

# Tasmanian Poppy Industry:

## INDUSTRY STRATEGY *for* MANAGING Paddock *and* ROADSIDE REGROWTH 2020



### Purpose

This strategy summarises the joint industry approach in Tasmania to continue to minimise and control poppy regrowth on farms and on roadsides in a way that supports existing legislative responsibilities and responsible practices.

### Background

Tasmania is internationally recognised as a leader in the secure and efficient production of raw narcotic poppy material for use in pharmaceutical medicines, supplying almost half of the world's demand.

The narcotic content of alkaloid poppies means that strict controls are maintained over all aspects of poppy production in Tasmania, from growing, to processing, and transport of the material.

Tasmania is responsible for meeting international obligations for strictly regulating the industry, including managing public health and safety risks, as well as protecting the good reputation of this valuable industry to Tasmania.

As an industry we take crop security very seriously and we endeavour to work with the Tasmanian public so they can too.

Our reputation is built on the industry's investment in cutting-edge plant breeding techniques and crop management practices, coupled with strict regulatory controls across the supply chain, overseen by the Poppy Advisory and Control Board (PACB).

We work collaboratively with the PACB to ensure best practice and continuous development of the industry, including consideration of emerging issues of shared concern, such as crop disease, poppy seed transport, security and community safety.

## Parties

- Tasmanian Poppy Advisory and Control Board (PACB), as established under Part VB of the *Poison Act 1971*
- Sun Pharmaceutical Industries (Australia) Pty Ltd, Palla Pharma Limited and Tasmanian Alkaloids Pty Ltd, the “processing companies” with operations in Tasmania
- Poppy Growers Tasmania Inc, representing Tasmania’s poppy growers

## Why is poppy regrowth an issue?

Under the *Poisons Act 1971* (the Act), alkaloid poppies of the species *Papaver somniferum* are a prohibited plant and can only be cultivated, possessed or refined under licence.

Regrowth can sometimes occur in the paddock, along farm laneways, in loading areas and along roadsides, often arising where soil disturbance occurs combined with favourable weather conditions.

Poppy regrowth plants are a potential public health and security issue if the poppy plants are left to flower and mature and they can be a host for systemic diseases that affect poppy plants, eg poppy downy mildew.

Poppy seed is very small. It can be spread from seed falling from machinery and during transport as well as by environmental factors such as wind or birds. Even with the best hygiene practices we cannot entirely eliminate the risk of regrowth and the industry is therefore committed to minimising spillage and controlling regrowth on a continuing basis.

***Poppy security is everyone’s business – our Industry’s reputation is critical***

## Responsibilities

All unauthorised poppy plants or ‘regrowth’ must be destroyed.

Growers are licensed by the PACB and are responsible for controlling regrowth on their properties including controlling the risk of seed spreading as the ‘grower’ under their licence conditions.

Processing companies are licensed by the Department of Health. Under their manufacturing licence conditions they must ensure that the transport of poppy material is conducted in such a manner as will prevent the escape and spread of seed and this is enforced by the Department of Health under the Act (in consultation with the PACB). Responsible officers named on these manufacturing licences are ultimately responsible for ensuring the practices of any sub-contracted service provider, including transport companies, is in accordance with licence conditions.

Contractors and transporting companies under their sowing or harvesting contracts with processing

companies have the responsibility to ensure that they meet all instructions and conditions in relation to minimise the potential spread of seed off-site.

It is therefore the responsibility of growers, processing companies and any agents acting on their behalf to take all necessary steps to avoid the risk of regrowth and to take action to control it where it does occur.

The PACB is responsible for ensuring the security of alkaloid poppy crops grown in Tasmania under the Act.

PACB field officers regularly check paddocks and roadsides for the presence of regrowth. On farms PACB field officers work with the growers and/or processing company field officers to control any regrowth.

On roadsides, and where appropriate, PACB field officers manually remove regrowth where they can do so safely in line with WHS protocols, including traffic management accreditation and works permits.

PACB field officers also undertake spot checks of sowing and harvesting operations.

The Department of State Growth, on behalf of the State Government, is responsible for the routine maintenance of road verges along State roads. Where a road belongs to Local Government, it is the responsibility of the relevant Council to maintain its roadsides.

Routine roadside maintenance on road verges includes activities such as roadside mowing, the use of registered herbicides to control weeds, or other methods to maintain the integrity of the road shoulder interface, line of sight requirements and sometimes includes treatment of poppy regrowth.

Where the PACB staff cannot address the issue, they notify the responsible road authority to assist with controlling any regrowth, often involving spot spraying of knock down herbicides or manual treatment.

The ongoing support of State and Local Government for routine roadside maintenance is acknowledged.

## Industry agreed actions

### Preventative hygiene

All sowing equipment, harvesters, augers and trucks are to be thoroughly cleaned of loose seed and soil before leaving the paddock.

Processing companies will actively maintain systems and internal controls to ensure relevant employees/ field officers, contractors, contractor employees or subcontractors are regularly supplied with appropriate information, instruction and training regarding minimum hygiene standards and procedures to alleviate the risk of regrowth.

The expected hygiene standards includes:

- measures to prevent seed from falling from transport vehicles and other equipment (eg bin liners, seed proof bins, and/or bins with inbuilt floors);
- removal of seed from around sowing and harvesting equipment and trucks prior to leaving paddocks (eg sufficient tools and air capacity is available for blowing down, including leaf blowers or similar);
- checking that all rear unloading doors are properly secured and sealed before commencing loading and securing loads to prevent spillage, including further tightening of tarps after a load has settled;
- checking and cleaning all points where seed or straw can accumulate after tarps have been attached and before leaving paddocks;

- checking under trucks that no straw is present before leaving a paddock; and
- removal of all straw and seed from truck surfaces (eg bin doors or in rolled tarps) prior to leaving the company weighbridge and re-entering the road network.

Processing companies will also have an appropriate process to audit compliance with its standards and procedures.

Growers will take a proactive role in monitoring that procedures to clean down equipment and trucks are undertaken before they leave their paddock(s) and to provide appropriate equipment where possible, eg: fire tanker or pressure cleaner etc.

## Poppies on the roadside

The PACB will continue to work with the responsible road authorities to monitor, identify and manage poppy regrowth on Tasmania's road network, with every possible effort made to control such regrowth, as part of the routine roadside maintenance program.

Growers and processing companies will help monitor and report to the PACB any potential sightings of regrowth on roadsides.

The parties will all contribute to the clean-up of poppy regrowth where it cannot be addressed by routine roadside maintenance (refer to existing responsibilities section).

An account will be created for this purpose, by the depositing of funds, jointly from processors and growers and will be held under the management of Poppy Growers Tasmania, with all contributors to be notified annually of any outgoing expenditure.

## Spills and accidents

Spills or accidents are rare and the PACB in consultation with Tasmanian Police, has protocols in place for engaging with the relevant processing company for the clean-up of any accidents or spills and then the ongoing monitoring of any sites.

The processing companies will advise the PACB of any incident that could increase the likelihood of regrowth occurring, such as a poppy spill or loss of poppy material during transport. It is a requirement for processing companies under their manufacturing licence to notify the PACB and other relevant authorities in writing within 24 hours of becoming aware of any loss of any poppy material.

Alternatively where a spill or incident has been identified by the PACB, and the relevant processing company and/or grower is able to be identified, then the processing company and/or grower will be contacted directly for assistance in the clean-up.

## Industry awareness and education

To promote the uptake of the measures required to minimise the risk of regrowth the parties will work together to provide regular educational information, training and/or induction to the wider poppy industry including growers, company employees and contractors.

## Community engagement and reports

All parties encourage community members to report any sightings or to raise any queries about poppy regrowth to the FarmPoint Hotline 1300 292 292 (statewide local call fee) or email: [farmpoint@dipwwe.tas.gov.au](mailto:farmpoint@dipwwe.tas.gov.au) which will result in follow-up from the PACB or one of the parties.

Information on the Tasmanian Poppy Industry and related matters is available from the DPIPWE website <https://dipwwe.tas.gov.au/agriculture/plant-industries/tasmanian-poppy-industry>

## Commencement and review

The PACB will regularly report to the parties on any incidents of concern regarding poppy regrowth and as part of the annual industry forum on the poppy season.

This industry strategy will be reviewed within two years of the commencement date and as required thereafter.

This industry strategy will be published on DPIPWE's website.

*This strategy represents our ongoing commitment as an industry to manage paddock and roadside regrowth.*

Endorsed by:

Michael Stevens Chair Poppy Advisory and Control Board

Phillip Loane Chair Poppy Growers Tasmania Inc

Noel Beven Tasmanian Alkaloids Pty Ltd

Lucy Waddell Palla Pharma Limited

Tiago Tomaz Sun Pharmaceutical Industries (Australia) Pty Ltd

Effective as at: 1 November 2020

## Further information

### Poppy Advisory and Control Board

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Regulated Crops Branch

Phone: 1300 368 550 Email: [poppies@dpipwe.tas.gov.au](mailto:poppies@dpipwe.tas.gov.au)

<https://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/agriculture/plant-industries/tasmanian-poppy-industry>

### Poppy Growers Tasmania Inc

<https://poppygrowers.com.au/>