

# TALGA NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2023



## MESSAGE FROM TALGA PRESIDENT

### INTRODUCING TALGA COMMITTEE 2023/24

**Hello and warm greetings to all TALGA Members, Affiliates and Associate Members**

It is my pleasure to write to you as incoming President of TALGA to introduce the new committee and to outline a few points we will be dealing with in the near future.

Together with my husband Bruce, I own and operate Blue Mountains Lavender Farm located in Little Hartley on the western foothills of the Blue Mountains. My business launched in late 2020 so is still in its infancy, however being involved with TALGA since 2019 has been invaluable and I find it very satisfying to be contributing to the Australian lavender industry.

To start, I would like to thank Kellie Oxenford for renominating for the committee, she will continue in her vital role as TALGA Secretary. Stuart Whiteman will continue as Treasurer and Fiona Glover as Public Officer with Clare Dean as an ordinary committee member. I would also like to warmly welcome the newly elected committee members, Michael Hill and Karen McRae, who begin their two year term.

## In this issue

- Message from TALGA President
- New TALGA Board Members
- 2023 TALGA Conference Round Up
- Award Winners
- Annual General Meeting Report
- News from TALGA Member Farms
- AgriFutures: Optimisation of lavender oil
- USLGA
- Book Recommendation



Have you followed the TALGA Facebook page? Click [here to follow](#), and remember to join the TALGA Facebook Group. Click [here](#).

Both Karen and Michael have written a short introduction about themselves for this issue of ENews.

At the AGM in May, we farewelled long standing committee members and office bearers Gary Young and Christine Hitchin who are both stepping away from the committee after many years of service to TALGA. In recognition of their contribution to our Association, during the festive award ceremony at the Conference Gala Dinner, Gary was awarded a Life Membership, Christine was gratefully acknowledged with an Honorary Membership and Ann Young was awarded an Honorary Membership in appreciation of her professional support over many years. TALGA wishes to sincerely thank Gary, Christine and Ann and wish them all the best for the future.

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Conference in the Blue Mountains recently and I appreciate it is a big ask, in this current economic climate, to travel to face-to-face TALGA events and stay for multiple days. For this reason, one of my first priorities as President will be to discuss with the committee the potential benefits of conducting more online information sessions to enable more of us to participate in TALGA activities without incurring costs or time away from the farm.

As discussed at the AGM, we will be continuing good governance with updates to TALGA's constitution and registration with Consumer Affairs Victoria to ensure we are meeting requirements of an incorporated organisation. We will also be working towards a positive outcome from 'The Optimisation of Lavender Oil' project and harnessing the digital tools developed by La Trobe Institute for Agriculture and Food (LIAF).

The committee will also be discussing TALGA's direction for the future – our Vision and Mission – and how this directly translates into what we do and when we do it. We will be prioritising activities that tangibly add value to your membership of TALGA and assist you in your lavender business.

This means we would like to have your input and ideas on how TALGA can help you and, as an industry representative association, your ideas on what





we could be doing. Please feel free to send your thoughts to me at email [president@talga.com.au](mailto:president@talga.com.au)

Finally, a hearty congratulations to all the winners in each category of the Olfactory Oil Awards, the Dawn Baudinette Tourism Award for Excellence in Tourism, Culinary Award, and the Jean Sargeant Craft Award, all announced during the Conference Gala Dinner and much celebrated afterwards! The summary of winners appears elsewhere in this ENews and a full wrap up of the Conference will be published in the Journal later in the year.

All the best until next month!

Louise Bickerton  
President, TALGA  
M: 0409 717 899

---

## MEET THE NEWEST TALGA BOARD MEMBERS

The TALGA Board welcomes TALGA news editor, Karen McRae, and Michael Hill, as our newest board members. Get to know them below:

### **Karen McRae – Wine Country Lavender, Hunter Valley NSW**

“My husband and I started Wine Country Lavender at the Hunter Valley NSW in 2021, planting two varieties of Angustifolias, and some Intermedia test plots. We have since expanded all the plots and planted 12,000 plants! As you can imagine, we've had our hands full mulching and weeding, and unbogging our tractor a few times!

We have been using a copper still to distil our lavender essential oil and have been using it in our range of products. So when I am not on the field, I'm usually making skincare products which I really enjoy and have been making for about five years! It is very rewarding to now be able to use our own lavender essential oil in our products.





Agritourism is a passion of ours, and we offer accommodation at our farm, accommodating up to four people, less than half an hour from all the popular Hunter Valley wineries.

I've been a member of TALGA for a couple of years and have been enjoying putting the monthly newletter together over the past year. I have learned so much from TALGA's resources, updates and from other members. It's great to be able to network and learn so much from other growers in Australia, and I hope our community continues to grow! I look forward to meeting more TALGA members in our upcoming get-togethers!" Karen & Marty

### **Michael Hill - Orkney Park, Braidwood NSW**

"My passion for lavender began in the early 1970's when I was a child – smelling the wondrously fragrant little bags of dried lavender flowers my grandmother sold in support of a charity. Then in mid-2018 we were in Provence on a walking/dining tour. We pestered our guide to show us some lavender - in between the fabulous food, culture, and scenery. By a stroke of luck, we were there on Bastille Day - the traditional start of the harvest. What an overwhelming experience to see and smell hundreds of acres of lavender in full bloom and the industrial-scale harvesting/distilling process (pictures below).



Having both grown up in the country, we decided a tree change transition in early 2021 was a good idea - so we bought a small farm near Braidwood, halfway between Canberra and the coast. In addition to us both having full-time jobs off-farm, we decided to bring our lavender dream to life by planting 2,000 Grosso seedlings with a Hamilton planter in January 2022. Whilst La Nina culled some of the plantation, our plan is to extend it over time on a nearby north-facing slope and eventually sell oil and flowers. We want to do things



regeneratively – so no plastic weed mat, no herbicides, no insecticides, no tillage, no irrigation and no artificial fertilisers. So far, so good.

We are looking forward to joining the community of other lavender farmers. Sharing the experiences and building the knowledge of TALGA members will help ensure lavender growing is a fun, fragrant and formidable agricultural enterprise." Michael & Suzanne



---

## TALGA CONFERENCE 2023 (BLUE MOUNTAINS) ROUND UP

The beautiful Blue Mountains were the back drop for the 28th TALGA Conference and AGM at The Carrington, Katoomba! What a fabulous venue and a magnificent area.

**Growing Momentum – Building your best Lavender Business** was the foundation for the conference and our sessions followed the Five Key elements of Business Success to a T! VISION, SINGULARITY, VALUE, VISIBILITY & PERSONALITY!

The conference began on Wednesday afternoon with a pre-conference session for new growers with Clive Larkman on different lavender varieties and growing. This session was well attended by some new growers but I did also lay eyes on a few experienced growers attending this session! Just goes to show you are always learning.....

The AGM was well attended by members after this session with two board members – Gary Young & Christine Hitchin retiring from the board. Two new board members Michael Hill and Karen McRae were voted in with enthusiasm.

Conference Attendees were invited to attend Welcome drinks and canapes in the bar and lounge area of the Carrington. This was a warm, friendly, fun couple of hours that gave us all time to network and catch up with lavender friends from near and far. Lots of laughter, chatter and excitement was heard!

On Thursday morning delegates gathered their lanyards, show bags (filled with lots of goodies donated by our awesome sponsors) and programs ready to soak up as much information as possible. We were heartily welcomed to the Blue Mountains by Councillor Suzie van Opdorp and encouraged to explore the area.

Our **keynote speaker DeeAnn Seccombe Prather – Managing director of DownUnder Enterprises was our VISION speaker** – Holding the line, Flexing and being a Roly poly toy. DeeAnn was a most inspirational and engaging speaker and it was very interesting to hear her story in relation to vision.

We all enjoyed morning tea and a stretch before settling down to listen to **Clare Dean from Tasmania Lavender Company and Port Arthur Lavender speak about SINGULARITY** – Unique Selling Proposition an essential ingredient in the recipe for success! Clare inspired us to do our own USP for self discovery and find out what our lavender business does well, what our customers want and what do our competitors do well – so interesting.

This lead straight into our next speaker **Phillip Prather chair of ATTIA Board of Directors who focused on VALUE** – Quality Assurance for Essential Oils Starts with the Grower. Phillip had the whole room engaged and inspired and thinking more about Quality Assurance and a QC system which could ensure the industry achieves consistency.

Attendees enjoyed lunch and more networking (we can never get enough networking) and time to chat to suppliers and speakers.

Our next speaker was **Nikki Barker from Monroe Marketing + Design who focused on VISIBILITY – Digital Marketing for Growers**. Nikki guided us through the swamp of digital marketing and some of the most desirable tools for us to use, identifying our markets and customers and how to be savvy with Social Media! Essential tools in this modern business world.

Our **Agritourism Panel – Stuart Abernethy (Lavender Abbey NZ) & Helen Griffin (Amandine Lavender QLD) & Louise Bickerton (Blue Mountains Lavender NSW)**. Each told their Agritourism Journey – the positives, the negatives, the rules and more rules mostly government hurdles, the rewards! The conversation was lively, fun but serious, informative and user friendly!

The serious part of the day done – time to wrap up and smarten ourselves up for the **gala dinner!** In the Grand Dining Room we were treated to the musical entertainment on the grand piano from Tien Attwater Year 12 student at the Blue Mountains Grammar School while we enjoyed our beautifully presented meal, the banter from Clive Larkman our MC, Craft, Oil & Dawn Baudinette Award presentations. Our Guest Speakers for the night were **Shane & Tessa McLaughlin from Hillbilly Cider NSW** who brought new meaning to the PERSONALITY part of our elements of business success. Great entertaining speakers who definitely bring personality to their own business.

On Friday morning we caught the bus (on time!) to **Blue Mountains Lavender Farm at Little Hartley**. We could not have asked for a better day – a perfectly clear, crisp morning, no wind and a comfortable day in the sunshine! We were treated to lovely coffee/hot chocolate/tea from the Coffee Cart sponsored by Fiona! We enjoyed a welcome and tour of the farm by Louise and Bruce. It was wonderful to walk around their farm and



distillation shed! A beautifully presented farm and environs – lots of discussion, questions and networking about growing, diversity & sharing. Some members enjoyed a bus trip to visit some local gardens and a tour of Historic Hartley Village while those that remained at the farm were treated to some more speakers. **Fiona Glover from Creative Dried Flowers** presented a fundamental educational session for all lavender growers and distillers on **Best Practice for Storing Essential Oil and Drying Lavender**.



**Train your Nose to Assess and Evaluate Lavender EO** was presented by Fiona Glover and Matthew Oxenford. This instructive sniffing session was used to educate members on appreciating the fragrance qualities of their own oil and others. This session was heady with the fragrance of good and bad oils, lots of questions were raised and answered and plenty of food for thought which may lead into another follow up session?

**Kaye Kelly retired owner from Tower Hill Lavender presented an informative talk on Compliance Protocols around Product Development and Labelling.** Kaye's in depth talk triggered many questions and the need for members to do their own research within their state Governments regulations.

The conference ended on such a high note and some very positive and enthusiastic feedback was much appreciated. Many thanks to Louise Bickerton for her hard work and dedication and persistence to allow us to participate in such an informative and enjoyable conference. Well done!

## AWARD WINNERS

At the Conference Dinner, Fiona Glover and Clive Larkman MC, were pleased to announce award winners. A selection of photos is included here. A full writeup will be included in the Lavender Journal.



- The **Dawn Baudinette Award for Excellence in Tourism**. This was won by Yanchep Lavender, WA. Second prize was awarded to Amandine Lavender, QLD. Photo shows Helen and Kelvin Griffin receiving award from Dawn Baudinette (top left).



- The **Jean Sargeant Craft Award** was won by Jan Illingworth. Distinction awarded to Fiona Glover and presented by Kaye Kellie and Kellie Oxenford (top right).
- Your **Best Lavender Culinary product** was won by Cate Harper and presented by Kaye Kelly (middle right).
- Winners of the **Olfactory Oil Competition** included Stuart and Sonia Whiteman for their *L.angustifolia* 'Bee' (bottom right) and Louise and Bruce Bickerton for their *Lavandula* 'Riverina Alan' (photo on page 9).
- **Life and Honorary memberships** were bestowed upon Gary Young, Anne Young and Christine Hitchin.





With thanks to the following members for organising and contributing showbags, delightful flowers and gifts to speakers (picture on page 6).

- Leven K Lavender
- Port Arthur Lavender
- Blue Mountains Lavender
- McLaren Vale Lavender

Delegates showbags included generous samples from Seasol and Weed Gunnel.



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT (17 MAY 2023)

For those members who didn't attend the AGM, here is a wrap up of proceedings for your information, the full Minutes of the AGM will be published in this year's Journal.

**TALGA AGM 2023 was held in the cosy Library of The Carrington Hotel, Katoomba on Wednesday 17 May**, organised by the 2022 Committee of Management and chaired by President Gary Young. With all categories of Members gathered, we had a total of 32 in attendance with two members connected via a Teams online link, but we were sorry to hear Committee member Christine Hitchin was delayed by a flight cancellation and could not be with us for the meeting.

The meeting began with the usual business of **previous Minutes** being accepted, audited **Financial Statements** for year end June 2022 accepted and an auditor for the next year's financial statements nominated by the Treasurer.

Gary Young stepped down as Chair and Returning Officer Neville Henderson acted as Chair until all nominations for the committee were read and vacancies declared filled. Two members did not seek renomination, Gary Young and Christine Hitchin. Kellie Oxenford was returned to the committee for another two year term, together with members Michael Hill and Karen McRae. There was no election of ALRs. All reports of Office Bearers were delivered in person and paper copies circulated for participants information. We had two major points to discuss with members during the meeting:

### Constitutional Change

Public Officer Fiona Glover outlined the need for important changes to be made to TALGA's constitution and registration with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV). The changes recognised the switch to the new membership financial year being July to June, the use of technology to enable Committee meetings to occur each month virtually via MS Teams and permit for the AGM too, and the need to register TALGA with Consumer Affairs in the state where the registered office is located, in our case, Victoria.

Fiona explained why these changes were necessary and the assistance we received from specialist commercial lawyers in Ballarat, Nevett's Lawyers to ensure proper Association

governance has been followed. Fiona pointed out that TALGA has always been registered with ASIC as a registered body but this does not provide a legal structure including incorporation. TALGA was registered with CAV many years ago but this was discontinued at some stage. The members were asked to approve a motion that TALGA proceed with the registration with CAV and adopt, with some adjustments, the Model Rules as set out by the CAV. This motion was approved by the meeting.

### **Lavender Oil project**

The second issue to put before the members was in regard to the ongoing costs associated with The Optimisation of Lavender Oil project. In 2020, the Optimisation of Lavender Oil project was proposed by Clive Larkman of Larkman Nurseries, and received a funding grant from Agrifutures. Research, including a field trial at ChinChin Farm, Vic was conducted by Latrobe Institute for Agriculture and Food (LIAF). A website was created [www.lavdata.org.au](http://www.lavdata.org.au). TALGA members were asked to participate in a questionnaire designed by LIAF and covering topics such as members' type of business, lavender cultivars being grown, and for what purpose, yield of crop, oil yield if applicable, etc. This data is being held in Google Drive and not yet uploaded to the website.

At present only lavender business names/addresses are shown on the site. Not all are members of TALGA. Agrifutures is keen for TALGA to take ownership of this site so discussion centred around the need for such industry information to be publically available and the costs associated with the management and maintenance of the lavdata database and website. It was generally agreed that TALGA should continue with current arrangements until further investigations have been conducted into possible grant funding or alternative sources to enable lavdata to be a useful source of lavender industry information for TALGA.

### **Outgoing committee members**

At this stage of the meeting it was appropriate for me to ask for a vote of thanks for the enormous contribution to TALGA made by Gary Young as outgoing President of 8 years and ordinary committee member for another 2 years, sincere appreciation by all members were expressed and admiration for a truly heroic term at the helm of TALGA. Expressions of thanks were also given to Christine Hitchin, outgoing committee member who held the office of Vice President for a few years and was instrumental in the marketing and production of the Scentimental Collection for TALGA.

### **Incoming committee members**

The meeting then concluded and a special committee meeting of incoming members 2023-2024 was conducted to determine Office Bearer positions. I am pleased to announce that Kellie Oxenford continues in the Secretary position, Stuart Whiteman continues work as TALGA Treasurer and Fiona Glover continues as Public Officer. I am honoured to accept the position of President and the Vice President position remains unoccupied for the moment. Ordinary committee members are Clare Dean who continues from her appointment in 2022, and TALGA warmly welcomes the new recruits Michael Hill and Karen McRae onto the management board.

Louise Bickerton | TALGA President

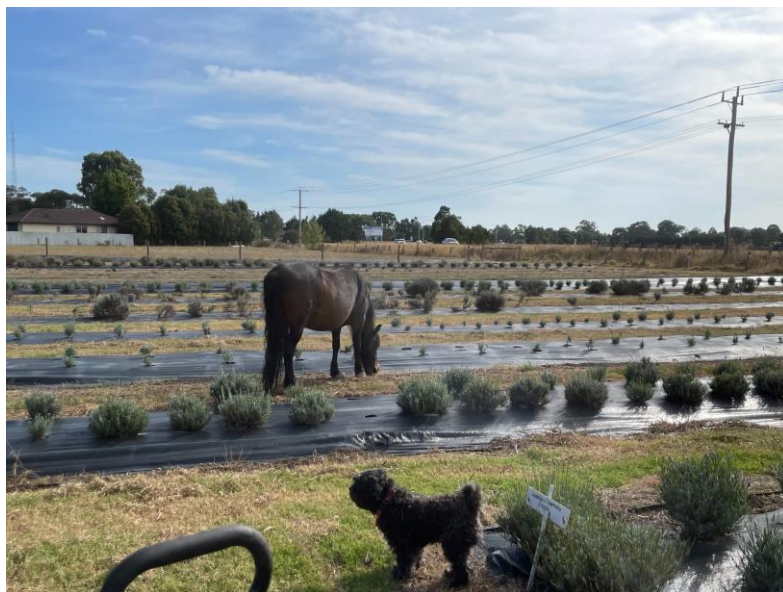


## NEWS FROM TALGA MEMBER FARMS

### ➤ Glenvalley Lavender | VIC (Cate & Neil)

Neil and I had a fantastic time at the conference it was very informative. Louise and crew did a fabulous job of running this year's event. We got so much out of it, I took plenty of notes from all the guest speakers. It was great to catch up with people we hadn't seen for awhile and meet some new faces. We only got to do a little bit of sightseeing visiting the 3 Sisters, unfortunately we weren't there long enough to see more of Katoomba and surrounds. As soon as we got home Neil was hard at work re doing more rows as we lost approximately 60% of our Lavenders due to the big wet last Spring. We have been busy doing a lot of replanting since December, still a bit more to go yet, to refill this one paddock.

Neil has made a start on another paddock which has some Grosso planted which were full size plants that I transplanted from a row that was pulled up because most of the plants died due the extensive rainfall last November. Our two Dartmoor pony mares have been doing our mowing for us between the lavender rows and are doing a wonderful job of keeping the grass down. I have been busy getting a lot of cuttings potted so hopefully most of them will take. I have also been busy doing local markets to promote our farm. Cate and Neil



➤ **Warratina Lavender Farm | VIC (Annemarie)**

Winter news: Warratina is taking a break from the public over the winter months. A great opportunity to clear out cupboards, computer files, reorganising and so on.

On the farm we will be competing some late planting. Due to the humid conditions over Summer and Autumn, propagation has been very slow therefore the lateness of this exercise.

Soil health treatment continues due to the massive amount of rain and leaching. We are applying a fish extract and Go-Go juice to all the rows. Unfortunately due to flooding last year we lost about 40% of our lavender production. Several rows have been remade and being prepared for planting.

The shop continues to sell our extensive range along with our online shop.

The Tea House is now vacant and applications are now open for a new tenant to take over end of August. Enquiries to be made to Annemarie via email.

Exhibitions in the Drying Shed continue with a most successful Patchwork and Craft Expo held recently and raising money for "Quilts for Orphans". Our next exhibition will be in September "Wood Working Wonders". See flyer attached.

Warratina continues to exhibit and sell their produce at the Mind Body Spirit Festivals in Sydney & Melbourne, both highly successful.

Happy winter working at your enterprises.

Best wishes,

Annemarie at Warratina  
Lavender farm



**WARRATINA**  
lavender farm

# WOODWORKING

*Exhibition*

9 – 24 September 10am – 4pm

Our annual exhibition and sale of stunning timber pieces by local craftsmen and women including:  
furniture, boards, platters, bowls, toys, pens  
and many other handcrafted pieces.

Entry: Adults - \$5, Concession - \$3.50, Children under 12 - Free  
Tickets available on the day at the farm

find out more at  
[warratinalavender.com.au](http://warratinalavender.com.au)

**WARRATINA LAVENDER FARM**  
105 Quayle Road, Wandin Yallock - 03 5964 4650



## AGRIFUTURES – OPTIMISATION OF LAVENDER OIL

AgriFutures have published the 'Optimisation of lavender oil' report. Read more by clicking here: [Optimisation of lavender oil | AgriFutures Australia](#)

---

## POSITION VACANT

**Café Position VIC (available immediately)** Looking for a person interested in working in a café at a well-known Lavender Farm in the Yarra Valley. Events on the farm include festivals, occasional markets, exhibitions in the Drying Shed, weddings, garden walks, and special occasions. Must have:

- Hospitality experience
- Barista training
- Good customer relations
- Able to make scones & or cakes

Minimum hours 20 hours per week at award rates. Days to include Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & occasional weekend day. Please apply via email to arrange an interview.

Include your resume with your application. Contact: Annemarie:

info@warratinalavender.com.au Mb: 0417 589 231

---

## UNITED STATES LAVENDER GROWERS ASSOCIATION (USLGA)



Did you miss out on this year's United States Lavender Conference? USLC 2023 was packed with valuable content, amazing speakers and interactive sessions!

Don't worry though, we didn't let all that great content go to waste. The recordings are available for you to purchase and review, so you can learn in your own time!

Click [here](#) for more information.

---

## BOOK RECOMMENDATION

TALGA member, Veronica Curness, recently read an interesting book that she wanted to share with lavender lovers: "[A Lavender Affair: The life and secrets of this ancient flower](#)" by Marian French. Marian and her husband owned Beach Farm (The Lavender Patch) in Avoca Central NSW, back in the 1970s. This book covers the basics for new lavender growers. Enjoy!

Have you read any interesting books or articles on lavender recently? Send an email to [news@talga.com.au](mailto:news@talga.com.au) and share your recommendation!

---