



A message from our Chair

A big, bright shiny hello to all our grower members, corporate members, allied trade and subscribers, I hope this edition of the Undercover newsletter finds you well and out of COVID's way. Well, it is Greater Sydney's turn to be in lockdown, we are into our 3rd week and things are not looking that good right now for restrictions to be lifted any time soon. Our fellow Victorians and Melbournians will know the feeling and it is quite confronting. Here at Family Fresh Farms – we are very fortunate and grateful to be operating even though there are very tight regulations and restrictions in place to keep all our team and their families safe, whilst continuing to work. Our team has been amazing and taken to the mask wearing and extra social distancing without so much as a bat of the eyelid. However, I must say we are fortunate we are in winter because the glasshouses are milder than in summer.

You have probably heard we have had to postpone our tour of the Green Camel facility which was due to be held on 22nd July, 2021 – unfortunately, there is nothing we can do except apologise to our members and corporate sponsors for any inconvenience caused. We know everyone is dying to visit farms again and network with other growers and the allied trade but unfortunately it is health and safety first. There are some plans a-foot for farm tours in South Australia and Western Australia later this year – get in touch if you want to be involved.

We are powering ahead with the PCA Conference in Coffs Harbour and the program should be released this week. We are excited with a brilliant range of speakers and topics – it is shaping up to be an awesome event.

There will be a PCA survey arriving in your inboxes soon – please complete it as soon as you can – it is vital that we know exactly what you like, dislike and



Nicky Mann • PCA Chair

want from our organisation. We realise we are in uncharted waters right now with COVID19 but we ask you to please give us your honest feedback so we can serve you better no matter what life is throwing at you.

Lastly, I have just been informed that Dr Stephen Goodwin has passed away. This is a truly sad day for the protected cropping industry as Stephen alongside his wife, Dr Marilyn Steiner, pioneered Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for our sector and every protected cropping business utilizing IPM today owes some level of respect and gratitude to Stephen & Marilyn for championing, training, coaching and instilling passion into growers & consultants to adopt IPM. Stephen was also very much part of PCA and AGHA – being a past Board member and Chair of the organisation.

There will be a tribute to him in the upcoming Soilless magazine. Our condolences go out to Marilyn and Stephen's family.

Until next month, stay well, stay safe and hug & tell your loved ones (including your crops) how special they are to you!





AIS Greenworks at Hort Connections 2021 Conference

AIS Greenworks and sister company, Irribiz, divisions of ICI Industries, exhibited at Hort Connections, Brisbane Convention Centre in June, promoting, among other things, a new Queensland branch address at Beerwah, in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast.

Both companies work to provide solutions to the Australian agricultural, horticultural and hydroponic industries.

Projects range from small to large scale fruit and nut orchards, vineyards, chicken sheds, to high tech R&D glasshouses and semi protected crops across Australia.

Our vision is "To lead Australia's growing future through water innovation."



Left to Right: John Rourke, Technical Sales Manager; Henry Bosman, National Sales Manager; Saskia Blanch, Greenworks Sales Support and Marketing Coordinator; Chris O'Shea, Irribiz National Branch Manager

'The Australian Farmer' Digital Copy Now Available!

Growcom is pleased to give you access to this important collector's item in digital form.

Including major Horticulture innovation thematics.



[Access the digital copy](#) of this updated landmark publication dedicated to Australia's farming, agricultural, regional and country population here!



The PCA Board would like to extend our warmest welcome and good wishes to our new members.

Individual Members

Stuart Doyle, AgVista Australia

Giao Nguyen, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Darren Clarke, The Yield Technology Solutions

Tell us about your farm and/or your role in the protected cropping industry.

Our Sensing+ microclimate solution combines sensors and analytics to provide information and predictions in easy-to-use apps that help large commercial growers, and their contract growers, make fast confident on-farm decisions like when to irrigate.

What do you see as current and future challenges for the protected cropping industry?

- Maximising the ROI on technology investment
- Increasing production while working with diminishing resources
- Increasing unpredictability of weather
- Unavailability of labour due to COVID travel restrictions and border closures

What do you enjoy most about working in the protected cropping industry?

I enjoy the challenge and supporting growers that are innovating

Why is it important to be a member of the PCA, and why did you join?

There is an enormous potential in the industry and would like to support PCA in leading the way. I can support this aspiration by being a member of PCA

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Leading an AgriTech company that is focused on high value horticulture

Tell us an experience or funny story about yourself.

I started my career as an Officer in the Royal Australian Navy

We look forward to many successful years together!

Stephen Jackson, Green Camel

Tell us about your farm and/or your role in the protected cropping industry.

We are a certified organic Glasshouse operation

What do you see as current and future challenges for the protected cropping industry?

Sustainability in nutrition and media

What do you enjoy most about working in the protected cropping industry?

The diversity of operations and the high tech nature

Why is it important to be a member of the PCA, and why did you join?

It is important to be connected to other growers and industry problems

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Leading new technologies and sustainable development in the industry

Tell us an experience or funny story about yourself.

A modular growing tour in France showed me the differences in growing conditions even in protected cropping. Visiting a new operation in the UAE really showed me the amount of money pouring in the sector

Benjamin Males, Medical Cannabis Australia

Tell us about your farm and/or your role in the protected cropping industry.

Co founder/Head of projects @ Medical Cannabis Australia

What do you see as current and future challenges for the protected cropping industry?

Energy costs

What do you enjoy most about working in the protected cropping industry?

Solving Problems

Why is it important to be a member of the PCA, and why did you join?

Knowledge Share is very important for any Industry to be strong and am very interested in learn from other members

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Playing on my own farm spending more time with family

Tell us an experience or funny story about yourself.

Real not keen on talking about myself lol

PCA Advocacy Update

Greetings everyone and hope all our members are safe and well despite the latest challenges.

Introduction of a new Ag Visa to address Labour Shortages

Over the last month, the PCA welcomed the news from the Australian Government about the development of a dedicated Agriculture Visa to address the ongoing labour shortages in Horticulture. However, it was disappointing to learn after the announcement that changes to the requirements of the Visa could have a detrimental effect on retaining existing workers and recruiting future workers into our industry.

The PCA calls on all Government Departments to work together with industry when developing these policies to ensure a workable solution is forthcoming. The PCA would like to acknowledge the hard work undertaken by various Peak Industry Bodies led by AUSVEG and the National Farmers Federation Hort Council to address this issue.

The PCA will be raising this and other important issues with the Australian Government on our visit to Canberra in August.

A decision is also pending on whether the Greenhouse Construction Code will be included in the National Construction Code schedule of works.

Storm & Flood Damage in Victoria

Agriculture Victoria together with the nursery and berry Industries have reported that over 30 protected cropping business have had significant storm damage from an extreme weather event in June. An emerging issue in Victoria – and indeed nationally is growers finding it increasingly difficult to obtain insurance for all structures and other 'on farm' infrastructure. Relevant information on various assistance measures from this storm and flood event can be found at: agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/emergency-management/floods/flood-advice-and-support

Protected Cropping Research, Development and Extension Strategy update

The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries have submitted the final plan to Hort Innovation for approval. The PCA have been approached to endorse and assist with the implementation of the plan which the Board has approved. This includes working with the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment to launch the plan in the coming months.

Thank you to everybody who has contributed to this important plan that will hopefully inject much needed funds into the PCA to develop our industry and assist with Industry Development activities.



Matthew Plunkett • PCA Deputy Chair

Industry Advisory Council call for nominations

The PCA have sent out an Expression of Interest for financial members to join the Industry Advisory Council. If you would like to advise the PCA Board on matters affecting the various commodities we represent, please express your interest as soon as possible to Kerrie Harris Spencer, business@protectedcropping.net.au

This is also a great way to gain experience before considering a position on the PCA Board.

National Farmers Federation (NFF) Hort Council Membership deferred

At this stage, the PCA Board have deferred joining the NFF Hort Council until the appointment of a dedicated Executive Officer is in place to resource such a commitment. However, positive discussions are underway on a variety of issues which is welcomed.

Recruitment underway for a PCA Executive Officer

In closing, the PCA Board have started the recruitment process for a part time Executive Officer to work with our existing team.

Until next time, take care and thank you for your commitment and dedication to our industry.

	Earlybird	Regular
PCA Member	\$750	\$825
HFF Member	\$875	\$950
Non-Member	\$975	\$1050
Student	\$500	\$600

EARLYBIRD REGISTRATIONS CLOSE FRIDAY 23 JULY 2021
Register now to secure these great savings!

Did you know PCA offers a range of Membership options?

Financial Individual Members are usually individual grower or smaller allied trade organisations. Corporate Memberships are usually for larger grower or allied trade organisations.

See our corporate members at <https://protectedcropping.net.au/our-partners/>

A Corporate Membership 'bundle' includes five Individual Memberships and up to 10 Subscriber Memberships. Subscribers are non-financial members who are encouraged to upgrade to financial membership status to access PCA's full range of benefits and opportunities.

Details of Membership options are available at: <https://protectedcropping.net.au/become-a-member/> or by contacting:

Michelle Harris - Spencer: +61 (0) 3 8560 4391 or at protectedcropping@asnevents.net.au

Sydney Regional Tour 2021 Update

The Sydney Regional Tour has been postponed. A new date is currently being discussed, stay tuned!

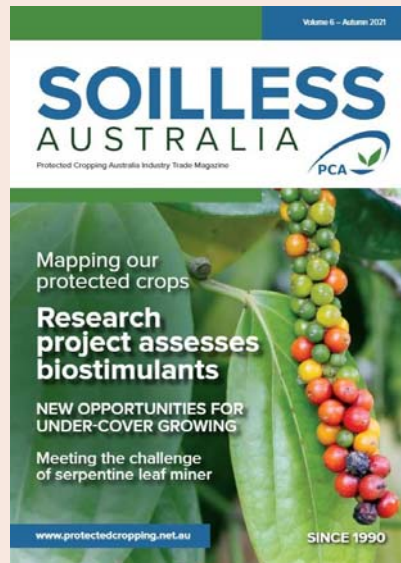


The poster features the PCA logo at the top left. The main text reads 'PCA Sydney Regional Farm Tour' in large green letters, followed by 'POSTPONED' in large orange letters and 'MARCH 2022 TBC' in large green letters. Below this, there are five circular images showing various agricultural scenes: tomatoes, a greenhouse, a field, and more tomatoes. At the bottom, the text states 'The PCA Sydney Regional Farm Tour has been postponed' in orange, followed by 'The Organising Committee is currently working on securing a new date in March 2022.' and 'Protected Cropping Australia apologises for any inconvenience caused. Stay tuned for the new date!' in black. The contact information at the bottom is '(0)3 8560 4391 | PROTECTEDCROPPING@ASNEVENTS.NET.AU'.

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Tell us your story!



People love hearing about what their peers are up to - and we're always on the lookout for news about what's going on in the protected cropping industry. Our monthly e-newsletter, Growing Undercover, is a great place to catch up on these stories.

If you've got something you'd like to share, or there's an issue you'd like addressed, we're all ears.

Please give us a call on +61 (0) 3 8560 4391 or via email: protectedcropping@asnevents.net.au

Haifa investing in young greenhouse knowledge

ON-THE-JOB training for young professionals in the horticulture industry has been a challenge amid COVID restrictions and has prompted Haifa Australia to invest in local expertise to ensure the continued development of new staff.

Emily Corbett joined the company as an Agronomist based in Victoria earlier this year and has recently been expanding her knowledge alongside greenhouse and hydroponic systems specialist, Tony Bundock.

Tony was earlier the Controlled Environment Horticulture Leader at the Chisholm Institute of TAFE before assisting the industry as a trainer for Powerplants Australia's greenhouse climate and irrigation control systems.

Today he continues to operate his consultancy, Genesis Horticultural Solutions, while assisting students in a part-time role at Community College Gippsland (CCG).

Emily said Tony's support had been a major plus for assisting her understanding and to gain experience with greenhouse and hydroponic systems. This included different irrigation systems, use of soil and soilless media and different growing practices.

Working with the Priva system for automatic fertigation of greenhouse crops, including visits to a number of hydroponic system set-ups, also had been a highlight.

Emily is putting the new knowledge into practice at CCG using fertilisers donated by Haifa Australia. "I have certainly gained a lot from the training and am looking forward to using that knowledge," she said. Tony said Emily was eager to learn, running from the theory perspective out to the on-site hydroponic operations and Priva systems. "She is like the classic star student, hanging on every word," he said.

A large portion of Tony's consultancy work also continues to focus on support for operating the Priva

systems, particularly in protected cropping areas of New South Wales. This has included a range of commercial enterprises growing berries and various vegetable crops. He also has assisted local land services in the State.



Pictured in the greenhouse at Community College Gippsland in Victoria, Haifa Agronomist Emily Corbett has been building her greenhouse and hydroponic systems knowledge from industry specialist Tony Bundock, who assists students at the college in a part-time role and also continues to operate his consultancy, Genesis Horticultural Solutions.

Minor Use Permits - What Chemicals are Registered for use in Protected Cropping in my State and for my Particular Crop?

One of the latest requests from our growers is about "minor use permits" for protected cropping systems and knowing what is available and legal to use in their state and on their crop.

The below link will allow our growers to search for products/permits online through APVMA.

portal.apvma.gov.au/permits

This link can also now be found on our website under the [resources](#) tab.



Strawberry Farm, Meander Valley TAS

PCA 2021 Keynote Speaker Highlight

JULIAN CRIBB AM

Julian Cribb & Associates



Keynote Speaker

Julian Cribb AM is an Australian author and science communicator. He is principal of Julian Cribb & Associates who provide international consultancy in the communication of science, agriculture, food, mining, energy and the environment.

He is a Fellow of the UK Royal Society for the Arts, the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering (ATSE) and the Australian National University Emeritus Faculty. He is a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

His career includes appointments as scientific editor for The Australian newspaper, director of national awareness for CSIRO, editor of several newspaper including the National Farmer and Sunday Independent, member of numerous scientific boards and advisory panels, and president of national professional bodies for agricultural journalism and science communication.

ELIO JOVICH

Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries



Keynote Speaker

Elio is a senior horticulturist with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF). For the past 26 years, he has been involved in farmer and industry aligned research, development, and extension (RD&E), managing projects in horticultural cropping systems working with a diversity of stakeholders and across a range of areas of specialisation and regions.

He has worked in both protected cropping (PC) and field production of vegetables, on diverse crops and topics, including applied research, extension, and teaching; working in interdisciplinary teams of researchers and extension officers, in partnership with farmers and various industry business; and identification of agricultural production constraints and solutions that promote sustainability of farming and livelihood systems. [View the website to read more!](#)

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Family Fresh Farm in action

PCA 2021 Invited Speaker Highlight

KATJA HOGENDOORN

University of Adelaide



Invited Speaker

Dr Katja Hogendoorn is a senior researcher of bees and crop pollination at the University of Adelaide. Her research focuses on bees as pollinators of crops and native plants, and investigating the management decisions that improve bee health, biodiversity, and crop pollination services, outside and in protected cropping. This involves improving the understanding of the factors that influence bee foraging and nesting behaviour, so their natural requirements can be better met.

In addition, she translates this information for beekeepers, growers of pollination dependent crops, and restoration and land care managers, to achieve better outcomes for crop pollination and biodiversity. Currently, she is focusing on improving pollination services in netted apple orchards.

NEENA MITTER

Centre for Horticultural Science



Invited Speaker

Prof Neena Mitter is the Director of the Centre for Horticultural Science, Queensland Alliance of Agriculture and Food Innovation, the University of Queensland. She is also the Director of the Australian Research Council Industrial Transformation Research Hub for Sustainable Crop protection.

She has received recognitions such as Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering, Women in Technology Outstanding Life Sciences Award, and Gates Grand Challenges Explorations Award. She has >100 publications and has supervised >20 PhD students. She is globally renowned for her leadership of innovative platforms namely 'Environmentally sustainable BioClay platform for crop protection' and 'Clonal propagation of avocado using plant stem cells'. [View the website to read more!](#)

Click Here to Register - Early Bird Closes 23rd July 2021



Hope to see you in Coffs Harbour for PCA 2021!

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT



Knowledge grows