

Adam Schreurs receives AUSVEG Environmental Award



Left to right: Netafim Queensland Manager Jeremy Evans and Adam Schreurs.

Adam Schreurs, from Schreurs & Sons, has been presented with the AUSVEG Environmental Award at this year's National Horticulture Convention, Trade Show and Awards for Excellence.

The AUSVEG Environmental Award, proudly sponsored by Netafim, was one of 14 awards presented to the Australian vegetable and potato industries' best and brightest members at a Gala Dinner attended by Australia's leading growers, dignitaries from Australia and overseas, and a wide array of industry representatives. The Gala Dinner was held on Saturday 27 June in the Pavilion Ballroom at Jupiters Gold Coast as part of

the 2015 National Horticulture Convention.

Together with Ben and Chris Schreurs, Adam helps manage the family farms at Clyde, where they grow celery, leeks, spinach, rocket, baby leaf and other salad vegetables.

In 1995, Adam led the set-up and development of the family's Coralyn property, where he then managed operations for 15 years.

By 2010, Adam had expanded the role to manage multiple properties, and he now heads up the Field Operations division. He is very active within the industry, being involved in many HIA projects which include soil health, pest and disease management

and best growing practices. In 2014, Adam was involved in the Growing Leaders program.

A big advocate of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Adam became involved with Dr Paul Horne to be the first to introduce the practice to the Australian vegetable industry.

Adam has shown a commitment to implementing sustainable on-farm practices and has taken a leadership role in promoting environmental issues in the local and wider community.

"We take great pride in managing our crops through IPM, where we encourage beneficial insects to improve and control insect pests. We were the first

to actively use IPM for celery in Australia, and it has demonstrated enormous environmental and health benefits for over 10 years. IPM is a very important practice in vegetable production," said Adam.

Adam was chosen to receive the AUSVEG Environmental Award from a field of several highly committed nominees from around the country who practice sustainable principles and practices in vegetable production.

The Vegetable Growers' Association of Victoria congratulates Adam on his award.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Hi everybody,

I have recently attended several Conferences and asked the question: Are they worth attending? The answer is definitely yes.

After attending the National Horticulture Convention held by AUSVEG and APAL in June, and the Protected Cropping Australia Conference in July, I can say that they were both outstanding in their content and presentation. There was a lot of networking and knowledge gained by growers, industry and sponsors from both organisations running programs throughout the conferences.

Congratulations to all concerned, and a special congratulations to all nominees from our industry in each category of the AUSVEG Awards for Excellence.

So next year, fellow growers, make sure that when next year's

conferences are announced, you put the dates aside to attend them – in combination with a well-earned holiday. The networking amongst fellow growers, sponsors, and exhibitors is worth the time and effort alone, and importantly, it allows us to know what is happening in our ever-changing industry. If you attend a conference and have the opportunity to have your say about the competitive nature of our industry, or gain even only one new idea, it is to your business advantage – and remember, knowledge is power.

At the National Horticulture Convention, there was an export display for overseas importers for produce grown around Australia. It was a delight to see the quality and freshness of Australian produce on show, and the range of packaging was exceptional. It was a very attractive display by all growers, showcasing what our country produces. Fantastic effort!

The VGA Executive and I have been working on union rights to enter grower properties and have sought legal opinion, together with the VFF, on what rights we have. If you have any queries on your rights in this area, I suggest you contact Fair Work Australia, the VFF or VGA Executive Officer Ken Orr.

We have a sub-committee and consultant reviewing the benefits of potential future structures of the VGA within the Victorian vegetable industry. There will be

some forums at the end of August at Lindenow, Cranbourne and Werribee to gather members' thoughts about the future of the VGA. I urge all members to attend, where possible, and have your say as we present our case. Information covering these forums will be mailed to members in early August.

Sadly, the VGA will vacate its office at the Footscray location of the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit, Vegetable and Flower Market at the end of July, after 45 years of trading at the site. During that time, we have made long-lasting friendships and seen the evolution of business ventures and generations of family businesses.

It has been a long road towards the Epping market opening, with a lack of understanding for what made the Footscray market so successful unfortunately preventing

these principles being transferred to the new site. The growers' advisory committee has done a tremendous job over a long period to input their views, which have unfortunately not been taken into consideration. The market opens on 3 August and we will do our best to make it a success.

Finally, I would also like to thank the growers that have called me regarding issues relating to our industry for their support.

Keep well and be positive – this is a great industry.

Sincerely,

David Wallace

President



David Wallace at the National Horticulture Convention talking to export delegation members.

For the Executive Officer's corner

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FAREWELL TO NATIONAL VEGETABLE EXPO

The National Vegetable Expo Organising Committee recently held its final meeting, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all those growers, seed companies, sponsors, exhibitors, media and volunteers who have worked to make the Expo the great success it was over the past 50 years.

Sadly, like many other industry Expos, the National Vegetable Expo – Werribee, which has traditionally been held biennially

during the first week of May since 1963, is over.

The first “Field & Gadget Day” for growers was held in Keysborough in 1963 as a social event to bring growers and their families together, and was such a success that it became a biennial event.

The Expo provided a venue for vegetable growers, seed companies and industry suppliers to gather and discuss the best our industry has to offer.

The Expo also provided a valuable

link between vegetable growers and providers of new products and technologies. Exhibits included machinery, chemicals, fertilisers, irrigation, filtration, packaging, computer software and material handling equipment.

The Expo would not have been possible without the many volunteers, especially Les Giroud and David Milburn, who tended the site year after year to ensure a wonderful display greeted visitors. Other long serving members of the

Committee include Luis Gazzola, Jack Walker, David Wallace, Paul Heseltine and John Pardew.

There are many others who also gave their time, but they number too many to mention – apologies to those who have been missed.

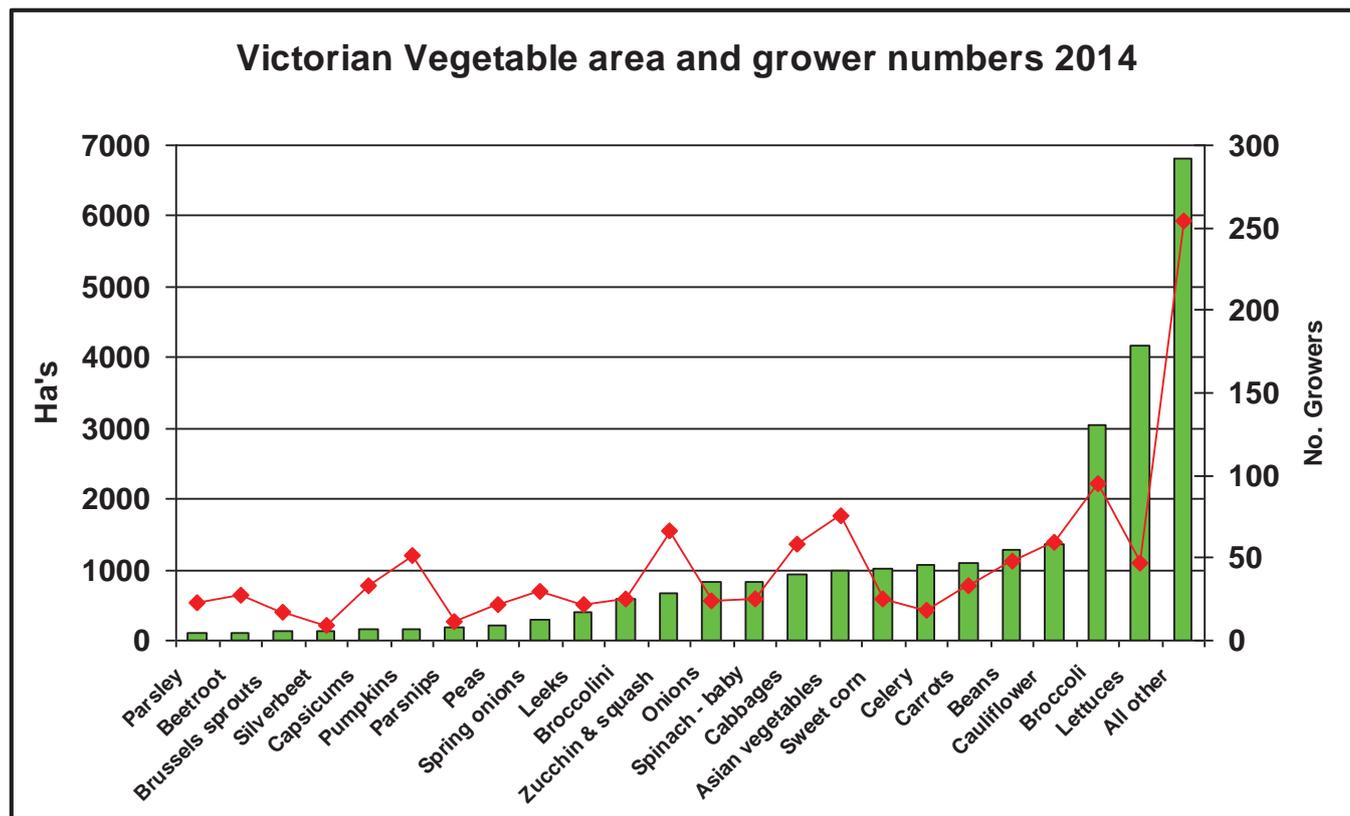
A special mention must go to the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria for providing the secretariat and financial assistance to the Expo over many years.



Left to right: John Pardew, David Milburn, Jack Walker, Helena Whitman, Les Giroud, David Wallace, Rod Hall, Luis Gazzola.



Victorian Vegetable Industry Snapshot



Graph 1: Number of Victorian vegetable growers and individual area of crops grown (ABS 2014)

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) recently provided a snapshot of the Victorian vegetable industry. Vegetable production occurs in all parts of Victoria, with the majority of production in the Western Port and the Port Phillip region. Significant production also occurs in the West Gippsland, Mallee, East Gippsland and Goulburn Broken regions of Victoria.

Key points

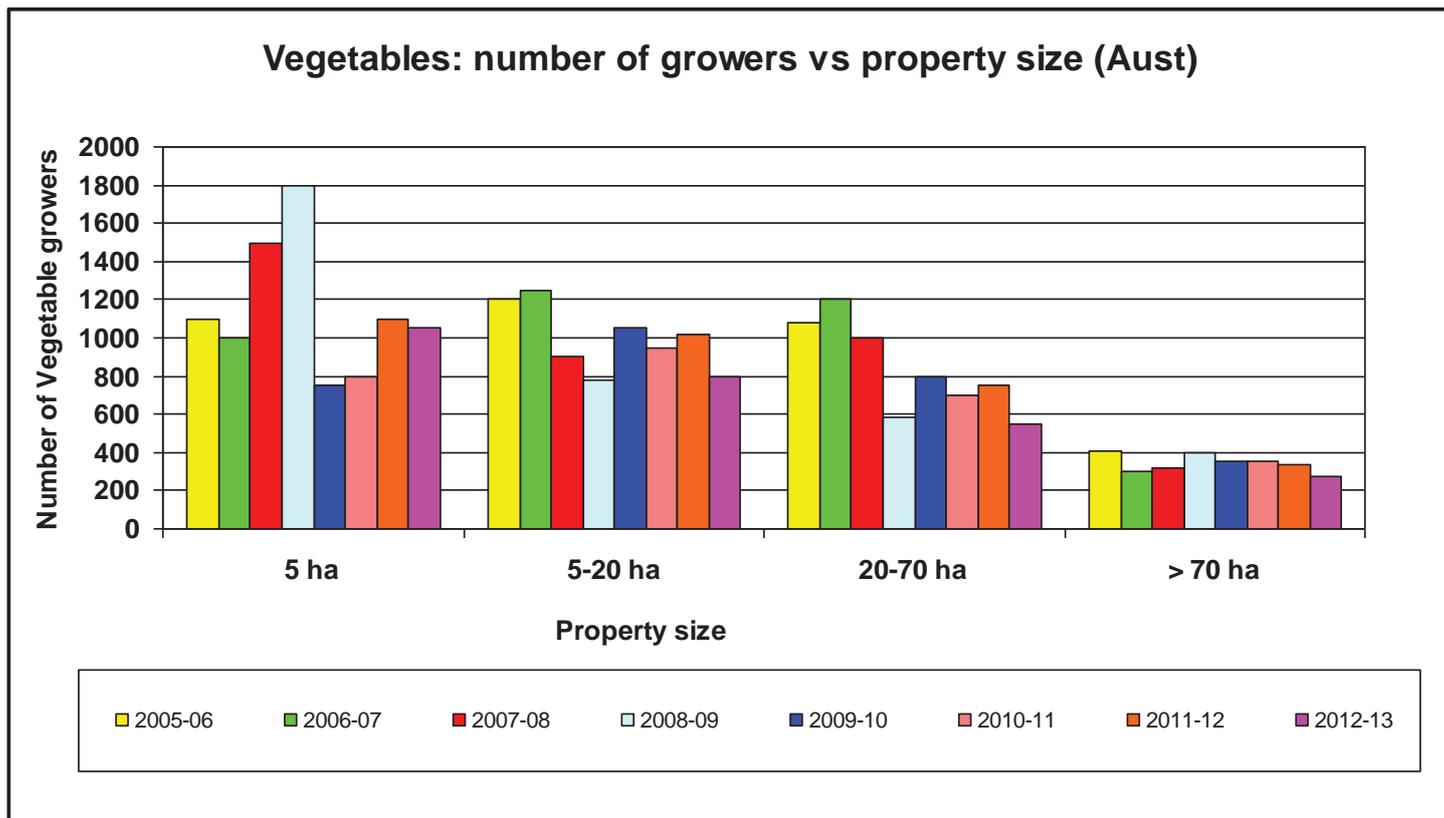
- There were 550 businesses in Victoria producing vegetables in 2014 (excluding potatoes and tomatoes)
- The total area sown to vegetables is around 26,750ha (excluding potatoes and tomatoes)
- Victoria is the second-largest vegetable-producing state by value after Queensland, and is responsible for 26 per cent of

total production value for Australia

- The Victorian vegetable industry is driven primarily by domestic markets rather than exports
- Victoria is the largest vegetable exporting state, contributing 31 per cent of Australia's vegetable exports value in 2013-14
- The gross value of vegetable production for human consumption in Victoria in 2014 was \$985 million
- Port Phillip and Western Port region produced 42 per cent of the value of Victoria's vegetable production

Structure of the Victorian vegetable industry

In 2013-14, there were 550 businesses in Victoria producing vegetables for human consumption (excluding potatoes and tomatoes). This includes 172 brassica growers, 47 lettuce growers, 60 cucurbit growers, 33 carrot growers, 76 Asian vegetable growers



Graph 2: Number of Australian vegetable growers number vs. area segments sown to vegetables (Mick Keogh, Australian Farm Institute 2015)

and 33 celery growers. (Note that some businesses grow two or more vegetable crops.)

These businesses had a total area sown to vegetables of 26,795 hectares. The primary crops planted are brassica crops (including broccoli, sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower) with 6,068ha, followed by lettuce with 4,162ha, cucurbits with 1,933ha and then beans, carrots and celery around with plantings of around 1,100ha each (Graph 1)

In 2011-12, 21 per cent of vegetable farms in Victoria were single operator businesses, 76 per cent were partnerships and 2 per cent were companies. Graph 2 depicts the Australian vegetable industry comparing growing area with grower numbers. There is a large proportion of vegetable growers growing vegetables on 5 ha and less.

Employment in Victoria's vegetable industries

In 2010-11, there were approximately 4,000 persons permanently employed in the vegetable growing industry in Victoria, representing 5 per cent of the state's agricultural employment. Additional employment in processing, marketing and exporting makes a significant contribution to regional economies. In 2011-12, the average age of vegetable farm owners/operators in Australia was 55.

Location of Victoria's vegetable production

Vegetable production occurs in many parts of Victoria. Of the agricultural land used for vegetable production, 42 per cent is in the region surrounding Melbourne. Significant production also occurs in the West Gippsland (16%), Mallee (14%), East Gippsland (7%) and Goulburn Broken (7%) regions of Victoria.

VGA Vic attends PMA Australia and New Zealand Fresh Connections

The VGA, in conjunction with the Produce Marketing Authority, had 10 places for young VGA vegetable growers to attend the PMA Fresh Connections event in May. Several young grower members took up the offer and attended the trade day.

The growers were shown around the trade displays by PMA Australia Marketing Manager, Camilla Phillips, and all VGA attendees agreed it was worthwhile visiting the trade show, saying that the networking opportunities were most valuable.

Over 800 delegates visited the Conference, Trade Show and Special Interest Group Day at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre over the three-day event.

The Conference, held on the first day of the event, concentrated on the digital future of the industry and how best to market products

and produce, as well as how to grow your company by innovating in areas like product packaging. It also showed that there was much to be learned by looking at the big retailers – including where they succeeded and where they got it wrong.

The second day of the event featured the Trade Show, which saw in excess of 800 delegates and a steady flow of visitors throughout the day. There were over 60 stands for industry organisations in fields ranging from packaging equipment to fresh produce.

The VGA had a stand promoting Victorian grown vegetables at the Trade Show, with most inquiries focusing on the primary vegetables grown in Victoria and the state's major vegetable-growing areas. There was also keen interest from exporter delegates wanting contacts to source vegetables for export to China and the Middle East.



Vegetable display at the VGA stand at the PMA Trade Show.

www.freshplaza.com



Camilla Philips, PMA Marketing Manager, with young grower members Matt Wallace, Kipp Arnott & Danielle Newbury.



Paul Gazzola (Gazzola Farms) with Diane and Anthony Staatz (Fresh Select) at PMA Trade Show.



VGA Executive Officer Ken Orr with Duncan Lamont (South Pacific Seeds).

www.freshplaza.com

VGA VIC MARKET OFFICE TO CLOSE

The VGA office at the Footscray Market will close on 31 July 2015, after 45 years at the site.

The VGA and the Victorian Potato Growers Council shared offices in the early days, followed by the Orchard and Fruit Cool Store Association. The VGA is the last growers' group to have any representation at the market.

As you are all aware, the new market at Epping will open for business on 3 August 2015. The VGA will not be relocating to the Epping market. Any new location for the VGA is dependent on the outcome of the organisation's restructuring, and will not be known until the end of September.

In the interim, the new contact details for the VGA will be:

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CALENDAR

11-12 August	2015 Fresh Produce Safety Conference, Sydney, NSW
25 August	VGA Members Meeting, Lindenow VIC
26 August	VGA Members Meeting, Cranbourne VIC
27 August	VGA Members Meeting, Werribee VIC
2-4 September	Rural Leader's Bootcamp, Brisbane QLD
24 September	AUSVEG EnviroVeg, Biosecurity, Minor Use and Export Seminar, Cranbourne VIC
8-9 October	Rural Women Uncovered (VFF), Beechworth VIC
9 October	VGA Vic 2015 AGM and Dinner, Waterfront Venues, Docklands, Melbourne. <i>Grower Member Registrations from 4.00pm.</i>
14-15 October	2015 Onions Australia Conference, Griffith NSW

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 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).



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S CORNER



Hello there,

I recently attended a forum at the Horticulture Centre of Excellence at Tatura. The forum was run by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) to outline its new investment plan and priorities for horticulture from 2014-18.

This investment plan did not include the vegetable sector, which is most disappointing from the industry's perspective. Although the vegetable

sector is a significant contributor to horticultural production in the state, DEDJTR suggested that the industry had not at this point sought to co-invest with the State Government in a significant way. Both the VGA and AUSVEG are addressing this situation.

Several years ago the VGA, WorkSafe Victoria and the Ballarat University ran a successful series of manual handling and occupational health and safety workshops. WorkSafe funded this program to help producers ensure their staff is aware of safety in the workplace.

WorkSafe have suggested that this spring, they will be out and about auditing vegetable farms for their compliance with work safety in the work place. Copies of the fact sheets produced during the mentioned workshops can be found on the VGA website if you need to refresh your memories.

Several large vegetable farms within Victoria employing large numbers of permanent, contract and casual labour have been approached by the

trade union movement to meet with staff during meal times under the Fair Work Regulations 2009, Entry notice regulation 3.27. If you require information concerning protocols, there is information on the Fair Work website, or you can contact the VFF. I also have some basic documentation, so please feel free to contact me if you require information.

As mentioned last issue, the VGA has engaged a consultant to look at the feasibility of standing alone or amalgamating with other groups representing the vegetable industry within Victoria, such as the VFF or AUSVEG. The results of this study are to be presented to members at the end of August, with meetings to be held in Lindenow, Cranbourne and Werribee. In early August, members will be sent information concerning the options and meeting details. These meetings will be important for members to attend and voice their views on the direction the VGA takes in the future.

Remember to look or refer to our website on a regular basis. The site attracts over 3,000 visitors a month, has over 2,000 pages of content and features 300 R&D report summaries, as well as topical news and events.

Cheers,

Ken

The VGA Vic is your voice of the Victorian vegetable industry and needs your support.

Should you require more information about vegetable services available to you please contact:

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VGA Vic. proudly recognises our industry supporters:

