careful we don't over respond to a noise that comes from what is really a very small number of people. There is an inherent worry about anything nowadays, rather than an informed idea of the things they should be worried about.

"Our great problem is that the community doesn't understand the difference between hazard and risk. Understanding the difference is fundamental and getting harder to promote."

8 How is CropLife addressing the current challenge to glyphosate?

We've dedicated ourselves to a huge range of resources, directly engaging with all the national and state farm groups, and we are coordinating with messaging. We are working with everyone from suppliers like Bunnings, Woolworths and Coles - we are dealing with everyone that could have a consumer raise an issue to ensure they have the information to respond to them. We make sure we don't forget our base though, so we are working with all the farming groups.

Our great problem is that the community doesn't understand the difference between hazard and risk. Glyphosate is hazardous, but then so is lemon juice to an insect. Understanding the difference is fundamental and getting harder to promote, and also understanding how it is used. The systems in place are so robust in testing, there are hundred fold safety levels build into these things. We have social media advertising to ensure people are directed to credible web sites if they are looking for information. Our main approach is direct briefings with all politicians, our focus is on those who could make a regulatory change.

The industry spends 13 years, US\$250m and testing is done on 130,000 compounds just to come up with a new product. If someone could come up with a better product than glyphosate they would have by now. When you take one product out of the system you put pressures on the others, so industry is always looking for options.

We are agnostic to systems. An urban consumer would not understand there is a heap of chemistry used in organics, it is just not synthetic chemistry. Plan A is making sure the safest chemical is not regulated out of the system. Plan B is continuing to look at new products, and there is massive research on new chemistry. It is ironic to be talking about a Plan B on what is the safest agricultural chemical we have available today. Farming can't be done on an ideological basis, it has to be done on a sound scientific basis. The conflict needs to be taken out of this conversation, it is an urban based argument that doesn't need to be there. The idea that there is a single silver bullet, or a single ideological basis that should be adopted, is nonsense when farmers draw from a range of operating systems to best manage their resources and produce safe food.

9 Is it possible to separate the issues around glyphosate use in public/urban areas from broadacre and horticultural glyphosate use?

It is possible, but ironically on an issue that is crucial for farmers it has also proven to be important for councils that have tried alternative weed control practices like steaming and have returned to glyphosate use. The steaming can mean a more dangerous practice in a park if a child comes into contact with it as it would hospitalise them. The crucial issue is that it is protected for farmers as that is fundamental for food production. Ironically the community will come back to their council in 12 months and demand their parks be cleared up.

10 What is at stake if glyphosate was removed from the WA agricultural industry? Have the numbers been run on this, by sector?

We have done some modelling, but the public discourse is around safety so we don't make an economic argument when the concern is with safety. We have had our industry remove products because we believed the way they were being used was raising the risk profile. That is where the current argument is so that is where we focus – why the product is safe because the world's best independent regulatory system says it is safe. I will guarantee that there are people that have signed a petition against glyphosate yet have probably used it in their own back yard.

We have a convergence of commercial interests inflaming this issue. In the US on television at night there are ads from law firms looking to make a lot of money from glyphosate cases. For people with Hodgkin's lymphoma it is devastating; you want to find out why you have it and you want to blame someone. But the evidence states that rates of this disease have declined over the period glyphosate has been used. It is an impossible conversation to have.

11 What message would you give the WA Minister for Primary Industries on glyphosate, given she has just warned the industry to develop its Plan B?

These throwaway lines are dangerous. The only reason a Plan B would be needed is if politicians made a decision that was not based on science or evidence.

We know from activity over the past three years on the glyphosate issue that we have held governments back from some silly decisions. If we can assist and help the Ministers achieve their goals then we work with them. We also engage directly with every single local government in the country, and the vast majority of their responses are 'we know it is safe, we just have to manage our political issue with the community'.

We have a handful of staff but it is challenging to stay on top of what is required. Our focus is on the people who can make decisions, if I am distracted by focusing on hearts and minds the outcomes will be compromised.

The supermarkets are leading community perceptions through their marketing campaigns and they need to feel more connected to the ag community and be leaders of consumers rather than taking advantage of their consumers' ignorance for an improved marketing outcome and results next quarter. The pressure needs to be put on them to be responsible for how they lead consumers. In New Zealand Woolworths effectively ended the egg industry by declaring new standards that meant the huge industry investment industry had made in improved practices no longer met their standards.

The retailers spend more on advertising and have huge influence on consumer perceptions. Coles no added hormones is an appalling example and I don't know how they don't get done for deceptive and misleading conduct. They need to take a stance that supports agriculture, and they need to employ ag policy people to get their marketing back into line and to understand how long it takes producers to get new operating standards in place to adapt to new expectations.

We also need to be very careful we don't over respond to a noise that comes from what is really a very small number of people. There is an inherent worry about anything nowadays, rather than an informed idea of the things they should be worried about.

9 Dr Andrew Rowland, Chief Executive Officer, Recfishwest

Recfishwest's website: *Recfishwest is a community organisation that strives for sustainable, accessible, enjoyable and safe fishing for all West Australians and we pride ourselves on delivering these to all West Aussies in a credible, transparent and respected manner. Our purpose is to ensure great fishing experiences for all in the WA community forever. Our commitment is to protect, promote and develop sustainable, accessible, enjoyable and safe fishing for the benefit of the community.*

Andrew Rowland believes that rec fishing provides significant social, cultural, health and economic benefits to WA and is passionate about maintaining and building this value for the benefit to the whole community. He understands that natural resource management requires striking a balance between competing user groups, and various (often diverse) stakeholders in protecting the resource which they value. A key component to achieving the right balance is ensuring the interest and values of West Australians who enjoy fishing are effectively represented to protect and develop great fishing experiences.

1 How important is it for WA consumers to continue to have a safe, local fresh food supply?

It is critically important to have local seafood supply, particularly as it is part of our lifestyle and culture in WA. We have always been relatively close to our food supply in this state and that is part of who we are.

2 What do you believe is the level of community trust in WA fishers to do the right thing?

In Western Australia I think generally people who are in the know and are relatively well-informed understand that our fisheries are well managed and are confident that the fishers are environmentally aware and sustainable in their practices. It comes back to our WA lifestyle and spread of coastal communities where people generally have a closer connection and awareness of our seafood than you may get in other parts of Australia and in the rest of the world. In WA 1 in 3 people go fishing at least once a year themselves, so with around 700,000 fishers annually it means general awareness is high.

3. What do you believe is the level of community trust in the methods WA fishers use?

Obviously trawling for species like prawns and scallops is a method that people don't understand so there's a perception there could be a massive amount of damage, but that is a historic perception and not appropriate to today's methods. I don't think people are as in touch with the fishing methods used today as it happens 'out there'. People in trawling are easily demonised and even with MSC accreditation people still have a general feeling of scepticism of the method. Trawling is a fairly efficient method of catching seafood, and around the world this has led to the collapse of fisheries so the international issues transfer into local perceptions. Likewise, terms like 'line caught' are more benign and generally have a more favourable perception by the public. 'Fish traps' proposed in the Gascoyne was another case where people genuinely didn't understand the method which leads to misinformation and concern.

4 What erodes consumer trust around seafood?

Country of origin labelling and a lack of certainty as to where seafood comes from erodes public trust, and that is also confounded by the profusion of common names of fish species that are used to market fish around the world. It leads to uncertainty and misunderstanding which erodes trust.

Seasonality and inconsistency of supply also impacts trust. You can buy steak any time of year and it is fairly consistent, but if you can't buy the same size of prawn from one month to the next it leads to perceptions of unsustainability of the fishery, and there's a lack of understanding of the reasons behind seasonal supply of certain species.

5 To what extent are global concerns around depleted fish stocks and polluted oceans impacting WA consumers' perceptions of the WA seafood industry?

The global conservation movement often sucks the fishing industry up into issues that are occurring in other parts of the world, but are not occurring in WA. That can impact on local perceptions and trust. The super trawler issue was an understanding issue, where in the absence of locally relevant information the public took on the misinformation propagated in the media by interest groups.

6 Do consumers recognise and understand Western Australia's Marine Stewardship Certification and the industry's long-term commitment to sustainable fisheries management?

No. I'll be quite frank, the biggest weakness in MSC from the state level is the lack of promotion. The state government's investment when Norman Moore was Fisheries Minister included a budget for promotion of the program. That lack of awareness-raising has led to a lack of understanding of the public. It is a weakness in third party accreditation generally, and it wouldn't take much to discredit any of the global certification systems; one major incident could be a major challenge to their integrity. With RSPCA now accrediting food in supermarkets there doesn't seem to be any transparency around that accreditation and the standards set to meet it, so it is challenging for the public to understand exactly what third party accreditation actually means.

MSC really is only designed to be ecological in its accreditation. We have seen MSC move into modern slavery and social aspects, but there is a risk element there. We see that with our constituents as well as they expect MSC to do a lot of things it simply was not set up to do. That is a weakness and a risk that will start to creep in as people just expect there is a whole range of other ethics and behaviours that they expect their seafood companies to adhere to. That is a catch 22 for industry too; the MSC standards could change to meet society's expectations and the new standards that come in could lead to a loss of accreditation for a fishery.

7 What should industry do to improve consumer understanding of MSC?

Perhaps more cooperative effort across industry to promote an information campaign. The fact that rock lobster doesn't need MSC from a premium perspective means it is not used to manage social licence in that industry as it probably should be. The fisheries should work across sectors to promote the industry's credentials cooperatively.

The commercial sector drove government to help industry step up to attain MSC accreditation, now there needs to be further effort to achieve the real benefits from it.

8 Who can or should advocate for the integrity, quality and sustainability of WA seafood?

Ideally you'd want consumers to be advocates. But it has to be the fishers really. Government simply doesn't have the trust in the community to take on that role, but maybe it requires a partnership with industry through reinvestment of licence fees. But ultimately it has to be the fishers to provide authenticity to the story. The story of WA sustainable seafood is strong and it is up to industry to tell its own story. It comes down to the individual fisher to share their stories and advocate on their own behalf. We have seen other areas of agriculture successfully promote their produce through telling their own stories. It comes down to the people, the families and the livelihoods and promoting the value that consumers benefit and enjoy from the WA seafood industry.

9 Is there a perceived difference between corporate vs family fishing business operations?

Yes, but the corporates have the people factor as well as part of their story as they are large employers in regional communities. You can engender community support by sharing stories of the seafood producers and the value that providing the seafood generates to them, their communities, the people that work on the boats, in the factories and towns. There is a difference with larger corporate companies, but they also have a story to tell.

If we are going to advocate an issue from a resource access perspective, it is always easier to gather community support around objecting to the practice of a corporate than a family business. Putting the family front and centre is a good way of building community support.

10 How can we engage as a fishing and food industry with the recreational fishing sector better?

The recreational fishing sector want to catch our own fish, but we also want to sit down and enjoy a feed of prawns or scallops, so we are also beneficiaries of the species we can't catch ourselves and we rely on the commercial fishers to access that resource for us.

Bait is often overlooked as an interdependence between the sectors; rec fishers require commercial fishers to access, process and distribute bait species so there is a shared value there.

Commercial fishing is often 'out of sight out of mind': the commercial sector needs to build public understanding of their industry and work with community around where fishing occurs. Commercial fishing within a kilometre of a landing area during weekends or holidays is a good way to earn community disdain. Community acceptability, understanding that and working with the community in relation to when and where fishing activities are happening is a good way to address this. We see this with fisheries management plans where these arrangements are acknowledge and built into the shared plan.

Relationships are also key between fishing clubs and peak fishing bodies; putting a face to the name and having people understand the value of the fishery to the local community. Even if they don't agree with it at least they will have a better understanding, which is the first step to acceptance.



11 How do we help people to be clearer about the WA resource itself?

We need to build capacity in the commercial fishing sector at the local level and engage those local advocates and champions who can best represent the interests of their industry and have them expose themselves and their fishing activities to the wider community. Examples like Damien Bell, Bryn Westerberg and Alan Myles and the guys at Parry's who are good advocates of who they are and what they do. So much can be done in the instant of time to engage with people on the beach and make a better decision on how they interact with the public which can save a lot of heartaches and avoid confrontation.

Peak organisations like WAFIC and Recfishwest are good at communicating, we understand the system, but we don't have the same level of trust or authenticity that those who are on the beach do. I am a big believer in relationships; as recreational fishers we are mostly 99% aligned with industry, but the less we come together to understand the issues and work on solutions together, the more we open the door for others with other interests and politicians to step in to do it for us and that complicates the process of becoming aligned.

Building individual's capacity is the key but it is hard to achieve. It is a big mountain to climb and it can be overwhelming; you challenge what the purpose is of investing in this space, but I'm a big believer in investing in people. FRDC has programs and budgets in this area, but their biggest challenge is to get commercial fishers engaged. It is critical the industry gets the next generation involved in becoming advocates for their industry on the beach.

It is a good point of difference that agriculture successfully engages women in sharing stories of their industries, the fishing industry could do more of this as women are good at communicating with the public.

"Commercial fishing is often 'out of sight out of mind': the commercial sector needs to build public understanding of their industry and work with community around where fishing occurs."

10 Adrian Meder, Sustainable Seafood Program Manager, Australian Marine Conservation Society

Website overview: The Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) is the voice for Australia's oceans. We are Australia's only national charity dedicated solely to protecting our precious ocean wildlife – a community of ocean lovers across the nation working for healthy seas. We are an independent charity, staffed by a committed group of scientists, educators and passionate advocates who have defended Australia's oceans for over 50 years. Our paid and volunteer staff work every day to protect our coasts and oceans.

AMCS works on the big issues that risk our ocean wildlife. Together, we have protected critical ocean ecosystems with marine reserves around the nation, including Ningaloo and the Great Barrier Reef. We have led the movement to ban whaling, stopped supertrawlers, and protected threatened and endangered species like the Australian Sea Lion. Together, our community of ocean lovers save our oceans every day.

As Sustainable Seafood Program Manager Adrian Meder works on the Sustainable Seafood Guide which is produced independent of industry and government, and is part of the global seafood ratings alliance so we work in accordance with best practice internationally. Adrian does a lot of the technical work behind the guide and works with the fishing industry to showcase those doing the right thing to our supporters. When we find the fishing industry putting the environment first, we share that with our members.

1 How important is it for WA consumers to continue to have a safe, local fresh food supply?

Local fresh food supply is vital. It is absolutely fundamentally important especially as isolated as WA is, it is very important we can source as much food locally as possible. We have a unique marine environment, one that is not fully understood, but it is capable of producing quality local fish.

I am a recreational fisher myself based in the south west where about 40% of people are recreational fishers, and rec fishing is an important way for consumers to engage and understand issues first hand. It is easy to have misperceptions and misunderstanding of who gets what access to fish stocks, so resource access is important.

Environmental issues are connected to social licence both where rec fishers have been the canary in the coalmine identifying issues and in helping to manage them, and likewise there are examples where commercial fishers have been excluded from areas where there is no demonstrated environmental

impact but perceptions and public pressure have come to bear. These days the argument is that if there is a fish in the water with a high economic value to one fishing sector or another then that is considered, and the environment is a secondary consideration.

2 What do you believe is the level of community trust in WA fishers to do the right thing?

I will put out there that in a professional capacity I'm a contact point for people who don't have that trust and I interact regularly with stakeholders that have concerns with fishers, but I am also part of a region where there is closer connection between fishers and consumers. I don't think there's a level of community trust overall, it is more case by case, fishery by fishery. Environmentally where you have a fishery impacting a species that is particularly important to the community, that tends to bring down the reputation of the industry as a whole.

On the other hand, there are some fisheries like pearling and abalone that have very strong local perceptions. There is a downward influence on the Western Rock Lobster fishery here based on perceptions of wealth and societal factors, where the environmental issues aren't a part of that perception at all and those fisheries do well overall from an environmental perspective.

Overall the level of trust is not as high perhaps as it could be and there are reasons for that, from my point of view as someone who has worked on environmental issues that have enormous levels of community support like protecting dolphins and marine reserves.

Australian consumers prize the marine environment and consider the sea as a special place to most people. There may be genuine concern for future resource stocks, but some reaction has been way over stated on the loss of production. For example marine parks were forecast to impact by a value of \$2m in gross value, which was relatively low in value compared to the range of other factors that can impact an industry.

We have seen fisheries that have railed against environmental initiatives and they have struggled with their social licence and that has been a factor. Purely economically a cheap supply of our most abundant fishery on the local market would do a lot for the social licence of the industry, but in principle a lot of the obstacles to fisheries building community trust seem to be relatively inexpensive and seem to be mostly symbolic in nature.

3 What do you believe is the level of community trust in the methods WA fishers use?

It is certainly an issue, but it can just be about the visibility of the method. Salmon fishing is a classic example. It has been restricted on many beaches on the south coast as it can look horrific to the tourist who has no understanding of primary industries compared to a local community that understands and is familiar with what commercial fishing feels and looks like. Trust is manifestly affected by industry's willingness to address issues like whale, dolphin and sea bird entanglements. Industry largely has been pretty proactive and practices are modernising. Perhaps the fishing industry may jeopardise the wider industry's reputation by demonstrating its willingness to adapt and change practices.

4 What erodes consumer trust around seafood?

Interactions with specific species particularly whale entanglements, though the mammal populations are pretty healthy and increasing where there are other species that do need attention. The community takes a dim view of entanglements regardless of the actual level of environmental impact for a particular species.

Transparency is important. With gear loss there is a perception that has been under reported and that knocks consumer trust. Particularly in WA the stakes are high as a lot of fish stocks are pretty vulnerable and the migratory nature also makes them vulnerable.

Given the size of the task and the funding available for WA fisheries management they are largely doing a good job.

5 To what extent are global concerns around depleted fish stocks and polluted oceans impacting WA consumers' perceptions of the WA seafood industry?

There is no doubt that they do and they are significant. In some sectors like aquaculture a lot of community perception is based more on what is happening globally rather than locally. Likewise, with a lot of seafood coming into WA from around the world it will remain that way. We export a whole lot of the value of our WA seafood production; if rock lobster could be sold at an affordable price locally it would be more accessible which would improve consumers' perceptions.

6 Do consumers recognise and understand Western Australia's Marine Stewardship Certification and the industry's long-term commitment to sustainable fisheries management?

It is an interesting question and my take is that directly not necessarily; I don't know that WA consumers feel substantially more confident in local seafood because of MSC certification. I think the expectation at the market level that our fisheries will attain those standards is high, I don't think the level of trust has directly increased but the outcome and expectation of consumers to have sustainable seafood is somewhat reflected in those companies that have MSC certification. I think consumers trust what they find on the supermarket shelf more because of the supermarket's expectation of MSC certification from their suppliers. Those sourcing policies are driven by the demand as Australian consumers have that requirement. Our major retailers haven't gone in that direction purely out of their own goodness. There are a whole range of other food areas where retailers don't demand proof of sustainability, but they have done for seafood and it has met consumer expectations.

7 Why not, what should industry do to improve consumer understanding?

There are WA businesses in the fishing industry that are making a conscious decision to demonstrate best practice and sell their products off the back of that, to go beyond the regulatory requirements and to take the best of what is being done elsewhere and apply it, then talk about it. The industry is dragged down by the corners of the industry that are dragging their heels. The recreational salmon fishery on the south coast raised a lot of community disgruntlement through the laggards in the recreational salmon fishing community leaving rubbish and gear on beaches to impact local swimmers, and it is up to the recreational fisher leaders to do their job to get rec fishers to clean up their act.

Connecting with people in the cities to improve consumer understanding is a challenge; Australian people are becoming more urbanised and less connected to the water and industry can work to address this.

8 Who can or should advocate for the integrity, quality and sustainability of WA seafood?

I see WAFIC working with chefs for example and building a fair amount of community presence around this. That can be done more effectively. I also think it is a case of business by business advocating for their industry; a lot are doing an outstanding job and it is pretty clear where the leaders are in the WA fishing industry. The northern prawn fishers were early adopters of sea certification, they are on the record as saying they did this to keep the greenies off their back as they saw the environmental concerns as the most likely to impact, so they took the moves to be proactive in addressing bycatch and seafloor impacts. Full credit to them for staying ahead of the pack. More and more businesses are doing more to stay ahead of the regulations and adopting it voluntarily, and putting themselves in a place where it is difficult for them to be criticised or attract the attention of an organisation like ours.

9 Is there a difference between the corporate vs the family fishing business operations?

Business efficiency is not always geared to the needs of a resource like a fishery resource. Delivering shareholder value for example is often out of step with the longer-term management a fishery requires. Family businesses can deliver the environmental stewardship a fishery resource requires. Corporate businesses can extract a greater value from the resource they access in the marketing investment they make.

Environmentally fisheries where the holders of the fishing licence aren't the people doing the fishing tend to be more problematic and we have seen an erosion of community trust in New Zealand around this where the people doing the fishing are struggling and the licence holders are profiting quite well. That is starting to become an issue in WA around the Total Allowable Catch with western rock lobsters. Seafood is a business and fishing for the maximum economic return is the way of the future.

"More and more businesses are doing more to stay ahead of the regulations and putting themselves in a place where it is difficult for them to be criticised or attract the attention of an organisation like ours."

11 Dr Jenny Shaw, Research Director Western Australian Marine Science Institution

Dr Jenny Shaw is the Research Director managing the development of the Blueprint for Marine Science priorities for the Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI). Dr Shaw (Jenny) is working to determine stakeholder questions on issues, synthesis of existing knowledge including collation of metadata and the determination of researchable management questions resulting in a science plan to address residual knowledge gaps for key regions of the State.

In 2014 Jenny won multiple awards for the Abrolhos PhotoVoice project and the 'Seeing Change' exhibitions. The PhotoVoice project showcased a fishing community's experience of environmental and social change as seen through the lens of a camera. The project highlighted the issues affecting the Abrolhos Islands, the rock lobster fishing industry and the Island community over a five to ten year period.

Jenny was an inaugural Director and foundation member of the Women's Industry Network Seafood Community and was recently acknowledged as a life member for outstanding service to the organisation since its inception. In 2018 she was inducted into the inaugural Women's Honour Roll for Women in Seafood Australasia (WISA). This year she was inducted into the National Seafood Industry Hall of Fame.

Note: The views and opinions in this interview do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Western Australian Marine Science Institution.

1 What do you believe is the level of community trust in WA fishers to do the right thing?

I suspect the level of community trust in WA fishers is not very high. There is a general feeling that fishers in WA and Australia don't value the marine environment as highly as others. I don't believe that is true, I think fishers are embedded in their environment and are often excellent environmental advocates. In Alaska fishers are celebrated as part of their culture, but that doesn't happen here in Australia which is disappointing. Our fishers are stewards of their marine environment but if you say that to the average person they don't believe it. There is a huge gap between the public perceptions of the WA industry and the reality. It doesn't surprise me that fishers rated lower than farmers on the trust rating. People see farmers, but very rarely do you see fishers, so they get very little community support.

2 What do you believe is the level of community trust in the methods WA fishers use?

Again I would presume the level of community trust in the methods fishers use would not be very high. People get confused with the words used to describe fishing methods and there is a general lack of fishing knowledge in the community. For example, there can be confusion and lack of understanding of the specific nature of fishing methods, like trawling (using a trawl net) and trolling (trailing a fishing line). Fishing can be complicated and the community generally doesn't have a sense of that.

3 What erodes consumer trust around seafood?

Consumer trust is impacted by poor perceptions of fishers and the industry. There is a huge lack of knowledge of the WA industry, and the international media coverage highlighting unsustainable practices are often thought to be the same as in WA. There is no understanding that WA had the very first Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) accredited fishery in the world! This is the gold standard environmental accreditation and few people in WA know what the MSC logo means.

There is also quite a gap between the two sectors of recreational and commercial fishers. I think many recreational fishers don't understand their own impact in terms of their numbers and the amount of fish they take. Sometimes we forget that the commercial fishers are catching fish for everyone: it is their job and their livelihood. More recently commercial fishers have been removed or are being removed from estuaries. These small fisheries are important as they provide a low cost sustainable and accessible fish for the community market.

4 Do you think the WA fishing industry should be investing in managing its social licence?

It is a relatively small industry, so although I do agree they should be investing in it, the investment has to be targeted and specific to have real impact. The industry in WA and nationally has shrunk in size and numbers of fishers.

5 What do you believe are the most effective ways the industry can do this? (Build trust)

1. Promote women in the industry, and promote the industry's diversity.
2. Always be at the table: you have to have representatives present when issues are discussed to have recognition and impact.
3. Try and speak with one voice, not disparate groups: it can be difficult to get things going if the industry is not working as a collective.

One way to get traction in building community understanding and trust requires promoting enough industry women and giving them a voice: we need to promote women and give them the confidence to speak up and become the voice of their industry.

6 To what extent are global concerns around depleted fish stocks and polluted oceans impacting WA consumers' perceptions of the WA seafood industry?

I think this is a huge issue. People see the widely promoted footage and they think the issues are the same in WA. It indicates a lack of understanding of the industry in WA. Polluted waters and plastics are huge issues globally. However, when you look at our pristine waters off WA there is not the distinction made by the public. Yet people are happy to buy imported low cost seafood from some at times questionable sources. The global issues of overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing are massive, but when you have a well-known local claiming we have international factory fishing boats in WA waters illegally it doesn't help community understanding of our highly regulated fisheries.

7 Do consumers recognise and understand Western Australia's Marine Stewardship Certification and the industry's long-term commitment to sustainable fisheries management?

I don't think people understand what Marine Stewardship Certification is, and the logo is rarely seen. I believe the MSC should have done more to promote the logo and the fact all the WA fisheries are moving to MSC certification. It appears few understand the logo and what it means. As it is expensive to gain and maintain accreditation: understanding, recognition and promotion of this gold standard environmental accreditation should be pursued.

8 What should industry do to improve consumer understanding of WA seafood?

In terms of improving consumer understanding: chefs and cooks are really important – the women and men who are cooking seafood. Just the difference in taste of fresh local seafood is the real giveaway, but I'm not sure how discerning the community is, as people tend to be price driven. To change this we have to have fresh, well-priced, local fish available, so the loss of estuarine fisheries and affordable estuarine fish is a real shame. Another example of an affordable fish is Australian salmon, but it is not a popular eating fish perhaps because there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of how best to keep and prepare the fish. Often people don't know how to fillet, and they don't know what to do with a whole fish.

9 Who can or should advocate for the integrity, quality and sustainability of WA seafood?

Chefs, cooks and high profile people. Getting people on board who are seen and held in high regard. There are a many good things happening in the industry. At the recent Seafood Directions national conference there were a lot of chefs talking about the product but I am not sure how much traction that gets with the wider public.

Everybody's story is important, so it is important to have both men and women sharing stories about the fishing industry with the wider community. Given the lower level of community trust in the industry, often women are perceived as more trustworthy, so if you have women telling their story they may also be connecting with the people (women) who are making decisions around what to feed their families and tap into their interest in nutrition. Many years ago we had a catchcry that the fishing industry is a community of men and women, not just blokes in boats. It is sometimes overlooked that both women and men work in the fishing industry. Women are possibly underrepresented in the public's perception of the industry.

10 Is there a perceived difference between corporate vs family fishing business operations?

I think there is a difference, the general perception is that people prefer family-owned businesses as they are in the community and are adding to the size, employment and services for that community.

The corporates are considered more transient. The family business is seen as being there for the long term. The perception is that the corporates are just there to make money, where the family business is often intergenerational and seen to have more 'skin in the game.' I believe that fishing is a way of life for many fishing families. The negative of this is that it is often more difficult for family businesses to make strategic decisions about the future of their business, and change is difficult.

11 Do women in the WA fishing industry have a role in helping the industry better manage community perceptions, trust and social licence?

I do think women have a key role in helping manage community perceptions. Sharing their stories is a good place to start, and encouraging women to stand up and tell their stories. The mental health initiative in the fishing industry was driven by

women, so it is a good example of how effective women can be. The Women in Seafood Australasia is a group of volunteers. The group is scattered and funding is tight, but there have been fabulous programs and initiatives for over 20 years. These programs include: building the capacity of women in the industry, providing scholarships, creating a network and just meeting people around Australia to understand what is happening in other parts of the industry, telling stories to the community and getting women's profiles into the community. This helps to build understanding that fishing is a whole community and may help the industry better manage community perceptions.

12 What lessons can you share from your experience with the Abroholos Island project on the value of documenting and sharing stories of the WA fishing industry?

It was a very interesting project that surprised us all with how well people (fishers and non-fishers) related to it. It was a story told by fishers using their own photographs. We ended up with about 30,000 people coming through coastal museums to view the project and it was an enormous lesson in learning how people are captivated by fishers telling their stories. In follow-up surveys I asked 'did the exhibition stimulate interest to learn more about the fishing industry' and the response was on the high side. That result may have reflected the interesting stories the exhibition highlighted.

The lesson in that is that we need similar transdisciplinary projects, one exhibition is a great start. We don't focus enough on the social aspects of the fishing industry, yet how that plays out with community perceptions is really important.

I'd like our WA commercial fishers to be celebrated and not denigrated; I've seen other international fishing industries that are celebrated and I think we have a long way to go. The commercial fishing industry in WA should be celebrated – these people fish sustainably, and they deliver a great product. It is all about managing public perceptions, building knowledge and increasing trust.

12 Dr Sue Foster, Spokesperson, Vets Against Live Exports/ Adjunct Associate Professor Small Animal Medicine, Murdoch University

Dr Sue Foster is a registered veterinary specialist in WA. Disappointed in the lack of independent and objective veterinary analysis and knowledge of the health and animal welfare in the live export trade after Four Corners, Sue and others founded Vets Against Live Export (VALE) in 2012. VALE is a group of veterinarians and other animal care professionals who are prepared to speak out to show the reality behind live export, and expose the people who are continuing to let it happen despite overwhelming evidence of poor animal welfare at all stages of the live export process. Sue is the current spokesperson for VALE; she is also a member of Sentient and Australian Veterinary Association WA's Council of Leadership in Animal Welfare (CLAW). It has been an interesting return to involvement in production animals for Sue, who is concerned that whilst there have been some advances in animal welfare in livestock production since her early practice days, other issues of animal welfare have significantly deteriorated.

Sue is Fellow of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists and a registered specialist in feline medicine. However, her interests span many areas of small animal, ovine and bovine medicine. Sue worked mainly in private mixed practice for 7 years, with a specific interest in cattle practice, before switching and doing specialist training in small animal medicine and a Masters in Veterinary Clinical Studies (on adrenal function in dogs) at the University of Sydney (1995-1999). She then lectured at Murdoch University (2000-2003) and also at the University of Sydney (as a visiting scholar, 2004). Sue is currently a medical consultant for Vetnostics (NSW) and an Adjunct Associate Professor in Small Animal Medicine at Murdoch University (WA).

1 What do you believe is the level of trust in WA farmers and fishers to do the right thing to produce food?

My view is that I wouldn't have a clue what the level of trust is with fishers as I don't think there is much awareness at all; the fact that people continue to buy Vietnamese prawns full of contaminants suggests people don't have that much of an idea of where their seafood comes from. I personally will only eat certified prawns from Australia both for personal health reasons and environmental sustainability concerns.

My view on trust levels in farmers is that at least in WA the farming community has taken a big hit. Overall Australians like and trust farmers and have an almost idyllic view of them, which doesn't seem to be altered by any adverse information that is exposed. However, that support has taken a hit in WA by the continued and irrational support for live sheep export during the Middle East summer months. People see the footage of conditions on ships and then they see farming leaders say it is all fine; so even for people with no interest in live export it has knocked public confidence in the livestock sector. If people see farmers as people who look after their stock, and then see the footage from the Awassi Express and then see that farmers want to continue with that practice, they form the view that while they thought farmers looked after their animals they must actually not care. Farmers in NSW ask me 'what the hell are they doing? They are tainting us as well'.

2 What do you believe is the level of community trust in the animal husbandry practices and care that WA farmers provide for their livestock?

I think trust in animal husbandry practices has probably always been reasonably good, until the more recent events. It has caused people to sit back and think about it. For example, I now get comments from people who drive past stock in paddocks in 40 degree temperatures (40 in the shade!) and they ask me is it ok and what do you think from a veterinary perspective? It is reasonably obvious that stock need shade for comfort in these hot conditions and that is not being provided. So it has heightened people's revaluation of farming generally. There are also concerns about the more extensive pastoral industries especially with the focus on the appalling condition of livestock in some pastoral areas. I think because WA has so many extensive rangeland properties it does impact on public views when a few properties have a problem with stock welfare. My personal view is that many farmers don't make good decisions that take objective views into account in a poor season, particularly about when they should let go of stock. There is this whole level of emotion attached to farming that interferes not only with good business decisions but also the welfare of animals. It is not only the 'Struggle Street' farmer, the larger enterprises are also guilty of not making good decisions in difficult seasons.

"One of the things leading to rising levels of activism is the 'head in the sand' attitude of industry."

3 What do you believe is the community's understanding of the animal husbandry used in WA farming industries?

My guess is that the community don't have a great understanding of routine animal husbandry practices. The average person doesn't actually know what mulesing, drenching, castration or dehorning actually is, nor are they really interested. There is very poor public understanding generally in terms of sheep and cattle. They do have a higher level of understanding of chickens; that it is not a good thing to shove a number of chooks into a small wire cage to get eggs.

I have been involved with a non-mulesing property that was one of the worst cases of animal cruelty I have ever seen; it highlights the fact there is not a simple solution like taking away mulesing, there has to be a whole of farming system approach. There has been a reluctance to look at practices that long-term mean that mulesing can be phased out e.g. better pasture and parasite management that will result in less parasitic burdens, resulting in less 'daggy' sheep and less chance of flystrike. The uptake of analgesia hasn't been high and that doesn't reflect well on the sheep industry. There has also been only limited enthusiasm for breeding for decreased breech wrinkle.

I regularly take photos of sheep in trucks on the highway and it is obvious that tail docking is often not carried out appropriately and according to Department guidelines as it is done far too radically, exposing the vulva etc. There are a lot of contractors not following best practice. Industry has to deal with this proactively and be seen to be caring about such issues – i.e. taking animal welfare concerns seriously.

One of the things leading to rising levels of activism is the 'head in the sand' attitude of industry. There are the younger innovative farmers looking for new markets and happily embracing low stress stock handling, improved animal welfare and production and looking at global markets and trends, but there are also some fifth generation farmers, who are now running multiple farms with less direct oversight and greater interest in making a dollar who are actually operating at lower animal welfare standards than their fathers and grandfathers.

4 Does the WA public make the distinction between what they see on social media or online of international animal farming practices and the standards, regulations and practices actually used in WA?

I'm not convinced the public actually make comparisons between overseas practices and what occurs in Australia. The rural community are aware but the general community are less aware. The public generally believe the practices and regulations and standards are really high in Australia. There has been the mantra that we do it better than everyone else. The average person in Australia believes that we do it pretty well. That is not necessarily right. There has been a real trust in the regulation. The problem for industry is that compliance is not funded, there are no compliance people left, and there is pressure on those people to ignore significant issues rather than rocking the boat. Most people would be surprised if they knew what is not regulated. For whatever reason we do idolise farmers, where fishermen are just fishermen. A pastoralist down on his/her luck can garner front page of The Australian. A Geraldton fisherman would be lucky to get a little snippet buried somewhere in The West Australian.

5 What practice change does the community expect of WA animal farming systems?

I do think the public expects a high level of not only animal care, but also land care. The two go hand in hand. It is very evident in many agricultural systems the sheer level of land degradation which most people believe is unacceptable, and the government's own reports identify more should have been done to address this back in 2003-2017 (The Report to the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation on the condition of the WA pastoral resource base 2013 found the following: "This report indicates that on-going rangeland degradation continues under present management on many leases, and that such management is therefore not in accordance with Section 95 of the Land Administration Act 1997. Action to address this situation will not be simple, but is necessary and should be immediate). People are critical of the industry because they want to ensure animals and the land are appropriately looked after.

6 How do you believe this can be achieved? How would it be funded? Would people be prepared to pay more for food produced this way?

I think the first step is that the farming community has to acknowledge that the issues are present. Every forum I have attended starts with the message 'we have to deal with the activists', but they need to deal with the issues that cause the activists to take their stance. The do not enter for biosecurity risk signs appear very threatening to the public passing by; it is fine to say don't enter the property, but those signs hint at a suggestion there may be practices we don't want you to see. Biosecurity in Australia is laughable – farm machinery trundles happily between farms without appropriate disinfection, a visitor driving up in their car would not pose the same security risk. One does not see this in Europe where public footpaths in multiple countries actually pass through owned farmland. Farmland practices are transparent in other countries but not in Australia. So I don't think farmers have got to that point as an industry to recognise the problems, acknowledge them and address them. The FutureEye report was all about how you can change perceptions, instead at looking at changing the unsavoury practices that led to those perceptions. People are generally pretty good at assessing welfare just by looking at an animal (look at Murdoch's Qualitative Behavioural Assessment studies in which lay people perform very well in animal welfare assessment using 'anthropomorphic descriptions'. Farmers need to get it out of their head that animal welfare concerns reflect unrealistic soft, city slicker mentality. They must understand that they do not have the monopoly on animal assessment and that they are not the only ones with inherent knowledge of animals.

I think many of the changes would not need funding; if you have better animal care and welfare you will have better productivity, so the inputs for a practice change may well be paid for by the outputs. The opposite to this is caged hens, and free range pork, so there are some things that will definitely cost more. But if the public education is good enough then the public will pay, if they can afford it. I'm not sure the community is willing to pay more for meat, they may just eat less. If lamb was marketed better beyond the Australia Day campaigns, with good marketing it would be possible to justify the cost if it was also promoting that the lambs were well looked after. It has always been crazy that Australia has only promoted lamb, why haven't we marketed the flavour and value of mutton? It seems a missed opportunity to me.

In the UK there are the Red Tractor products and the UK public knows what they are buying with this logo. The logo gives a clear message that these products have been raised on farms with improved and audited animal welfare standards and you (the public) will need to pay for that and they do.

7 A recent government-commissioned report that found 95% of Australians surveyed are concerned about the welfare of farmed animals, and 91% want reforms to address this. What will it take to build and maintain trust in animal farming systems?

Farmers have to recognise and acknowledge the problems, and commit to actually fixing them.

Putting out the Sheep Collective live export videos can be viewed two ways. For them it is all about telling a story, telling it well and thinking people will believe it. But anyone who knows about live export knows that there is no bedding put on sheep ships (the sheep faeces form a pad over time) so the videos of wood shavings on a ship in the video are just a lie. They place a lot of emphasis in the film crew being in a position of expertise re animal welfare assessment but they haven't even noticed their film shows a lame sheep hopping up the loading ramp, undermining their credentials. They have loaded a lame sheep; what does that say about the level of care? Under ASEL, only healthy sheep should be loaded so this is likely an issue of non-compliance. The video has copped a lot of flak amongst vets and in some international veterinary schools.

8 Who can or should advocate for the integrity of WA animal production?

VALE set up only to look at live export specifically. The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) has now made strong statements since they have done their own analysis, but they have been completely ignored by industry and government. When government and industry are ignoring groups like AVA we have a problem. RSPCA has to be part of it as they have the role of policing welfare. The Departments (state and federal) should be advocating for the integrity of the industry, but for animal welfare but they sit on the fence as they have the dual responsibility of promoting trade and regulating the industry. In South Africa, the NSPCA holds the entire role for policing welfare so they have greater powers to intervene and prosecute. It operates on a completely different level because the roles are separated. I think the public would have greater trust if this was the case. The fact that government hasn't acted here (i.e. in live export) has weakened public confidence that this issue is being managed appropriately.

9 What are the important values held by VALE members?

VALE members are all veterinarians or vet nurses. We have a couple of members who are animal behaviourists, and a legal expert but we are not a public organisation. It is fair to say veterinarians are not activists, it is not part of who vets are. We have close to 300 members. They are non-activist, thinking people who are frustrated by the lack of government action on live export. Initially there was also frustration about the AVA's unwillingness to advocate for improved animal welfare but that has now changed. The one value held by all VALE members is that live export is not acceptable on animal welfare grounds. Every veterinary and welfare organisation in the world advocates for slaughter as close as possible to the place of production so that is a defensible position.

10 The livestock export industry says it is committed to improved animal welfare, can this be achieved?

I think that is a statement that is not backed up in evidence and outcomes. Like every industry there are some operators that are undoubtedly better than others. But the industry is in the hands of a very small number of exporters, so if they say they are all improving animal welfare in livestock shipping they are lying. A ship can go out of Australia with 4,000 cattle under Australian regulations, but the same ship goes out of South America with 10,000 head. If they were committed to animal welfare they would not be doing this. It makes a complete mockery of their commitment to animal welfare, because that commitment should be to animals wherever around the world they are shipping them. Basically those animals are a commercial commodity and the exporters know that despite increased voyage mortality, they will unload a greater number of cattle/shipment if they can 'overload' in that fashion. Likewise with sheep exports out of countries that do not have specific standards.

ESCAS has made an enormous difference, there is absolutely no doubt about that. It still doesn't protect individual animals, and again government hasn't acted to regulate when there are issues. The industry has, by and large, tried to do it well and some industry members self-report which is great, but 99% of reporting of incidents comes from Animals Australia (the unfunded auditors) and the fact that AA seem to be able to turn up anywhere and find a problem suggests there is a broader problem. It is difficult for exporters to manage but that is an expectation they have to manage.

My problem, as for any veterinary or welfare organisation, is that slaughter should take place as close as possible to where the animal was produced, and that not one of the countries we export to has animal welfare stands in place. Australia has no way of imposing our animal standards on those countries, which means we shouldn't send our animals into that system. ESCAS has no impact on that.

11 Live cattle exports from northern WA underpin the northern livestock industry. How does VALE assess the relative animal welfare challenges if northern cattle can only be sold and processed at southern facilities, incurring significant road transport for the animals?

It is fair to say for VALE that the northern cattle industry is the least of the problem. We would be delighted if long haul trade disappeared. If that happened, then there could be a real focus on getting the northern short haul trade to be done really well. It needs to be emphasised that many northern cattle do have a long trip by road just to get to an export port as well, so there are existing road transport issues with the current trade, and the current road conditions as well. The northern cattle trade is the least of our worries. The long haul trade is a seriously bad issue. Also, we do need to differentiate destination ports. Indonesia is actually a very short voyage and is probably an acceptable trip. Vietnam is now taking 11-12 days, the voyages to China are really long haul as there is no difference between the mean and median voyage times between Chinese voyages and the Middle Eastern travel times.

The northern issue is seriously a challenge as abattoirs have not lasted in the north. If live export didn't exist there would be more use of abattoirs though; AACo has demonstrated it couldn't compete on supply due to the existence of the live export trade. The data shows turnoff for live export is pretty low and there are other models, one innovative operator has seen that opportunity and made it work.

There are some pretty bad animal welfare issues in the pastoral grazing of those animals, so live export is only part of the problem. It is part of the business model that cattle will look like scarecrows by the end of the season and that pastoralists simply hope for a wet to reverse that. Industry needs to be thinking about how the whole system can be done much better. There is no good reason why the 26th parallel allows different practices to occur:

the same practices that would require analgesia in Albany are allowed in Broome without analgesia (the Albany farmer would be prosecuted for cruelty if doing this). There are a lot of things that need to be changed in the model. With good innovation and the right help these things can be addressed. You do see wonderful innovation that is happening, then you see the big hat and boots and the defence that 'this is how we do it'. It gives me hope that we could do things better; there are enough people up there that are smart and innovative enough to make things happen.

12 What alternatives has VALE considered both for southern wether turnoff and northern beef production?

We are not economists or animal production experts, so we wouldn't have the expertise to make comment on production, we deal with veterinary issues. This is something the industry should take on board and deal with. The mutton opportunity though is an example of where investment in marketing could be the solution.

The future of the sheep trade depends on what the government decides to do with the northern hemisphere summer ban; if continued, it is likely to become unsustainable for the exporters. The fact that they have moved to other markets (Romania and South Africa) is an indication that the exporters are already looking elsewhere.

"That lack of farmer openness to another group's significant expertise, trusting only information that supports their incorrect or limited views and experience, is a serious impediment to productive discussions."

13 Would you be interested in a continuing conversation around animal production with the WA primary industries sector?

I am always interested in these conversations and I am happy to participate. I do find there is a real issue with listening though.

Farmers have trusted in the process, they have been told Australia has the best export standards in the world, they want to believe that because they want to believe their stock are looked after. The fact is the rest of the world has no live export standards i.e. it's not hard to be the best when being compared to zero!

This successful government mantra has resulted in farmers assuming that things have been ok, and that organisations like VALE have been banging on about nothing. In addition, farmers may have only limited experiences (e.g. northern cattle trade or southern sheep trade but do not the overall industry). VALE should not have to argue with local farmers that there is no legal requirement for a veterinarian to be on a live export ship. We know that for a legal fact and as a regularly published fact. Anyone in the northern pastoral trade would know that stock in the north travel only with a stockman. But a farmer from Kojonup knows that there is a vet on the ships to the Middle East (by EAN and not law!) so makes an erroneous assumption that there is a vet on every live export ship. Likewise the radio comment by an Australian veterinarian that the sheep on the Awassi weren't Australian because Australia doesn't have black-faced sheep (a fact that was also relayed to me by a Tasmanian pastoralist). Not only does this display ignorance of the Australian sheep industry and the sheep that are exported from WA but a lack of knowledge of government industry reports where those sheep breeds are detailed in the mortality lists.

That lack of farmer openness to another group's significant expertise, trusting only information that supports their incorrect or limited views and experience, is a serious impediment to productive discussions.

13 RSPCA (WA)

RSPCA WA is committed to supporting animal welfare in Western Australian food and fibre industries. We collaborate with governments, peak farming bodies, regional groups and individual farmers to provide feedback and advice on matters to do with animal welfare. Our objective is to ensure animals in agriculture are treated humanely from birth to slaughter. Indeed, this aim is shared by many farmers and peak farming bodies. The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme for poultry and pigs sets strict animals welfare standards that go above regulatory requirements. The Scheme demonstrates how upholding the highest standards in animal welfare is commercially viable and highlights our commitment to work with industry to improve the lives of animals in agriculture.

1 What is your members level of understanding of the best practice animal husbandry used in Western Australia' farming and pastoral industries?

RSPCA supporters make up a broad cross-section of society and come from all demographic and geographical sectors of the community. Some have in-depth understanding of animal husbandry practices and are farmers themselves, others have limited knowledge or experience in husbandry practices. Most supporters keep themselves well informed about improvements that can be made to achieve best practice.

2 Where do your members draw their information from? What informs their perceptions?

RSPCA supporters draw their information from a wide range of sources. Some from practical personal experience, others from information communicated by industry, government and animal welfare organisation sources. RSPCA Australia's Knowledgebase is a significant resource for information. At the start of 2019, there were around 50,000 sessions per week on the Knowledge base. When the site was re-launched early in the year as more mobile and tablet-friendly, session numbers steadily climbed to 62,000 per week. There are now over 200,000 visitors to the site per month.

Where the public gets their information on animal welfare issues was canvassed in the report by social research company Futureeye, Australia's Shifting Mindset on Farm Animal Welfare, available here: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/animal/farm-animal-welfare.pdf>

3 Do your members make the distinction between what they see on social media or online of international animal farming practices and the standards and regulations set in Australia?

We have no data on this. But the inhumane slaughter of cattle in Indonesia exposed by Four Corners and other subsequent exposés has made the public more aware of what can happen to our animals despite our own set of regulations in the domestic setting. However, there are equally inhumane situations occurring in our own backyard e.g. the cruel slaughter of horses and the way animals are treated in intensive farming systems.

There is a growing intolerance for this amongst the majority of the public as they know our animal welfare regulations and laws are either not enforced, or treated with little regard by unscrupulous operators who let down the whole of the farming sector with bad practices.

4 What practice change would RSPCA expect of WA animal farming systems?

The RSPCA would like to see practice change in any area of farming that causes pain and suffering or extreme behavioural deprivation. Accordingly, we support moves towards farming systems that cater to behavioural needs of the animal, and avoid practices that cause pain and suffering. Specific examples include eliminating painful procedures such as dehorning (by breeding polled cattle) and mulesing (by breeding flystrike-resistant sheep), removing extreme confinement systems (e.g. farrowing pens rather than crates for lactating sows, phasing out cages for layer hens), improving the welfare of meat chickens (e.g. by introducing slower-growing strains), and phasing out live exports.

5 How do you believe this can be achieved?

Each example must be considered on a case by case basis. Some painful husbandry procedures can be avoided through changes to breeding and genetics. Changes to production systems such as battery cages for hens will require changes to infrastructure to convert sheds and remove cages. In each case, there will be a multitude of influencing factors and stakeholders to consider and engage.

6 How would it be funded? Would people be prepared to pay more for food produced this way?

The Australian community generally assumes that the food on their plate is from animals that have been treated humanely and not harmed in the production process. There's no doubt that farming to better welfare standards costs farmers more to produce. With lower stocking densities, and greater production inputs, which may include a change in infrastructure, a greater focus on stockpersonship and an enriched environment, farmers should receive a premium. Futureye's 2018 research shows 65% of respondents say they are willing to pay more to ensure better animal welfare standards. Of course, willingness to pay needs to also translate to action, and consumers should be prepared to pay more for humanely farmed food. The RSPCA encourages the community to vote for better animal welfare with their wallet when shopping at the supermarket and eating out.

There may also be a role for governments to assist with transition costs particularly in circumstances where government is requiring change through regulations to ensure livestock industries meet the changing expectations of the constituency. The RSPCA supports government assistance in such circumstances especially when transitions may entail upfront capital costs like converting infrastructure.

7 Has the 'RSPCA-approved' badging on intensive animal farming practices proven to be an effective mechanism for practice change?

Established in 1996, the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme aims to improve the lives of as many farm animals today by working directly with farmers and the brands they supply and since that time, more than 2 billion animals have been farmed with a focus on their welfare. For example, meat chickens on RSPCA Approved farms have access to perches, better litter conditions, better lighting and are stocked at lower densities than legal requirements, giving birds more space. The standards are publicly available, based on animal welfare science, RSPCA policy and leading farm practices in the Australian farming context. They set a higher level for animal welfare by providing an environment that encourages animals to express natural behaviours, while still being commercially viable. These standards allow for indoor and outdoor production – recognising that good welfare can be achieved in a variety of production systems.

RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Standards are available for meat chickens, layer hens, turkeys, pigs, dairy veal calves and farmed Atlantic salmon. These species are some of the most intensively farmed animals in Australia, where in the absence of better legislation, independent standards will continue to play a key role in improving welfare. In addition to the Standards themselves, regular on-farm assessments are a critical aspect of the Scheme. RSPCA Approved farms are assessed by an RSPCA Assessor two to four times a year to check compliance against the RSPCA's standards.

8 Does the commercial nature of this arrangement with supermarkets/food companies challenge the perceived independence and integrity of the RSPCA?

The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme is not-for-profit and operated by RSPCA Australia. For producers that choose to participate in the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, they must meet the RSPCA's detailed animal welfare standards and go through a rigorous assessment process. The compliance costs associated with the Scheme, including the ongoing assessments of participating farms is covered by a licensing fee. This fee is paid by brands (such as supermarkets and food companies) that use the RSPCA Approved logo in the marketing of their RSPCA Approved product. The fee is quarantined and used only within the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme to improve the lives of these farmed animals. RSPCA state and territory Member Societies do not receive any financial contribution from the Approved Farming Scheme.

9 What are the important values held by your members?

We have no specific data on the values of RSPCA supporters. We can only speak to the values of the RSPCA and infer that by implication our supporters have similar values.

The best articulation of the RSPCA's values can be found in the RSPCA Australia's Animals Charter. The Charter appears at the front of our detailed Policies booklet, and can be accessed here:

<https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/rspca-australia-animals-charter/>

10 What values do you believe the RSPCA shares in common with farming families?

We would like to think that we share many values in common with farming families. We know the majority of farmers care deeply about the welfare of the animals they produce and if supported they will, and do, improve their welfare practices. What constitutes good welfare is not always understood by farmers who have “always done it that way”.

11 What do you believe is the level of community trust in Western Australian farmers?

Community trust in any business or industry is critical to its sustainability. We believe trust in livestock agriculture has suffered in recent years as some industries have failed to keep pace with changing community expectations around animal welfare. Practices that were common and accepted in the 1950s may not be as acceptable today.

Practices that cause harm and suffering to farm animals will continue to come under greater scrutiny in the years ahead. The farm sector must be conscious of the impact one industry can have on the public's perception of livestock agriculture as a whole. Often the public are not discerning in the negative perceptions they can form.

Practices like live animal exports can impact public trust in farmers across the board, particularly when the public see farmers openly defending and supporting the trade.

To put it simply, the community loves farmers but hates animal cruelty. Farmers enjoy widespread community support and respect but certain husbandry practices and production systems do not.

These issues are outlined in detail in the Futureye report.

12 What does it take to build and maintain trust in animal farming systems?

Genuine transparency and continuous improvement. Genuine transparency shows the warts and all, acknowledges limitations and the need to improve. This is what builds trust and this is what can bring the community along with the industry.

Conversely, PR dressed up as transparency has the opposite effect, particularly if and when the PR portrayal is juxtaposed with the reality. Nothing damages trust more than when the public feels they have been taken for a ride.

13. How would you describe the current relationship between the RSPCA and the Western Australian farming sector?

The relationship has been tested in recent years due to the RSPCA's opposition to the live export trade. This was evident when the RSPCA campaigned against the inhumane slaughter of cattle in Indonesia in 2011 and again in response to the cruelty towards sheep laid bare in the Awassi Express incident in 2018. There has been a tendency for some peak farming bodies and very few individual farmers to portray RSPCA's opposition to live export as being in opposition to all farming practices. This is of course untrue. RSPCA supports farming animals for food and fibre provided the animals involved are treated humanely.

We believe that the majority of farmers are aware that the RSPCA can add value to their industry. It is unhelpful to the livestock production sector as a whole to “shoot the messenger” when they can trust the RSPCA as a useful barometer of public opinion.

Our everyday experience is that most farmers have a healthy respect for the work that RSPCA does and the manner in which they work, particularly the inspectors who they often call upon to deal with poor operators in their ranks. Some of the cruelty reports we receive about commercial livestock are made by other producers.

It appears there has been a definite divide in the farming “ranks” with the traditional representative farming lobby groups not wanting to engage with RSPCA as they have in the past. That has allowed for a more productive relationship to be sought directly with grower groups and individual operators. More recently there appears to be a shift in thinking and a more positive approach to RSPCA as a valued partner.

14 Where would you like to see this relationship in five years' time?

The RSPCA seeks to work more effectively with WA farm sector on improving animal welfare. There will always be a natural tension between animal welfare groups like the RSPCA and farmers but this does not mean that animal welfare issues should become vexed and views polarised. Working together with the farm sector has always been, and always will be, the RSPCA's preferred approach.

We are pragmatic and reasonable. Our policies are based on science, not emotion. If the farm sector is willing to openly acknowledge and work on areas in need of improvement, then the RSPCA will be on their side to help make it happen.

14 Alex Mijatovic, Spokesperson, FOODwatch WA

FOODwatch WA is a network of volunteers working towards a goal to keep WA GM-free. Our role is to advocate and educate communities on the risks of genetically modified crops and foods, and their impact on the environment, agriculture, food security and our health. We aim to inspire individuals and communities to actively campaign against the spread of GM crops and foods into our environments and lives. We are proud to be members of the GM-Free Australia Alliance. Members of the Network are concerned about the legacy left to the future generations if GM crops are allowed to contaminate the environment and our food.

A rally was held in Perth in October 2008, where a 27,000 signature petition was presented to Agriculture and Food Minister Terry Redman calling for the retention of the GM moratorium. The Network has concerns that current inadequate labelling provides no choice to those wishing to avoid GM ingredients in their food. Hence, the Network is calling for comprehensive GM labelling. The Network also calls for independently controlled trials to investigate impacts on the environment. 800 Facebook followers.

1 Describe your organisation and membership, and the main issues of concern to them:

FOODWatch WA is not incorporated so it doesn't have any formal positions. I joined 4 years ago with Janet Grogan and others, and I've been involved in many of the meetings and I administer the Facebook page. We took a bad beating with the parliamentary inquiry into compensation on GM contamination and the inquiry dismissed everything we put forward; it was very demoralising and things went very quiet after that in our organisation. I'm one of the last ones involved and I am the National Coordinator for the GM Free Alliance, and FoodWatch is a member of that.

We have a number of semi-active members in WA, so at the moment we are supporting the national effort to argue against the government's push to allow gene technologies like Crispr. The night of the federal election the government passed through a proposal to deregulate new GM techniques, this has been passed around the states but not debated in parliament. The Greens have put in a disallowance motion; it has been tabled but is not supported by Labor. There has been a postponement of the date the government will vote on the deregulation to mid-November. It will mean Australia will become one of the first countries in the world to deregulate the genetic modification of plants, animals and microbes so they are basically throwing out the rulebook.

2 What is your members' level of understanding of WA food, farming and fishing industries?

Our members have got a pretty good level of understanding as a lot of our members are farmers themselves, especially down south.

We are a bunch of people that gather around the GM issue with five main people involved over the last couple of years, though we are still involved with the national alliance and supporting GM free in Australia. We function in crisis management mode; we try to keep the wolves at bay when an issue arises again. It is very difficult when everyone is a volunteer with limited time; it has been driven for a long time by Janet and Shirley but everyone is getting tired. Our Facebook page has 800 members which has doubled in the past couple of years, but interest drops when there is not an immediate issue to respond to.

3 Where do your members draw their information from?

There is a GM free farmers group and there is a bit of crossover there for information. Our information is primarily from similar sources; social media, our networks and contacts, the local community. My own knowledge comes from what I read and the research I do, and the communication I have with farmers.

4 How important is social media, online forums in informing your members?

We have a website, a Facebook page and we distribute email newsletters. We feed into a weekly newsletter nationally where we work with Gene Ethics and the SA GM free information network. Gene Ethics keeps an eye on what is being published in the rural media and we report content to Gene Ethics and they distribute to quite a large network that includes a lot of farmers. Gene Ethics is based in Victoria.

5 What practice change would you expect of WA farming systems?

Obviously GM free is our focus. We often have conversations around that if food is organic then it is GM free anyway so it is relevant to continue to advocate, but we believe it is extremely important. What we are working towards is to reduce, minimise, eliminate and get a GM moratorium in WA, but we also support organic and biodynamic farming. We are 100% supportive of organic and we are working with the two national organisations at the alliance level.

6 With organics are people prepared to pay more for food produced this way?

My background is in financial services and marketing, so when it comes to finance and consumer behaviour this is my area of expertise. My view is that people already are prepared to pay more, the organic industry wouldn't be where it is now if people weren't prepared to pay. But for the organics industry the challenge now is about achieving scale. It is more expensive to produce organic food, maybe the government should be giving subsidies to the organic industry instead of mining. How would you fund it? The organic farmers need help whether it is government support, investors or grants.

Dr John Paull from the University of Tasmania has published his latest report this month showing Australia is now the largest producer of organic food by hectares in the world, which is fantastic. That sort of research is the sort of thing that could be put together professionally to attract investors that can feed funds into the organic industry to achieve growth and scale.

7 What are the important values held by your members around food and farming?

Honesty about what is in the food, health, fairness in the whole chain of production and sustainability – the way the earth and the people are treated, that producers make a profit and consumers get fair value. A big one is health and what we are feeding ourselves and our families and the impact on them of mass production and industrial farming. Transparency is key.

8 Do you believe you share any values in common with farming families?

With organic farming families, definitely 100% per cent. I wouldn't share values with those that are using GM, and as far as conventional farming I'd call it a tolerance with their purpose of providing food for people but it is all about the methods they use and the trade-off of it costing less to produce food if they use pesticides.

9 What is your level of trust in Western Australian farmers? (on a scale 1-7)

That's a good question and a tough one. I'd like to say I'm a proud Western Australian and I've met lots of wonderful people in farming that I do trust, but the Steve Marsh GM contamination case showed me there were many farmers I don't trust and GM canola is now relentless down south and there are a lot of farmers that think that is great. So sadly I'd say my trust rating is a 3-4 for conventional farmers, while for organic farmers I'd say a 6 out of 7. There is even a lot of scepticism of the labelling on organic food whether it actually is organic, but I am still prepared to pay more for organic food to send the clear message that I want to buy organic.

10. What erodes trust?

The crooks. There are definitely people taking advantage of the system in organics and mislabelling.

The Swan Valley free range egg court case eroded public trust; they made a lot of money claiming their eggs were free range and organic when they actually weren't. The offender was fined, but the courts were weak. This is why there is no trust because there are people who get away with things because the laws are weak. There wasn't enough momentum or communication to create enough of a boycott by consumers to shut his business down, we're dealing with people with more money and more power than consumers have.

11 What would it take to build and maintain trust?

You need a strong independent industry association that communicates really well with the public, the consumers. A friend of mine has the money to buy organic, but just doesn't believe it is authentic. She grows her own food, but will then buy conventionally produced food. This is a real life example; clearly she's read things that make her believe that the organic label is not true. I explain how much is involved in certification and the standards set but she is not convinced.

An industry association needs to communicate how a grower becomes certified and explain to the public what goes into someone whacking that certification label on their product. Consumers need to be able to understand it is not something that is easy to swindle.

I think consumers do want to trust the farmers and their food. The reason we have got to this point is that in the past we have trusted that what governments and corporations have put on their labels is true and they have been found out.

I think consumers would be interested in dialogue with industry to work towards solutions. I think the problem is that most people don't have the balls to call out poor practices and we need to ensure they don't get ostracised when they raise an issue. We don't have protections for whistle-blowers. It takes very strong individuals and there needs to be mechanisms to protect the individual, then you would have a lot more people come forward. I do believe most people are doing the right thing, and those that see a wrong practice they are just scared of the impacts of calling it out. They definitely need support as things would come out quicker and then people would know they can't get away with it.

Social media provides some protection for whistle-blowers, and it also provides a sense of power as you can support an issue without putting your name against it. But ultimately it requires a leader who can put their name to an issue to call it out. In the financial sector my experience in Australia and internationally was that those who do the wrong thing are paid off and they quietly move on to the next job.

Farmers need to communicate their beliefs and values to their customers. In marketing that is what people buy – the person or the values the produce represents.

Marketing is really just communicating and selling, so marketing that message about WA farming and what they do, who they are, what they have achieved as an industry is so important but it has to be done really well. That involves money, but a lot can be done without investing a lot of money. All the work goes into getting that message really right and then being really persistent to get that across so consumers understand why they support WA farmers and local WA food.

"Farmers need to communicate their beliefs and values to their customers. That is what people buy – the person or the values the produce represents."

15 Alex Jones, Co-Chair, Pesticide Action Group of Western Australia

The Pesticide Action Group of WA (PAGWA) vision is to bring a balance to earth's ecological systems and wellness in communities though freedom from pesticides. Their mission is to prevent harm and to promote well-being by educating and lobbying for evidence based precautionary decision-making and enactment of strong laws to restrict the availability, sale and use of pesticides. PAGWA's Facebook page has 625 members.

1 Describeyourorganisationandmembership:

PAGWA was established in 2013 in response to a resident's battle with the City of Stirling to stop the spraying of herbicides in public spaces. At the time there had already been petitions under the Save Our Trees group to stop the spraying of pesticides on public land in urban areas. Since then, under the Pesticide Action Group, interest has been growing across the state. There are 643 members on Facebook and there is a lot of activity on the site.

2 What are the main issues that concern your members?

Our members are concerned about overuse and exposure to pesticides. People are concerned and they are now sharing their views through PAGWA's Facebook page. People come to us for advice. Jane Bremmer has also been very active as chair of the Alliance for a Clean Environment. Both Jane and I receive a lot of requests for advice and help on how people can deal with issues they are facing in their own area. We can and do offer advice but local governments in particular need to change their practices and they need to listen to their councillors, electors, residents and ratepayers. More people now are feeling confident about speaking at council meetings or writing about their concerns and gathering petitions. This had been happening for a long time but unfortunately governments hadn't been listening. There was a petition of 3,500 signatories to the City of Stirling in 2007 but nothing happened; it is taking a very long time for local governments to adopt integrated pest management and alternative weed control in urban areas.

All public land is our area of concern and it takes three levels of government to address this issue which is why it has become so difficult. We tend to have an economy that accepts toxic trade deals such as when Malcolm Turnbull signed a deal with Indonesia to export our sugar and import their

herbicides and pesticides. Logically, if we import all these agricultural chemicals that are poisons they have to be used, and what better way than to spread them around not just in agriculture but in misguided environmental weeding and management of public land including footpaths, kerbs, medians, shopping precincts and bushland in urban areas.

There is not a huge difference between metro and rural local governments. I have been interested in the issues regarding decades of spraying under the Agricultural Protection Board and the effect on those workers exposed to the chemicals 24D and 245T in the Kimberley. The issues are the same now. There is a heavy reliance on pesticides and governments fail to acknowledge that there are serious risks. They do not properly monitor what we are receiving as products which can also be contaminated with cancer-causing dioxins due to the cheap manufacturing processes. A lot of this information came out in 2013 through the Chemical Time Bomb 4 Corners program. We know that many people are very concerned about the increased rates of cancer, particularly in the young, and spraying chemicals in our urban environments means that we are all facing this risk.

3 What is your members level of understanding of WA's food, farming and fishing industries?

As far as I am concerned I think that there is growing awareness of the differences of opinion. There appears to be a conflict of opinion between those involved in conventional practices with reliance on pesticides and those using more environmentally sustainable practices. There is a view that we can't feed the world if we don't use chemicals. Naturally with our concerns particularly about pesticides that we know are designed to kill various forms of life, most of the people in our network would look to source organic, biodynamic or pesticide-free food. Unfortunately it is not always easy to find and that is a challenge for consumers who want the right to choose.

We would support farmers transitioning to sustainable agriculture with reduced reliance on these chemicals that we believe are having an adverse impact on public health.

At an industry level, we are aware that there is a need for government support for farmers and we don't always see that. Farmers alone can't do this; they need support from consumers too and I think consumers would be prepared to pay more as we rely on farmers to feed us and provide this choice. We need government to acknowledge there are issues with how we produce food and that we can't

keep polluting our environment and expect to have a healthy nation and healthy people. The people that contact us are often chemically-affected and there are a lot of tragedies in their stories; it is an important issue and governments need to acknowledge this.

4 Where do your members draw their information on food and farming from?

We have become aware that there is a lot of talk, particularly on social media, about the different levels of science: industry lobbyists' science versus independent science - we try to sift through all that and it is disappointing where there is a veil on truth at the government level. We have to have transparency and accept when there is a risk to public health from reliance on pesticides.

5 How important is social media, online forums in informing your members and forming their perceptions of farming practices?

PAGWA came together over issues related to the spraying of pesticides in urban areas but naturally some in our network are also very concerned about the food that they and their children eat. They take an interest in organisations such as FOODwatch, Gene Ethics, the GM- Free Alliance and a range of healthy eating and lifestyle related websites. Most of us are interested in what is happening at an international level, as well as locally, and share information from reliable scientific and medical sources.

6 What practice change would you expect of WA farming systems?

The important thing from a consumer perspective is that we would like to see a transitioning to less reliance on agricultural chemicals and poisons in particular. That can only occur through highlighting the successes. Farmers who have had success in more sustainable practices should share their experience and share their stories with government.

I saw that in 2007 with Peter Andrews' books that came as a breath of fresh air; how not doing what are considered "conventional" things on his property resulted in better environmental outcomes. I have opposed the clearing of land where almost everything is considered a weed, and he shares that view as a farmer. So people like Peter are a source of inspiration and we need to get behind people like this. Economic policies also need to be part of the solution; we can't keep on putting a veil over controversies or prop up unsustainable practices through economic policies.

7 How do you believe this can be achieved?

I am someone who is removed from farming, but I can see there are population pressures everywhere and Australia is seen as a country of benevolence and richness traditionally. We need to work on that and make sure we don't lose that opportunity. It is really important for us to protect our land and work quickly to do that so we don't lose the fertility of our land or our opportunities. We have to feed the world and Australia also needs to do this but at the same time we have to protect our people, our farmers and our communities. We shouldn't make ourselves ill by propping up toxic industries and trade deals that are misguided.

There needs to be a higher level discussion with farmers and consumers to find solutions. We know from media reports that many farmers are suffering and need help, similarly urban people are under pressure. So we need to keep working together, sharing ideas, being transparent and not being afraid to say that things don't have to keep working the same way. We need to protect our children's future. The way we are going there are so many pressures that we have no choice; we have to come together. I think there are a lot of people in urban areas who would like to work more closely with farmers and government needs to be part of that process.

8 How would it be funded? Would people be prepared to pay more for food produced this way?

Speaking for myself and my family, we are definitely prepared to pay more for food that is organic, biodynamic and we would be prepared to continue to do that. But that is not an ideal situation as all people should be able to afford to eat healthy food; it should not be a privilege of people who can afford it. We need to make it more accessible to everyone and that can only happen by promoting healthy farming practices and less reliance on chemicals and poisons like pesticides.

We have such a cocktail of chemicals in our foods as well as in urban areas. We know that farmers are using too many and as consumers we need to work together to change practices. We have had petitions at all levels of government and we will continue to call for a Royal Commission into the Use of Pesticides and Harm to Public Health at a federal level as there has been a lack of transparency. There has to be discussion on why we have such reliance on pesticides particularly on cheaply manufactured chemicals with increased risk of containing cancer-causing dioxins. If it means paying more for food or contributing in other ways, I think many people in our networks would be prepared to do this to support farmers.

9 What are the important values held by your members?

That is an interesting question. The PAGWA logo is the dandelion, and the words - a healthy environment for all life - we thought of the dandelion because so often it is poisoned; we have declared so many plants as weeds but there are other forms of life that rely on those plants, and this is the web of life. We have a beekeeper who told us that bees love the dandelions. It is about valuing life and a healthy environment.

10 Do you believe you share any values in common with farming families?

I think we share these values with farmers around a healthy environment and valuing life. The problem lies in how we describe these things. The intentions are there. A lot is coming from industry lobbyists that promote a view that you can't farm without reliance on chemical use, and it is disappointing hearing farmers repeat the words of the lobbyists. We call that conventional farming, but I feel optimistic when I hear farmers say we have to find a better way, or openly admit a pesticide has been a problem. The issue arose for example with Fenthion use in stone fruit; it was demonstrated by SA that things can be done differently. For many years South Australia sourced its sterile fruit flies from Western Australia while we continued to use Fenthion which is known to be harmful. Politics and industry pressure often gets in the way of farmers making the change.

You can't say that the pesticide industry is not toxic as their products are all designed to kill some form of life. In high school *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson was on my English reading list in the 1960s, so it is not as though this is new information. It is just there has been resistance for political and economic reasons to acknowledge the harm and find a better way for us all.

As an urban person I want to learn more about farming. It is an area of interest to me as I also try to grow food in my backyard without the use of pesticides. Increasingly people want to know where their food comes from and politicians need to get behind this. There hasn't been transparency at government level and there hasn't been broad community consultation in regard to practices that use a cocktail of harmful agricultural chemicals. Too many people don't seem to be aware of this.

11 What is your level of trust in Western Australian farmers? (on a scale 1-7)

I'd rate it at 5 out of 7. I am inspired by so many people now speaking about and interested in becoming organic and going into regenerative farming. There are many good reports and information is starting to be shared through email and social media. Things are changing and I feel the balance is shifting. There is a lot more pressure on everyone to find better ways. Some of that comes from concerns about climate change and we know that the pesticide industry is another contributor with adverse environmental impact from petrochemicals and the poisoning and loss of vegetation including from roadsides and many urban areas. More people are starting to question the War on Weeds, as promoted on the City of Melville website, particularly with the use of poisons.

12 What erodes trust?

When I hear some farmers being aggressive in their position that growing something can't be done without the use of glyphosate products, I think that erodes public trust. That type of attitude that is resistant is similar to the attitudes at local government. I say let's have a debate about it, let's find examples where people have done things differently. Where there doesn't seem to be the will to change, that is disappointing. There is less of that compared to years ago; there is more will to change but when resistant farmers are a mouthpiece for a toxic industry, that erodes trust.

13 What would it take to build and maintain trust in WA food and farming?

Organisations such as COBWA (Certified Organic Biodynamic WA) are going to play a very significant role. I was very excited about being invited to join the organic movement's first industry-wide meeting, as these are the linkages needed between farmers and urban people who share ideas around producing healthy food and protecting the environment.

Most people, if educated about the difference and given a choice of conventional or pesticide-free food that may not look perfect, would make that choice for pesticide-free. I have questioned why apples need to be waxed and shiny, and I have seen carrots called the Ugly Bunch in supermarkets. This is about changing people's mindsets. We have been told what consumers want by the supermarkets, but if I know that the wax on an apple contains a fungicide I don't want to buy that apple. I learnt about that common practice many years ago on a TV program that showed how apples were being waxed; I look at the small amount of fungicide and other chemicals in apples and make the decision that I don't want children in particular to be eating that. Increasingly consumers hold similar views. There needs to be more research and more community awareness of

what is going on with food. For example, if parents are not aware of the chemical residues in the food that their children are eating, then that is not right. The lack of transparency is a problem and if that is industry-driven and due to vested interests, that is very concerning.

14 Supermarkets say they are meeting customer needs, how can we have consumers work more closely with supermarkets

There really is a role for organisations like PAGWA to be more vocal and work with supermarkets. When Woolworths was distributing plastic toys I complained; now they are giving packets of seeds and we have used some of those and that's a big change. Supermarkets need to be encouraged to make the right choices, and they need the feedback from consumers. People who are trying to source pesticide-free or organic food need to tell their supermarket managers they want to buy that, otherwise the supermarkets think there is no interest in it. If growers are producing organic produce I would like to see that on the shelves. Globally there is an interest in healthy food particularly for children and that is where our government is failing because growers who want to transition need to be supported by our government. Misguided trade deals are part of the problem; it has to start at that level to push back the tide.

15 Consumers have driven supermarkets on issues like plastics and modern slavery, are there lessons there for your work?

It does fit with our values and what we are trying to do which is a healthy environment for all life. We would be in favour of any moves to reduce the toxic load on the environment, and that includes plastics use. I think many consumers would be prepared to pay a bit more to see recyclable packaging if they believed the packaging would be less toxic to the environment. But people need to be convinced of that need to increase costs and of the benefits of new packaging.

Young people are very aware of these issues but are unable to do much about it. We need to take a leading role as elders and work with our politicians to make these changes as our next generation is relying on us. Children are often taught about these issues at kindergarten but that is unfair, in my opinion, as they can't do anything but worry particularly if they see adults doing the wrong thing. We have to take up these issues as consumers and work with government and industry to find solutions.

We all need to face the issues as a community and people will need to be compensated where the necessary changes to find a better way impact their business. We simply have to sort it out.

16 Melissa Osterhage, Coles State Marketing Manager WA

"We love to meet farmers and producers from across the state, hear their stories and see just what it takes to get their products onto the tables of West Australian families. These businesses truly do whatever it takes to get the best quality products to us, and it shows. There's just nothing better, fresher or tastier than meals made with products that came from, quite literally, down the road. You'll be seeing more and more local products in-store and, as always, we love to receive your feedback on what you would like to see on our shelves."

Coles WA magazine October 2019

1 In the latest Coles WA magazine State Manager Pat Zanetti has stated Coles is committed to helping WA farmers and producers feed WA families, and the magazine features stories on WA producers. Why has Coles shifted from generic fresh food promotion to local story telling and profiling growers?

We know our WA customers want to know more about the food they are eating and where it comes from. We also know that we have fantastic suppliers who take enormous pride in producing great food for Coles. That's why we established our first in-store WA magazine in March 2019 so we can tell the fantastic stories behind the WA products we stock at Coles.

2 How strong does Coles perceive the buy local messaging is in the WA market?

We perceive the buy local message to be very strong in Western Australia and the majority of our local suppliers have adopted the Buy West Eat Best (BWEB) logo.

3 What value does Coles see in partnering in the Buy West Eat Best program?

We were inaugural partners with BWEB over ten years ago but more recently we've started working really closely with BWEB. As members, we can also use the BWEB logo on our Coles branded goods that are produced in WA.

4 What is Coles perception of the level of pride WA consumers have in WA-produced food? (on a scale of 1-7)

Rating 6 or 7 - WA consumers are immensely proud of WA-produced food and perceive local food as high quality. They also understand that if food at the supermarket is sourced from a WA farm, it will be fresh because it doesn't have to be transported as far.

5 What is Coles perception of the level of trust WA consumers have in WA's farmers and fishers to produce their food? (on a scale of 1-7)

Rating 6-7 - I believe WA consumers respect and trust WA farmers and fishers and the food they produce. I think customers also appreciate that they work hard to produce great quality products.

6 How well informed do you believe WA consumers are about how food is produced in this State?

I believe WA consumers are well informed about local food thanks to BWEB, labelling and a proactive approach by food producers in Western Australia to tell their stories.

7 What impact do you believe social and general media is having on consumers' perceptions of food, farming and fishing, particularly given international content around food safety scares, depleted global fish stocks and land resources, climate change and animal welfare?

Social media definitely plays a significant role in shaping consumers' perceptions. For example, if customers hear about a food safety scare overseas, they are motivated to buy only local food because they consider it to be more safe.

8 Do you think WA farmers and fishers could do more to tell their stories? How?

In terms of marketing promotions, they definitely could do more to tell their stories. Sometimes it is difficult to do this through traditional media but social media provides the industry with a platform to reach consumers. Joining up to the BWEB program is a way they can also access resources for developing their messaging and profile. A lot of WA farmers and fishers are so busy, it is hard for them to find the time to tell their stories. BWEB and the Coles magazine have acted as vehicles for producers to tell their story and start conversations. For example, the story behind Cone Bay barramundi is important to share with customers so people know it comes from remote, pristine Kimberley waters and is Australia's only ocean-farmed barramundi.

9 Should Coles also be informing consumers of the high quality assurance systems WA producers must comply with in order to supply Coles, to help build greater trust in WA food?

Coles cares about how our food is produced and sourced and we are committed to working towards a sustainable future that supports local farmers and food producers, while also looking after the welfare of animals. For example, all Coles Own Brand seafood is sustainably sourced and has been since 2015 and this is something we promote on our products, in our stores and in our communications so customers are aware. Similarly all our Coles Own Brand fresh chicken, Own Brand fresh turkey, Own Brand fresh free-range pork and Own Brand fresh free-range chicken is RSPCA Approved – which is again something we are proud to tell customers on our products, in stores and in our communications.

10 Does Coles see itself as contributing to the 'social licence' or perceptions of trust in WA primary industries? (Given the large television advertising reach of Coles on sustainable seafood, RSPCA approved chicken etc.)

We believe we can help shine a light on the wonderful things our WA suppliers are doing to continually build the connection between customers and their food.

11 Would Coles be prepared to continue the conversation with the WA farming and fishing sector to build and maintain trust in WA's food industries?

Yes, we want to continue the conversation with the WA farming and fishing sector and continue to work through BWEB in Western Australia.

17 Chris Wheatcroft CEO Rural Financial Counsellors Service (WA) and 60 national Rural Financial Counsellors discuss their role as first responders to social licence incidents/ disruptions

The Rural Financial Counsellors Service WA services all types of farming including livestock, grain, fruit and vegetables. Since starting it has been extended to cover professional fishing, forestry and small rural businesses that support these industries, such as fencing, harvesting, spraying or stock management contracting. RFCS WA is focused on the financial aspects of the enterprise, especially long term financial sustainability. It works with tools in business analysis and planning, personal goal setting and debt management. Key among these tools is the model of how to manage situations for the best result that RFCS WA has developed in-house, based on local experience. RFCS WA can also help access government assistance programs.

Services are supported by government and free to qualified businesses. RFCS WA services are based in Geraldton, but delivered state-wide. The service employs 10 Counsellors, who live all over the state, plus support staff. RFCS WA is governed by a Board of management.

1 How have you observed the impact of social licence incidents on primary producers?

- We dealt with the impacts of the live cattle export ban and the impacts on farm families was huge, and families that never thought they would come close to the RFCS were overnight making contact with us.
- The sudden and brutal impact of the live cattle export ban was diabolical when I visited Kimberley stations.

"I believe WA consumers respect and trust WA farmers and fishers and the food they produce. I think customers also appreciate that they work hard to produce great quality products."



2 How is the range of issues and the rate of change impacting producers?

- There will be a rapid switch from issue to issue so agriculture will face an ongoing barrage, which is a big shift from the previously blessed / revered position it has enjoyed in Australian culture.
- The vegetarian message extends now to milk, eggs etc. so the impact is broadening.
- The research into the benefits of a plant based diet is huge, it is far reaching beyond being an anti-meat lobby. Foreign Correspondent: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-06/impossible-burger-patties-worrying-farmers-over-definition-meat/11378282>
- It is a fundamental change in what farmers do, and the rate of change creates significant stress.
- In many areas there is no alternative to grazing enterprises due to the land types.
- We could have a new wave of disenfranchised farming operators that could be denied access to income.
- The farmers that have not been planning for policy change are the ones that will struggle with the rate of change and will arrive at our door.
- Social media is impacting and influencing young people.

3 How is government responding to these challenges to the food production systems?

- The rate of change means in DPIRD we now do weekly environmental and issues scans and updates, where we used to do it six monthly.
- The escalation from farm trespass, social media coverage, outraged response through to legislative change has been rapid.
- The unexpected and unplanned change can also occur with biosecurity impacts, the food contamination issues like strawberries and salmon, which calls government services into emergency responses.

4 How can rural financial counsellors respond to sudden shocks in food production systems?

- The overnight and immediate impact is the important aspect for RFCS – can we respond to a sudden shock or change?
- RFCS can have little influence or impact, it can only respond to match our service to a new high demand need which may be in different areas, industries and areas of expertise – we will need to be flexible and mobile.

- A new high demand can't be at the expense of an existing client – they will still need our assistance also.
- What is the process to train new counsellors for a rapid response, what is government's response to an 'emergency' to enable RFCS to provide the triage initially with a visual presence (emotional support and listening to identify needs) and ongoing support (adjustment) over the longer term?
 - We need a 'no panic' response, we need to be calm and consistent.
 - Gathering intelligence on the impact and understand the footprint – how many are affected?
 - Identifying resources to respond.
 - Developing a communications strategy to maintain the information flow.
 - Interact with other State RFCS to share ideas on response and resource issues.
 - Ensuring we can triage clients and be speaking with them quickly.
 - Counsellors are in the business of change management and this is in the realm of rapid change, so it may require training for counsellors in awareness of options to help farmers deal with a crisis.
- RFCS is not an advocacy organisation so we need to remain independent, but be aware of issues and understand hot spots, understand the pressures on clients and always manage the safety of counsellors.
- Counsellors can talk to clients about risk management for the potential impacts of future events. Social impact issues can be part of the conversation around preparedness to cope with future business shocks. The challenge is how can RFCS maintain currency in understanding the issues and the options so it can be a provider of information and referral for clients?
- The counsellor part of our role comes to the fore in an emergency, you don't have to know much, you just need to listen in those early stages, to be there, walk amongst the crew, settle things down and reassure that resources will be found.

Our role starts on day one of a disruption, we mobilise and get started.

18 Larissa Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, Grain Industry Association of WA Inc.

Larissa Taylor started her career in the corporate sector in management consulting with McKinsey & Co, moved to a consulting and research role with Dutch agribusiness bank Rabobank, and subsequently worked in executive development, business development and community development roles with the UWA Business School and BHP Billiton Iron Ore before joining the Grain Industry Association of WA in 2014. Originally from a farming community in the Great Southern of WA, Larissa has lived and worked in Canberra, Sydney, Houston, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Perth.

1 What do you believe are the major issues challenging the public's trust of your sector?

I had been trying to nurture a small group of the CEOs of the major WA agrifood industry associations, keeping us connected informally for four years since the failure of the former Agrifood Alliance during Rob Delane's time as Director General of DAFWA. Originally we called ourselves the Agrifood Alliance and more recently the Food Alliance WA, which is still an informal working group.

After the Linda Eatherton talk and workshop Creating Social Licence in Agriculture in the 21st Century (which became Masterclass #1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RC4qKlyEYY>), that DPIRD and GIWA hosted in February 2019, the GIWA Board supported this Food Alliance WA DPIRD Trust in Primary Production project being housed on the GIWA ABN because there are issues in the grain industry around crop protection (chemicals, pesticides, herbicides) and crop production practices that aren't well understood by the urban public. These public perceptions around crop protection and use of agricultural chemicals could potentially clash with their use in the future.

For the CEOs that are leading small and relatively under-resourced WA agricultural and fishing industry associations, I wanted to help develop an understanding of why we need to address issues challenging the public's trust in our sectors. We couldn't afford to do this baseline research inside each ABN, but we could afford to contribute time and some funds from the industry associations only, given DPIRD's generous seed funding to:

1. Conduct a quantitative community perceptions of primary production survey of the WA urban public;
2. Conduct a desktop review of local, national and international trust initiatives;
3. Conduct qualitative interviews with key influencers in the sector.

And this project has allowed us to connect into national community trust initiatives like Agrifutures, CSIRO, NFF Telling Our Stories, MLA, Seafood Australia, Grain Growers Ltd. Personally I am also learning a lot about earning the public's trust from some of the leaders in the commercial fishing sector.

2 Are these trust or social licence issues driven by International, National or WA influences?

Certainly the international influence is becoming stronger and consumer concerns are easily magnified through social media, which leads to pressure on politicians. In Europe the pressure on politicians on the use of chemicals in food production has meant they are pressuring regulatory systems, and where it impacts one regulatory system it can impact on other regulatory systems around the world in a domino effect.

The closest thing we have to international food safety standards is Codex that measures chemical residues. In Australia we have Food Standards Australia New Zealand and the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority, with the National Residue Survey situated in the federal Department of Agriculture and part funded by growers and government to report on chemical residues in grain and horticulture. In the grain trade space, we are finding phytosanitary and food safety technical trade barriers (or Non-Tariff Measures i.e. NTMs) are on the rise; a response to international trade agreements and increasing consumer concern about food safety.

We saw a global anti GM movement move through agriculture, that is still live but I think it is being overtaken by an anti ag chemical and particularly anti glyphosate movement. We have social media-literate younger people who love food, but don't know first-hand how it is produced. They pick up on these movements and are quick to have an opinion.

3 Are any of the trust or social licence issues you mentioned amplified or more likely to impact the WA industry than in other States?

The bulk export commodities industry has been slow to step up in building trust and understanding in the urban (not regional) WA community. WA has a trust 'double whammy'. With a largely urban population based in Perth, we need our domestic population to trust that food production in Western Australia is safe and ethical, as we export 90 per cent of what we produce to middle class consumers in Asia who have different trust understandings around food. We can only export that food if our local population believes we are producing to the highest standards and trust our technologies and standards. Gone are the days when you can just operate inside your value chain, without being aware of inter-sectoral community trust issues in primary production.

One of the reasons we supported the trust project was to map out the issues we have in common across the WA primary industry sectors, for example ag chemicals go across cropping, horticulture etc. so there is a knock-on effect between sectors. It is important we learn how to collaborate with other supply chains to address trust issues.

4 Do you believe your WA industry is aware of the impact that public acceptance of your industry's practices may have in future?

There is a growing awareness. In the grain industry we are now seeing work being done in this area by CSIRO, GRDC and Grain Growers Limited. One of the impediments to the Australian grain industry around this issue is that the representative grain industry organisations are fragmented. The industry structure beyond the RDC is weak and not effectively resourced to address these issues.

What WA has going for it is that most people in the grain industry know each other due to our isolation and export focus. We understand what each other offers in grower advocacy (WAFF, WAGG, GGL, GPA) and pre-competitive supply chain services (GIWA) in the grain chain, so that is an asset that needs to be capitalised on. We need to provide a place where the industry can come together around common issues. I am feeling more urgency and courage about providing opportunities for the supply chain to connect as we just have to collaborate on complex market-facing issues that are bigger than any one ABN can deal with.

5 How concerned are you about the impact public acceptance of your industry's practices may have in future?

The public wants to know that we are producing food, taking care of the environment and looking after the land; increasingly the sustainability piece and the climate adaptation piece will merge with the trust work. We are incredibly adaptive but we don't talk about it to the public in a way that they can get it.

6 What are the practices that may need to be addressed to improve the public's perception and acceptance of your industry?

All of us in each of our supply chains has to identify our best practices and identify any areas of concern. We need to tell the story about our best practice in the media and through other channels to young people in a way they can understand, so they see it repeated on social media, in conversations, in school classroom content and in the general media.

7 How prepared is your industry to work together in WA to address issues that may help to improve its social licence and the public's trust?

There is a preparedness, but it has to be developed very carefully to reassure the farmer/grower advocacy groups that it is not trying to replace them but support them. For example, this baseline research project is a precompetitive trust initiative, it is not a farm advocacy initiative.

8 How prepared is your industry to work collaboratively with other industries in WA to address issues that may help to improve its social licence and the public's trust?

I feel sad that we have two competing farmer advocacy groups in WA. With all due respect to my colleagues, this baseline research initiative the Food Alliance WA DPIRD Trust in Primary Production needs to leap frog over that situation and focus on the collaborative initiatives that build trust, telling the story of how we produce food in Western Australia to the WA urban public, and start to include climate adaptation and mitigation in that narrative. "We produce safe food sustainably, in a drying climate."

"All of us in each of our supply chains has to identify our best practices and identify any areas of concern."

9 Is your industry prepared to invest to manage its own social licence for the WA industry's specific needs?

I think we need at least the first quarter in 2020, until April, to take the results of this project to our boards and stakeholders for them to consider. I have learnt from experience that commercial businesses don't willingly put their hand in their pocket to fund 'soft' multi-party projects like this, so we need to build a compelling case for why the commercial agrifood and fishing companies should invest in trust initiatives. That was why we didn't include them in this baseline research phase; the multiple industry associations had to demonstrate that they could collaborate first, and produce something which was worth wider commercial engagement.

Our biggest grain asset in WA is the growers' bulk handling cooperative. What the co-op decides at a board level has wide ramifications in the grain industry. The co-op is in a period of necessary cost cutting to remain competitive globally; there is not necessarily an appetite at board level to invest in these kinds of soft initiatives so we have to have a compelling proposition to put to them if we want to earn their strategic and financial support for capacity building in urban community trust in primary production initiatives.

GRDC is investing in the Agrifutures trust piece with the other RDCs; they have a portfolio investment in climate initiatives and are investing in those. Once Grain Growers launch their sustainability framework in Q1 next year GRDC will likely review its position. Grain Growers will bring their sustainability framework to Perth in February and we will look to incorporate the local trust project into the launch of the sustainability framework.

"Industry associations had to demonstrate that they could collaborate first, and produce something which was worth wider commercial engagement."

10 What do you believe may be the consequences of your WA industry not managing its social licence / trust / public perceptions

The consequence may be that the glyphosate issue will blow up in our face; consumers don't distinguish between pre-season and late season usage of this chemical. Without pre-season glyphosate we could not grow a profitable grain crop in WA. Regulators around the world continue to say that glyphosate is safe, but that doesn't cut through with consumers who read about court cases, misinformation and fear. At this point there is no equivalent chemistry that provides the same generic pre-season weed management that glyphosate does. There is a huge investment underway in complementary weed management technology whether herbicides, manual, crop planting patterns etc. but we are not telling that story to the public yet.

The terms industrial farming and regenerative farming are emotionally polarising. A lot of the grain industry's practices are already regenerative in nature but we are not telling the story. Agriculture is a systems game; we are constantly revising our systems science to produce safe food, so if there is new science coming out of regenerative farming which is scalable and sustainable we should look at it. The best operators in our industry are constantly looking at new practices.

11 How prepared is your industry to adapt to Western Australia's changing climate?

The WA grain industry is incredibly adaptive; we have a suite of technologies we are using to adapt to climate impacts. I don't think at a state or national policy level we are addressing climate change adequately, at a state level I don't think we've fully articulated future climate impacts with the capacity to produce food; how and where we produce food in future will have to respond to the rapidly drying south west. We need to make sure the WA population continues to have access to locally produced food; we need food security to be embedded in our social welfare policies so we can look after the most disadvantaged at the same time that we export most of what we produce.

In terms of climate mitigation and adaptation, the production sector is really responsive; give growers a price for carbon and adequate management tools and they will respond. There is already a lot of interest in measuring on-farm carbon and people are starting to invest in their businesses to capture those opportunities. In the grain belt we are impressively adaptive to water availability. We continue to grow crops on less water, but we can't assume we will be able to grow the same crops the same way we have grown them in the past in the low-medium rainfall zones of the wheatbelt.

12 How important is it for Western Australian students to be informed about and connected with the local food, farming and fishing industries?

We have to up our game in talking to the school students and 18-25 year olds as they don't have the experience of agriculture or an understanding that we are globally competitive in terms of our technology and sustainability; that we produce their food, care about the environment and are sustainable.

We all have to put our shoulders to the wheel and start telling the story about our food production in our high schools. If I could mandate a school kitchen garden program from early primary years right through so by the time they get to high school they are learning about the agricultural economy of WA, I think that is the connection that needs to be made. There are so many kids who don't experience growing their own food yet they love it, they love that connection, they love learning about it. At that primary stage and also in secondary school, that is where we get the biggest 'trust' bang for our buck.

13 What are the barriers for your industry in attracting young people to careers in the food, farming and fishing industries?

The biggest barrier is that agricultural industries are not connecting with young people when they hit their teenage years through the careers programs at school; they don't have industry telling the story at their school, exciting them about opportunities, taking them out to farms or to agribusinesses or fisheries. You have to engage, attend the careers forums, work with the teachers, provide state of the art curriculum materials that are cool, get them excited about careers, give them a personal experience when they are quite young.

14 What needs to happen for collaboration between industry and government on trust?

If industry feels these issues are important, next year beyond this project I think we the industry associations could work with the WA commercial agribusinesses and fishing businesses to put a compelling proposition for a shared trust in primary production and fishing initiative to government for co-funding. The days of government solely funding these things are over. Some of us have some meagre educational or capacity building resources; we could contribute, combine or leverage what resources we have.

WA industry agri associations are fragmented and small, we suffer from not having a Chamber of Primary Industries (I'd estimate there is only \$10-\$12 million amongst all of us the industry associations, not counting the two farmer advocacy groups). And nationally there's also fragmentation within the representative grain organisations; our own small pre-competitive industry association the Grain Industry Association of WA has been proactively advocating for four years to be absorbed into/taken over by a new pre-competitive national 'Grain Australia'. It hasn't eventuated yet, we will keep trying. In the meantime we have to reach out, collaborate towards the most pressing issues and not let out-of-date governance and industry association structures prevent us from future-proofing our industries.

Note: Some of the standards which the WA grain industry uses to produce trusted food: CBH Receival Standards; Grain Trade Australia trade standards; commercial sales contracts; Department of Agriculture phytosanitary export requirements ref MICOR; Main Roads WA Grain Road Management Joint Management and Operations Framework; APVMA MRL Standards Instrument 2019; Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

"If I could mandate a school kitchen garden program from early primary years right through so by the time they get to high school they are learning about the agricultural economy of WA, I think that is the connection that needs to be made."

19 Ralph Addis - Director General, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

20 Heather Brayford - Deputy Director General Sustainability and Biosecurity, DPIRD

1 What role does DPIRD see it can take in assisting primary industries in WA to manage their social licence or trust?

- We would want to remain committed and see the effort continue in WA.
- It is an industry initiative and is industry-lead: government is there to support, guide, provide resources.
- The project has to have sustainable legs. What sort of venture could government and industry invest in? Or would it be an informal entity where we employ someone to build it.
- Data could be housed within DPIRD, but there could be a risk for industry that government could take control and not share so this is not a preferred outcome. Industry should own it. Would be interesting to understand how to get consistency in the data collection.
- With the climate change initiatives DPIRD is progressing, how do we bring all these together with the social licence initiatives? What are the linkages, how can they be aligned?

2 How should the Trust project engage with the two Ministers with responsibility for primary industries?

- Need to have discussions to build some alignment of language and opportunities.
- DPIRD's primary industries plan will be providing a briefing for the Ministers within the next five weeks, involve the project leaders to be part of that briefing.
- Broader community trust is important to understand, so the project needs to ensure it is building an understanding that is broader than consumers.

3 What will maintain the momentum around the trust initiative in WA?

- Maintaining momentum for the project into the new year will require some determination of the project's structure and how to extend the effort beyond the pilot phase.
- Industry will need to work with government to put some work into the structure that supports the project over time.
- The key will be to identify how industry makes sure government has an ongoing commitment.
- Bring the health sector and other government stakeholders into the government's engagement.
- It may evolve to a model of a Joint Venture.
- **Proposition:** create a 'Trust Group' that has seed capital, has clear direction for its role and seeks input and investment from primary industries across the whole supply chain, it holds the data and information, shares knowledge, provides resources and capacity, then supports whoever wants to use the information or engage in trust building initiatives. A key role could be to provide the global watching brief, provide capacity in communication.



