



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

**PinAg**  
PARTNERS IN AG

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*Robyn Gulline*

In 2017, Partners in Grain Vic/Tas committee was faced with the dilemma of determining a new direction, following the National Partners in Grain decision to disband. After much deliberation, we established Partners in Ag, to reflect the types of professional learning, that we were eager to share with the ag sectors of Victoria and Tasmania.

It has been my absolute pleasure to lead both organisations throughout this period and to gather a strong, diverse, and knowledgeable Board, ably supported by passionate and talented staff. The Board sadly farewelled Brialey in October and excitedly welcomed Erin in April and Al today.

Partners in Ag has experienced a year of highs and lows as 2020 goes down in history as a year unlike any experienced in living memory. Building on the networks and expertise of staff and Board members, we continue to develop and refine our workshop offerings to meet the ever-changing needs of agricultural businesses.

In 2019, funding from the Digital Innovation Festival (DIF) program supported Social Media workshops in Horsham and Banyena, with positive participant feedback and our marketing services were contracted by Birchip Cropping Group to support their AgTIDE workshops. In 2020, Wimmera Machinery Field Days engaged Partners in Ag to manage 2 new and very well received initiatives, the Ag Futures Pavilion and Ag Ed Quest education package over the 3 days in March. The WMFD committee is keen to re-engage our services for the next Field Day. Bendigo's Australian Sheep and Wool Show are also keen to engage our services in a similar manner. Congratulations to Katherine for her leadership and management of these successful programs. DIF funding has again supported a series of Social Media workshops in August and September. Thank you to the Wimmera Business Centre for the additional funding to subsidise Wimmera participants.

Engaging in the new virtual workshop world has proven challenging for several reasons, including internet connectivity, farmer Zoom fatigue and the proliferation of free online workshops, information sessions and other events. Our participants and facilitators eagerly await the return of F2F workshops, at some point in the future.

I would like to thank our dedicated band of facilitators. They are always eager to turn our ideas into valued workshops. Participant feedback assists us in future planning and our facilitators always receive acclaim for their skill and knowledge. In May, we held a Virtual Country Cuppa morning tea. A wide range of topics including farm safety were discussed and ideas shared. It was great fun and we have decided to run a similar event on a regular basis.

Following our collaboration with WorkSafe with our series of Farm Safety Walks, Nickie was invited to participate in their Strategic Planning process. Pleasingly, WorkSafe have been very responsive to her knowledge and professional learning suggestions. Nickie and Katherine continue to expertly manage the day to day running of Partners in Ag. In the past few months, Katherine's role has evolved from Marketing to Business Development. Partners in Ag interactions with our past participant and support networks has increased significantly in the past year through an effective and engaging social media posts and a high-quality regular newsletter. We thank you both for their commitment and dedication to assisting the Board achieve our mission.

To the Partners in Ag financial members, thank you for your ongoing support. Thank you to each Board member for your contribution, passion, and assistance in determining the professional learning needs of the farming sectors of Victoria and Tasmania. I look forward to working with the new Executive to continue the great work that Partners in Ag has achieved so far.

# BOARD MEMBERS

*2019 - 2020*

**Chairperson** - Robyn Gulline

**Vice Chair** - Fiona Chilvers

**Treasurer** - Tracy Dart

## **General Members**

Charlotte Aves

Eileen Jorgenson

Annabel Mactier

## **Outgoing**

Brialey Brightwell (October 2019)

## **Incoming**

Erin Johns (April 2020)

Alastair Gabb (August 2020)



# A YEAR IN REVIEW

*Nickie Berrisford, Executive Officer*

This year has certainly been challenging, for us all. Climate change, the impact of drought and now Covid 19. How many changes we have been able to make in relation to these and other challenges?

I would like to commend all Board Members for their contribution and input into Partners in Ag, without their support PinAg would not be the impressive organisation that it is. Partners in Ag does face many challenges but, as a small Not-For-Profit organisation, it is making a significant difference to the delivery of quality, appropriate professional development for the grains sector as well as agriculture as a whole.

Robyn has provided enormous support for the organisation and her many roles means she is able to promote PinAg widely. Sincere thanks Robyn for the outstanding job you have done in your role as Chair. I am certain that you will continue to bring great ideas and support to PinAg as you continue on the Board.

Katherine has brought a diverse range of skills and expertise to PinAg and this has made an immense difference to the operation of PinAg. Katherine's social media, IT and grant writing skills are vital to the development of PinAg. Katherine and Robyn are examples of so many members of rural communities using their skills in many ways.

It was an honour to be asked to contribute to the development of the WorkSafe Strategic Plan. Unable to have a F2F workshop there were three two hour Zoom meetings. My first experience of using break out rooms for small group work. I was very pleased that there was positive acceptance of the ideas put forward from the experience we had had through Partners in Grains and Partners in Ag in the delivery of workshops in relation to Farm Safety. The suggestion of working with women on the farm was well received – something that has been neglected.

Through contact with Graham Phelps at WorkSafe, I became aware of funding available through WorkSafe. Katherine has worked to put in a major grant application, which we look forward to hearing about. Grant applications can take significant time to prepare and PinAg is becoming more conscious of the time taken while ensuring that we do not move away from our strengths, which is delivery of high-quality professional development.

Significant work went into trying to deliver Spray Application Training with Craig Day. Keeping to PinAg's focus on quality relevant workshops that has been postponed until 2021 as face to face is seen as a vital component to successful delivery. Other workshops are being reviewed to see where there can be a combination of online and face to face.

PinAg looks forward to continue and expanding on its excellent work as we head into 2021.

*last year's*

# FINANCIALS

Partners in Ag's goal of delivering high quality professional development is evident in the financial report, expert facilitators deliver superior learning comes. Operating overheads are purposely kept low in an aim to deliver the high quality at a lower cost to participants. Subsidising participant fees is done wherever economically viable for the group. Income to fund our activities is via paid participant fees, services provided or through highly competitive government and industry grant processes.

As a Not-for-Profit our financial capacity is at times, hand to mouth and we continue to shape our offering to show value to stakeholders, whilst filling the identified knowledge and skills gaps in the Victorian/Tasmanian agriculture sectors. Our expanded activities this year have included marketing services and event management which have contributed to the modest profit. Continuing to look for alternative avenues of funding will enable the group to harness the momentum which has built in the past 12 months.

It is important to note the ongoing, significant support from all board members. They collectively guide the organisation on a volunteer basis, at an in-kind contribution of around 400hrs per year.

Of note in the financial report, \$35,000 of grant income for events conducted in the 2019 financial year was received post June 2019 and is included in 2020 financial income. COVID 19 has no doubt had a detrimental impact on the activities of PinAg, however our low cost model has enabled us to adapt and continue planning for a future beyond restricted movements. Government contributions via ATO cash boosts have bolstered our ability to confidently maintain our staffing levels and continue our business development activities.

We can move forward with confidence in our ability to scale our activities, in line with our financial position.

*Tracy Dart  
Treasurer*

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

*Katherine Colbert  
Business Development Officer*

2019-2020 will be a year to remember for many reasons. It has provided us with opportunities to expand our range of services and to think outside the square about how we engage with prospective participants and stakeholders.

Whilst the list of 'completed workshops' isn't extensive for the past twelve months, the workshops and events we have completed have received overwhelmingly positive feedback and have established PinAg as a reputable organisation for collaborative projects. The workshops are mentioned in detail throughout the report, but I'd like to highlight the Digital Innovation Futures Festival Social Media workshop, the partnership with Birchip Cropping Group (BCG) and the Wimmera Machinery Field Days as three achievements that will potentially set up PinAg for future collaborations. All three projects were new collaborations with Wimmera Mallee based organisations who are leaders in their field.

We have made considerable ground in refining administrative processes and tidying up the PinAg contacts database and updating content on the website. Always a work in progress, these refinements assist in the professional approach and appearance PinAg prides itself on.

A considerable amount of planning has occurred on a wide range of workshops that, when we're allowed to meet face-to-face, will be rolled out across the two states. Online definitely has a role to play in the delivery and the services we provide, but there's nothing like a room full of grower's sharing stories, exchanging ideas and networking.

Exciting inclusions to the 2021 workshop calendar (pending COVID-19 restrictions) include staff safety inductions, header driver training, weather and wellbeing webinars and extensions to existing workshops such as Facebook Advertising for Ag and a revamped Paperless Office.

Thank you to Nickie for her unwavering support and understanding over the past 12 months. A big thank you to the Board for your support, and particularly Robyn and Tracy for your assistance, feedback and guidance over the year. I look forward to working with you in the coming year on some exciting projects.

Here's hoping that 2021 bring some normality (albeit the new normal) and allows PinAg to get back to what we do best, facilitating quality learning opportunities to farmers across Victoria and Tasmania.



**INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA FOR FARMERS**  
**DIGITAL INNOVATION FESTIVAL**  
**HORSHAM AND BANYENA**  
**AUGUST 2019**



**BIRCHIP CROPPING GROUP'S MAKING THE MOST**  
**OF PRECISION AG WORKSHOPS (AGTIDE)**  
**ARARAT, BIRCHIP, HOPETOUN, KANIVA,**  
**LONGERENONG, ST ARNAUD**  
**AUGUST 2019**



**2020 WIMMERA MACHINERY FIELD DAYS**  
**NUTRIEN AG - AG FUTURES PAVILION**  
**AG ED QUEST - SCHOOL RESOURCE PACK**  
**LONGERENONG**  
**MARCH 2020**

# MARKETING STATISTICS

## JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020

### Facebook

13.8% increase in likes (239 - 272)

79% of fans are female

Top Rating Posts (organic):

1. Ag Ed Quest (1.7k)
2. Social Media Workshop Kaniva (1.6k)
3. Succession Planning Workshop (1.3k)

### Twitter

47.3% increase in followers (372 - 548)

79% of fans are female

Top Rating Tweets (organic):

1. WMFD Ag Futures Pavilion (3.1k)
2. BCG Precision Ag - All (2.2k)
3. BCG Precision Ag - Longerenong (2.1k)

### MailChimp - Email Marketing

278 contacts

Average 40% open rate (21 emails)

Top Rating Emails (organic):

1. August 2019 Newsletter (73 opens)
2. Virtual Country Cuppa (70 opens)
3. WMFD Ag Futures Pavilion (70 opens)

### Website Analytics (January - June 2020)

Total Unique Visitors: 4,023

Avg Monthly Unique Visitors: 670

Total Number of visits: 6,626

Avg Monthly visits: 1,104

2019 - 2020

## WMFD AG FUTURES PAVILION

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The Ag Futures Pavilion provided a brilliant home for speakers presenting on a wide range of topics for the duration of the Wimmera Machinery Field Days (3 - 5 March 2020). Audience numbers ranged from 3 to 50+ and rode the waves of fluctuating visitors along with the rest of the event.

Topics covered included:

- Longerenong College DATA Farm
- Wimmera Plant Protein Project
- Connecting Data in the Farming System
- The VFF's role in faster grain payments
- Workplace Manslaughter Laws
- Soil Moisture Monitoring
- Making Precision Ag Profitable
- Communication Strategies
- Seasonal Climate Outlook
- Drones in Ag
- Weather product insurance

## WMFD AG ED QUEST

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Partners in Ag was proud to join forces with the Wimmera Machinery Field Days to launch a new resource kit for schools to assist in their excursions to one of country Australia's largest agricultural and agribusiness trade shows. The Ag Ed Quest provided a fun, educational and engaging pack of information to schools, allowing students and teachers make the most of their time at the 2020 Wimmera Machinery Fields Days.

Thursday's Careers in Ag Panel Discussion was very successful and a highlight of the program. 3 Secondary Colleges (over 50+ students) utilised the pavilion as a meeting point. The panel members were very passionate, articulate and engaged with the session and the students seemed to engage well with the discussion.



*the year to come*

# 2020-2021 FOCUS

There is uncertainty surrounding what 2021 may look like and how service businesses interact with clients and customers.

Partners in Ag continues to work towards its goal of being a leader in the agriculture industry for training opportunities.

The ever-increasing demands on farmers and changing landscape of agriculture in Australia stresses the importance of continuous learning and refining processes.

Partners in Ag workshops cover both in-paddock, on-farm and administrative topics that not only help farmers be more effective and efficient with resources, but provide safe workplaces for staff and family members.

Planning continues in developing new workshops and refining existing workshops to best practice and industry standards, ensuring participants receive the most up date, relevant and accurate information at hand.

Areas of focus for Partners in Ag for 2020/2021 include:

- Farm Safety
  - Relaunching Farm Safety Workshops
  - Staff Safety Inductions
  - Header Driver Training
- Contracting services to large-scale events
  - Focus on education, engagement and empowerment
- Finance and Risk Management workshops
- Blending online and face-to-face learning for the betterment of all stakeholders
- Continuing to build strong relationships and networks throughout Ag industry
- PinAg Study Tour
- Increase communication with members and stakeholders
- Continue representing the farming community at state committees
- Continue improving administration and internal processes

The team at Partners in Ag is excited for the next 12 months and planning has started in anticipation for a busy year!