

# WAFARMERS

## ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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# Introduction

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**Welcome to the 2019 Annual Report. This year has been a pivotal year for WAFarmers centred around a vitally important federal election campaign that marked a clear fork in the road for the future of our industry.**

WAFarmers working alongside the National Farmers' Federation, played a key role in setting out the policy agendas that the coalition government took to the election and which today help underwrite your farm business.

Your membership is vitally important in supporting this sort of paddock to politician policy process that can be the difference between seeing a continuance in the live export trade or having the ability to access the new GM crops.

This year saw WAFarmers continue to advocate for its members across a whole range of local, state and national regulatory and funding issues as we have done for the past 107 years.

Membership is essential to WAFarmers, being the largest and most influential advocacy group in WA. With over 1000 farm businesses and 3500 individual memberships, WAFarmers requires your continued support to ensure that we can professionally represent you on issues important to your livelihoods and your business.

This report provides you with an overview of all commodities; grains, livestock, dairy and bees along with our general section. It will give you further insight into WAFarmers role in the media and events during the year. It will allow you to see and read about the outcomes made possible by your valuable membership contribution and highlights the strong position that WAFarmers has in the agricultural industry.

*Thank you for your support.*







## President's Message

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**It is with great pleasure that I present the 2019 Annual Report on behalf of the Western Australian Farmers Federation (WAFarmers). It has been a challenging year not just for many farmers who have experienced below average yields but also on the political front there seems to be no end to the intrusion of government into farm businesses and the demands for ever greater accountability and responsibility with no acknowledgement of the costs this imposes on businesses. Costs that farmers who are experiencing a loss making season can ill afford.**

As President I was elected on a platform of change to take our organisation forward towards 2030 with a structure and a purpose that reflects the rapidly changing nature of both our industry in terms of sheer numbers and the politics of a globalising world reaching past the farm gate.

WAFarmers held eight regional meetings across W.A. between June and September that were open to both members and non-members. As the new president, I was keen to engage with fellow farmers and canvass views and ideas from different regions. The meetings were a great opportunity to listen to growers, business owners, community members and politicians. These meetings have given the organisation some clear guidelines as to where to direct our efforts on behalf of rural WA.

Three key items have been at the forefront of much of WAFarmers political advocacy for the past year. The first item being developing policy and engaging with the various political parties as part of the federal election process. The second item was responding to the emergence of highly organised and well-funded anti farming organisations and the third key item saw WAFarmers engaging with the federal government as it developed a new wave of policies around drought. Other items that the WAFarmers team have been working on your behalf are:

### LIVE EXPORTS

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As part of the lead up to the election live exports continued to be a primary focus with numerous delegations heading to Canberra to walk the halls of parliament house. Fortunately, live export was strongly backed by the Coalition government, while the Australian Labor Party (ALP) made a clear policy position that if they were successfully elected, they would force the closure of this important

industry trade. Live Exports has and will continue to be one of our major issues as we head towards the next state and federal elections in 2021. Critically to date there has been no indication that the federal ALP is prepared to reverse its policy of ending the live sheep trade.

### ONE VOICE

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The One Voice Debate which ran for six months earlier this year before culminating in a poll executed by the Farm Weekly, dominated much of 2019. The debate was about drawing a line in the sand on the long running questions regarding the costs and benefits of having two competing farm bodies being WAFarmers and the Pastoral and Graziers' Association (PGA), representing less than 4000 farmers, pastoralists and graziers.

This issue has been raised and debated endlessly over past decades. On at least four previous occasions attempts have been made by leadership or representatives of the two organisations to succeed in bringing the two organisations together. Politically we have heard from Premiers and Ministers for Agriculture of the importance of coming to government with a single industry view in order to avoid having government make the decisions over us.

During the lead up to the poll I took the opportunity to debate Tony Seabrook of the PGA on the ABC Country Hour program. The debate allowed us both to state our views for and against a new organisation. It was a robust and thorough debate against a seasoned political campaigner. However, in the end, as with all these sorts of issues the matter was resolved with the vote. The vote run by Farm Weekly was open to members of both organisations as well as all non-members within the state.



The results were stark. A clear majority of WAFarmers and non-members of either organisation supported a merge, whereas an overwhelming number of PGA members preferred to remain separate. The matter is now settled, at least until another generation of leaders comes through to reopen the debate. I suspect looking at the results, that it is only a matter of time that will drive an amalgamation outcome. It was clear from the results that those under 40 are overwhelmingly in favour of a single organisation. In the meantime we will work with the PGA on issues where we agree and on those issues where we disagree we will continue to advocate separately.

## SOCIAL LICENCE

In today's highly connected world, our standard business practices are often scrutinised and questioned by stakeholders, so it is vitally important that our agricultural industries are sustainable in economic, environmental and social terms. Our customers and the community need to understand and trust how we operate as producers. In order to allow farmers to be able to demonstrate and enhance their credentials, we have partnered with food, fishing, and fellow farming organisations to deliver the Trust in Primary Production project. The project is partially funded by DPIRD and financially supported by WAFarmers along with seven other primary industry representative bodies. We are optimistic the outcomes will help build community confidence in Western Australian agriculture and further sustain growth and profitability for farmers.

## DPIRD

WAFarmers maintains an active engagement with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. It has taken nearly three years for the government to complete the amalgamation of what were previously three separate departments and in doing so, saw the departure of many key staff. During the process the Minister made it clear that her priority was to grow the full value chain and jobs, which is reflected in her focus on the downstream side of the industry. Even so we are pleased to see that the government has put a floor in the department's budget and hopefully we will see an end to more than three decades of cuts to staff numbers in key

areas such as research and biosecurity. WAFarmers continues to have a constructive working relationship with the Minister and will be spending 2020 developing policies and encouraging all parties to adopt them in the lead up to the April 2021 state election.

## STRUCTURAL REVIEW

I am happy to report that WAFarmers has been able to maintain a balanced financial position during the last 12 months recording a third surplus in as many years. Disappointingly, membership continues to slightly decline each year in direct reflection of the speed of aggregation of family farms. Our challenge is to recognise the fact that the millennial generation is busy farming big complex enterprises and have different family priorities. In order to engage with the millennial generation, the organisation needs to embrace digital technology and establish clearly recognisable links to issues that impact the farm bank account.

This brings me to my final point. I wish to advise members that the organisation has embarked on a structural review, under the guidance of Robert Gordon. Robert has worked with organisations such as CBH and the Geraldton's Fisherman's Cooperative to help them review and evolve as both a board and an organisation. This work will continue into 2020 with the aim of taking a new structure to the members in 2021. A structure which will have the ability to take our organisation through to 2030 and aimed at attracting a new generation of members and leaders.

I would like to thank our staff, commodity council presidents and members, and my fellow board directors for their continued and energetic support to the organisation, particularly our staff Trevor, Melanie, Jessica, Kate and Laura who continue to provide us with their full support.

WAFarmers looks forward to continuing its many roles for you next year and I wish you all well for the coming season.

*Rhys Turton*  
**PRESIDENT**





# Grain Report

Duncan Young and Jessica Wallace

## It has been another busy year for WAFarmers Grains Section, which remains committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for Western Australian grain-growers and the broader community.

Following the second highest harvest on record at 17.9million tonnes in 2018, the 2019 season was a frustrating one for many growers. Another late break to the season, below average rainfall, large frost events and ongoing challenging seasonal conditions kept most growers questioning the year's harvest outcome.

With an earlier than anticipated harvest due to multiple warm weather events in October and November, growers geared up for an average to below-average season. Whilst tonnage was down for many, quality of the grain was positive for many.

### THE YEAR IN REVIEW

WAFarmers Grains Section remains focused on return on investment for growers and the level of influence that Grains Section has at both a national and state level.

### KEY POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

#### CBH Payment Terms

A key policy achievement for 2019 was the long-awaited improvements made to CBH payment terms. A special thank you to Grains Section Executive member Mark Fowler, for championing these changes and working tirelessly to see these implemented for the benefit for all Western Australian growers.

#### DrumMUSTER

WAFarmers has continued to work with AgSafe and Chemclear following the 2018 DrumMUSTER Manufacturer levy review, and remains committed to improving the DrumMUSTER program here in Western

Australia. Following extensive consultation with AgSafe and seeking program gap analysis to be investigated, WAFarmers welcomed significant operational improvements to the program here in WA with 6 new collection sites opening across the state. For more information, please visit [www.drummuster.org.au](http://www.drummuster.org.au)

### CONTINUING GRAINS SECTION PRIORITIES ARE:

- Access to incoming technologies- gene technology & agricultural chemicals
- CBH network strategy improvements
- Biosecurity
- Industry good function consolidation through the Australian Grains Industry Discussion Group (AGIDC)
- Grains Research and Development in Western Australia and Nationally

### AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS

Agricultural chemicals will remain an area of focus for WAFarmers Grain Section as we continue to work closely with Grain Producers Australia, leading chemical experts and chemical manufacturers to ensure that farmers continue to have access to the Ag chemicals they require. While policy advancement is a slow process in this highly regulated space, we remain focused in ensuring our Western Australian growers are heard and WA's case continues to be put forward. Unfortunately, much of the hype surrounding chemical use has been exacerbated by the industry following last year's ABC Four Corners program on

glyphosate and the possible link to non-hodgkins lymphoma.

Growers must be aware that the debate is almost purely political, and many reactions within industry are made due to political scepticism rather than judgements based on sound scientific reason. WAFarmers will continue to work diligently behind the scenes to ensure growers continue to have access to vital agricultural chemicals.

### GRAIN PRODUCERS AUSTRALIA

With the appointment of Maddison McNeil as Executive Officer, along with the work of Tanya Pittard, Rohan Rainbow and Paula Fitzgerald, 2019 was a huge year for GPA.

GPA focused on a number of issues in 2019: progressing the formation of industry good company, biosecurity workshops and responses, changes to gene technology regulations for breeding techniques and changes with international market MRL acceptance. There were also a number of ACCC Wheat Port Code submissions and exemption applications.

GPA continued our work on pesticides, including AgVet chemical reforms, regulations, APVMA chemical use pattern reviews and the late-season glyphosate on barley permit.

Ongoing work for GPA included our role as Representative Organisation (RO) to GRDC, the grains industry signatory to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) and working with National Residue Survey and Plant Health Australia.

GPA remains committed to the need for an ACCC grains industry market study. The intention is to conduct a supply chain review to look at opportunities for efficiencies and consider the role of existing and future regulations for the grains industry.





# Livestock Report

David Slade and Jessica Wallace

**The Livestock Council has had another busy year with several ongoing key policy areas continuing to be the primary focus.**

## LIVE SHEEP EXPORTS

Sheep Live Exports experienced another year of regulatory uncertainty with the Department of Agriculture proposing options for September and October shipping months, giving industry only 7 working days to make a formal response. In our submission WAFarmers stressed in the strongest possible terms that we would not support any regulatory decisions that compromised Western Australian primary producers, and their livestock at such short notice.

Unfortunately, after all attempts by industry the moratorium dates were extended to the 22nd of September, and now industry remains focused on adjusting potential shipping shoulders given positive on-board shipping data collected by exporters. This will remain a key focus of WAFarmers in 2020.

## RED MEAT ADVISORY COUNCIL REVIEW

The MoU must support and incorporate current PICs to provide maximised industry engagement across all levels of the red meat value chain. Governance structures that compromise the independence of individual member organisations diminishes representation and impacts industry advocacy capabilities and resources.

WAFarmers is supportive of RMAC as the single voice for industry on national issues but does not support one umbrella organisation to support the individual needs of differing sectors.

## ANIMAL WELFARE BILL

WAFarmers submitted to the 2019 WA Animal Welfare Review. In its submission, WAFarmers emphasised disappointment in the consultation period, lack of industry discussion paper, and questioned the intent of the Welfare Review given the vagueness of the Terms of Reference.

## POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

### Esperance Wild Dog Fence Extension

After 20 years of industry campaigning, the A\$11m fence was approved. Funded by the Esperance Shire, Ravensthorpe Shire, WA Government, the Federal Government and Australian Wool Innovation, WAFarmers was active in lobbying both state and federal governments.

Changes to Australia's definition of lamb dentition became effective on 1 July 2019. WAFarmers championed for change through peak body Sheep Producers Australia (SPA).

These changes have increased ROI to producers bottom-line.

### Live Sheep Exports

Live sheep exports have continued following the 2019 Federal Election. This was a win for WA sheep producers, and bought much needed time for industry to implement, meet and exceed new regulatory requirements. WAFarmers continues to work with industry and government departments to ensure the live sheep trade continues.

## LIVESTOCK COUNCIL

This year Livestock Council welcomed Jessica Wallace taking over from Kim Haywood as Executive Manager in April 2019. With Jessica taking over the reins, a new Livestock Executive was established, comprising the Livestock President and Vice President, cattle, wool, and red-meat/live export representatives- these valued members provide ongoing support to the President and Executive Manager. With a high level of input and responsibility, the established Livestock Executive creates improved operational efficiencies for the office, and much needed support for the Livestock President. Industry updates and recommendations are then put forward to the wider Livestock Council for ratification and policy formulation.

### The 2019 Livestock Executive members are:

- President – David Slade
- Vice President – John Wallace
- Cattle representative – Geoff Pearson
- Wool representative – Steve McGuire
- Red-Meat/Live Export representative – Jeff Murray





The structure of Livestock Council has also changed from previous eras, with the removal of individual commodity committees, and now formally operating as one formal council with delegates covering all livestock issues. This was an important change for the Livestock Section; as national issues across livestock production become more integrated, delegates must be aware of cross supply issues.

## OUTGOING COUNCILLORS

David Slade would like to acknowledge the following valued members, whose contribution to the Livestock Council and various committees over years has seen WAFarmers Livestock Council able to achieve a massive amount of work, achieve numerous policy goals, and continuously deliver better agricultural outcomes for our wider WAFarmers membership base. Their ongoing commitment, unwavering support of the Federation and loyal membership will always be remembered. WAFarmers thanks the following valued members, Meighan Stewart, Dane Sieber, Ed Rogister, David Lindsay and Guy Bowen for their invaluable contribution during their time on Livestock Council.

## SHEEP PRODUCERS AUSTRALIA

SPA has gone through a busy year, with both industry issues and structures both requiring resources. The sheep industry has embraced the change in lamb dentition, which has been managed by both SPA and AMIC through the regulatory frameworks and distribution of information to producers. This will add value to all producers and processors who have issues with lambs breaking their teeth early under the current feeding conditions.

SPA has been a strong advocate for the continuation of the Live Sheep Trade, playing a major role in coordinating industry response and engaging regularly with the regulator on the many submissions over the past 12 months. The results have been positive, however on-going vigilance at all sections of the supply chain will be essential. The efforts in Market Access are also continuing in the carcass and boxed meat trade as we continue to engage trade negotiators to ensure sheepmeat is at the forefront of considerations in the upcoming FTA negotiations.

The National Sheep Industry Biosecurity Strategy (NSIBS) has commenced with a pilot program in place to improve on the

ground biosecurity plans and preparations for our industry. This program will look to close the loop from the Farm Biosecurity Plans, to what is in place at both a State and Federal level. As always, the objective is to reduce both endemic disease spread and prevent Emergency disease from entering our production systems.

Looking forward, the continuing drought has raised on-going supply concerns, and SPA will be looking into how the increase in grain feeding (and containment feeding) can assist in maintaining supplies of high-quality sheep meat. With the Sheep Sustainability Framework also in development, all aspects of sustainability from reducing our industry's carbon footprint, to the most efficient pastures and use of water will be part of efforts to future proof the sheep industry, ensure best practices in animal welfare, and give producers the best chance of a profitable future.

## WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA

WoolProducers Australia continued to represent and advocate on behalf of all Australian woolgrowers and our State Farming Organisation members in 2019. Our policy portfolio ranged from







wool industry specific issues to broader, agricultural industry issues. Our key achievements for 2019 are outlined below:

#### In 2019, WPA has:

- Continued to advocate for the implementation of all 82 recommendations arising from the EY Review of AWI Governance and Performance
- Maintained involvement in the AWI WICC and WCP
- Advocated for the mandatory application of pain relief for mulesing to provide a firmer legal and social foundation for the practice
- Participated in the IWTO Biosecurity Trade Working Group, Sustainable Practices Working Group, Growers Forum and Joint Australia-China Working Group
- Provided Australia country updates at the IWTO Congress
- Presented on Australia's wool industry Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness at the Nanjing Wool Market Conference
- Continued involvement in the Sheep Traceability Working Group, SAFEMEAT Advisory Group and Integrity Systems Taskforce
- Facilitated the second year of the WoolProducers Youth Ambassador programme, funded by the Commonwealth Government Leadership in Ag funds
- Performed ongoing responsibilities as the

wool industry signatory to the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement

- Maintained CCEAD, NMG and Liaison-Livestock Industry personnel for wool industry EADRA
- Conducted the first, whole of supply chain EAD training for the wool industry
- Continued involvement in steering committees, project groups and management groups for core and industry specific AHA projects and programmes, such as SheepMAP, the National Sheep Health Monitoring Project, The National Sheep Industry Biosecurity Strategy
- Continued involvement in health, welfare and biosecurity projects and programmes, including the review of the Sheep Health Declaration, the Sheep Reproduction RDE Review, the National Wild Dog Action Plan, and developing the National Feral Pig Management Strategy

#### CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

The Cattle Council of Australia marked its 40th anniversary in 2019, a significant milestone for unified, national cattle industry advocacy. Cattle Council has continued to work to deliver outcomes aligned with the Meat Industry Strategic Plan (MISP) 2020, while having a significant input into the new strategic plan, Red Meat 2030. Animal welfare, systems integrity, environmental sustainability and market access have been prominent in these deliberations.

The Red Meat Memorandum of Understanding review has also required significant Cattle Council input. Beef cattle producers are the biggest red meat industry stakeholder and, as such, it is vital that we take significant ownership of the reform process. Cattle Council's own restructure has been put on hold until we have a clear view of the role that a peak producer body will have under the revised MOU.

A real highlight of the past 12 months was Cattle Council's annual Rural Awareness Tour which spent a week visiting cattle industry sites in the Kimberley and around Perth. A highlight of the tour, which takes Department of Agriculture staff to see the beef industry supply chain first-hand, was being hosted by WA Farmers' Cattle Council director Geoff Pearson at TW Pearson's Lake Preston feedlot.

Finally, I acknowledge the significant contribution of our former CEO, Margo Andrae, who became the CEO of Australian Pork Ltd in August. In November, we welcomed experienced agricultural advocate Travis Tobin to the CEO position and look forward to his leadership and experience being put to good use on behalf of producers.

*Tony Hegarty*  
**PRESIDENT**  
 CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA



# Dairy Report

Michael Partridge and Laura Stocker

**The WAFarmers Dairy Council continues to work hard on dairy industry issues and be proactive in the advocacy space to bring benefits to all WA dairy farmers. There have been many recent achievements as a direct result of our advocacy work including campaigns and resources to protect dairy farmers from unfair animal activist claims; end of \$1/L milk; and the Mandatory Code of Conduct for milk supply.**

## THE 2019 SEASON

We have had a challenging year with late rain and high feed costs. However, in 2018/19 the dairy industry supplied 374m L fresh white milk to the WA domestic market, worth \$187.8 m. We farmed 66000 cows (milk and dry) over 150 dairy farms and we employed 2600 people overall.

## THE POWER OF ADVOCACY

Our policy wins again remind us of the importance of WAFarmers' advocacy in bringing value back to the whole dairy industry. The diagram shows how the benefits of WAFarmers membership multiply as they flow up the chain through both National Farmers Federation and Australian Dairy Farmers to influence government policy.

## CALM THE FARM AND COMMONWEALTH TRESPASS LAW

Our joint advocacy has played a major role in the success of Calm the Farm and the introduction of the new Commonwealth Bill. We had a very constructive Calm the Farm meeting with farmers and key stakeholders. Since then WA farmers have had a significant relationship with police over this issue and I would like to congratulate WA police on their professionalism and how seriously they have taken the issue. I

recognise the NFF and Federal Parliament in their attitude to improving trespass and privacy for farmers in relation to Aussie Farm Maps. Advocacy has played a major role in this constructive dialogue.

The new Trespass Law criminalises the use of a carriage service to incite trespass or other property offences on agricultural land with penalties of up to five years' imprisonment. The law reflects the Australian community's expectations that farmers and their families should be safe from harassment in their businesses and their homes.

## \$1/L MILK

We have had a major win by ending the \$1/litre milk price. Woolworths announced an additional 10c/L and Coles and Aldi followed suit shortly after. A further 10c per litre was added in another round. Our advocacy has returned well over \$7m to WA dairy farmers.

WAFarmers Dairy Council, together with our peak dairy advocacy body Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) and other state advocacy organisations especially Queensland Dairy Organisation, have put in a huge amount of advocacy work over several years to keep this issue up front on the national agenda.

## MANDATORY CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code is designed to equalise power between farmers and processors with fairer and transparent contracts going forward. This has been a challenging process due to the diverse nature of the dairy industry and the intricacies of each dairy region's particular problems. The drafting process is ongoing, and we are hopeful that a clause will be included that better supports farmers whose contracts have finished and who cannot find a new home for their milk.

## WAFARMERS DAIRY CONFERENCE 2019

I would like to thank the WAFarmers Dairy Council and dairy farmers for attending and supporting the Dairy Conference on 4th July 2019 at Abbey Beach Resort, Busselton. It was another successful event providing a forum for delegates to hear from speakers at the top of the dairy industry and network with each other. The conference theme of Bringing Value Back for our industry's wonderful product of milk was a constant message from myself and other speakers throughout the day.

ADF CEO David Inall and Craig Hough gave us an update on recent achievements such as the end of \$1/Litre milk prices with support from WAFarmers Dairy Council. Dairy Australia's trade analyst Sofia Omstedt gave a popular and informative update on domestic milk trends. Her key takeaway messages were that while \$1/litre milk price has clearly impacted returns, other products in the dairy cabinet such as flavoured milks, yoghurt and snacks, spreads and cheese may provide opportunities for bringing value back to the WA dairy industry.



Adam Jenkins, Victorian dairy farmer, told us the inspiring, informative and at times hilarious story of his journey through banking, agricultural extension and secondary education to the dairy industry where he now milks 240 cows on 400 acres. He was a Nuffield Scholar in 2011 and travelled the world learning about what makes an effective dairy cooperative. I thank the WAFarmers Board for attending the Dairy Conference and Rhys Turton for opening it.

## WA DAIRY PAVILION

The Dairy Pavilion was a big success again at the 2019 Royal Agricultural Show in Perth. The stalls selling fresh WA produce including dairy were very well attended. The calf feeding and milking barn attracted lots of interested families keen to learn about our dairying lifestyle. Harvey Fresh raised over \$12000 for four charities, commenting: 'We are very proud to support such worthwhile charities and to be involved in the WA Dairy Pavilion.' It is our aim to have all the major processors represented at the Dairy Pavilion in 2020. We have developed a relationship with Iona College who are keen on continuing to work in the dairy space. Ian Noakes, Mike Norton, Michael Partridge, Paul Ieraci, Peter Evans and Oscar Negus all talked at the Milking Shed and promoted the dairy industry. Thanks

to Luke Micallef, Louise Freytag and Sasha McWilliams for running the Milking Shed. I am also very grateful to Louise Cashmore for coordinating the Dairy Pavilion.

## AUSTRALIAN DAIRY FARMERS AND POLICY ADVISORY GROUPS (PAGS)

ADF have again been very busy this year with involvement from our Dairy Council representatives who travelled to Melbourne at the end of January to attend the ADF Policy Advisory Group (PAG) workshops.

### Our key policy areas are:

#### Animal health and welfare – Phil Depiazzi

- Policy on eliminating calving induction
- Improving biosecurity
- Implementing Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines
- Improving dairy industry's social license to operate

#### Markets, trade and value chain – Michael Partridge

- Bringing value back to the entire domestic dairy-basket supply chain
- Strengthening free trade agreements in the export space
- Considering implications of Europe's tightening geographical indications

#### Farming systems – Ian Noakes

- Declined the use of BSA
- Building greater industry innovation
- Breeding cows based on research proven for Australian conditions
- Improving fertility and capacity for genetic improvements

#### People and human capacity – Tammy Negus

- Federal government has created an opportunity for skilled migrants working on dairy farms to obtain permanent residency in Australia to help solve industry's labour shortage crisis.

## CHANGE OF STAFF

I would like to thank our outgoing Executive Officer Kim Hayward for her three years of service, contribution and support while I have been President. I wish her all the best going forward. We are excited to have a new regionally based dairy Executive Officer dedicated to the Dairy Section and we have welcomed Dr Laura Stocker to this role. She has been doing an amazing job.

## WESTERN DAIRY AND DAIRY AUSTRALIA

Thanks to Western Dairy and Dairy Australia for continuing to supply us with state-of-the-art research, development and extension.



# Beekeepers Report

Stephen Fewster and Kate Nicol

**2019 has been another busy year for WAFarmers Beekeepers Section. With beekeepers producing a small amount of honey during the 2018-19 summer months, honey production was below average. Fortunately, this season has seen increased flowering and improved honey yields, with the spring season proving to be one of the most productive in a long time. Jarrah and White Gum produced a good amount of honey throughout November and December.**

Despite a successful season in WA, there is a predicted domestic honey shortage, and this is largely due to the natural disasters that have occurred, predominantly in the eastern states. This includes drought, cyclones and bushfires all impacting upon pollen and nectar availability, which are required to keep healthy bees. Some beekeepers have resorted to feeding their bees due to drought conditions in Queensland and NSW.

## PRESCRIBED BURNING

Prescribed burning continues to be one of the biggest issues for beekeepers in WA, and the WAFarmers Beekeepers Section has continued to advocate on this issue. Throughout the year we have had various meetings with government and industry stakeholders, including meeting with Hon. Colin de Grussa from The Nationals, as well as Policy Advisors for the Minister for Emergency Services, the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Agriculture. During these meetings, beekeepers have voiced their concerns around the impact that the current prescribed burning program is having on not only their bees and honey production, but also the environment and biodiversity.

In a submission to the Draft Fire Management Strategy in March, we requested more consultation with beekeepers at the planning stages, and a beekeeper representative in each of the regional areas. We highlighted the need for consideration of flowering patterns and timing of burns, as well as considering cooler burns, and maintenance of firebreaks to reduce burning large blocks of land. With an increased push from WAFarmers and BICWA, this resulted in

engagement commitments from DBCA, including quarterly meetings with DBCA Fire Management and DBCA attendance at BICWA meetings bi-monthly, as well as a beekeeper representative in each district.

After continued work on trying to secure funding for alternative mitigation methods we also achieved a commitment from DBCA to undertake a trial in conjunction with the next burning season, where fire breaks/maintenance will be implemented to reduce the amount of the Northern Sandplain being burnt, while still ensuring it is protected.

WAFarmers Beekeepers Section has explored alternative methods of managing forest fuels, with a specific focus on Mechanical Fuel Load Reduction. WAFarmers have been working closely with the Rural Fire Division of DFES, who are leading the development of an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project with the University of Adelaide and University of Technology Sydney focusing on Mechanical Fuel Load Reduction (MFLR). WAFarmers Beekeepers Section has put in a letter of support for this project, and we await the outcome.

## SITE ACCESS & MEMBERSHIP

WAFarmers continues to offer its members the opportunity to share sites. This year we have had an increase in site sharing, and it is great to see beekeepers offering their sites if they aren't being used. We have also seen an increase in membership, and we look forward to welcoming new beekeepers in 2020.

## INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

WAFarmers Beekeepers Section attended the BICWA Conference that was held in May over 2 days, and it was great to see industry come together to hear about pollination

services, prescribed burning, biosecurity, research updates and much more.

WAFarmers Beekeepers Section continues to work closely with BICWA, and has representatives on BICWA, APC and AHBIC.

## AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2020

Prescribed burning will continue to be a key focus area for next year, as despite the successes we have had this year, there is still much more that needs to be achieved in this space to ensure that the beekeeping industry remains strong and profitable. We will continue to advocate for the protection of the Northern Sandplain, and we look forward to the outcome from the trial fire mitigation (breaks and maintenance) in this area.

WAFarmers Beekeepers Section will continue to advocate for maintaining access to all existing apiary sites, and will work with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions on this.

Biosecurity is always on the forefront, as Australia is the only significant honey producing country that does not have varroa mite. In May this year varroa jacobsoni was detected at the Port of Townsville, and luckily no further varroa has been detected since this. It is essential that all beekeepers remain vigilant of pest/disease and use best practice in beekeeping.







**Prescribed burning continues  
to be one of the biggest issues  
for beekeepers in WA**





# Transport Report

Tony York and Kate Nicol

## It has been a busy year in transport, with many topical issues and the formation of a new Transport Committee in May.

Transport Committee members include Tony York, Mark Adams, Colin Nicholl, Mark Fowler, Matt Mauger and Mark Sullivan. The main issues which were advocated through the year include agricultural pilot requirements, licensed pilots, agricultural machinery curfews and permit requirements.

### TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT 2019

1. Changes to the Agricultural Pilot Requirements
2. Changes to curfew periods for the movement of agricultural machinery
3. Development of the Agricultural Combinations Order

WAFarmers Transport Committee believes all changes listed above are an improvement to the agricultural industry and reduce the amount of red tape farmers have to deal with.

### TOWED AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS & PILOT REQUIREMENTS

WAFarmers Transport Committee had considerable input into the changes made by Main Roads to the Agricultural Pilot Requirements released in August. The main changes include the identification of the green, orange and red zones for pilot requirements; not requiring a pilot vehicle (when outside of metropolitan area) until exceeding 3.8 m, increased from 3.5 m; an oversize agricultural vehicle can now have a width of up to 8.5 metres while being accompanied by an Agricultural Pilot, previously restricted to 7.5 metres; increase

in the number of agricultural vehicles allowed in a convoy from 2 to 3; and the removal of the 100 km limit when using agricultural pilots.

WAFarmers Transport Committee understands there is still frustration with the Licensed Pilot Course, and we are continuing to work with Main Roads and the Department of Transport on this. We will continue to advocate for a Licensed Agricultural Pilot course specific to farmers.

### AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY CURFEWS

WAFarmers Transport Committee consulted with Main Roads and State Government on the curfews on agricultural vehicles, requesting they be removed in the green zone. We are happy with the recent changes made in November, which lifted the curfew on all roads except within the Perth Metropolitan and 11 major regional roads, as well as increasing the size (width) from 4.5 m to 5.5 m.

### AGRICULTURAL COMBINATIONS ORDER

After industry consultation, Main Roads released an Agricultural Combinations Order in November. The development of this Order was encouraged and pushed by the Transport Committee as many farmers were unaware of the permit process, while others found the process unworkable. This Order reduces red tape as farmers are only required to obtain a permit if their over-mass agricultural combination is required to cross a bridge.

### RAIL AND ROAD

Rail access reached a turning point with CBH and Arc Infrastructure finalising an agreement in November 2019 on tier 1 and 2 which gives the industry certainty for at least the next six years and by all accounts should be relatively simple to roll over. Not surprisingly tier 3 yet again was left in limbo- a declining asset from which all sides of politics have walked away. There is however hope that a deal can be reached for CBH to have access to the lines it deems viable but it will take support from the government to close any agreement.

WAFarmers will be taking a policy position to our state conference that the state government should allocate 10% of what it spends on Metronet to go towards regional grain freight projects. If the government is prepared to fund city rail at \$1 billion a year to get cars off the road then the same logic should apply to the regions, \$100m a year would be a game changer for regional grain freight.

### SUBMISSIONS

The WAFarmers Transport Committee has made submissions to the following in 2019:

- Revitalising Agricultural Region Freight Strategy
- Removal of CA07 Condition

We are still awaiting the outcomes from these submissions.





# General Report

Rhys Turton and Trevor Whittington

**Throughout 2019 WAFarmers has worked on many issues that are incorporated under our General Council. These include dealing with activists, ensuring our WA farmers in drought are not forgotten, ensuring workable regulations and much more.**

The following gives a brief overview of our work on general topics throughout the year.

## ACTIVISTS

WAFarmers has taken on board the lessons learnt from the push by anti-farming activists to impose bans on everything from the live export trade and glyphosate to intensive agriculture. It is apparent the global activist movement is targeting modern agricultural practices.

Their access to social media makes it easy for them to build large audiences through the simple and cheap means of posting images and unsubstantiated claims on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

The political battles waged by activists now extend to capturing the hearts and minds of consumers and voters and it is our responsibility to respond to the misinformation that is being propagated across the community to ensure the voice of common sense and reason is heard.

WAFarmers is working at both a national and state level on social licence issues. At a state level we sit on the newly established Food Alliance WA, charged to undertake consumer attitude surveys in order to gauge the views of Western Australians consumers towards farmers and modern agricultural practices.

This will directly feed in at a national level with the National Farmers Federation project titled We Are Australian Farmers. This project is a multiyear, multimillion

dollar hearts and minds campaign. Their first video is available to view with a link via YouTube We Are Australian Farmers NFF.

Activist activity during 2019 involved venturing onto farms and removing livestock. WAFarmers have advocated strongly at both a national and a state level to have new laws and fines implemented to deter trespass. The pressure from the west on the trespass issues was paramount in gaining the changes to new laws targeting use of telecommunications to encourage illegal activity.

## WATER AND DROUGHT

Of all the issues that are currently dominating national agri politics during 2019 the Eastern States drought has taken centre stage. As it currently stands this drought is the driest on record, bigger than the centenary, second world war and millennial droughts. The government is actively engaged and there has been no limit to the number of meetings, industry forums, departmental discussion papers and regional tours that were undertaken to address the social, economic and environmental implications.

What was surprising from WAFarmers perspective was how little Canberra knows or seems to care that Western Australia is in the mix of its own large scale drought with large parts of the state's pastoral region suffering from decile one rainfall and parts of the Great Southern heading into their second year of well below average rainfall.

WAFarmers has supported changes to the new RIC farm loan scheme to underwrite farm income insurance to give farmers access to more and cheaper credit.

## AT A STATE LEVEL

The state government ended the Farm Water Rebate Scheme in June 2018, a scheme that offered up to \$15,000 every ten years to help cover the costs of dams, road catchments and tanks for farmers in districts receiving less than 600mm average annual rainfall. While the State Government ended this scheme, the National Government however introduced their new On-Farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme (EWIRS).

The EWIRS offers a 25% rebate up to a maximum of \$25,000 for undertaking similar sorts of farm water investment but to gain access to the subsidy farmers are required to outlay an additional \$75,000 of their own funds.

Water is part of state government's core responsibilities making up one of the four essential infrastructure services: water, power, roads and telecommunications.

During droughts, immense pressure is placed onto the community water supply, the town dam or standpipe that provides back up water to the farms and local towns.

WAFarmers has called on the state government to undertake a Strategic Rural Water Supply Review to demonstrate that they have worked through the economic, social, environmental and animal welfare impacts of a drying climate, ageing rural water supply system and changing farm water needs.

As part of this review we have outlined four things we believe they should consider:

Tripling the size of town tanks, stand pipe pressure, town dams and road catchments to ensure ample long term reserves of emergency water at strategic locations for human, stock, community infrastructure and firefighting.

Change the federal government farm tax incentive for capital investments to 150%. Under the current tax rules, there is a 100% deduction on water related infrastructure on-farm, prior to 2015, improvements could only be deducted over three years.

## RURAL FIRE SERVICE

WAFarmers have supported the call for a Rural Fire Service and despite clear evidence that a separate agency would benefit Western Australia's rural community the government has refused to move down this path. As part of our campaign to support the push for a dedicated rural service we have had WA Bushfire Volunteers base themselves in our Belmont office to enhance collaboration as we both share a similar membership base.

WAFarmers believe that it is vital that management of a bushfire situation is locally based, where those involved have good knowledge of local conditions and weather patterns.

WAFarmers continues to support a dedicated rural bushfires service focused on :

- Working with Local Government to develop Bushfire Risk Management Plans and supporting their implementation.
- Coordinating fire management agencies in rural areas.
- Promoting bushfire prevention, preparedness and damage mitigation
- Providing, or facilitating training in fuel reduction burning and fire Suppression by volllies.
- Advising local government with respect of implementation of the Bush Fires Act.
- Funded by the allocation of 20% of the funds from the ESL.
- Giving the RBS flexibility to allow local services to purchase graders, loaders, tankers as they deem fit for their region.
- Supporting and encouraging more volunteers.
- Funding the Bushfire Volunteers Association.

## REGENERATIVE FARMING

WAFarmers attended RegenWA's Regenerative Agriculture Conference in September 2019. We acknowledge Minister MacTiernan's interest in regen ag and provided suggestions on future funding in this space. Our view is that all of our members practise sustainable farming methods and are focused on building good soil health, and we do not tell our members how to farm.

WAFarmers supports regenerative practices that are supported by scientific evidence and encourages trials on a large farm scale.

WAFarmers supported funding two of the state's research stations to trial on a commercial basis the concepts promoted by the various regenerative theories to ensure the science and the returns are real.

Any trial or research station work will need to come from a new allocation of government funding, rather than tapping GRDC funds or reallocate existing resources which are working with current proven farming systems.



## STATE BUDGET

This year's 2019-20 state budget offered up \$131.5m in additional funding which was at first glance seen as a welcome injection of funds after years of cuts. However, closer inspection shows that the funding only constitutes around \$90m of new money over 4 years, as the remaining \$40m simply stems the cuts that this government had built into their own budgets through to 2021 as part of the efficiency drive of bringing three departments together.

Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to directly compare the previous Department of Food and Agriculture

WA (DAFWA) and the new Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) budgets, given the amalgamation of three completely different departments, Agriculture, Fisheries and Regional Development.

The previous government downsized the department of agriculture by one third losing approximately 650 staff. The McGowan government has spent its first three years re-arranging and re-aligning its new department, and now appears to have stabilised DPIRD at 1590 staff, which includes Agriculture, Fisheries and Regional Development staff. How many are directly related to Agriculture is impossible to tell, but it is assumed that only half are working on agricultural related issues.

New funding projects that WAFarmers supported include:

- \$20m grains research funding – albeit in the outlying years in forward estimates.
- \$40m for a water project (continuation of what was planned by the previous govt)
- \$10m for additional biosecurity.

These new projects totaled \$70m over forward estimates of four years which equates to \$18m a year, a far cry from the \$100m the Barnett government was allocating through Royalties for Regions funding.

WAFarmers has lobbied for an additional \$80m to match the Barnett government's funding.

The four key projects are:

- \$20m in a joint GRDC grains project but this time in partnership with the universities.
- \$20m into a sheep and pastures regeneration and supply chain project.
- \$20m to building our production of super-premium products like wagyu, honey, truffles, speciality grains, dairy and wine.
- \$20m for a Fitzroy River Ord II style scheme, facilitating pastoral stations along the Valley to move into Irrigated Agriculture.

WAFarmers will be watching the 2020-21 budget carefully to see if the staffing numbers or budget are negatively impacted and just as importantly if any new funding is allocated to projects that will help the industry grow productivity and profits.



## FEDERAL ELECTION

In April, WAFarmers General Section held an event in the RSM Boardroom and invited speakers from the political parties to present and make their party's case on agricultural policy. During the event, members workshoped a package of agricultural policy measures to be presented during the federal election campaign. The package consisted of the following ten measures:

1. \$1 Billion additional funding over 4 years to go into the regional mobile black spots program across Australia's grain growing belt (\$150m into the WA wheatbelt).
2. \$100m over 4 years additional funding to fast track Trade Agreements.
3. \$100m over 4 years additional funding for Rural Research for Profit (over and above the \$180.5 million currently committed).
4. \$100m over 4 years to enhancing Australia's Biosecurity System to underpin our clean green status.
5. Double Farm Management Deposits to \$1.6m and continue the current taxation arrangements for family farms under trust to help build profitability and off farm assets to help farmers self-manage drought.
6. Maintain the existing diesel fuel rebate unchanged to help keep our farms internationally competitive.
7. No carbon tax impost on agri sector.
8. No restrictions on agricultural chemicals that are outside APVMA guidelines.
9. Support the continuation of the Live Export Trade under effective and viable regulations.
10. Establish a dedicated farm workers visa allowing semi-skilled workers to work across all agriculture and agribusiness sectors.

WAFarmers were pleased with the election result with the mix of policies that the coalition supported clearly aligning with the views of most of our members. While we remain apolitical, we will always publicly back or criticise policies that impact our members.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Over the last decade the state and federal governments have committed \$380 million

to the Mobile Black Spot Program to invest in telecommunications infrastructure to improve mobile coverage and competition across Australia as part of Rounds 1 – 4 delivering 1047 base stations.

On 20 March 2019 as part of the Government's response to the 2018 Regional Telecommunications Review \$160.0 million in funding was allocated to rounds 5 and 6.

WAFarmers lobbied hard for the last funding round and is now working with Telstra, state and national governments on the roll out of 5g and the impending closure of 5G to ensure that no new black spots are created.

## OH&S

The State Government has completed the harmonising of the state-based Occupational Health and Safety legislation with the rest of the nation. It is now progressing with its plans to introduce Industrial Manslaughter laws with a maximum penalty of 20 years goal.

WAFarmers has joined forces with other industry peak bodies to push back against this unnecessary new law which is contrary to all good legal advice as an effective or valid means of responding to tragic industrial deaths. The bill is expected to come before parliament in 2020.

## LAND & ENVIRONMENT

In 2018 the State Government proposed to introduce cost recovery on all water licences with fee charges on farm dams of up to \$9000, heavily impacting horticulture, viticulture, dairy and some graziers.

Following extensive lobbying the state government pulled the plan to impose the fee on farmers which was a welcome win for irrigated agriculture.

## FOOD ALLIANCE WA

A partnership was formed between DPIRD, GIWA, WOWA, Vegetables WA, WAFIC to engage in social licence issues around trust in agriculture and fishing.

The alliance is a direct response to the challenges posed by the anti-agriculture activists and is working alongside the National Farmers Federation. The first major project was released in October 2019. It was a \$120,000, 1000 person study titled *Trust (Social License) in*

*Primary production – Situation Analysis and Implications for Western Australian Industries.*

The project aims to establish 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 indicatives.

Community perceptions of Western Australian primary industries are largely formed by external messaging and imagery that is often irrelevant to how food is produced in the State. The advent of the internet and social media has exposed consumers and policy makers to a flood of information, influencers and socially driven issues around food, many of which originate from northern hemisphere food systems where intensification of production has created negative perceptions of 'factory farming', industrial farming, 'big agriculture', corporate farming', over-fishing of resource stocks, nitrates in groundwater, CO2 emissions from intensive livestock systems, animal welfare and waste management concerns around indoor beef feedlots and dairy production systems.

WAFarmers recognises that our primary industries will need to rewrite the narrative and manage the messaging to build greater public understanding of how agricultural production is managed in WA using the latest technology, world class sustainability systems to manage resources, modern equipment and practices, with educated and innovative business operators working across complex supply chains which contribute to the states economy. This project builds the foundations for that work.





# Communications and Events

Melanie Tolich

## WAFarmers' communications focus on three main audiences – our members, the agricultural industry as a whole, and the general public.

We have a specific message that we want to communicate to each audience, which is done via a multitude of channels including print media, social media, events and publications.

Our primary focus is always our members, ensuring that we communicate effectively to them what the organisation is doing and how they can influence our actions and become involved with either policies or events. We communicate directly to our membership through a fortnightly digital newsletter and encourage all members to keep us updated with their contact details to ensure they are getting up to date information.

We also utilise social media, using platforms such as Twitter and Facebook and have a fortnightly segment on Rural Focus Radio West. During this year we have also established our own podcast series "The Political Farmer", please take the time to have a listen: [wafarmers.podbean.com](http://wafarmers.podbean.com)

Furthermore, WAFarmers in 2019 has a monthly page in the Farm Weekly, this will be increased to a weekly page in 2020 to allow for further engagement with our members and with wider agricultural stakeholders.

### PHOTO COMP

Earlier this year WAFarmers ran an inaugural photo competition "Positive Ag" asking participants to capture Western Australia's unique and beautiful farming country in a way that demonstrated a

positive outlook. A photo competition is a great way to build a database of photographs that can be utilised in WAFarmers marketing campaigns and publications, but it also encourages engagement with agriculture from the wider community.

WAFarmers received an overwhelming response, with many beautiful agricultural memories captured, making it very difficult for the judging panel to critique and decide the winners.

After judging panel deliberations WAFarmers announced the following winners 1st: Yvette Borthwick (Finishing Up in the Sheep Yards) and 2nd : Annika Happel (My First Year). Photos reproduced below.



## PERTH ROYAL SHOW DAIRY PAVILION

The Dairy Pavilion was a big success again at the 2019 Royal Agricultural Show in Perth. The pavilion was well supported by WA Dairy producers including the WAFarmersFirst Milk which supported the Iona College run Coffee Shop.

The pavilion attracted lots of consumers, particularly families who were keen to learn about a dairy farmers' lifestyle. The running of the Dairy Pavilion is made possible by the funding received from the WAFarmers Dairy Milk Fund which was established from a percentage of sales from the WAFarmers owned branded milk, WAFarmersFirst. WAFarmers thanks the following dairy farmers who assisted at the Dairy Pavilion in promoting and educating the public about their industry: Ian Noakes, Mike Norton, Michael Partridge, Paul Ieraci, Peter Evans and Oscar Negus. WAFarmers would also like to thank Louise Cashmore from Reality Consulting for her outstanding work in coordinating the Dairy Pavilion.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE – TRENDING AG 2019

The WAFarmers 2019 Annual Conference "Trending Ag" was held at the Pan Pacific Hotel, Perth on Thursday 14 and Friday 15 March. The conference was aimed at bringing together global, national and state agribusiness specialists to present on the key forces that are driving the regulatory and market frameworks that today's farmers would need to accommodate to remain profitable over the coming decade.



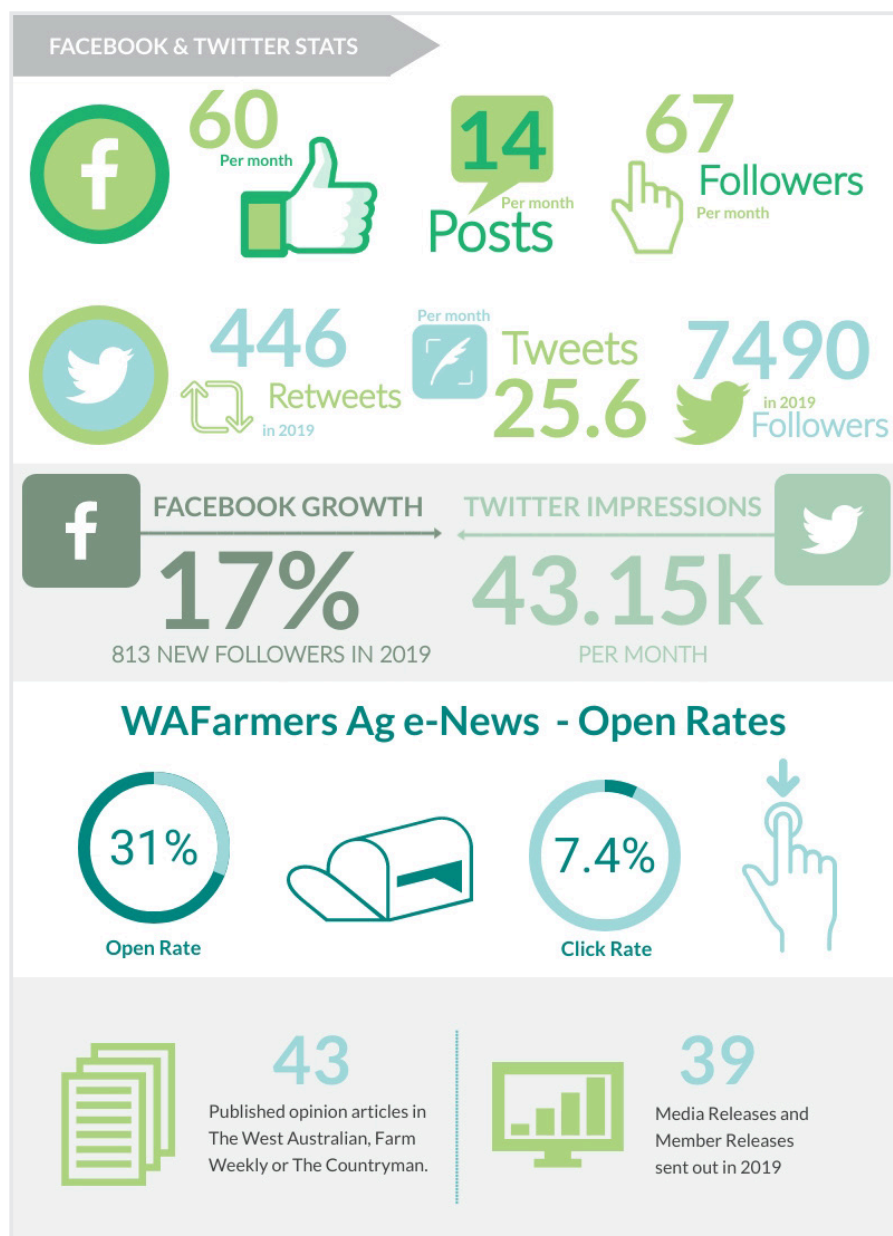
Without a doubt, the feedback provided by the 341 registered attendees advised us that the conference was a great success in delivering an informative program with interesting and diverse speakers. It was wonderful to have so many enthusiastic farming and agricultural industry individuals coming together for mutually beneficial networking opportunities, where discussions regarding the future of the sector both in Western Australia and at a national level could be held in detail and at their leisure. We look forward to seeing you all at our Conference in 2020, "Fuel the Tank" on Friday 13th March.

## EVENTS AND FIELD DAYS

In 2019, apart from the "Trending Ag" Conference, WAFarmers was out and about hosting or running a number of other events including: WA Livestock Field Day and Forum, The WAFarmers Dairy Section Conference, The NFF Dinner at Don Hancey's-The Kitchen as well as being in attendance at the field days of Wagin Woolarama, Mingenew, Dowerin and Newdegate.

WAFarmers attends the field days in a shared tent capacity with our Corporate Partners: 4Farmers, Bresland Insurance Group and Bailiwick Legal. This has proven to be a productive collaboration in driving more pedestrian traffic through our tent. This year as part of the collaboration we ran a competition from primary producers to win a Honda Motorbike. We had an overwhelming response to the competition which has now been narrowed down to 8 finalists. The 8 finalists will attend the WAFarmers Annual Conference "Fuel the Tank" Dinner on Friday 13th March where one of them will take the motorbike home with them.

WAFarmers staff work tirelessly to bring you informative events that are designed to give attendees the most up to date information on research and development and industry trends. WAFarmers is happy to report that all events were very successful and attracted a great number of attendees. We look forward to the continued support and seeing you at our events planned for 2020.





# Membership Report

Melanie Tolich and Kate Nicol

## In 2019 WAFarmers welcomed 32 new farm businesses with 56 new individual members.

Our retention rate has remained high at 92 percent, although steadily declining with the membership retention pattern mirroring the aggregation of farm businesses – as farms get bigger, membership gets smaller as there are less farmers managing larger properties. AgConnectWA is maintaining its membership base, making up 6 percent of the overall WAFarmers membership base. It is great to see young members maintaining an interest which is key to a strong future for WAFarmers.

WAFarmers made some recent changes to the constitution at the AGM in March 2019, which affects the number of votes attached to your membership. The changes see Large

Memberships entitled to up to 6 votes, Medium/Average Membership entitled to up to 4 votes, Small Memberships entitled to up to 2 votes and other membership levels all receiving 1 vote per membership. WAFarmers office sent correspondence to all members earlier in the year advising them to update their listed members and voting preferences. All votes must be attached to a physical member and do not allow for proxy voting. If you have not updated your voting details or if you have any questions about your voting entitlements, please contact the office on 08 9486 2100.

WAFarmers team have been on the road in 2019 attending several zone meetings

and information roadshow sessions. In all the team has travelled in excess of 31,000 km's across the state from Geraldton in the north to Esperance in the south. The information roadshow sessions will continue through 2020, so keep an eye out for where and when details coming through your WAFarmers newsletter and our farm weekly page.

Our new website was launched early in 2019. The website was completed by Optimise Online. Optimise Online is an owner operated business run by Calum Watts, once a local Beverley boy. The website is a great, easy to use interactive tool for both members and non-members that provides up to date, relevant and easily accessible information pertaining to WAFarmers activities. If you have not already done so please take the time to have a look [www.wafarmers.org.au](http://www.wafarmers.org.au).

### MEMBERSHIP GROWTH, TYPES, INTERESTS & ZONES

**32** New Farm Businesses



**56** New Individual Members



The WAFarmers team have attended

#

REGIONAL & ZONE MEETINGS

10

INDUSTRY EVENTS & FIELD DAYS

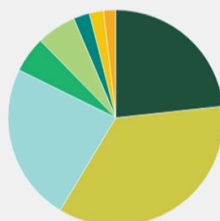
4

NATIONAL FARMERS' FED MEETINGS

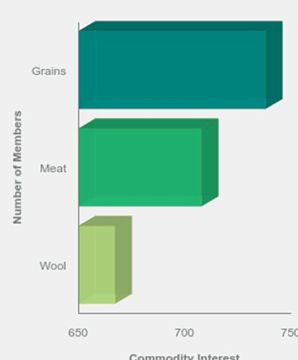


TRAVELLED **31,000 KM** OVER THE PAST YEAR.

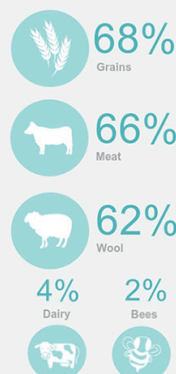
#### Member Types



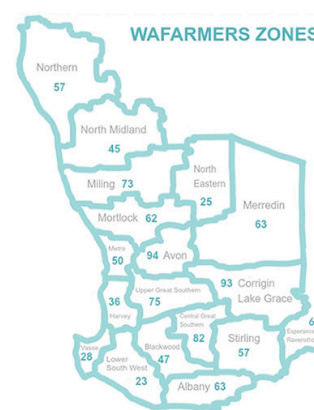
#### Top 3 Commodities



#### MEMBER INTERESTS



#### WAFARMERS ZONES







# National Farmers' Federation Report

Tony York

**2019 marks my first full year on the National Farmers' Federation Board, it is the first time in over 20 years that we have had a representative on our national body; a length of time far too long considering the scale of agricultural production coming out of Western Australia.**

While there may not have been many from our state to sit on the NFF Board, I do follow in the footsteps of some very high-profile former members including NFF's inaugural President Sir Donald Eckersley, former Senator Winston Crane and Peter Lee. While it is disappointing that we have had such a long gap without a WA representative sitting at the table, I intend to ensure we have a long list of future WA leaders ready to step up once my time has ended.

My focus is very much to help steer the organisation towards its goal of \$100 billion by 2030; a daunting challenge considering the shock the industry has had with the eastern states drought rolling into its second year. Part of this challenge is to recognise the responsibility our industry has to engage actively in both the climate change debate and recognise that we have to work hard to maintain our social licence to operate. While we can engage politically at the highest levels, ultimately it is the people who elect governments, and politicians will always be taking their lead from community views. Hence we have to be proactive and engage on a wide range of issues that in the past would not have been on the radar of agri politics; on everything from carbon emissions, agri chemicals to animal welfare.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the NFF where President Fiona Simson

along with representatives of all the founding state farming organisations and commodity peak bodies came together to mark an important milestone in agri politics in Australia. Many of our younger farmers may not be aware that Western Australia was very much part of the original push for the establishment of a national body permanently based in Canberra to represent our interests. An organisation that had the funding and staff to run complex legal and policy issues through the bureaucracy, the parliament and where necessary the courts. Over the past 40 years the NFF has had many wins particularly on industrial relations, tax, the environment and international trade reform, and we continue to work on a whole range of complex issues that impact profitability

and productivity at the farm gate.

At the November NFF Council Meeting I was elected Chair of the NFF Workforce Committee. This will allow me to play a role in the policy area for labour issues. Broadly, this is an increasing area of concern for many of our members who are looking for a supply of a skilled workforce, with changing demands.

Over the past year the number one issue that has absorbed the NFF's time over and above the election has been drought. While large parts of Western Australia are now drought impacted particularly the Southern Rangelands and parts of the Great Southern, our farmers and pastoralists are by all accounts far more drought prepared and hence resilient than what we are seeing in the Eastern States. Our job is to ensure that as the federal government rolls out more drought relief measures, we continue to remind them that the best support is self-support, so changes linked to tax and savings will be far more beneficial in the long run than short-term measures.



## AgConnectWA in Review. Looking forward, looking back.

2019 was a big year for the AgConnectWA committee, our annual conference was a sell out, followed by our AGM where a lot of fresh faces joined the committee. We welcomed four new committee members, a new President, Vice & Secretary. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the committee who stepped down in 2019. Time is money. To commit to a year on a state committee is a huge ask. Thank you for the hours you devoted to AgConnectWA and I hope we can do it justice.

We launched into our 'Telling Our Story' event in collaboration with DOWERIN GWN7 Machinery Field Days & FFN shortly after our AGM and discussed the importance of storytelling and being proud of this industry. We then took a step back to find our feet, rediscovering our values as a committee and what we wanted to achieve as individuals and as a team in the 12 months to come.

I believe AgConnectWA isn't here to be a voice for young people in the agricultural industry. We are here to ensure that young people know they have a voice, because you do. We don't want to be the face of the industry- you need to be the face of your own story. We hope by providing our members, those involved in the industry and young people throughout regional Australia the chance to come together- look around and realise they are not alone and there are in fact so many passionate young people just starting to pave their way within this industry, when you find your tribe you're invincible.

We are getting back to basics- the word networking is thrown around a lot and networking events are something we have proved we are good at. Having that support system and the opportunity to meet people outside your boundary fence and community is so important. To know it's not all gloom and doom (because weirdly enough, people are always going to need food, therefore we will still need the chance to learn, grow and feed people) creating an excuse for young people to leave their properties, communities and meet others also at the early stages of their life in Ag, is something we can't underestimate. At last year's City

sundowner I was speaking to a group of young men who told me they had driven 4 hours to be there, when I asked why- they said at their first AgConnectWA cocktail party 4 years ago they had met each other and the events we hosted were the only time they caught up as they farm on either side of the state. This is why social events are important!

Then to combine social opportunities with the chance to upskill these young people and provide updates on the industry is essential.

This is one of the reasons why we continue to host our annual AgConnectWA cocktail party. Put the 28th of February in your diary for our 2020 event. We are also continuing our bush BBQ's in 2020. This is simply an excuse for young people in the regions to come together. We have hosted bush BBQs so far in Wylkatchem, Wongan Hills and Morine Rock. We have drafted Bush BBQs for , this time offering a speaker on a single topic- from crop updates, policy 101, the basics of governance or even the power of networking.

In 2019 we collaborated with careers in grain to host informational sundowners about career options, we look forward to continuing this!

Our members also took the opportunity to enjoy the sheep tours run by The Sheep Collective on a live-export vessel to gain a better understanding on the live export supply chain.

Recently we hosted a post harvest sundowner in Esperance, tickets sold out for this event showing that this is something young people want in the regions so we are hoping to deliver more of these!

We've got a few events and projects in the pipeline for the year to come, make sure you suss out the save the date list below and come along to anything you feel you will benefit from, or even come along to simply meet new people in Ag! Our focus is still to upskill and provide epic social events, but as a committee we are hoping to balance that with more learning opportunities to ensure there is a young person in every room when it comes

to decisions or discussions surrounding agriculture. It's a sad sight that with all the discussions about how we are going to feed the world in years to come, there's usually only 1 or 2 people involved in the industry in the room under the age of 35.

If there is anything you want to see, or anything you want us to host or assist you in hosting in your community PLEASE don't hesitate to contact us. As a committee we are only as good as the feedback we are receiving. You, our members are the most important thing- I hope the new direction as a committee we are taking is what you want in this industry, and if there's more we can do, please tell us!

To our members heading into 2020- We aren't the next generation in this industry, we are the now generation. Stop letting people lead you to believe your time to step up is in a few years, it's now. We have the ability to create the changes we want to see, don't ever forget that and I hope you know we are here to support you as a committee. Remember, even when the crops are crap- Livestock prices are low, when you feel like we aren't going to be able to feed this mass of people by 2030, you are not alone- we are in it together!

### Dates to put aside:

- **14 March:** Deanne Lush Communications Workshop (*we are taking applications for members who want to attend*)
- **14th March:** City Sundowner, open for everyone
- **28 March:** Cocktail event
- **April:** Regional Field Walk, sustainable environments
- **4 September:** Conference & AGM
- Sundowner at both Wagin Woolorama & Dowerin Field Days

### What else to look out for in 2020

- BBQs in the bush at Goomaling, Dalwalinu and Bruce Rock area.
- Broome Sundowner
- Careers in Ag Networking event- Murdock, Muresk & Curtin
- The launch of our agriculture exchange program in exchange with 'Young Farmers' in England. An opportunity to see farming where the grass is green!



# AgCONNECTWA



**We are here to ensure that  
young people know they have  
a voice, because you do.**



# Financial Report

## Executive Summary

For the year ended 31 December 2019

### The 2019 Financial Report has been completed with WAFarmers recording an audited operating surplus of \$82,176 for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019.

In 2019 due to constitutional changes WAFarmers Financial Year changed to calendar year reporting, our financial year is now 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December, a shift from the previous financial year of 1<sup>st</sup> December to 30<sup>th</sup> November. This shift has resulted in WAFarmers reporting on a 13 month year for 2019 (1<sup>st</sup> December 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019).

Although reporting on an extended financial year with one additional month of expenses and income we can announce an excellent result with WAFarmers recording an operating surplus for the fourth year running.

Another constitutional change that affected WAFarmers financial reporting for 2019 was the change to WAFarmers membership year. Previously the membership year ran from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> January, with the changes at the AGM in March 2019 the new membership year has been brought in line with the new financial year with membership now also running from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December. To account for this WAFarmers has reported on an 11 month membership collection for the 2019 Financial Year. In recognising this a prepayment equivalent to 1 month's membership collection was carried forward for the 2020 financial year and members will only be invoiced for an 11 month membership for 2020.

The surplus was achieved through a focused commitment by the Board and Management along with measured controls over expenses for the last 13 months. Membership continues to track down reflecting the ongoing aggregation of family farms. Interestingly we seem to be retaining the same percentage of membership as we were in the 1970s with approximately 1 in 3 farm businesses being members of WAFarmers.

Our challenge is to recognise the fact that the emerging millennial generation are busy

running complex enterprises, they have different family priorities, access to digital technology and the focus of agri politics is moving from a state to a national platform. As an organisation we need to reposition ourselves to connect with this generation and ensure we are focusing on the issues that will support farming families into the future.

#### INCOME

Noting that Membership Income was derived from 11 months in 2019 this has in part resulted in lower membership income of \$869,857 compared to that of previous years.

Sponsorship and events income decreased in 2019 to \$182,795 with the WAFarmers Board deciding to discontinue the Heart of WA event following the withdrawal of our key sponsor Coles as they moved to support agriculture at a national level.

WAFarmers ran a profitable and informative Livestock Forum in Kellerberrin in February 2019 which assisted in managing the decrease in events income.

A slight decrease of \$8,470 in 2019 from corporate partner sponsorship compared to 2018 resulted in revenue from partnerships for 2019 being \$66,333. WAFarmers has noted a distinct shift of corporate partners moving to events based sponsor commitments rather than a year round partnership.

WAFarmersFirst products once again resulted in significant income derived from this initiative. The royalty on sales figures increased by over 15% (\$47,564) on WAFarmersFirst Milk and Eggs to \$322,518 for the 13 months to December 2019. Half of this (\$47,564) increase was attributed to the 13 month reporting year and the other half was due to an increase in WAFarmersFirst egg sales linked to the eastern states drought and a decrease in national production. An amount of \$64,048 for 2019 was added to the Dairy Project

Milk Fund resulting in a total accrual on the Balance Sheet of \$97,256 as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019.

#### EXPENSES

The Board and Management have worked hard to ensure expenses have been tightly managed. Expenses decreased in 2019 by 17% to \$1,508,333 and came in under the budgeted amount of \$1,719,880.

A significant amount of the decrease was apportioned to an internal restructure and staff departures. We are confident that under the new office structure the 2019 results will be maintained in 2020, further cementing WAFarmers' position as Western Australia's number one membership based, advocacy group.

#### BALANCE SHEET AND CASH POSITION

The Board and Management have also been extremely focused on increasing reserves where possible while delivering on business plan strategies. To this end, we note: Members' funds increased to \$515,472 between December 2018 and December 2019.

Cash on Hand and Trade Debtors increased to \$937,791 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019, a significant portion of the recognition of carry over subscription and sponsorship income received in advance.

The total liabilities of the Federation decreased by \$27,838 from the 2018 reported figure of \$571,491 to \$543,653.

In summary, 2019 has been a successful year for WAFarmers financially, the Board, the CEO and staff are committed to ensuring the long term financial strength of your organisation.

*Trevor*  
*Whittington*  
CEO



# Income and Expenditure Statement

For the year ended 31 December 2019 (13 months)

	2019	2019	2018
	ACTUAL \$	BUDGET \$	ACTUAL \$
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>			
Newsletter Ag E News	1,593	1,000	940
Farm Weekly/Countryman	8,148	6,000	336
News Research	4,348	0	6,684
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>14,088</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>7,960</b>
<b>MARKETING and PROMOTION</b>			
Membership Promotion	11,163	19,600	13,245
Marketing Promotion	14,773	15,600	12,534
Sponsorship/Awards	14,840	15,000	12,915
Field Days & Shows	15,909	10,000	4,635
Website Development	540	0	9,503
Database Upgrade	4,500	5,000	1,350
Hosting Associated Costs	1,911	5,000	3,136
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>63,636</b>	<b>70,200</b>	<b>57,318</b>
<b>PERSONNEL</b>			
Salaries & Wages	483,542	591,063	655,539
Contract Services/Expenses	21,845	0	0
Superannuation	46,207	49,740	59,783
Consultants	24,311	35,000	22,080
Zone Coordinators Wages	10,305	15,000	9,619
Zone Coordinators Expenses	76	2,000	424
Payroll Tax	0	0	27
Fringe Benefits Tax	582	500	597
Recruitment & Training	3,743	7,500	4,287
Workers Compensation	3,482	4,300	4,291
Staff Travel	16,633	16,500	17,161
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>610,727</b>	<b>721,603</b>	<b>773,808</b>
<b>OFFICE SERVICES</b>			
Rent & Variables	114,958	131,732	111,388
Office Renovations	0	0	1,550
Electricity	20,707	20,000	20,650
Office Operating Expenses	41,296	48,360	40,846
Repairs & Maintenance	404	1,500	1,622
General Expenses	14,356	10,000	9,061
Minor Assets	295	1,000	518
Periodicals & Publications	4,589	6,000	6,215
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>196,606</b>	<b>218,592</b>	<b>191,850</b>
<b>FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>			
Bank Fees & Borrowing Costs	5,398	7,000	7,793
Insurance	11,124	11,000	7,843
Audit Fees	16,664	12,000	11,750
Accounting Fees	7,222	4,200	5,851
Legal Expenses	19,677	35,000	55,666
Debts Expense	2,000	0	6,417
Depreciation	31,881	28,800	29,294
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>93,966</b>	<b>98,000</b>	<b>124,614</b>
<b>TOTAL ADMIN. EXPENSES</b>	<b>979,023</b>	<b>1,115,395</b>	<b>1,155,550</b>

	2019	2019	2018
	ACTUAL \$	BUDGET \$	ACTUAL \$
<b>INCOME</b>			
Members subscriptions	869,857	1,000,085	978,437
Commission	0	3,445	3,445
WAFarmers First Royalties	322,518	275,227	271,509
Sponsorship/Events Income	217,878	307,872	408,103
AgConnectWA Income	31,250	33,000	38,927
Interest-Main A/C & Term Deposits	2,102	3,000	3,013
Commodity Income inc project funds	30,813	27,753	51,645
Zone Income	3,076	2,000	96
Rental Income	73,055	55,268	44,189
Sundry Income	23,039	8,000	15,175
Secretarial Service Fees	0	6,000	6,776
WAFF Invest Fund Trust	16,921	0	19,621
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>1,590,509</b>	<b>1,721,650</b>	<b>1,840,936</b>
<b>LESS EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>Affiliation Fees</b>			
National Farmers Federation	50,819	44,000	41,667
Cattle Council of Australia	24,621	23,000	22,727
Sheepmeat Council of Australia	13,742	15,000	14,332
Grains Expense Account	9,750	9,000	8,250
WoolProducers Australia	17,731	16,366	16,367
Australian Honey Bee	0	2,300	379
Australian Dairy Farmers	22,345	22,000	22,278
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>139,008</b>	<b>131,666</b>	<b>126,000</b>
General Section inc cocktail events	7,143	4,000	19,827
Board Expenses	9,395	9,500	4,529
President's Allowance inc Super	58,847	50,000	60,417
President's Expense	9,400	16,000	11,147
President Election	2,375	0	0
Motor Vehicle Expense	5,139	12,120	6,111
Events Expense	114,847	170,980	238,419
AgConnectWA Expense	27,703	33,000	30,854
WAFarmersFirst Royalty	11,236	25,000	36,031
Dairy Industry Milk Trust	64,048	59,969	55,979
Commodity expenses inc projects	42,576	67,250	68,172
Commodity Pres/Portfolio Allowance	8,708	9,500	7,792
Zone Expenses	3,210	5,500	5,436
Investment Fund Expense	25,674	0	1,395
Contingency Expense	0	10,000	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>390,302</b>	<b>472,819</b>	<b>546,109</b>
<b>TOTAL EXEC EXPENSES</b>	<b>529,309</b>	<b>604,485</b>	<b>672,109</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES</b>	<b>979,023</b>	<b>1,115,395</b>	<b>1,155,550</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,508,333</b>	<b>1,719,880</b>	<b>1,827,659</b>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>82,176</b>	<b>1,770</b>	<b>13,277</b>

# Balance Sheet

For the year ended 31 December 2019

	2019	2018
BALANCE SHEET-NOVEMBER 2018	DECEMBER	NOVEMBER
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>Bank Accounts</b>		
Bank- Operating Account	67,098	41,357
Westpac Bank-Term Deposits	0	0
Westpac Cash Reserve	303,006	301,509
Petty Cash	250	250
Zone Bank Accounts	115,891	114,618
AgConnectWA Account	19,554	19,333
Corporate Card- Tony York	0	103
<b>Total Bank Funds - Unrestricted</b>	<b>505,799</b>	<b>477,170</b>
<b>Restricted Funds</b>		
Donations Account	4,992	4,986
WAFF Invest Fund	176,650	187,312
Fundraising live Export	22,642	41,089
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b>204,283</b>	<b>233,388</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Accounts Receivable	131,006	39,017
Bank Guarantee- Belmont Premise	29,219	29,219
Prepayments	36,055	27,274
Sundry Debtors	31,429	31,111
	<b>227,709</b>	<b>126,620</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>937,791</b>	<b>837,178</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Furniture & Fittings	8,732	9,821
Motor Vehicles	19,992	26,900
Lease Hold Improvements	66,554	82,942
Plant & Machinery	10,233	12,766
Telephone System	160	204
Computer Hardware	11,315	8,689
Computer- Software	268	600
Investment- Westralian Farmers	2,734	2,734
Investment- Trust Fund WAFF	10	10
Investment- Farmwide	1,334	1,334
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>121,334</b>	<b>146,000</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,059,125</b>	<b>983,178</b>

	2019	2018
BALANCE SHEET-NOVEMBER 2018	DECEMBER	NOVEMBER
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable	11,530	6,864
Accruals	13,001	59,356
Sundry Creditors	9,080	20,355
<b>Payroll Liabilities</b>		
Payroll Liabilities-Group Tax/Super	14,928	4,176
<b>Payroll Provisions</b>		
Provision for Holiday Pay	32,674	35,938
Prov for Employee Long Service Leave	17,746	15,856
<b>Corporate Cards</b>	<b>6,307</b>	<b>8,813</b>
<b>Donations Payable</b>		
Esperance Fire Appeal	0	0
Warroona Fire Appeal	4,924	4,924
Fundraising Account Prov	22,740	38,613
<b>WAFarmersFirst Provisions</b>		
Provision for Dairy Trust Projects	97,256	76,746
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>		
Motor Vehicle Finance	22	22
Telephone System Payment Plan	-311	8,442
PPA Wheat Fight Fund	52,259	52,259
Food Alliance Projects	2,759	0
Dairy Farmer Project Events	2,819	0
<b>GST Liabilities</b>	<b>3350.18</b>	<b>6176.31</b>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>291,085</b>	<b>338,541</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Perth NRM Bond	5,000	5,000
Make Good Provision- Belmont Premise	44,586	44,586
TH Peterson Trust Loan- Bank Guarantee	30,618	29,213
Subs in Advance 2021	6,082	15,246
Subs in Advance 2020	100,933	33,482
Subsin Advance 2022	1,718	0
Income Received in Advance	63,632	83,814
<b>Total Non Current Liabilities</b>	<b>252,568</b>	<b>211,341</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>549,883</b>	<b>390,594</b>

<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>543,653</b>	<b>549,882</b>
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<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained Surplus	433,296	420,019
Current Surplus	82,176	13,277
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>515,472</b>	<b>433,296</b>



## WAFarmers Corporate Sponsors

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## WAFarmers 2019 Annual Conference Supporters

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## WAFarmers Supporters

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