

**OPENING OF THE 2022 AGFEST FIELD DAYS
ON BEHALF OF THE RURAL YOUTH ORGANISATION OF TASMANIA
BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
CARRICK, WEDNESDAY 24 AUGUST 2022**

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to open Agfest 2022. It is a real pleasure to be here in this beautiful country setting at Quercus Park.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

I also acknowledge:

- The Honourable Mark Shelton MP
- Bridget Archer MP
- Brian Mitchell MP
- Mayor Mary Knowles OAM

This is the first time that Don and I have attended Agfest as Governor and Patron of Rural Youth Tasmania. I thank you for your invitation and acknowledge the success of the event and the way that it has become an integral part of our rural community calendar.

Agfest is run by a volunteer committee of 50 Rural Youth members and ex-members, with an average age of 24. They are motivated to make a significant contribution to agriculture by staging the best possible event.¹ The organising of Agfest not only provides benefits for the agricultural community, but also provides an opportunity for personal growth and leadership training. I congratulate the committee for their hard work and planning, and all the volunteers who will be working here over the next four days.

This is the 40th anniversary of Agfest. There have been challenges, especially in the past couple of years, but you have worked hard to overcome them and maintain the original intent of Rural Youth: to provide all members, not just those who live or work on farms, with the opportunity to connect with other young people interested in developing themselves, meeting new people and having fun.²

¹ <https://www.agfest.com.au/history> accessed 17 August 22

² <https://www.ruralyouth.com.au/faqs> accessed 17 August 22

I congratulate every one of the many hundreds of exhibitors and sponsors who are spending the next four days here, in the “paddock”. I congratulate you all for your work in the “Agfest in the Cloud” as well, extending the reach of the event online, from 27 August to 2 September.³ In 2020, The Cloud received over one million page views from all over the world,⁴ a wonderful way for other countries to view what Agfest offers.

May I acknowledge that many of our exhibitors benefit significantly from the exposure to local, national and international markets.⁵ With more than 500 exhibitors on site there is something for everyone.

Agfest has become recognised in the top three field day events in Australia. Conservatively, Agfest brings about \$26 million to the Tasmanian economy each year. Charities benefit from these funds. Rural Youth fund all of their activities throughout the year from the proceeds. Rural Youth also give generously to charities.

Over the last eight years, Rural Youth have supported Life Without Barriers, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Ronald McDonald House Hobart, Leukaemia Foundation, Teen Challenge, Rural Alive and Well Inc Tasmania and Canteen Tasmania. The organisation’s combined donations to these charities were over \$15,000.⁶

It is no wonder that Agfest is attracting increasing numbers of urban visitors. The quality and spirit of this four-day event “Agfest in the paddock” is unmatched. We are certainly looking forward to bringing our grandsons to next year’s Agfest.

May I conclude by again congratulating the volunteer committee of Rural Youth Tasmania whose outstanding efforts make Agfest possible each year.

To Rural Youth State President Josh Mison, Agfest Chairman Caine Evans, and all your hard-working colleagues – well done. We are proud of what you do for young Tasmanians.

Now, with great pleasure, I declare Agfest 2022 officially open, and invite you to enjoy the Agfest Field Days.

Thank you.

³ <https://www.agfest.com.au/> accessed 17 August 22

⁴ <https://www.agfest.com.au/demographics> accessed 17 August 22

⁵ <https://www.agfest.com.au/about> accessed 17 August 22

⁶ <https://www.agfest.com.au/supported-charity> accessed 17 August 22