

MASTERCLASS IN HORTICULTURAL BUSINESS DINNER
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
UTAS STAFF CLUB, HOBART, THURSDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2018

Good evening and thank you for inviting me to speak at your Graduation Dinner.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land—the Mouheneener people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

Can I also acknowledge Holge Meinke, Director of TIA, the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture.

I know that this is a culmination of a busy 10 months during which you have had the opportunity to improve your horticultural careers and businesses by turbo-charging the business side of your skills, marketing, value adding, risk assessment and so on.

As Governor of Tasmania, I travel around our State and particularly during Municipal Visits, we have the opportunity to visit many businesses, agricultural and also horticultural. There are 29 municipalities in Tasmania, and we have now visited most of these. I know that you have done a number of field trips during the year and possibly there will be some overlap with the places we have visited.

I will start with **Burlington Berries**. Just last month on our visit to the Northern Midlands, we visited Burlington Berries at Cressy and met the family owners of that business Stewart Sutherland and his daughter Emma, who is the business manager. The Sutherland family are farmers from New South Wales who specialised in pasture and turf seed production. On a trip to Tasmania, Stewart's father was blown away by the potential of the Cressy area with its cool temperate climate, fertile soils and abundant water.

The berry farm producing strawberries and raspberries was established in 2012 and now has 35ha of berries grown in polytunnels. From October to June the berries are picked, chilled and packed in their own on-farm pack house with daily refrigerated transport links to Devonport and distribution centres. At peak harvest, 450 seasonal staff are employed, which in itself is a huge logistical exercise. The farm supplies Driscolls with Driscoll bred varieties and it is Driscolls who control the marketing and distribution.

Mount Roland Hazelnuts provides a contrast in scale. We visited Greg and Elizabeth Taylor's 50-acre farm during our municipal visit to Kentish (inland in the North West). When purchased the farm was very neglected and over-run with blackberries and thistles. It now hosts a delightful organic hazelnut orchard with income supplemented by small group visits.

We have of course visited a number of vineyards and distilleries.

Adams Distillery at Cressy and **Lawrenny Estate Distillery** at Ouse are new on-farm distilleries that grow their own barley; value adding to the farming enterprise. Vineyards visited include **Tamar Ridge Vineyard** at Kayena during our West Tamar visit; also **Craigie Knowe** during Glamorgan-Spring Bay visit. These all have or will have in the case of the distilleries, cellar door sales and function facilities.

Bridestowe Lavender Estate (Dorset Municipal visit in 2017) and **Table Cape Tulip Farm** (Waratah Wynyard October 2018) are two wonderful examples of agri—or agro-tourism. Bridestowe is not only the largest lavender farm in the southern hemisphere with 250 acres of lavender, with a huge range of products in addition to lavender oil, it is a very popular tourist destination attracting 50,000 visitors annually. The Robert-Thomson's tulip farm is the home of Van Diemen Quality Bulbs and it is primarily a flower bulb producer of tulips, lilliums and Dutch Iris. However, it also takes advantage of the spectacular flowering season on Table Cape and attracts many visitors from late September to mid-October providing an additional income stream to the farm. The switch from a smallish vegetable, cattle and sheep farm has provided the farm with the capacity to provide careers for the family's next generation on the farm.

Nearby at **Flowerdale**, the Sadler has large glass houses producing lilliums for the flower market; again an enterprise which has provided careers for their children in horticulture.

Finally, **Forager Foods Pty Ltd** at Deloraine (Meander Valley Municipal Visit) is another example of innovation and enterprise. It is a business which employs 14 people freeze drying fruit, vegetables and herbs providing a valuable use of second grade produce with a process which locks in the goodness, flavour and colour.

In fact all of these business are examples of innovation and enterprise. All use the latest technology, scientific knowledge and business practice in their various enterprises and presage an exciting future for agribusinesses in our State.

Thank you.