

## East Gippsland Leafy Vegetable Demonstration Day



The Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria would like to congratulate Andrew Bulmer, Stuart Grigg and a number of associated seed companies for organising and hosting an excellent leafy vegetable Demonstration Day in East Gippsland recently.

Bulmer Farms was the scene for the field-day, which highlighted new leafy vegetable varieties to the wider vegetable industry.

The displays built awareness among vegetable growers of a range of exciting new varieties of lettuce, baby broccoli, leafy brassicas, beet/chard, rocket, spinach and baby kale, and raised considerable interest within the leafy vegetable sector, with 10 major seed companies taking the opportunity to present their latest lines.

Vegetable growers, processors and resellers had the opportunity to

inspect the new leafy vegetable varieties, discuss the display, and see other advances in the marketing of leafy vegetables.

Celebrity chef Geoff Jansz conducted cooking demonstrations, promoting alternative uses for some of the new varieties. His samples were eagerly consumed by those present.

The Demonstration Day was preceded by a very successful dinner held at Lindenow Hall attended by over 200 guests.

Again, congratulations to all involved with putting on this event.

*More photos page 6...*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Hello Everyone,

I hope everybody enjoyed the Easter period with family and friends, followed by ANZAC Day - a day to reflect on our past and current servicemen and women of this great country and the enjoyable lifestyle we have today.

Last month, my wife Robyn and I attended the Fruits of Life Gala Ball organised by the Madafferria Foundation, the proceeds of which raised money for 'The Room' at the Royal Children's Hospital Children's Cancer Centre. It was a most enjoyable night and was well supported by all sectors of the market community. To top it off the event raised \$33,000 and was the icing on the cake for the Royal Children's Hospital Appeal.

It just goes to show that industry unity is a very important part of our contribution to the Victorian and Australian economies, our lifestyle and our national health.

Together with industry, both the state and federal governments must recognise and support smart, innovative forward thinking in our fast-moving industry, in order to keep delivering clean, green, healthy and nutritious veggies to the consumer. We can't afford to be restricted by red-tape, particularly in the area of planning, as we strive to develop bigger and more modern farming enterprises. We need to be encouraged and helped when there are difficulties along the way.

### What is happening in our industry?

- The VGA Vic has been representing fellow vegetable growers in a number of areas. Many of the discussions and presentations focus on what growers feel they require, and take place behind closed doors in meetings with local, state and federal government departments. These meetings involve many public servants and ministers in an effort to resolve important issues that affect our livelihoods both now and into the future.
- In order to survive and stay viable we must educate politicians and bureaucrats. So, thanks to all the growers who sit on industry committees and work hard to either keep the status quo or improve it. It's most important that we don't stand back and hope that someone else will do it. It's our industry and we are all in it together, whether large or small, family or corporate farming enterprises.
- To remain viable, improve and maintain the standard of quality and quantity of our produce into the future, we must work together with fellow growers and associates, such as VGA Vic and specialist committees, that work so hard on our behalf to keep this industry at the forefront of horticulture and within the fast food chain.
- Vegetables need smart promotion even though they already have the wow factor built into them! With their natural nutrients, antioxidants, minerals and vitamins, vegetables have many great qualities and benefits built-in and need no add-ons or extras to make them better. Therefore, we need to keep reminding the consumer that veggies are the healthy food of this nation and a much better choice than other snacks. It's important to keep our share of the food-consumption pie. To maintain our share takes hard work. So let's all keep working on promoting veggies.

The best part of being VGA Vic President is being part of an exciting, enthusiastic,

forward-thinking industry that keeps evolving around new ideas.

It makes me very proud to be associated with this industry through VGA Vic. It has been my pleasure to work for our members alongside the great team of proud growers that make up your committee. There are not many industries where you see businesses in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation, backed up by associated industries that support growers through technological advancements in machinery and equipment that are vital to ensuring that businesses remain viable.

On the 9th of May, the VGA Vic Committee had its monthly meeting at the Bairnsdale Motel, in conjunction with the inaugural Leafy Vegetable Demonstration Day at Lindenow.

We enjoyed an industry dinner at Lindenow Hall the evening before visiting Bulmer's Farm to see ten different seed companies display new varieties of leafy green veggies. The Demonstration Day was well attended by growers from around Victoria and Australia and was very enjoyable and informative. Congratulations to all the seed companies and staff for an excellent display, and to Bill Bulmer, Andrew Bulmer and their family for hosting the event. Events like these make us very proud to be in this industry.

It is important that all growers set aside time to read the newsletters circulated by your Association. They are an important part of your membership service, and inform you of changes to legislation and any other changes that relate to your business and our industry. It's very important that we as an industry stay on top of matters such as work safety, employing contract labour, hourly rates, employer rights and employee conditions. If you have any questions relating to these issues please ask your Association for advice, as we're here to help. Communication with your association is a two-way street.

The Growers Advisory Committee continues to meet and discuss issues surrounding the new Epping Market and growers trading floor, with the State Government and the Melbourne Market Authority. If all goes to

*Continued next page...*

For Executive Officer's corner

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED...

plan, the ballot for stands is now likely to happen in early July. Sadly for growers, large or small, it will cost more to sell our veggies at the new market and there are many things still to work out, which makes it very hard for growers to complete a business plan for the Epping Market in conjunction with their own current business plan. We are still awaiting an official opening date for trading to commence. How do we as tenants and individual businesses plan our future without facts and figures? We're not wizards, we can't go to the bank without this vital information

and borrow money for new vehicles and machinery. Is that fair or logical? Please think of your tenants for once!

It was Tony Imeson's last meeting as Executive Officer when we held the VGA Vic Executive Committee meeting in Bairnsdale on the 9th of May. On behalf of the committee and myself as Chairperson, I'd like to congratulate Tony on his contribution. Twelve years have gone too quickly, but what Tony has done for VGA Vic over the years has progressed and maintained your Association in the present and well into the future, with a structure that will help ensure a strong future for Victorian vegetable growers. Thanks again Tony!

Congratulations to Helena Whitman who most of you already know who will take on additional responsibilities in the role of VGA Executive Manager. The future of the VGA is in good hands!

I hope to see as many growers as possible in Cairns for the AUSVEG Convention. It's people like you that make this an exciting, vibrant industry.

Sincerely,

*David Wallace*

President

## SANITATION OF WATER

Treatment of water using sanitisers is part of the overall control of microbial contamination in packing houses and on vegetables. Water treatment must be used in conjunction with good agricultural and hygiene practices to ensure food safety.

Sanitisers can be used to reduce microbial build-up and prevent cross-contamination in washing or cooling waters.

There are a number of chemical sanitisers and non-chemical sanitising methods that can be used to treat water. The common options include: chlorine, chlorine dioxide, hydrogen peroxide, peracetic acid, peroxy compounds, ozone and ultra-violet light.

Chlorine has been used for years to treat drinking and waste water and is the most commonly-used sanitiser for wash water used in horticulture. There should always be a minimum of 5ppm residual-free chlorine in the water.

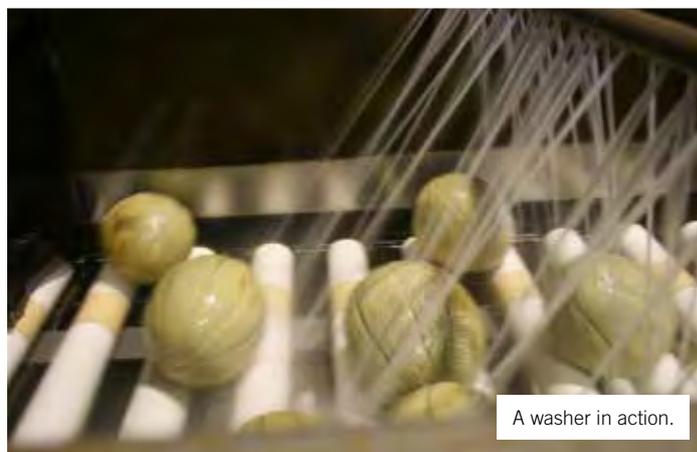
Chlorine will combine with organic matter, which can reduce its efficiency. Therefore, the concentration of free chlorine needs to

be monitored either automatically or manually using test strips on a regular basis. A pH of between 6 and 7.5 is essential for chlorine based sanitisers. Citric acid can be used to lower the pH.

Dirty produce will use up chlorine in the water more readily. Prewashing dirty produce will mean that less chlorine is lost in the final wash.



A Quik-Cool Hydro Vac.



A washer in action.



Broccoli on ice.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Farming...“there’s an app for that”

Contrary to what a lot of people think, farmers use smart phones and tablets just as much as any other industry. And now there is a dedicated website where farmers can go for information about farm-related apps and how other farmers are using apps in their operations. The site also provides information about hardware and accessories and generally makes it easier to work out how to use apps in your farming business whether it be large or small. To check it out, go to [www.farmingwithapps.com](http://www.farmingwithapps.com).

### Grower Tours

AUSVEG is seeking expressions of interest from growers wanting to participate in two tours being held later this year:

- 2014 Women in Horticulture Tour – 6-18 September, visiting Israel and Turkey
- 2014 Young Grower Study Tour – 11-25 October, visiting Japan and South Korea

Interested growers should register by emailing [info@ausveg.com.au](mailto:info@ausveg.com.au) or call (03) 9882 0277.

### AUSVEG CEO meets with Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries

AUSVEG CEO Richard Mulcahy recently received a visit from the Deputy Secretary of the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries. The meeting was constructive and will potentially lead to improved communication and dialogue between the State Department and AUSVEG.

Export initiatives by the Victorian Government were discussed in detail and Hayden Moore, AUSVEG National Manager - Export Development, also participated in discussions. Discussions also centred on research and development (R&D) funding and an outline of the Strategic Investment Plan for vegetable R&D was provided.

### Help for Small Businesses hiring staff

The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) recently launched a guide to hiring new employees for small business, offering straight-forward advice about employing new staff.

The Guide, which offers step-by-step processes and best practice recruitment tips, can be downloaded from [www.fairwork.gov.au/](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/) Employment.

## WFI, proud alliance partner of VGA Victoria.

WFI is a proud alliance partner of the Vegetable Growers Association Victoria (VGA). Like the VGA, we have a very broad reach across the state with over 35 Area Managers located throughout Victoria. Unlike a number of our competitors, we prefer to deal direct with our clients face to face. When you deal with WFI, you deal with a person, not just a voice on the other end of the telephone.

#### Why not call us for a quote?

To find out more about WFI’s products, request a quote, or to contact your local Area Manager, simply visit our website at [wfi.com.au](http://wfi.com.au) or call **1300 934 934**.

Good people to know.



To see if our products are right for you, always consider the PDS from the product issuer, WFI (ABN 24 000 036 279 AFSL 241461). If you take out a policy with WFI, VGA receives a commission from WFI of between 5% and 7.5% of the value of the premium payment (excluding taxes and charges).

## BI-ANNUAL EE MUIR & SONS GROWERS GOLF DAY AT WERRIBEE GOLF CLUB.

Despite an unsettled weather prediction, EE Muir & Sons held its successful bi-annual Growers' Golf Day in May at the Werribee Golf Club without any rainfall.

VGA Vic was delighted to be invited to provide an industry presence at the Muir Golf Classic. Executive Officer Tony Imeson had numerous social hits and a pleasant walk around the golf course along with Keilor grower Archie Tsardakis and Conrad and Zac from E E Muir & Sons.

Our team received the highest score team prize and the meal in the club house completed an enjoyable afternoon.

Local vegetable grower John Marinis led the winning team home with a two under par score of 71.

VGA Vic provided an encouragement prize, and Dale O'Connell from Muir's presented the gift voucher to young golfer Joseph Piovesan, who is part of the family operated RP Motors Pty Ltd. The business, located in Duncans Road Werribee, provides tractor services to growers in the district.



'Lets get started'



Attendees enjoy a refreshment at the Muir's Golf Day.



It was all 'go go go' at the Muir's Golf Day.



Young golfer Joseph Piovesan is presented with his award by Dale O'Connell EE Muir & Sons.



Expert putting on display.

# East Gippsland Leafy Vegetable Demonstration Day



VGA Vic Secretary Tony Imeson with Luis Gazzola.



Organisers Stuart Grigg (left) and Andrew Bulmer (right).



[L-R] Luis Gazzola, David Wallace, Bill Bulmer, Craig Arnott, Peter Cochrane and Geoff Foster.



Vegetable critters on display.



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## EMPLOYER RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS

As an employer, there are several obligations you must follow regarding employee record keeping. It is particularly important to correctly keep these records in the horticulture industry because of the high turnover of employees in the industry.

Some of the general obligations you need to follow include ensuring records are:

- In a form that is readily accessible to a Fair Work Inspector.
- In a legible form and in English (preferably in plain, simple English).
- Kept for seven years.
- Not altered unless for the purposes of correcting an error.
- Not false or misleading to the employer's knowledge.

As well as general record keeping practices, there is also a range of information that must be produced and kept for each employee, as prescribed by the Fair Work Act 2009 and Fair Work Regulations 2009. These include:

- Pay records.
- Hours of work records.
- Leave records.
- Super contribution records.
- Individual Flexibility Arrangement records.
- Guarantee of annual earnings records.
- Termination records.
- Transfer of business records.

Pay slips are another record keeping obligation employers need to have in place. Every employee must be given a pay slip and it must include the employer's name, the employer's ABN (if any), the employee's name, the date of payment, the pay period, the gross and net amount of payment, any loadings, monetary allowances, bonuses, incentive-based payments, penalty rates, or other separately identifiable entitlement paid.

Some other elements that need to be on an employee's pay slip, if it applies to them, include an hourly pay rate, the number hours worked at the rate and the amount of payment made at that rate, any deductions made, and super contribution records including the amount and the name and number of the superannuation fund the payment was paid into.

Please ensure that you have your record keeping practices in place and correct as there are penalties if they are incorrect or insufficient. A Fair Work inspector can give you an infringement notice, or if the case is serious enough, take you to court. There are several free record keeping and pay slip templates available on the Fair Work website for your use.

VGA Vic acknowledge contribution from



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## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S CORNER



Once again vegetables become the 'forgotten' section of horticulture and the least considered in the agriculture industry. The recent announcements from tariff talks with our Asian neighbours are glowing for the export advantage to Australian producers. Vegetables have a range of some 85 commodities and yet only manage three tariff reductions for asparagus, cabbage and carrots.

This, however, is a welcome start to improving our export trade and good luck to vegetable growers involved in export.

Recent consumer surveys have indicated that the average vegetable consumption by Australian adults is only half of the recommended intake based upon guidelines provided by National Health and Medical Research Councils. The survey indicated that adults were consuming only 2.5 serves of vegetables per day and not the recommended five serves per day. Young people were seen to be consuming an average of only two serves per day which is an even worse scenario for the vegetable industry. High intake of vegetables especially greens has long been associated with health benefits and seen to reduce certain coronary diseases. State organisations have continued funding and operating several programmes to encourage all families and school children to consume more fresh produce which unfortunately appears to have received limited acceptance from consumers. In a country that produces the most clean and green vegetables there should be more emphasis on eating a wide range of local fresh produce.

There has been a dramatic increase in the ratio of time spent by growers "on the farm" against the increasing number of management and administration duties which require the vegetable growers attention. It has been recorded that previously growers spent 90% of time in the paddock and 10% in the shed and office. The latest indication is 60% in the paddock and 40% in the office. Crop production costs have escalated and it is essential to ensure commercial survival that farm gate prices increase accordingly to ensure there is a realistic profit margin to run the farm and feed the family. This applies whether sales are by contract or in a wholesale market environment. Growing vegetables today is certainly different from growing vegetables 30 years ago, although the basics are still applicable. There are now numerous laws, regulations and rules by local councils, state and federal governments which need to be adhered to when following the best farming, OH&S, industrial relations and food safety practices while operating a

commercial farming enterprise in a rapid developing technology world. It is essential that all vegetable growers prepare a good business plan and budget with a close relationship with an accountant. It is well known that vegetable growers are competing with neighbours and other farming colleagues, so that every advantage in a risk taking farming business relies upon new developments in both technology and marketing. Let's not remain in "yesteryear".

To use an old expression: "The time has come the Walrus said to talk of other things...."

So this is my last contribution to Vegetables Victoria and after 12 years in the role of Part-Time Executive Officer I will finalise my duties at the end of May 2014.

It has been most gratifying to have served with four Vegetable Grower Presidents over the past 12 years. Thank you to Peter Cochrane, Alec Berias, Luis Gazzola and David Wallace for sharing advice, ideas and recommendations to ensure that VGA Vic remains a leader within the Victorian vegetable industry.

My involvement in the fruit and vegetable industry over the past 39 years has created many friendships and colleagues around Australia which have been most pleasing and rewarding.

I hand over the Executive Corner to Helena Whitman and offer my best wishes to Helena and VGA Vic in future years.

Keep smiling,

Tony Imeson  
Secretary.

**Remember VGA Vic is YOUR voice of the Victorian vegetable industry and needs your support.**

**Should you require more information about vegetable industry services available to you, please contact Executive Manager, Helena Whitman.**

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