



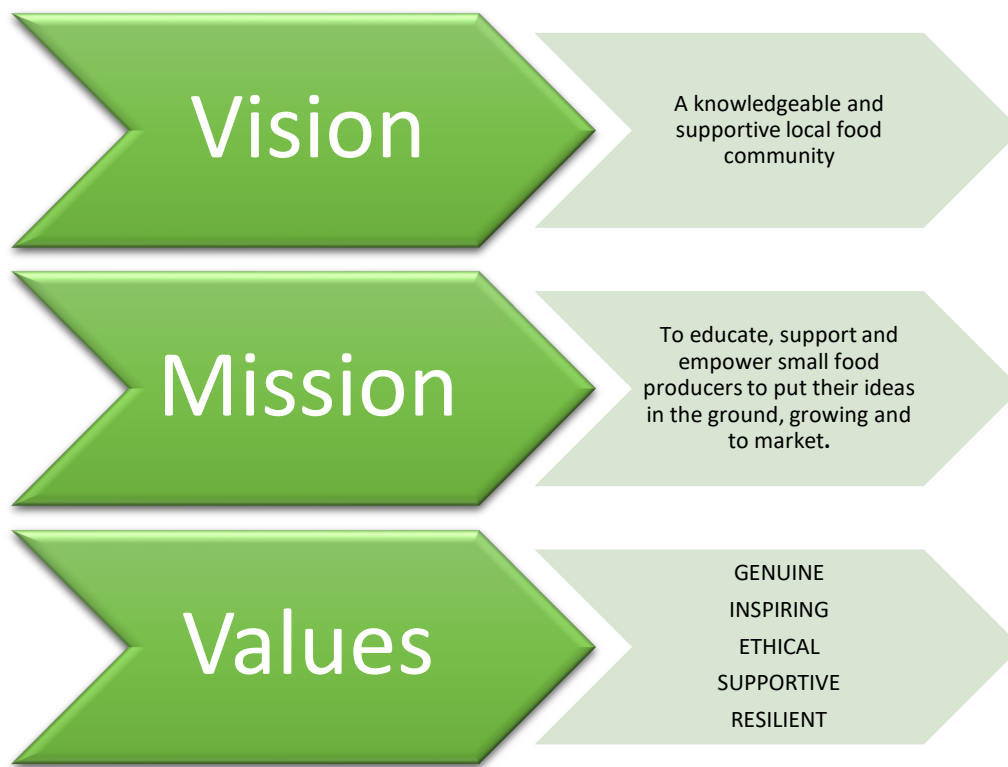
ANNUAL REPORT

2020/2021

Sustainable Production,
Research & Training Inc

Sprout Tasmania
ABN: 77 001 889 484

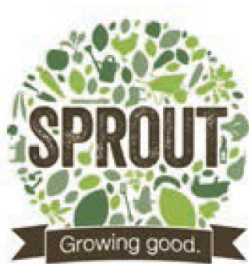
Our Mission & Vision



Our History

Sustainable Production Research and Training Incorporated (trading as Sprout Tasmania) was established in December 2011 as a not-for-profit organisation that provided research and training services to small-sized food producers.

Today, Sprout Tasmania has grown into an organisation managed by a volunteer board, employing a General Manager, two casual staff and engaging with volunteers.



Why we do what we do...

Sprout exists to change the conversation about local food systems and support local producers to grow and market ethical, sustainably produced food that supports thriving local economies.

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SECTION 1

AN OVERVIEW OF SPROUT TASMANIA

ABOUT US

Since its inception in 2011, Sprout Tasmania has evolved into an organisation that is recognised for its passion, support and ongoing education contribution to the Tasmanian food community.

Armed with our vision for Sprout and our members; to be “**a knowledgeable and supportive local food community**”, Sprout has continued to focus on the core projects we know bring about positive results for local producers.

We help aspiring farmers turn their ideas into thriving, sustainable small businesses; and have supported the success of a wide variety of entrepreneurs, from all walks of life and all over the state.

Our programs are practical, useful and successful and offer real-world learning, networking and growth opportunities. Backed by a wealth of expertise, Sprout's board of directors and many volunteer supporters, we are to provide a year-round calendar of events for small producers and growers to connect, learn and grow.



OUR PEOPLE

Board committee members (as at 30 June 2021)



Tony Scherer
Patron



Justin Birchmore
Chairperson

Sue Cutler
Treasurer



Don Thomson
Secretary



Tim Russell-Jarvie
Board Member



Larna Pittiglio
Board Member

Employees & contractors



Jennifer Robinson
General Manager



Raj McBirnie
Communications & Administration Officer



Carissa Devereaux
Bookkeeper



Ollie Benson
Producer Liaison

OUR SUPPORTERS

Sprout Producer Program - Scholarship Sponsors for 2020



Event & Program Sponsors

STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT

The position of part time General Manager has continued to support the ongoing management of the core areas of the organisation.

A Bookkeeper now provides ongoing casual support to the General Manager and Treasurer in the areas of finance and reporting.

Two more staff were recruited in May/June 2020 to the following casual roles –

- Producer Liaison (Ollie Benson)
- Communications & Administration Officer (Raj McBirnie)

These two new roles give Sprout substantial capacity to continue to grow and to ensure all projects are undertaken successfully in order to give real tangible value to our members.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Justin Birchmore

It's pleasing to report on progress over the past financial year in our tenth year supporting Tasmania's small-scale food producers; whether new on the ground or as an existing operation, with ambitions of growth or content with their current scale of operation.

During the year, we've built upon our resource base, engaged additional staff to broaden our capacity and we're looking to further expand and broaden our sources of revenue to build financial resilience.

The Board and our Executive finalised our Strategic Review and it was useful to share some of that internal review with members at the Crosspollinate Conference and take on board feedback.

Work on a new more relevant Constitution continued; which will in part enable us to amend the Board and Executive structure somewhat. Notably, we intend dispensing with the role of President in favour of the newly created role of Patron, which our Co-founder, Tony Sherer, will step into. Similarly, Jennifer Robinson's role of General Manager is to be rebadged Chief Executive Officer.

The Tasmanian Government is very supportive of the ag sector and has an ambitious goal to increase the annual value of the State's agricultural sector to \$10 billion by 2050. We believe the small-scale production sector has a vital role to play in that, so thanks to funding received from the State Government's Strategic Industry Partnership Program (SIPP) reported last year, we instigated a survey on the sector.

Interestingly, amongst the findings, we found that 70% of the survey respondents are looking to grow their businesses and over half are looking to invest up to \$100,000 within the next five years. These results didn't go unnoticed by the Minister for Primary Industries, The Hon Guy Barnett, who recently praised Sprout for its ongoing contribution in a motion put to the State Parliament.

Also courtesy of our successful application for SIPP funding, we're now digitising those of our Producer Program education units that don't require boots on the ground.

Regrettably, COVID still represents challenges and risk for small-scale food producers. However, there does appear to be a renewed appreciation for fresh food grown locally, which can only assist with our efforts to support the sector.

In conclusion, I'd like to acknowledge and thank my fellow board members, our executive team ably led by Jennifer Robinson, our members, sponsors, donors and volunteers for all of their tremendous work.

Yours sincerely,

Justin Birchmore

JUSTIN BIRCHMORE
CHAIR

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Jennifer Robinson

I feel very lucky to continue to work with this amazing organisation, as we draw close on another 12 months, part of which falls in the year of our 10th birthday.

My introduction to Sprout was in 2014 when Alice Percy (Sprout co-founder) and then colleague of mine at UTAS invited me to a Sprout dinner at Frogmore in Cambridge. My husband and I went and to this day I can still remember the wonderful atmosphere, the sensational food, and an infectious sense of excitement for the producers who were about to embark on their scholarship program.

Since 2016 I stepped in to the General Manager role and have been fortunate to have witnessed its evolution over that time. Sprout is heading in a direction that is relevant, sustainable and valuable to our members and the broader food community here in Tasmania. Our 2020-2025 strategic plan gives us clear direction and outcomes going forward which I am confident we will achieve.

In November 2020 we saw our Cross Pollinate conference go ahead despite the challenges of holding a face-to-face event in post-COVID times. The two-day conference was hosted at the restored Spring Bay Mill. We asked the Sprout network what they wanted from the conference, the staggering feedback was 'connections both old and new'. Spring Bay Mill with its unique and specular spaces gave us the opportunity for just that. Cross Pollinate 2020 was an opportunity for people to take part in an attendee led agenda which brought about rich, in-depth discussions between the small groups that worked together, enhanced also by the broad representation that was there on the day. We saw producers, processors, hospitality, tourism, health, education, State Government and Industry representatives all take part and have a valued experience.

The first part of 2021 was an exciting time of the year for Sprout, as we embarked on our first survey of small-scale producers, funded from DPIPW, Tasmanian State Government. We were very keen to quantify how many small-scale producers there are in the state, what they grow, how they farm, what volume and value they contribute to the broader agricultural sector in Tasmania. We also asked for the challenges they face to doing well in business or on the farm. This survey was a great success and one we hope to repeat annually, to build on our data and start to understand the trends which will help support further advocacy and work for the organisation. From the survey responses, Sprout has highlighted a few key next areas we would like to work on in the coming 12 months and beyond, and these are:

1. Raising awareness of finance and grant opportunities for producers
2. Develop an employment resources kit through working with partner organisations
3. Continue to advocate to the government (both state and local) on challenges faced by this sector
4. Working with partners organisations to aid in consistent interpretation of planning schemes and food safety regulation.
5. Explore bespoke pre-employment training opportunities for people to work on small scale farms
6. Explore with government and philanthropic organisations opportunities for seed funding grants
7. Conduct research into barriers and enablers to improve productivity and efficiencies
8. Map food processing opportunities and challenges across meat processing and value adding industries.
9. Work with government to enable this survey to be repeated each year

Some of these projects are underway already and others will begin later in the 2021/2022 period.

Our core paid team at Sprout has grown, which brings with it so much opportunity, not to mention delight in working with a small team of incredible individuals. With Carissa as our bookkeeper, managing all our financial ducks and keeping them in a row, with Raj so capably managing our communications to ensure we are telling our story and getting the reach and engagement we need, and Ollie keeping all things producer centric ticking in our organisation – I feel we can achieve anything!

Sprout will always be supported by community donations, membership fees, corporate sponsorship and government funding. This is an ongoing piece of work for us, but we thoroughly enjoy the relationships with our sponsors and members and look forward to continuing and growing this into the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you, to all those board members, volunteers and producers who have played a part in our journey over the last 10 years. We wouldn't be where we are today without your expertise, skills, dedication and passion. Thank you.

I wish everyone a safe and prosperous spring season and I look forward to seeing you at Cross Pollinate 2021 in November.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Robinson
General Manager

OUR OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Activities

Sprout Tasmania is a not-for-profit organisation that educates, supports and empowers small Tasmanian producers. Sprout has an overall objective of GROWING GOOD – growing good food with care for our environment and our community.

Sprout Producer Program

Over the period of 2020-2021 we have had our cohort of SPP 2020 participants continue with their year, and the next SPP participants for 2021 have been inducted and are underway with their program.

COVID-19 restrictions during the 2020 period has meant that we have carried the 2020 cohort over into the 2021 period to continue to provide some support to them, which they missed out on during their year of the program.

2020 Participants	2021 Inductees
Susan Manning and Narelle Johnson – Bridgenorth Berries	South Arm Farm – Libby Graham
Miquela (Mac) McGuinness & Oli Wichmann – Huski Greens	Tamar Valley Eggs – Katt Ferrero
Rebecca Rumble & Paul Hallier – Lone Goose Farm	Karoolalla Farm – Cate & Rupert
Rebecca Reed & Dylan Hall – Tasmanian Natural Tomatoes & Garlic	Old Beach Berries – Cathryn & David
Valley Fresh Farm – Rob Mather	Rosella Roost – Anthony & Paula
	Beaupre Farm – Christine Bishop

Cross Pollinate 2020

Held at Spring Bay Mill in Triabunna, the event gathered together many small-scale producers from across the state, as well as State and Federal Government representatives, hospitality, tourism, processors, education and industry representatives. It was a two-day event, including tours of Spring Bay Mill, workshops on breathing and the neuroscience of habit change, a local produce dinner cooked by local Hobart chefs, and attendee led small group discussions. The overarching aim of the conference was to provide people with the opportunity to connect, and to share their challenges and ideas in doing business through the year of 2020.

On the first day we welcomed 45 attendees for the sessions and 65 for dinner, the following day there were 65 attendees all day. I would like to thank our sponsors for their generous support of our event and organisation; Tas Women in Ag, Eat Well Tasmania, FermentTasmania, NASAA Organic, National Drought Recovery Agency, State Government (DPIPWE), Blundstone, and Active Vista.

We had some incredible volunteers this year to really make this event tick along like a well-oiled tractor! Thanks so much to Calum and Samara, Jess, for being the amazing crew to work on all aspects of the event. To our chefs, Vladimir Panevin and Josh Andree, and all their team, Michael Santamaria, Carolyn Davis and Rochelle.

Advocacy & Awareness

Sprout always takes up the opportunity to advocate for small Tasmanian food producers and has been working with a range of local media outlets, including various ABC radio programs, The Mercury, Brand Tasmania and Tas Country, to share key messages about the importance of supporting producers and buying locally grown, seasonal foods. Here are some specific examples of projects undertaken by the team over the past year:

- **Tasmanian Agricultural Coordination Group** – Sprout sat as a member of this State Government convened group. There were various stakeholders from across the broad agricultural sector as well as State and Federal government representatives. All members were bringing to the virtual table any feedback from their own unique section of the community, and to collaborate, share and work together to get through those early months of COVID-19 lockdown, and beyond into recovery.
- **Abattoir service providers** – we have continued our advocacy work in this space, collating data on producers who farm for meat and what animal processing options they practically have available to them. Sprout has been a central point of contact for many producers who want to discuss challenges or ideas, and we are in dialogue with the State Government about these challenges but also advocating for a service kill provision with more flexibility for the things that matter to a small-scale stock farmer. This survey is now being repeated in 2021.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Please find attached the financial report for the year ended 30th June 2021, with the prior financial year shown for comparison.

It should be noted that the financial results for these years are shown on an accrual basis.

Sprout has successfully managed a challenging period in FY21 and has recorded a growth in income from a variety of streams. The increase in Government funding was brought about through successful project applications to the State Government, as part of their COVID recovery programs. It should be noted that Sprout also received an amount as part of the COVID-19 financial support to businesses, given the organisation did not receive the projected level of corporate sponsorship associated with events for the FY21 period. A commitment has been made to increase staffing in FY21 to allow our General Manager to focus on more strategic matters and ensuring Sprout's longer term financial sustainability.

The board has continued to prudently and strategically manage the financial capacity and resources of Sprout in the FY21 period and with a continued commitment to bringing in further major sponsors during FY22.

Sprout has sufficient cash reserves to continue to operate in the medium term, with the ongoing operation in the current form being reliant on a renewal of government funding (which ended as of FY21) and also the support of other corporate sponsors and community donations.

It is anticipated that Sprout will finish the FY22 in a favourable position.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Profit and Loss

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION, RESEARCH AND TRAINING INC.

For the 12 months ended 30 June 2021

	Jun-21	Jun-20
Income		
Donations	2,092	421
Event - registrations	12,996	5,609
Event - sponsorship	10,200	600
Government funding	47,661	25,000
Interest Income	1	41
Memberships	3,329	2,505
Sprout Producers Program	5,825	3,340
Total Income	82,104	37,516
Less Cost of Sales		
Accommodation	1,878	-
Catering	6,937	4,217
Equipment hire	-	344
Venue hire	2,830	70
Total Cost of Sales	11,645	4,631
Gross Profit	70,459	32,885
Plus Other Income		
Jobkeeper Funding	6,000	6,000
Payroll Tax Rebate COVID-19 (Cashflow Boost)	5,000	15,000
Total Other Income	11,000	21,000
Less Operating Expenses		
Accounting software fees (Xero)	480	450
Advertising	495	-
Audit Fees	-	950
Bank Fees	26	4
Consulting	16,838	915
CRM fees	1,054	755
General Expenses	187	230
Gifts	335	585
Insurance	4,291	4,039
Internet Expense	120	70
Merchant fees - payment gateway	358	176
Office Expenses	163	-
Printing & Stationery	690	129
Promotional material	700	198
Rent	4,385	3,165
Subscriptions	231	231
Superannuation	3,585	3,203
Telephone	203	404
Travel - state & national	2,926	721
Wages and Salaries	43,012	35,634
Web hosting	287	287

Profit and Loss

	Jun-21	Jun-20
Total Operating Expenses	80,366	52,145
Net Profit	1,093	1,741

Balance Sheet

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION, RESEARCH AND TRAINING INC. As at 30 June 2021

30 Jun 2021 30 Jun 2020

Assets

Bank		
Business account - Debit card	406	-
F2F Trading	-	-
Sustainable Production Research and Training Inc	67,636	34,229
TQA (nee Petty cash)	1	1
Total Bank	68,043	34,229
Current Assets		
Accrued Income	-	5,000
Prepaid Expenses	2,356	526
Total Current Assets	2,356	5,526
Fixed Assets		
Computer Equipment	1,487	-
Total Fixed Assets	1,487	-
Total Assets	71,885	39,756

Liabilities

Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	2,790	250
Accrued Expenses	12,438	11,737
PAYG Withholdings Payable	858	1,268
Superannuation Payable	866	-
Unearned Income	27,339	-
Total Current Liabilities	44,291	13,255
Total Liabilities	44,291	13,255
Net Assets	27,594	26,501

Equity

Current Year Earnings	1,093	1,741
Retained Earnings	26,501	24,760
Total Equity	27,594	26,501

SECTION 4

OUR OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & THANK YOU

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who are involved in or who support Sprout and our endeavours.

Donors

We have some donors who wish to remain anonymous, and yet we would like to acknowledge their ongoing support of our organisation.

Volunteers

Thank you to all our volunteers, who give up their time to support the projects we undertake. You are all incredible and have such passion to see the producers in our state flourish, and we hope we are able to give you some fantastic experiences in return! Thank you.

Members

Every member of Sprout helps to keep us current, focussed and true to what we are trying to achieve. We always welcome feedback and ideas, so never hesitate to drop our General Manager an email. Thank you.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Become a member

Join our membership base to become a part of our Sprout community. Your membership fees assist us in all the work we do, enables us to support small producers in the state through our scholarship program, events and advocacy. You will also get access to the following as a valued member:

- access to mentoring connections
- advocacy support if you are a small scale producer
- access to educational units
- access to a closed Sprout Family Facebook page
- able to attend conference at member pricing
- able to attend other events at member pricing
- seasonal e-newsletters
- voting right at AGM

For more information jump onto [our website](#).

Volunteer your time

Join as a volunteer and we will help you to have the experience of a lifetime supporting Tasmanian producers to do what they do best. We like to try and offer our volunteers the chance to be involved in the projects that interest you, and to be a part of our family in whatever way suits you. So that we can get to know you more, and work out how you can be involved, visit [our website](#) to register your interest and a member of our team will be in touch.

Make a donation

Any funds we receive as part of our donation scheme go straight towards the Sprout Producer Program and other projects we undertake which help us to achieve our mission to educate, support and empower small food producers to put their ideas in the ground, growing and to market. [Click here](#) to make a donation via our website.

Become a sponsor

Sprout is keen to talk to corporate organisations whose values and ethics align with that of Sprout, and who are keen to support small producers and the Tasmanian food industry on the whole. Email info@sprout.org.au to start that conversation and explore the opportunities.

Other ways you can help our cause

If you are a in the hospitality industry and are keen to connect with more producers or have ideas about how Sprout could help you connect to those growing or farming the food, then touch base with us via email or phone (info@sprout.org.au or 0419 519 296). We would love to hear from you.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

What we aim to achieve

Looking forwards, Sprout's Board has undertaken a strategic review, which is now complete. The motivation behind this was to ensure our key stakeholders can understand and engage with where Sprout wants to be in the future, and to utilise this piece of work to inform sound decision making from the General Manager and staff.

Sprout is driven to become a place of knowledge, of connections and networking, of advocacy and support in representing the small-scale producer sector, to have a collective voice.

Our completed Strategic Plan will be available on our website in due course and we can't wait to share it with you.



CONTACT US

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#empoweringsmallscaletasriefarmers