Tasmania’s Sustainable Agri-Food Plan 2016 - 2018
It confirms our commitment to working in partnership with the private sector – farmers, fishers, primary producers, processors, industry groups and agri-business – to keep delivering the future policies and initiatives required to achieve our goals.

The Government’s 2014 Cultivating Prosperity in Agriculture Policy and the Supporting a World Class Tasmanian Fisheries and Seafood Sector Policy laid down the approach we are taking to grow the primary industry sectors. AgriVision 2050 sets a strong target for growing the value of the agriculture sector in Tasmania tenfold to $10 billion per year by 2050. We also recognise that the seafood sector, including aquaculture, makes a significant contribution to the Tasmanian economy and has potential to grow in response to market demand. For this reason the Agri-Food Plan also includes the seafood industry.

2050 is a long way off, hence the need for staged planning to allow us to respond to emerging opportunities and constraints to growth. Through a process of government and industry engagement, supported by research, analysis and monitoring, we are collaboratively determining future priorities, formulating appropriate policy and making decisions about what needs to be done and by who to sustainably grow Tasmania’s agriculture and food sectors.

Jeremy Rockliff MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Tasmania’s Agri-Food Plan is our system for sustainably growing the agriculture and food sectors in Tasmania including seafood. The Plan clearly lays out our goals and provides a progress report on the initiatives we are delivering and our achievements so far.

The Tasmanian agriculture sector is diverse. It is a key part of the Tasmanian economy and we want it to become even stronger: An agriculture sector valued at $10 billion per year is an achievable target. It will require growth at more than double the growth rate experienced over the past 20 years, as indicated in the chart below. This means the 2020 target is gross value of agriculture at $1.78 billion, the 2025 target is $2.37 billion and the 2030 target is $3.16 billion.

Thriving, Vibrant Communities

An agricultural economy valued at $10 billion per year, operating in parallel with a thriving seafood industry, means increased employment in rural and regional areas of Tasmania, including growth in highly skilled jobs. This means regional Tasmania will have the critical mass required to underpin provision of fundamental services such as education, child care and health services. It means that governments and communities can continue to invest in critical infrastructure. It means that more people in more places, across Australia and overseas, can experience and enjoy premium Tasmanian food and seafood, fibre and beverages.

Challenges and Opportunities

Tasmania’s island status provides a comparative advantage in terms of relative pest and disease freedom. It also poses a challenge in relation to distance to market and the associated costs to transport inputs for processing and to send finished products to market. Our comparatively small scale of production also impacts on our cost-competitiveness.

By its nature primary production is subject to factors that cannot be fully controlled but must be monitored and managed. Changes in climatic conditions and market volatility are examples. Given much of Tasmania’s production by volume and value is produced under contract and sold into commodity markets we are exposed to market fluctuations which can have major consequences for our primary producers. Further opportunity lies in providing premium products to markets which value what we have to offer.
Grow, Make, Protect

Grow, make and protect are the three core components of the Agri-Food Plan as they are integral to the value chain from pre-production to market.

We need Tasmanian farmers, fishers, primary producers and processors to grow more and make more, in terms of volume and value, and sell it into markets that value the Tasmanian provenance and brand attributes. We need Government, industry and the community to work together to protect the private sector’s capacity to do this through upholding biosecurity, product integrity, food safety and animal welfare, and by looking after our primary production sectors, the natural environment, and the Tasmanian Brand.

We can impact Tasmania’s capacity to grow, make and protect through:
• increased and targeted investment by government and the private sector
• improved productivity through the adoption of new technologies and improved practices and
• skills and workforce development, and increased awareness of career pathways across the primary industry sectors.

It is the interaction between the core components of grow, make and protect and the three key drivers of investment, productivity and careers which will contribute to Tasmania reaching our $10 billion by 2050 AgriVision target, and any other targets that may be set across other primary industry sectors.

Through investment, productivity and careers, Tasmania’s Agri-Food Plan provides a system for focusing our effort onto those sectors and components of the value chain that have the greatest long term prospect of contributing to growth.

Tasmania’s Agri-Food Plan is based on the following principles:
• Industry leadership
• Market-driven development
• Empowering the private sector – red tape reduction
• Maximising the value of the primary industries sector to the Tasmanian economy
• Collaborative, integrated action
• Social and environmental sustainability
• Adaptability to emerging challenges and opportunities.
Our initiatives: Investment, Productivity and Careers

Agriculture policy and industry development

✅ **Good Neighbour Charter**
Developed in collaboration with the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) and local government and launched in July 2016, the Charter provides certainty for future relations between the managers of Crown land and their neighbours, most of whom are farmers.

✅ **Review of the Primary Industry Activities Protection Act 1995**
In August 2016 the Government amended the Act to simplify protections against frivolous or vexatious nuisance lawsuits, and included farm forestry activities on private land.

✅ **Support to King Island - Transport Assistance Grants**
At the conclusion of the scheme in June 2015, $1,332,300 in State transport assistance grants had helped livestock producers affected by the closure of JBS Australia’s King Island abattoir.

✅ **Support to King Island - farm productivity and wallaby management**
In 2016, working in partnership with the King Island community and Council, a business case for a King Island Multi-species Abattoir was completed. The Island’s Wallaby Management Co-ordinator was also extended and $25,000 has been provided for a wild deer management project.

✅ **$20 million AgriGrowth Loan Scheme - low interest, HECS-style loans - NEW Sept 2016**
AgriGrowth Loans are helping farm and agri-food businesses finance projects that advance the Government’s AgriVision 2050. Following a successful 12-month pilot which saw 13 loans totalling $6.67 million approved – with further loans pending – the program is being extended with an additional $10 million until 2018.

✅ **Farming Safely in Tasmania Guide**
The comprehensive Farming Safely in Tasmania Guide was launched in May 2016 as part of the three-year, $435,000 Safe Farming Tasmania Program which aims to reduce the high rate of workplace-related injuries and fatalities in rural industries.

✅ **Industrial Hemp Act 2015**
Through the *Industrial Hemp Act 2015* and accompanying regulations, which commenced in March 2016, the Government has delivered simple, fit-for-purpose regulation to support expansion of the industry without compromising drug law enforcement.

✅ **Agricultural Skills Plan - Tasmanian Primary Industries Workforce Development Scan**
The Workforce Development Scan developed by the AgriSkills Reference Panel in July 2016 will guide future investments to revitalise agricultural vocational education and training as part of the Government’s three-year, $450,000 Agricultural Skills Plan partnership with the TFGA.

✅ **Capacity building for rural women**
A further $40,000 over 2016 and 2017 to support the Tasmanian Women in Agriculture’s leadership and capacity building projects, builds on previous funding in 2014 and 2015.

✅ **Capacity building for rural youth**
A further $20,000 over 2016 and 2017 to the Rural Youth Organisation of Tasmania for capacity building activities for rural youth, builds on previous funding in 2014 and 2015.

✅ **RAW outreach services for rural communities**
Funding of $1.57 million over three years, in addition to funding provided through the Department of Health and Human Services, is enabling Rural Alive and Well (RAW) to maintain a statewide outreach service to farmers and rural communities.

✅ **Water for Profit**
The $1.5 million Water for Profit program is helping farmers maximise their returns from irrigation through improved land and enterprise suitability maps, peer to peer learning networks, and the provision of a range of information to farmers through the TFGA and workshops.

✅ **Research and development collaboration – Poppy Downy Mildew Projects**
In 2015 State funding of $64,000 helped establish the two-year, $320,000 poppy downy mildew response with industry delivering effective new seed treatments to address downy mildew disease in poppies.

In 2016 additional funds of $360,000 were secured from the Australian Government’s Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Projects scheme to implement a follow-on project investigating the epidemiology of poppy downy mildew. The ARC project is co-funded by industry contributions and additional State funding of $77,000.

✅ **Research and development collaboration – Improving the Productivity of Tasmanian Vineyards Project**
Announced in July 2016 a $570,000 collaborative project with Wine Tasmania and the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (including $381,000 from the State Government) is delivering a three-year project aimed at boosting productivity through reducing grape yield variability whilst improving wine quality.

✅ **On-farm productivity - Biofumigation Project with Vegetable Productivity Project - NEW Sept 2016**
With $150,000 in State funding this collaborative project with the vegetable industry and the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture will investigate the benefits of using brassica crops to manage disease, pests and weeds to boost productivity in annual vegetable crops including potatoes.
On-farm productivity - Precision Agriculture Project
Launched in May 2015, State funding of $370 000 to this $530 000 collaborative project with the Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group, the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture and a range of other stakeholders is demonstrating the benefits of adopting precision agriculture technologies to improve farming practices and performance.

Tasmanian Horticulture Market Growth Project
The Tasmanian Government, Australian Government and Tasmania’s fruit and vegetable industry are jointly funding an export facilitator who was appointed in June 2016 for one year to identify new export opportunities for Tasmanian vegetables and fruit.

Supporting rural communities and farming families
Industry support in response to issues such as unseasonably dry conditions and the dairy price crisis includes:

- $185 000 to the Rural Relief Fund administered by Rural Business Tasmania.
- an additional $135 000 over three years (2016-2019) to the Rural Financial Counselling Service to allow it to provide additional services to farmers, taking the total Tasmanian Government funding from $40 000 to $85 000 per annum over the next three years.
- Rural Business Tasmania also received $10 000 to provide financial counselling services, commencing in March 2016, to farmers on King and Flinders Islands.
- $44 000 to the TFGA to manage a fodder register to help farmers access feed.
- $2.2 million across two years to extend the existing 75% subsidy for new irrigation electricity connections.

Browsing animal management
The Government extended the period of crop protection permits for browsing animal management, streamlined monitoring and maintained access to all control methods.

Wool industry - Shearer-hand training
An investment of $300 000 over three years to develop the wool handling skills of Tasmania’s shearers and farmhands commenced in August 2015. This collaborative project sees matched funding from industry through Australian Wool Innovation.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)
In 2014 the Government extended for five years the moratorium on commercial release of GMOs to the Tasmanian environment. Annual environmental scans by AgriGrowth Tasmania are assessing and publicly reporting on developments in technology, markets and consumer sentiment.

Fracking
In February 2015 the Government introduced a five-year moratorium on fracking for the purposes of hydrocarbon resource extraction to protect Tasmania’s reputation for producing fresh, premium and safe produce.

Modemising poppy industry regulation
A package of reforms to reduce red tape and modernise poppy industry regulation are underway. Responsibility for the Poppy Advisory and Control Board has been transferred to the Minister for Primary Industries and Water better aligning the regulation of all agricultural crops. A number of amendments to the Poisons Act 1971, passed in September 2016, will deliver efficiencies in administration of the licensing of commercial poppy growing in a way that supports industry development, competitiveness and ongoing law enforcement.

Supporting Natural Resource Management and Landcare
Annual funding of $120 000 to Landcare Tasmania continues to support its Landcare Assistance Program and work supporting community involvement in Landcare. NRM North, NRM South and the Cradle Coast NRM each continue to receive $247 000 per annum for the planning, delivery and implementation of integrated natural resource management including support for the sustainable development of primary industries.

Water resources and irrigation

$90 million joint State and Federal funding for a second tranche of irrigation schemes
Building on the successful Tranche 1 program of 10 new irrigation schemes, the development of five proposed new schemes has commenced with the Southern Highlands and Swan Valley schemes already under construction.

Tasmania’s Future Irrigation Project
In May 2016 Tasmanian Irrigation (TI) delivered its final project report from the $500 000 future irrigation project. With $2.2 million in State and Commonwealth funding TI is now fast-tracking feasibility studies into eight potential new or expanded irrigation schemes around Tasmania in consultation with local communities. TI is expected to make its final recommendations to Government by the end of 2018.

Simplified dam works approvals
On 1 January 2016, a new streamlined dam works approval process came into effect, following amendments to the Water Management Act 1999.

Water resource management during extreme dry conditions
In November 2015 a new Ministerial Policy setting out water resource management measures to be implemented in Tasmania was introduced, and then assisted many farmers during recent extreme dry conditions.
Biosecurity

- **TT Line off-shore arrangements**: The introduction of the new strengthened TT Line off-shore biosecurity clearance process over the summer of 2015 has seen significantly more biosecurity risk material being seized off-shore, more targeted vehicle inspections undertaken, and quicker disembarking in Devonport.

- **Fruit fly strategy**: Announced in May 2016, Maintaining Tasmania's Freedom from Fruit Fly - a Strategy for the Future is being developed in collaboration with Fruit Growers Tasmania.

- **$900,000 to boost border protection**: In May 2014, as part of its first budget, the Government allocated $900 000 to boost border protection.

- **$2 million increased operational capacity of Biosecurity Tasmania**: As part of its $2 million initiative over two years to increase the operational capacity of Biosecurity Tasmania, modern signage and collection bins have been installed at the TT Line terminal in Devonport and all Tasmanian airports, a strategic review of post border biosecurity infrastructure for trucks and agricultural machinery is underway, and refurbishment of the State’s biosecurity laboratories has commenced.

- **Doubling the detector dog teams**: $4 million has been allocated to double the detector dog teams at the State’s air and sea ports from 6 to 12.

- **Improved biosecurity on the Bass Strait Islands**: A new Biosecurity officer was appointed in August 2016 for King Island as part of the Government’s plan to strengthen biosecurity on the Bass Strait Islands. This is on top of the Biosecurity officer already housed on Flinders Island.


Fisheries and aquaculture

- **Additional funding for Tasmanian shellfish quality assurance**: An additional $200 000 over three years to strengthen the Tasmanian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program (TSQAP) was complemented in 2016 by an additional $100 000 to review and modernise TSQAP in consultation with industry.

- **New funding for salmon industry research and the Fish Health Centre of Excellence**: Following provision of an additional $500 000 for the construction of the Fish Health Centre of Excellence at Mt Pleasant, officially opened in August 2015, an additional $500 000 to the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies has expanded salmon industry research.

- **Moratorium on Marine Protected Areas**: The Government introduced a moratorium on new Marine Protected Areas.

- **Developmental fisheries**: A policy prescribing overarching principles for advancing developmental fisheries was publicly released in February 2015. Developmental fishery applications are being assessed in accordance with this policy. Permits have been issued for developmental fishing for Australian sardines, octopus, and marine plants.

- **Fisheries Information and Licensing Management System**: Development of a new $1.5 million electronic Fisheries Information and Licensing Management System has commenced.


- **Wild Harvest Bi-valve Shell Fishery Management Plan**: A review of the Wild Harvest Bi-valve Shell Fishery Management Plan is underway.

- **Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) package - Fee relief**: At a total cost of $1.6 million, the Government granted fee relief for two years for all Tasmanian Pacific Oyster growers by waiving lease rental fees, licence fees, the TSQAP levy, and Primary Produce Food Safety Accreditation fees.

- **POMS package - POMS Recovery Concessional Loan Scheme**: In April 2016 the Government launched the POMS Recovery Concessional Loan Scheme to provide up to $5 million in low interest loans of between $30 000 and $250 000 to help Tasmanian owned and operated oyster farms, hatcheries and nurseries located in POMS-affected areas recover from the outbreak.
POMS package - Clean-up grants  
Also in April 2016, the Tasmanian Government allocated $1 million and the Australian Government $1.132 million to fund the cost of clean-up activities undertaken on oyster farms from 1 March 2016 in the wake of the POMS outbreak.

East Coast Rock Lobster Translocation Program  
A total of 43,000 rock lobsters have been translocated as part of the Government’s $315,000, three-year program to translocate 150,000 rock lobsters to enhance the East Coast lobster population.

World class regulation of our salmon industry  
In July 2016 the day to day environmental regulation of the salmon industry was moved to the independent Environment Protection Authority (EPA). In addition, legislation to modernise the penalty regime has passed the Tasmanian Parliament and a levy on salmon licences will help fund marine farm development.

State Growth

Establish the Office of the Coordinator-General  
The Office of the Coordinator-General is the primary point of access to government for investors and is responsible for attracting and securing investment in major development projects in Tasmania that maximise their contribution to Tasmania’s economic growth.

   Through the Regulation Reduction Coordinator, the office is also leading the Government’s red tape reduction reforms to boost productivity and reduce operating costs.

Establish Infrastructure Tasmania  
Infrastructure Tasmania provides a coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of major infrastructure in Tasmania, including rail, major roads, energy ports, and water and sewerage. Outcomes from the 2015-16 work program include the State Roads Audit 2016, the Tasmanian Integrated Freight Strategy, a review of a proposed light rail system in Hobart, and a review and recommendations for the replacement of the Bridgewater Bridge.

Tasmanian Integrated Freight Strategy  
The Strategy delivers a contemporary framework that links freight demand and investment, integrates planning and investment across modes, prioritises freight assets and supports improved project evaluation and freight system information.

Access 2020  
Released in October 2015 Access 2020 is Tasmania’s five-year air and sea access strategy. Its aim is to provide sustainable air and sea services for passengers and freight in order to meet the state’s goals of attracting 1.5 million visitors annually to Tasmania by 2020 and raising the farm-gate value of agriculture tenfold to $10 billion by 2050.

Wood and Fibre Processing Innovation Program  
The $1.25 million Wood and Fibre Processing Innovation Program launched in July 2016 will support projects that demonstrate innovative ways of utilising plant residues from forestry and agriculture to create value-added products. This includes $550,000 for projects to develop biofuel opportunities on-farm.

Private Forest Industry Development Program  
Private Forests Tasmania and the TFGA are collaborating on a $450,000 initiative to encourage adoption of farm forestry and grower initiatives.

Supporting a skilled workforce  
Through Skills Tasmania, the Government supports demand-led industry relevant training programs and workforce planning. For example the Work Readiness for Growth Industries Program is a new grant program aimed at ensuring Tasmanian employers have access to the skills they need to drive future growth in our economy. It includes the agriculture and aquaculture sectors.

Trade and investment and small business support programs  
Recent trade missions to South Asia and China, and in-bound delegations to the state, are supporting access to markets.

The Department of State Growth also provides a number of business support services ranging from supporting skilled migration, to targeted assistance and grant programs, such as the New Market Expansion Program, to small business support through the Enterprise Centres Tasmania Program.

Enhancing the Tasmanian Brand  
In addition to continuing to work with and support Brand Tasmania, $650,000 is being invested to revitalise and enhance the Tasmanian Brand and ensure a consistent approach to marketing Tasmania as the best place in the country to live and work, invest and raise a family.

The Brand Tasmania - Food and Beverage Tasmania website continues to receive solid traffic with the vast majority of visitors new to the site.
Our Agri-Food Plan in Action

We recognise that the private sector has a pivotal role in achieving continued growth in our agriculture, food and seafood sectors. Reaching Tasmania's agri-food potential needs farmers, fishers, primary producers, processors, industry sectors, agri-businesses, the community and all tiers of government working together.

We operate in a global environment and global drivers, combined with our current structures and capabilities, influence how industry, business and government interact and respond to emerging opportunities and challenges. That is why the Tasmanian Government will continue to regularly engage with the private sector to deliver on our Agri-Food Plan, to develop future actions and policies, and to assign our resources.

We are open for business and welcome proposals to work in partnership with industry on initiatives that align with grow, make, protect and deliver on one or more of the investment, productivity or careers drivers.

The Tasmanian Government will continue to monitor and report on the growth in our primary industry sectors. Through publishing the annual Tasmanian Agri-Food Scorecard we will regularly measure our progress against our growth targets.

The latest Scorecard is available from the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment website www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/agriculture/facts-figures

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