

Rural Business Tasmania

*Supporting and Growing
Rural and Regional Enterprises*



ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



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Chairman's Report

Last year was a year of many changes and developments within Rural Business Tasmania.

I would like to express our thanks to Hon. Guy Barnett MP and convey our best wishes in the new roles he is now undertaking. Minister Barnett has always been a great supporter of Rural Business Tasmania, and we appreciate the interest he has taken in our operations.

We welcome our new Minister of Primary Industries and Water, Jo Palmer MLC. I am sure that the same positive cooperation will continue with Jo and look forward to working with her in building on the valuable relationship with the Tasmanian Government.

We also wish to acknowledge the support and interest of Madeleine Oglivie MP, Minister for Small Business. As we move into supporting our rural and regional small businesses, the relationship with the Small Business Minister and her department is crucial to ensuring that all small businesses in rural and regional Tasmania have sufficient support in times of hardship. We would like to thank the Federal Government for its ongoing support for the rural and regional sector in providing financial counselling services and educational programs for our community.

We have revitalised the Board of Rural Business Tasmania by appointing 3 new Directors with different backgrounds and experience, this will bring diversification enabling a rich and skilled understanding of the issues that present. One of the strengths of Rural Business Tasmania is its Board which is made up of people with great knowledge and experience in the industry. The knowledge of Tasmania's business and primary industries sectors together with understanding of good governance ensures that our Board continues to meet the needs of the organisation.

It is with great sadness that I announce the resignation of Geoff Fader, our Emeritus Chair. Geoff has dedicated 14 years to Rural Business Tasmania and will be greatly missed. We thank Geoff for his wise counsel and passion for the organisation and his work in roles including Rural Business Tasmania Board Chair, National Rural Financial Counselling Service Network Chair and a Board Director.

With continued challenges for those doing business the importance of the organisation as a support in business and financial management will continue to be required. Shortages of labour is a major issue for farmers and small businesses and whilst tonnage wise Tasmania is producing very well, the increasing cost of production is affecting the profitability of many. In this environment of high costs for fuel, fertiliser, labour, transport, one doesn't have to be a bad farmer or business person to get in to trouble and Rural Business Tasmania is ready to assist as required.

I would like to say well done to our team, providing service to all areas of Tasmania. The team has continued to grow and diversify to meet the needs of new programs. Well done to the Executive, especially CEO Elizabeth Skirving for the achievements of the past 12 months. Thank you also to our funding bodies, partners and colleagues within the industry who have worked collaboratively with us to support our great rural and regional communities. Finally, I would like to thank Board Members for their significant contributions.



Michal Frydrych
Chairman – Rural Business Tasmania

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Rural Business Tasmania continues to grow in strength and reputation to be positioned as a key service provider in Tasmania's rural and regional communities.

Our vision focussed on supporting those running a small business and needing support with or wishing to expand their skills in business and financial management.

During July 2021 to June 2022 our industry faced a variety of opportunities and challenges as the world continued to navigate the pandemic. Rural Business Tasmania play a critical role in supporting our clients and community in adapting to change, encouraging resilience, and providing a vehicle for collaboration and effective service provision.

The agricultural community's return to prosperous seasons continued with good climatic conditions, good commodity prices and limited impact from the pandemic. Our small businesses endured further impacts of COVID-19 and our additional service portfolio has provided valuable support. Key issues that the business industry has experienced include workforce challenges, freight and supply logistics, increased costs and changing supply demands.

Significant uncertainty of funding options for our Rural Financial Counselling program post June 2021 due to funding renewal delays were resolved when in late April we secured a three-year funding grant for the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) with funds received from Australian and Tasmanian Governments. This allowed our financial counselling suite of services, **RFCS Tasmania** and **Small Business Support Program** to continue with

ongoing support to all rural and regional small business, including farming, fishing, and forestry.

We have also had additional program support for our proactive programs from the Tasmanian Government and enjoy a close working relationship with Agri Growth. We have continued to provide ongoing programs including:

- » **Forestry Contractors Resilience Program**
- » **Cultivating Rural Excellence Program**
- » **Agribusiness Career Pathways (ACP)**
- » **Cadetship Program**
- » **Mentorship Program**

We have been successful in obtaining new funding (Australian and Tasmanian Government sources) for a number of programs and will be announcing commencements during coming months. These programs include:

- » **eNABLE** – learning and extension skills development program (in partnership with Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA))
- » **Drought Risk Assessment Toolkit Project** (in partnership with Derwent Valley Catchment Group)
- » **26TEN Adult Numeracy and Literacy Program**
- » **Building resilience workshops**

We thank the Australian and Tasmanian Governments and each of the funding streams for their continued backing.

The **Rural Relief Fund**, through the provision of

emergency grants, provided support to a number of business families to build resilience or to meet immediate hardship requirements of household or animal welfare. We continue to hold funds from Tasmanian Government, corporate and individual sponsors but will be looking to further build on this to meet future demands for assistance.

The **Forum of Rural Stakeholders**, convened by Rural Business Tasmania and chaired by Rural Business Tasmania's Chief Executive, has again grown in membership and profile. Rural Business Tasmania has also continued to participate in industry discussions during this time and be available and ready to assist where appropriate. We have strong networks and stakeholder relationships and actively seek opportunities to work together.

The Australian Government, supported by Tasmanian Government, continued to expand, and develop a suite of programs and concepts to assist with adaptation, innovation and resilience to drought through the Future Drought Fund. Rural Business Tasmania were involved in discussion from early concept and have become a partner in the **Adoption and Innovation Hub for Drought Resilience – Tasmania**. We continue to look for opportunities to support our business clients to build a resilient, adaptive enterprise through managing the ever-present challenges and building risk mitigation strategies.

I would like to thank our Chairman, Michal Frydrych, and Board members for the support of myself and our team throughout the year. We have new Board Members and established a revised strategic plan that we will commence actioning in the coming 12 months.

Our operational team continues to evolve as new programs and opportunities arise. Our team have provided professional service to each participant of our programs through direct service delivery or supportive administration. Each has passion for the work we do and take pride in the communities that we support.

We thank all involved – Board, staff, funding bodies, industry, and key partners.



E Skirving

Elizabeth Skirving

Chief Executive Officer - Rural Business Tasmania

Who We Are

Established in 1986, Rural Business Tasmania Inc. is a not-for-profit association that primarily offers financial counselling and business support expertise to rural and regional communities.

Rural Business Tasmania's key objective is to help rural and regional families, businesses, and the community manage the evolving demands and challenges facing the sector.

Rural Business Tasmania has assisted many hundreds of Tasmanians to find pathways to sustainable futures. It has extensive networks that connect quickly and deeply into rural and regional communities. Our services help clients to gain a better understanding of their financial position and identify financial and business risk and opportunities. We assist clients to negotiate with lenders and creditors where necessary and refer to specialist service providers including accountants, family mediation, health and well being counsellors.

Vision

A sustainable and prosperous future for rural and regional Tasmania.

Mission

To develop and deliver services and projects within the rural and small business sector to foster viable resilient and sustainable development for Tasmanians.

Rural Relief Fund of Tasmania

The Rural Relief Fund is owned and supported by Tasmanian rural community members, and co-ordinated by Rural Business Tasmania.

In times of crisis and financial hardship, the Rural Relief Fund supports farming families and their communities in their time of most need.

We gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support provided by the Tasmanian Government who have provided a grant of \$10,000.

Donations made to the fund have this year provided immediate assistance to five applicants suffering hardship, totalling \$8,270.

Donations made to the fund are fully tax deductible as the Rural Relief Fund is a registered charity with the ATO.

Our Strategic Goals

- 1 Assist clients** to understand their business & financial management outcomes.
- 2 Implementation** of stand-alone complementary Fee for Service.
- 3 Raise awareness** in the rural and regional business community of our role, purpose and value of Rural Business Tasmania.
- 4 Support young people** to increase business acumen, financial and functional literacy to support workforce and industry for the future.
- 5 Position Rural Business Tasmania** to partner with corporate support and expand grant opportunities through key alignment with strategic entities.

Our Core Values

Our core values guide the way we work and behave:



Safety

A genuine care for the health and wellbeing of our people, clients and the wider community



Integrity

Staying true to our values even when it's hard



Professional

Providing excellence in service



Caring

Truly caring for our clients



Trust

Working together to achieve common goals and shared outcomes



Empathy

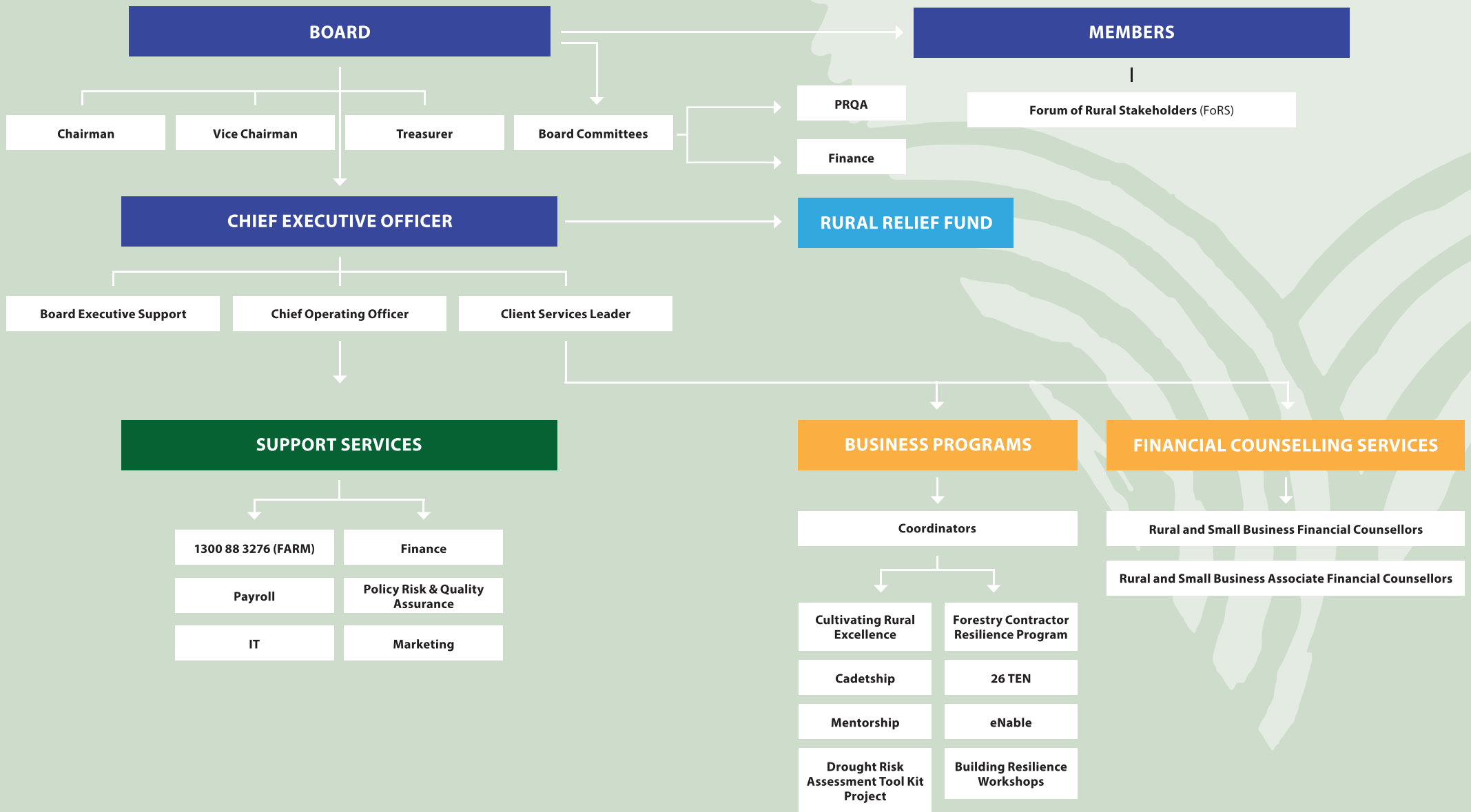
Understanding the concerns and fears of our clients



Collaboration

Working together as one team

Organisational Structure



Board Members

Name	Appointed	Position
Michal Frydrych	29/01/2014	Chairman from 20/11/2019
Geoff Fader	10/11/2011	Emeritus Chair from 20/11/2019
Keith Rice	14/12/2016	Treasurer from 20/11/2019
Tony Barker	16/04/2012	Vice Chair
Belinda Hazell	18/11/2016	Board Member
Christopher Bishop	14/02/2022	Board Member
Rebecca Duffy	14/02/2022	Board Member
Karen Robinson	14/12/2016	Associate Board Member
Sophie Milic	14/02/2022	Associate Board Member

Rural Business Tasmania is governed by the Board, supported by the Reference Group who provides advice and assistance as required. Members are invited to the Board as a representative of the community, industry or member group.



Picture (L-R): Sophie Milic, Michal Frydrych, Geoff Fader, Chris Bishop, Belinda Hazell, Tony Barker, Rebecca Duffy. (Absent – Keith Rice, Karen Robinson)



Michal Frydrych
Chairman

- >> Business strategy
- >> Marketing
- >> Project management
- >> Staff development



Geoff Fader
Emeritus Chair

- >> Business mentor
- >> Governance
- >> Board positions
- >> Marketeer



Keith Rice
Treasurer

- >> CEO Poppy Growers
- >> Board positions



Tony Barker
Vice Chair

- >> Diploma in Agriculture
- >> Diploma of Farm Management
- >> 2006 Nuffield Farming Scholarship



Belinda Hazell
Director

- >> MBA (Agricultural Innovation)
- >> Advanced Diploma of Horticulture
- >> Diploma of Occupational Health and Safety
- >> Board positions



Rebecca Duffy
Director

- >> Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Oenology)
- >> Business Management
- >> Marketing/Strategy Development
- >> Board positions



Christopher Bishop
Director

- >> Fellow CA ANZ
- >> Bachelor of Business Accounting
- >> Strategic Business Advisor
- >> Business analysis and strategic planning



Karen Robinson
Associate Director

- >> CEO Rural Youth
- >> Board positions



Sophie Milic
Associate Director

- >> Masters of Public Administration
- >> Bachelor of Commerce and Arts
- >> Strategic Communications and Stakeholder engagement
- >> Director of Coaldale Walnuts

Meet Our Team



Top Row L-R: Peter Aitchison, Lovisa Stagoll, Karen Hinds, Tim Hickey

Second Row: Tania Cornwall, Andrew van Rooyen, Kate Cox, Rhett McKenzie-Edwards, Linda Groombridge

Third Row: Michelle Williams, Roly Chugg, Stephen Hansen, Joanne McCullagh

Front Row: Elizabeth Skirving, Chantal Filgate **Absent:** John Dunbar



Elizabeth Skirving

Chief Executive Officer

- » Bachelor of Business
- » 5th generation farmer
- » Governance
- » Board positions



Chantal Filgate

Chief Operating Officer

- » AdvDip Ldrshp & Mgt
- » Dip Financial Services



Stephen Hansen

Client Services Leader

- » AdvDip of Accounting
- » Cert Ag Bus Mgt
- » Financial Counsellor



Joanne McCullagh

Executive Assistant

- » Executive support to CEO & Board Directors
- » Liaison with external stakeholders



Roly Chugg

Senior Financial Counsellor

- » Dip of Community Services (Financial Counselling)
- » AdvDip of Ag Bus Mgt
- » Cert in Financial Services



Michelle Williams

Senior Finance Officer

- » Cert IV Book Keeping
- » Financial Management
- » Support Services



Tania Cornwall

Payroll Officer

- » Marketing
- » Cert IV in Bus (Sm Bus Mgt)



Kate Cox

Support Officer

- » Marketing



Peter Aitchison

Financial Counsellor

- » Dip in Financial Services (Financial Planning)



Andrew van Rooyen

Financial Counsellor

- » Dip of Finance & Mortgage Broking Mgt



Lovisa Stagoll

Programs Delivery Officer

- » Bachelor of Business



John Dunbar

Associate Financial Counsellor

- » Bachelor of Business
- » Assoc Degree in Agribusiness



Linda Groombridge

Associate Financial Counsellor

- » Grad Cert Business Mgt
- » Advanced Leadership Program
- » TWIA Executive - Interim Secretary



Karen Hinds

Compliance Officer

- » Cert IV in Financial Services
- » Finance and Admin support



Rhett McKenzie-Edwards

Business Development Officer

- » Undergrad in Applied Science Agribusiness
- » Cattle Council Australia - Policy Working Group Member



Tim Hickey

Financial Counsellor

- » Dip Farm Management

Our Team

Position	Incumbent	Term
Chief Executive Officer	Elizabeth Skirving	30/10/06 - Current
Chief Operating Officer	Chantal Filgate	04/05/20 - Current
Client Services Leader Financial Counsellor	Stephen 'Steve' Hansen	20/02/20 - Current
Board and Executive Support	Joanne McCullagh	14/06/22 - Current
Senior Financial Counsellor	Roland 'Roly' Chugg	19/08/13 - Current
Financial Counsellor	Timothy 'Tim' Hickey	14/09/20 - Current
Financial Counsellor	Peter Aitchison	18/10/21 - Current
Programs Delivery Officer	Nanna 'Lovisa' Stagoll	20/10/21 - Current
Financial Counsellor	Andrew van Rooyen	10/01/22 - Current
Associate Financial Counsellor	Linda Groombridge	11/12/19 - Current
Associate Financial Counsellor	John Dunbar	18/02/21 - Current
Business Development Officer	Rhett McKenzie-Edwards	06/04/20 - Current
Senior Finance Officer	Michelle Williams	11/07/22 - Current
Payroll Officer	Tania Cornwall	14/02/20 - Current
Compliance Officer	Karen Hinds	15/02/21 - Current
Support Officer	Kate Cox	26/11/19 - Current
Board and Executive Support	Vanessa Smith	11/11/19 - 22/06/22
Finance Officer	Kim Woolley	05/04/16 - 30/06/22

Rural Financial Counselling Service

Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) remains the flagship program for the organisation — a highly respected and valued service that has been operational for over 30 years. We strive to achieve best practice providing support to Tasmanian rural and regional agribusiness and look for opportunities for enhancement.

Rural Business Tasmania in early 2021 was successful in securing the Australian Government's competitive tender process to deliver the new Rural Financial Counselling (RFCS) Program for Tasmania.

This new program is focussed on resilience and recovery.

During the 2021-2022 year, Rural Business Tasmania employed Rural Financial Counsellors based in the following locations:

- » North West
- » North/North East
- » Southern

A brief summary of factors for 2021-2022 impacting on primary production and ultimately the demand for the RFCS include:

- » Commodity prices across the beef, sheep & dairy sectors remain high which has increased demand for financial counselling services
- » North West Tasmania has experienced drier than normal conditions at times, however the remainder of the State has seen rainfall at or slightly above long-term averages. Portions of the East Coast and Southern Midland regions are still in recovery mode from the many years of drought like conditions.
- » COVID-19 related challenges continued to impact in aspects such as access to goods & labour e.g. harvest workers.
- » The Tasmanian Seafood Industry continued to suffer significant financial hardship as a whole due to loss of markets from COVID-19 and international trade issues which resulted in an increase in demand for our services. Rural Business Tasmania is working with the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC) to support this sector.

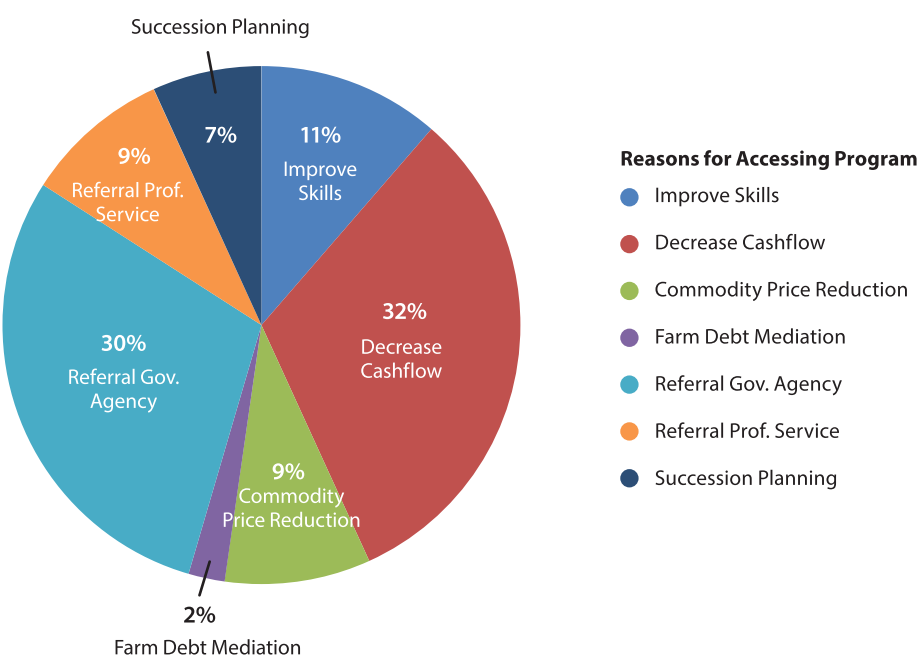
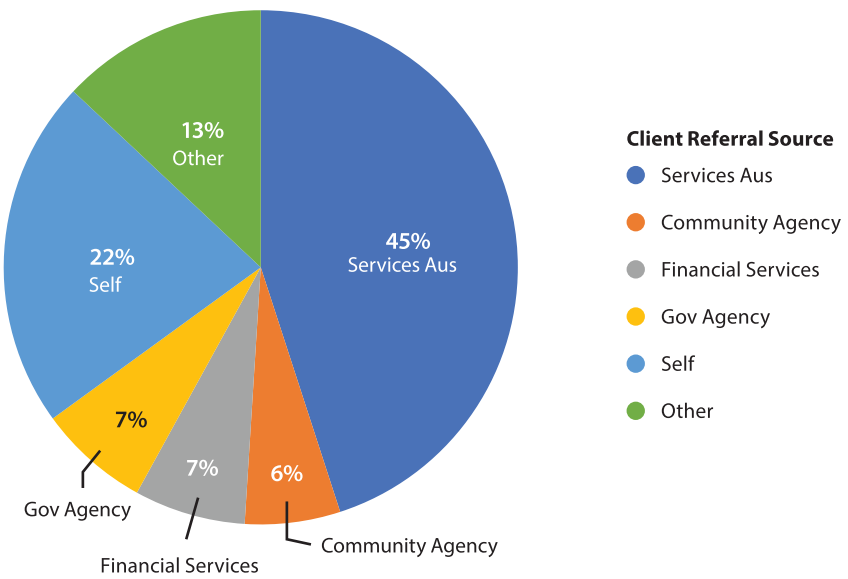
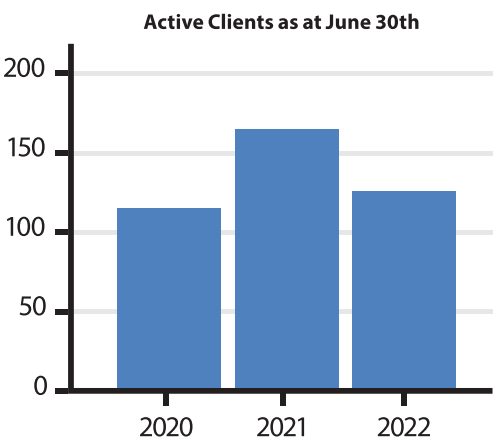
Client Levels

Client numbers have reduced from a peak of 165 clients to 127 clients as at the 30th June 2022.

This is primarily due to record commodity prices in the beef, sheep and dairy sectors.

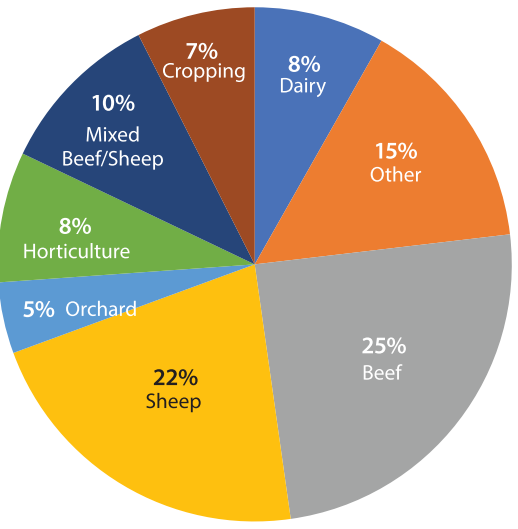
Primary producers in the Midlands & East Coast regions are seeking our assistance as they continue to recover from the extended dry conditions that have prevailed for several years.

The majority of our new clients were referred from a government agency (e.g. Services Australia, Dept. Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry, etc.) or through word of mouth however discovery of RFCS via social media is increasing.



RFCS Clients Per Industry

- Dairy
- Other
- Beef
- Sheep
- Orchard
- Horticulture
- Mixed Beef/Sheep
- Cropping



Counsellor Engagement

Clients in general are now assessed in one of two ways:

1. TRANSACTIONAL

Can be either complex or non-complex e.g. assist client with a loan application (complex) or assist with grant application (non-complex).

2. CASE MANAGED CLIENT

Holistic approach taken and client assisted in becoming financially resilient and self-sufficient through coaching and empowerment. Client is assisted with either succeeding, succession or exiting as required.

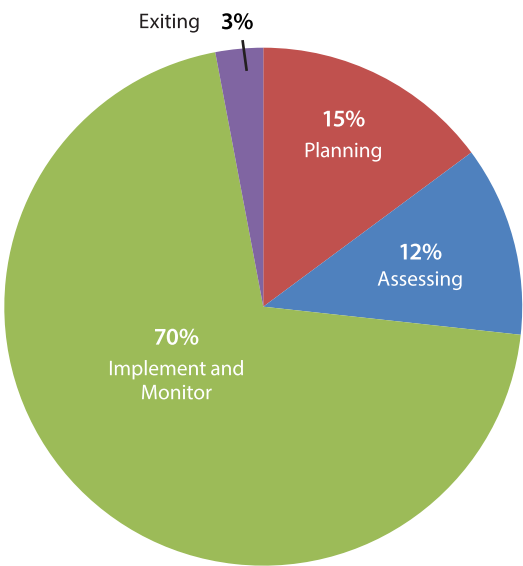
The bulk (over 95%) of our clients are considered as case managed clients

A case managed client is taken through various phases on their journey with Rural Business Tasmania and these phases are:

- >> Assessing
- >> Planning
- >> Implement and Monitor
- >> Exiting

Breakdown of RFCS Case Managed Client Counselling Phase

- Assessing
- Planning
- Implement and Monitor
- Exiting



Community Engagement and Referrals to External Partners in Times of Need

Our Financial Counsellors have worked alongside many varying industry partners and provided immediate on the ground assistance when natural disasters have impacted such as the Huonville bushfire event in early 2022.

The Rural Financial Counselling team has also partnered with Services Australia and the National Resilience and Recovery Agency for various roadshows and presentations across multiple towns throughout regional and rural Tasmania.

Our counsellors continue to regularly refer their clients to external parties in order to ensure that they are accessing all the necessary support and assistance they require in helping build their financial resilience.

A strong focus is to assist clients in accessing support around mental and emotional well-being. Our counsellors regularly refer clients to various social support groups/organisations such as Rural Alive & Well or our new program aimed at increasing adult literacy and numeracy skills – 26TEN and or their medical practitioner.



Small Business Support Program

Rural Business Tasmania’s Regional Small Business Support Program is designed to assist regional and rural small business enterprises that are either under financial hardship or have the potential to be under financial hardship.

The focus of the program is to assist businesses to:

- » Better understand their financial position and options moving forward
- » Develop self-reliance and enhance business viability
- » Access assistance measures as required

This program has been in operation since February 2020 with funding provided by a mixture of Federal and State Government assistance.

This program whilst being able to provide support to any small business across the State, has chosen to focus its emphasis on business’s located greater than 20 kilometres from Hobart or Launceston, noting businesses within this 20km radius are still eligible for support.

Client Focused Outcomes

The program key areas of focus and client assistance include:

- » Understanding their current financial position
- » Identifying options and implement plans to improve the viability of their enterprise
- » Understanding the benefits and drawbacks of different options to manage financial issues
- » Develop budgets and cash flow management
- » Negotiate with creditors and financial providers on behalf of the client
- » Understand rights and access broader professional advice and support services
- » Access government and community grants, programs or schemes

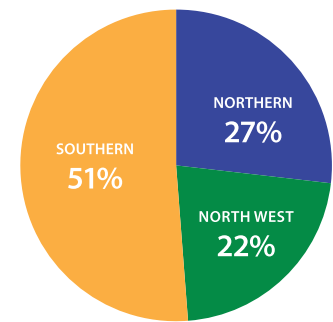
Statewide Coverage

The Small Business Team service greater Tasmania as follows:

- » North West
- » North/North East
- » Southern

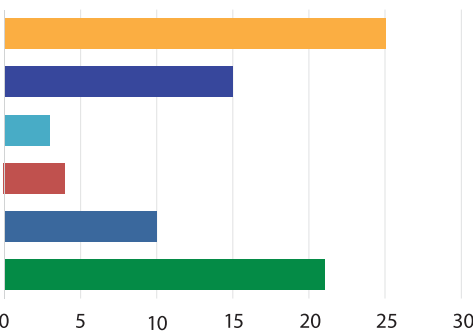
The program has been accessed by small business across all regions of Tasmania, with the exception of the Bass Strait Islands.

Active Clients by Region as at 30th June 2022



Southern Northern North West West Coast North East East Coast

Clients Assisted by Region Since Small Business Program Inception in March 2020



Coupled with the above charts the strongest demand by location has been Southern Tasmania with the Glamorgan Spring Bay, Sorell and Tasman Peninsula Local Government Authorities seeing highest demand.

Profile of a Typical Client Assisted

A typical regional small business program support client resides in a regional town of less than 5,000 people situated on the south east coast of Tasmania.

The business will provide food and or accommodation services and has 2.5 employees including the owner.

The business has typically been in operation for 6.5 years with an average turnover in the preceding 12 months of \$178,000

The client would have presented seeking assistance due to the business either not covering expenses or covering expenses but not making a profit.

The business will not have a business plan or cash flow budget.

It should be noted that only 20% of businesses assisted to date, actually have had a business plan prior to seeking our help.

Assistance will be typically sought for:

- » Diversifying the business (products/services, customer base)
- » Forecasting cash flow and managing day-to-day finances
- » Promotion/marketing – e.g., establish a digital presence (Website, Facebook etc)

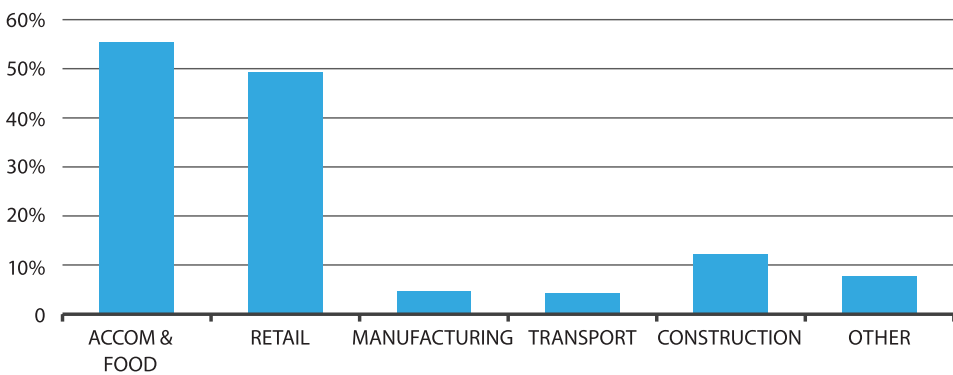
Assistance Provided

Strongest demand has been seen in the accommodation and retail sectors with COVID-19 related impacts being the main cause for businesses seeking assistance.

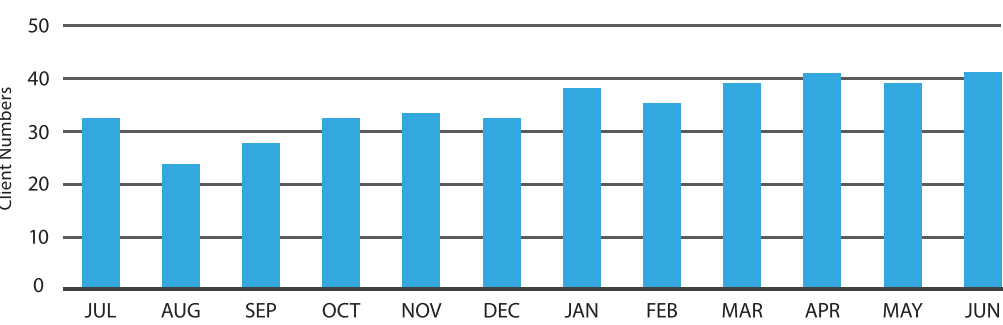
Coupled with the above, strongest demand by location has been in the Circular Head LGA and the Glamorgan Spring Bay LGA.

Uncertainty around funding post June 2021 led to a reduction in client numbers in April and May 2021. In late May 2021 funding was recommitted to the program and client numbers increased.

Industry Assistance by Type YTD Basis



Active Clients Rolling 12 Month Basis



Rural Business Programs

Our Rural Business Programs team has seen significant growth over the past twelve months. New and existing programs being undertaken include:

- >> Forestry Contractors Resilience Program
- >> Cultivating Rural Excellence Program (CRE)
- >> 26TEN Adult Numeracy & Literacy Program
- >> eNABLE – Learning & Extension skills development program in partnership with the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA)
- >> Drought Risk Assessment Toolkit Project in partnership with the Derwent Valley Landcare Group
- >> Cadetship Program
- >> Mentorship Program

Our business programs are designed to support and develop both the skillset and knowledge base of Tasmanian regional and rural communities and primary producers alike through innovative programs.

Our programs are funded through a mixture of Australian and Tasmanian Government funding, commercial support from regional and rural Tasmanian businesses and program participants.

Forestry Contractors Resilience Program

The Forestry Contractors Resilience Program was funded by the Tasmanian Government and has been successfully delivered.

This program allowed Tasmanian forestry harvest and haulage contractors to have the opportunity to work with specialists in business and financial management to identify future opportunities and build stability and resilience into their operations.

Eligible applicants received up to 5 hours of professional business coaching and up to \$15,000 to deliver agreed business improvements. The project funded safety upgrades to machinery, training of staff, upgrades to compliance software and purchase of new equipment to diversify income streams.

Key Outcomes Delivered:



27 grants paid out



\$386,350 total value of grants paid out to contractors



127 hours of business coaching delivered

Rural Business Programs

26TEN Adult Numeracy, Literacy & Digital Literacy Skills Development Program

Approved in May 2022 and funded by the Tasmanian Government, the 26TEN pilot program is designed to provide in-home support in the areas of literacy, numeracy and digital literacy in rural and regional communities.

The pilot will initially operate in Northern Tasmania with the potential to expand should demand warrant.

Participants can access up to 15 hours of one-on-one in home support to be conducted by an Adult Literacy Skills Officer.

As part of the program, Rural Business Tasmania staff have been provided training in how to identify and refer clients with potential literacy and numeracy issues.

Rural Business Tasmania is acting as a referral service to the 26TEN program, and has also engaged key stakeholders such as Tasmanian Fire Service, major banks and industry bodies to broaden the potential reach of the program.

eNABLE – Nurturing Agri Business Learning and Extension

This is a joint project between Rural Business Tasmania, The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) and the Australian Government Community Grants - Ag Up Program.

The project aims to develop and roll out a new training program targeting three distinct groups of people:

1. Owners and managers of small to medium agricultural and rural businesses
2. Early-career extension officers and consultants
3. Mid-career extension officers or consultants seeking to develop/refresh skills

Training will be delivered by fully qualified and registered training organisations via a mixture of face to face training and on-line sessions. Between 30 and 40 participants are expected to be trained each year.

The training developed will be a combination and merger of two independent training programs previously delivered (Cultivating Rural Excellence via Rural Business Tasmania and TIA's Extension Accelerator Program).

Drought Risk Assessment Toolkit (DRA)

Our Tas Ag Innovation Hub application for the Drought Risk Assessment – Practical Management Support to Build Resilience was lodged in April 2022 and approved in July 2022.

The total project funding will allow Rural Business Tasmania in partnership with the Derwent Catchment Project to deliver a Drought Risk Self-Assessment toolkit.

This toolkit is designed to help farming operators gauge current susceptibility and preparedness in relation to drought conditions, covering topics such as access to water, land management, forecasting and trigger points as well as enterprise flexibility and financial resilience.

The assessment tool kit will then provide practical management steps to make improvements in these areas.

Rural Business Programs

Building Resilience Workshops

Our Building Resilience Workshops, funded by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) are designed to support disaster prone Local Government Areas (LGAs) to better understand emergency response and preparedness.

These workshops will include key speakers from the SES, Tasmanian Fire Service, involved councils and Rural Business Tasmania.

Three key LGAs identified to host these workshops for the first round are:

1. Huon
2. Tasman
3. Break O'Day

These locations are subject to change for future rounds, pending disaster events in the upcoming seasons.

Cadetship Program

The Cadetship Program is designed to bring young people and employers together to create opportunities in rural communities and attract young people into agriculture.

A review of this program was conducted in late 2021 with a new project plan developed in conjunction with Skills Tasmania. This program is funded by the Tasmanian Government and supported by various industry stakeholders.

The aim of the program is to give year 11 and 12 students the opportunity to be placed in work experience roles in the agricultural sector with the intention of leading to a traineeship or apprenticeship.

The following schools have engaged in the program

- » Winnaleah High School
- » Yolla High School
- » Campbelltown High School
- » Ulverstone High School
- » Sheffield District High School
- » Launceston Grammar School
- » Brooks High School

The following employers / training organisations have also been engaged:

- » Skills Tasmania
- » TasTafe
- » MAS National
- » Safe Farming Tasmania
- » Primary Employers Tasmania
- » RTV Training
- » Beacon Foundation
- » Nutrien Ag Solutions
- » Harvest Moon
- » Brooks Dairy
- » ABC Tasmania
- » Tas Country
- » Huon Aquaculture

Rural Business Programs

Mentorship Program

After being postponed due to the impact of COVID-19 the Mentorship Program has been launched. Since March 2022 participation rates have been strong with connections made between mentors and mentees undertaking the program.

The Mentorship Program funded by the Tasmanian Government is aimed at:

- » Matching young farmers with experienced farmers, to help impart their knowledge onto the next generation of leaders in the agricultural sector.
- » Encouraging strong communication between mentors and mentees, to provide an experience of mutual benefit.
- » Build the young farmers' knowledge through mentoring and support.

Cultivating Rural Excellence Program

This program is designed to allow participants to hone their skills in business planning, communication, team management, financial reporting, understanding risk management, marketing, wealth management and much more.

In October, 2021, eight participants graduated from the program.

The program is planned to be incorporated into the eNABLE program in FY23.



Forum of Rural Stakeholders

Like minded community organisations, education providers, government businesses, government departments, peak industry groups and service providers have an opportunity to share knowledge and discuss emerging issues at gatherings held bi-monthly. Rural Business Tasmania is the convenor of the group with CEO, Elizabeth Skirving, chairing the roundtable forums.

In the first half of each meeting representatives hear from guest speakers and gain an Agri Growth industry update including discussions on emerging issues of the moment. The second half of the proceedings is a round table for each member to provide their organisational update, accompanied by a light lunch. We thank Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tas for hosting this face to face luncheon. Due to COVID some Forums have continued to be held online.

Forum of Rural Stakeholders meetings were held bi-monthly during 2021/22

- » 2021 July, September, November
- » 2022 January, March, and May

Guest speakers included:

- » Hon. Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries
- » Nicole Dobber (TIA) – presentation on TIA Events and Tas Ag Drought innovation Hub
- » Catherine Murdoch (NRET General Manager)
- » Rhett McKenzie-Edwards (Rural Business Tasmania) launch of Mentorship Program

Topics discussed included:

- » Agri Growth update
- » Workforce development (labour shortages, seasonal workers)
- » Horticulture – fair work piece rate impacts
- » Freight and logistics
- » Supply chain shortages
- » Input costs (fertiliser, fuel, inflation)
- » COVID and transition to living with COVID
- » Respect in the Workplace – media campaign videos
- » Weather impacts
- » Wellbeing – community and individuals
- » Member events, activities and updates

Members regularly attending included:

- » Dairy Tasmania
- » Dept. of Natural Resources & Environment Tas
- » Dept. of State Growth
- » Fruit Growers Tasmania
- » Local Government Association of Tasmania
- » National Recovery and Resilience Agency
- » Natural Resources Management North
- » Natural Resources Management South
- » Poppy Growers Tasmania
- » Primary Employers Tasmania
- » Regional Development Australia – Tasmania
- » Regional Investment Corporation
- » Rural Alive and Well
- » Rural Business Tasmania
- » Rural Youth Tasmania
- » Services Australia
- » Sprout Tasmania
- » Tas Ag Hub (Innovation and Drought Hub)
- » Tas Tafe
- » Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group
- » Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association
- » Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture
- » Tasmanian Small Business Council
- » Tasmanian Women in Agriculture
- » Utas/Uni College
- » Work Safe (Safe Farming Tas)

Engagement and Networks

During the past twelve months, Rural Business Tasmania Board and Team Members attended many events, industry forums, meetings and interacted with many stakeholders.

Rural Business Tasmania has engaged with:

- » Primary producers in our region including bee, sheep, wool, grains, dairy, poultry, and other intensive animal industries, viticulture, fishers and horticulture.
- » Small businesses in rural and regional Tasmania.
- » Regional Small/Medium Entities.
- » Local government authorities.
- » Tasmanian Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas).
- » Department of Fisheries and Forestry.
- » Federal and State Government departments and agencies (eg Service Tasmania, Centrelink)
- » Farmer's and fishery organisations including: Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, Poppy Growers Tasmania, Tasmania Seafood Industry Council, Rock Lobster Association, Tasmanian Fruit Growers Association.
- » Rural Youth Tasmania.
- » Rural industries representative bodies: water authorities, milk processors, co-ops.
- » Service providers and local community services: Country Women's Association, Tasmanian Women in Agriculture, Salvation Army, Rural Alive and Well, Relationships Australia - Tasmania, churches, community health organisations, relief agencies.
- » Professionals: accountants, lawyers, rural consultants.
- » Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community.
- » Banks and other lending institutions.

Government, Industry & Business

This included high level government discussion, industry collaboration, information sharing, outreach for programs, business development and general stakeholder engagement. We have a broad audience and were able to engage extensively with them, including:

- » Hon Jo Palmer MLC
- » Hon Guy Barnett
- » Hon Madeleine Oglivie
- » Hon Janie Finlay
- » Hon Rebecca White
- » Hon Jane Howlett
- » Hon Bridget Archer
- » Peter Voller (Cradle Coast Authority)
- » Catherine Murdoch (NRE Tas)
- » Huon Aquaculture
- » Doris Blaesing (RMCG)
- » Troy Robbins (Tas TAFE)
- » Naomi Walsh (UTAS)
- » Karen Robinson (Rural Youth Tasmania)
- » Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council
- » Mike Rose, Tas Institute of Agriculture
- » Tasmanian Abalone
- » Harvest Moon
- » Private Forests Tasmania
- » Tasmanian Small Business Council
- » ASBFEO Preparedness Resilience and Recovery Consultation

Government, Industry & Business:

- » Skills Tasmania
- » Nutrient Agriculture
- » Financial Counsellors Association Tasmania
- » Derwent Catchment Project
- » Break O'Day Business Enterprise Centre
- » Primary Employers Tasmania
- » Regional Development Australia (RDA)
- » Tee Off Enterprises
- » Tas Gas Networks
- » Tasmanian Community Fund
- » Rural Alive and Well (RAW)
- » Commonwealth Bank Australia
- » Rodgers Reidy
- » Aurora Energy (Hardship Team)
- » Tasmanian Women in Agriculture
- » ANZ Bank
- » Fruit Growers Tasmania
- » Westpac
- » Seed Lab
- » Regional Investment Corporation
- » Coal River Products
- » NAB Agribusiness
- » University of Tasmania
- » AusVeg
- » Findex Smithton
- » Bendigo Bank
- » Services Australia
- » Dairy Tasmania

Activities Undertaken:

Regular meetings attended:

- » Agricultural Co-ordination Group (Tas Government and industry)
- » National Executive Officers Meeting – RFCS Network and service providers
- » UTAS – Tas Ag Hub (as Partner and Steering Committee member)
- » OCCC Meeting – Economic Regulator
- » RDA Regional Intelligence Sharing sessions
- » Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia
- » Resilience Program Collaboration Group (Future Drought Fund)

Presentations made:

- » AICD Economic briefing
- » Tas Ag Hub Partner Council meeting
- » Forum of Rural Stakeholders

Events attended:

- » Ag Innovation Expo
- » Campbell Town Show
- » Agfest
- » AgriFuture Australia Community Perceptions and Worker Experience Roundtable
- » National Small Business Summit
- » WorkSafe Awards Dinner
- » NRRA National Meeting
- » Jobs and Skills Summit
- » National Small Business Summit
- » Rural Alive and Well Statewide events
- » Tourism Tasmania Industry Updates
- » Old Mates Day
- » Fonterra Business & Breakfast
- » Dairy HIGH Agribusiness Professional Breakfast
- » NRRA Agency Events

Support Services

The Support Services Team have continued to provide service support that ensures we meet the financial and administrative commitments, to sustain effective delivery of our programs and ongoing positive relationships with its partners.

Finance and Admin

Rural Business Tasmania has continued to build and manage its workforce and provide resources necessary to ensure it delivers requirements of all grant deeds that it operates under.

Additional vehicles have been purchased in the period to support the expanded financial counselling services. We thank Buckby Motors for their continued support in supply.

Thank you Ian Dickinson and Synectic for their support.

PRQA

Compliance and risk remain a focus of the organisation. During the year, our Policy Risk Quality Assurance Committee have worked closely with Support Services and Management in continued improvement in policy and procedure. The Committee reviewed policies and procedures monthly and made recommendations to the Board for change as required.

HR

A restructure of the business was undertaken to meet the continued growth of the organisation. This has led to four new roles being introduced, Senior Finance Officer, Compliance Officer, Business Development Officer and Programs Delivery Officer.

General compliance with Human Resource Laws, remains a focus this year. Thank you to Tess Moore and Andrew Cameron for their ongoing assistance and expertise in this area.

Staff movements during the year

Farewell: We would like to thank Vanessa Smith and Kim Woolley for their time at Rural Business Tasmania and wish them every success in the future.

Welcome : Welcome to Michelle Williams, Peter Aitchison, Andrew van Rooyen and Lovisa Stagoll who joined the team in 2022.

IT

An operational upgrade to our Client Relationship Management (CRM) system was completed to ensure that we are able to capture key elements of our Rural Financial Counselling Service Program and Small Business Support Program.

Thankyou: We would like thank Beyond IT for their continued IT support and acknowledge the work completed by Trevor Chalk in his expertise and support during the upgrade of CRM.

Support Services Team

Support Services Team provide critical business support to all aspects of the business including;

- » Administrative Support
- » Financial Administration
- » Payroll
- » Human resources
- » Accounts payable and receivable
- » Managing IT issues with the help of Beyond IT
- » Vehicle fleet oversight
- » Asset requisition and disposal
- » Compliance and oversight of statutory reporting to regulatory bodies
- » Policy review and oversight
- » Administrative support to board sub-committees

This year has been a year of growth and restructure where we have strived to meet and exceed the goals and expectations of the business. It is with great anticipation that the Support Services Team look forward to 2022-2023.

Compliance and Policy

Rural Business Tasmania has complied with all reporting requirements to Government, the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission and the Australian Taxation Office.

The Board's sub-committees continue in conjunction with staff, to oversee and complete periodic reviews of all policies and procedures and financial reporting to ensure that Rural Business Tasmania is at the forefront of its compliance and regulatory responsibilities.

Funding Partners:

Rural Business Tasmania thanks and acknowledges, the critical financial support received from Australian and Tasmanian Government agencies.

- » Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE – Australia)
- » Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas)
- » Department of State Growth

In addition, we thank and acknowledge the support of our sponsors including our founding body Rural Youth Tasmania Inc. for their generous in-kind support and the Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania and Devonport Agricultural and Pastoral Society for office accommodation.

In-kind and Financial Sponsors:

- » Rural Youth Organisation of Tasmania Inc. – Launceston office facilities
- » Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania – Hobart office facilities
- » Devonport Agricultural and Pastoral Society – Devonport office facilities

Founding Body:

- » Rural Youth Tasmania



Treasurer's Report

An overview of financial activities and the audited financial statements for the 2021-2022 financial year shows that income has remained steady at \$1.7m which has resulted in a sound operating surplus of \$77,000.

It is important to acknowledge that whilst we are a not for profit organisation, a sound surplus enables Rural Business Tasmania to deliver programs as well as the ability to evolve with the needs of our rural and regional communities.

Financial Reporting

To ensure financial governance remains at the highest level, financial reporting has been provided to the Board on a monthly basis. Reports include Profit & Loss Statement, Balance Sheet and Operating Statement including a detailed overview of the financial situation.

The Board of Rural Business Tasmania established a Finance Committee in June this year. The primary purpose of the Finance Committee is to assist the Board with monitoring and overseeing the company's balance sheet, and provide recommendations on Rural Business Tasmania capital management strategy.

The Finance Committee comprises of the Treasurer and at least one or more other Board members. Findings and recommendations are reported to the Board after each meeting.

Audit of Accounts and Compliance

The audit report for the 2021-2022 year has been completed utilising the general purpose financial statements methodology as issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

All compliance with funding bodies, taxation, superannuation and Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (ACNC) has been met for the financial year.

A complete set of audited financial statements is available upon request by emailing finance@ruralbusinesstasmania.org.au.

Summary

The 2021-2022 financial year has seen Rural Business Tasmania expand with more programs added to our portfolio. This has resulted in an increase in assets and the employment of 2 additional Financial Counsellors to the team.

We acknowledge the ongoing and new support received from both Federal and State Governments during this period.

I wish to again thank staff and Board for their hard work and generous support over the last 12 months.

Keith Rice

Keith Rice
Treasurer



Summary Statement of Profit & Loss

Revenue	2022	2021
Core Operating Grants - Commonwealth	\$490,118	\$545,951
Core Operating Grants - State	\$496,518	\$85,615
Other Grants State/Commonwealth	\$406,620	\$711,115
Grants - Forestry Contractors Resilience Program & Small Business Support Program	\$247,833	\$238,600
Other and Sundry Revenue	\$88,013	\$136,936
Total Revenue	\$1,729,102	\$1,718,217

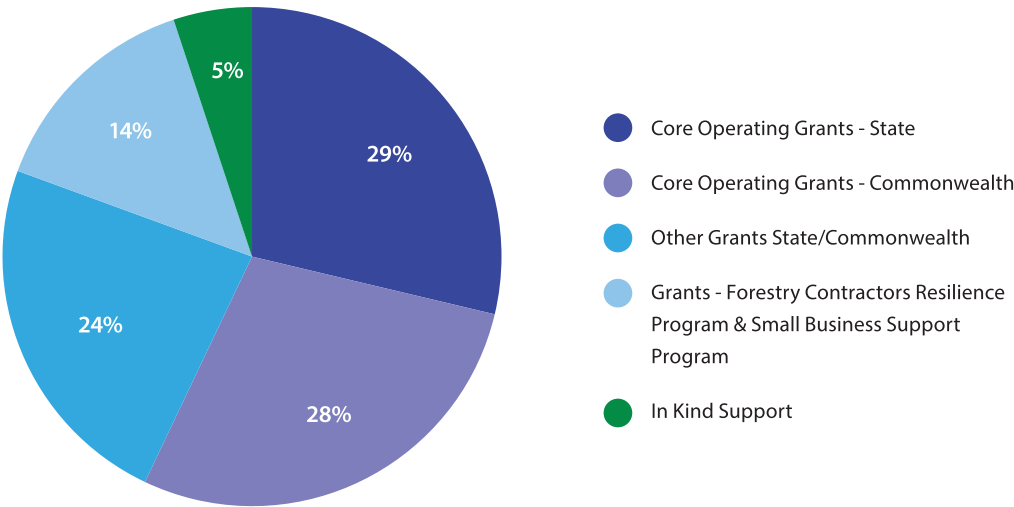
Expenditure	2022	2021
Core Operating Grants - Commonwealth	\$424,145	\$525,303
Core Operating Grants - State	\$496,428	\$82,377
Other Grants State/Commonwealth	\$406,620	\$684,220
Grants - Forestry Contractors Resilience Program & Small Business Support Program	\$247,833	\$238,600
Other and Sundry Expenses	\$95,696	\$131,757
Total Expenditure	\$1,670,722	\$1,662,257

Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	\$58,380	\$55,960
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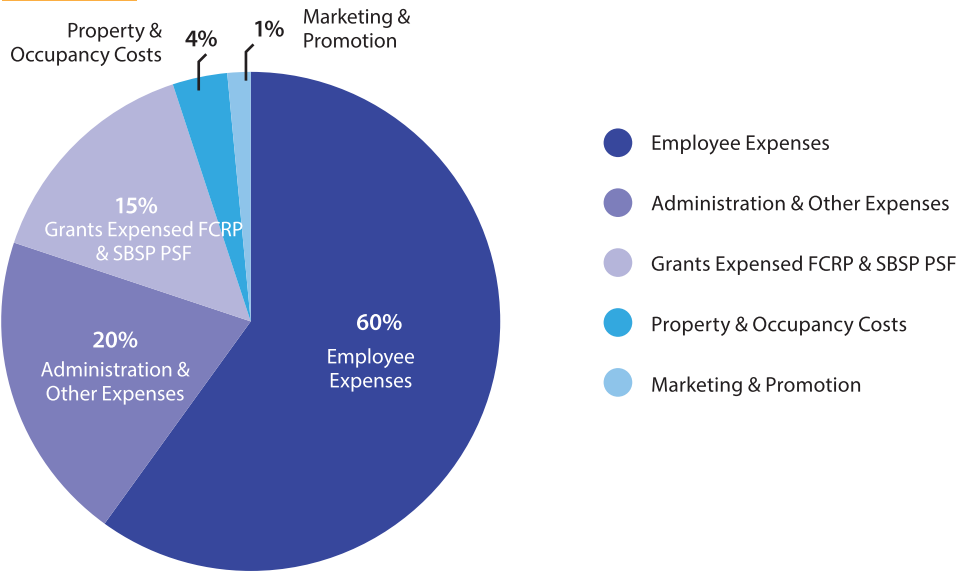
Rural Relief Fund	2022	2021
Donations Received	\$18,862.00	\$3,807
Administration Grants Received	\$8,270.00	\$10,000
Grants Paid	(8,270)	(11,000)
Net Rural Relief Fund Activities	\$18,862	\$2,807

Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$77,242	\$58,767
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Source of Revenue



Areas of Expenditure



Auditor's Report

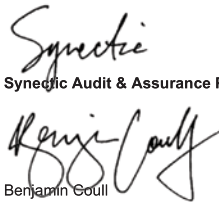


Auditor's Independence Declaration

To the Directors of Rural Business Tasmania Inc

In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, as auditor of Rural Business Tasmania Inc for the year ended 30 June 2022, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- a) No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- b) No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.


Synectic Audit & Assurance Pty Ltd
Benjamin Goull
Director

Date: 10 October 2022

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Rural Business Tasmania

*Supporting and Growing
Rural and Regional Enterprises*



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