

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24





A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

As 2024 starts to draw in to a close, and the busy season is propelling us forwards; it is imperative that we don't let the racing energy and need to get our hands in the soil push our minds too far from appreciation for all that has brought us to this point.

This has been a year of transitions, deep reflections, and productivity.

Transitions

As naturally occurs we have seen changes in our board as we farewelled Kate Field, Frank Barta, Penny Johnson and Holly Hanson who had recently stepped in to test out the role. Their contributions to the board have been held tightly and we thank them all for their ongoing support. On the flip side we have welcomed in Lissa Villeneuve, Ruth Geale and most recently Josh Somers. Personally, having stepped into the role of Chair in September, only 2 months ago, I want to thank Libby Graham for how steadily she held the role and kept steering us on the right path, thanks Lib it was an honour to move into the role after you.

Deep reflections

As with all personal growth we must look inwards to determine if we are living in alignment with our values and true sense of self. Sprout equally as an organisation did just this in knowing it was time to revisit and reflect upon the values of Sprout as a whole. In late 2023 we finalised our 4 core values of *Collaboration, Innovation, Leadership and Thriving*. Following this as a board and team we came together in January to identify and further refine our core business and financial planning. This was subsequently taken and developed into the overarching strategic plan that you can now view online and here tonight!

2024 also saw the opportunity to take a deep dive into the Sprout Producer Program and we reimagined many different versions of how this could be transformed moving forwards. What has resulted from this reflection is a version of the SPP that we think will serve participants with the greatest level of support needed for small producers into the future. We are so excited to see how the revised SPP unfolds in 2025, and with interviews having recently taken place I am aware that we are looking at a phenomenal bunch of producers to join us on this journey.

Productivity

The team at Sprout have produced some amazing outcomes this year, with the fantastic Land Access Tool Kit being completed and launched, the commencement of the small-scale Meat Processing Project, our first attendance at Agfest, Local Food on Local Plates project, Jen was asked to sit on the Tasmanian Livestock Processing Taskforce; and our largest cohort yet of Producers engaged in the Sprout Producer Program. Within our projects this year we have engaged in some really strong and amazing partnerships between ourselves and other organisations all collectively working together. One such example is the Land Access Toolkit which was created in partnership with Young Farmers Connect and is a fantastic demonstration of the strength in collaboration.

Not to mention our wonderful annual conference Cross Pollinate was a huge hit again this year. With a full to overflowing day packed with motivating and inspirational speakers, healthy and at times hefty debate and a fantastic catalyst to bring together a large number of small-scale producers, small scale farming champions and friends into a full day of building community and sharing information. Our annual fundraising event, Growing Good is booked in and tickets are on sale, so jump online to grab yours, 1st of December, Restaurant Maria on Hobart's waterfront, a night seriously not to be missed!!

Partnerships and new sponsors

We are always on the look out for ways to partner and build support for the work that Sprout do. Part of this has seen the board and team turn their attention to potential partnership opportunities beyond government grants to stimulate funding. Early 2024 Sprout launched our Sponsorship Prospectus and the board have worked to engage businesses in working together with us. Most recently Nutrisoil have committed to sponsoring Sprout and they join our current sponsors Blundstone, Cherries Tas, Active Vista, Farm Gate Market and Tas Women in Ag in ensuring that Sprout Tasmania can continue providing support across the state to all small-scale producers. To them all we are exceptionally grateful.

Gratitude

I just want to finish up with acknowledging the commitment of our Sprout team of Jen, Ollie and Carissa and all who support them in their volunteer roles, be that my fellow board members, supporters at our events, individuals who take on project tasks to help in research and our member base across the state. Sprout really is a collective agency, working for many by many, with our two key team members steering the path with their passion, desire and overall energy towards supporting all small-scale producers throughout the state. Thank you Jen and Ollie for all that you do.

I am super excited to see what unfolds in 2025, its going to be an even bigger year again!

Kate Plaschke

CEO REPORT

This past financial year, Sprout Tasmania has continued to champion the small-scale agriculture sector in Tasmania, guided by our mission to grow and support our industry through capacity building and advocacy of their unique needs at the policy level. Through a balanced approach that integrates both top-down and bottom-up strategies, we have remained steadfast in addressing the challenges facing small-scale farmers and enhancing the resilience and viability of agriculture within our state.



We remain committed to fostering collaboration and uniting stakeholders to address key challenges in a way that delivers tangible benefits for producers. Recognizing the critical need for enhanced cross-departmental cooperation within State Government, we continue to advocate for a coordinated strategy among sectors such as agriculture, education, health, and community services. Despite the setback of our previous grant application for a small-scale producer strategy, we are steadfast in our mission to encourage these sectors to work together. This integrated approach is essential for advancing human, environmental, and community health—each of which is intrinsically linked through food systems.

A key part of our work is understanding the sector we represent, so we applied for a grant and were successful in receiving the State Government Grant to complete our second comprehensive survey of the small-scale farming sector. This initiative provided us with valuable insights into the needs and challenges faced by small-scale farmers in Tasmania. By gathering and analysing this data, we are better positioned to identify and prioritise initiatives that directly address the obstacles impacting these farmers, contributing to a more secure and sustainable food system for Tasmania.

The projects mentioned further in this report - the Land Access Toolkit, the Livestock Processing project and the Local Food on Local Plates project, have all arisen from listening to our producers, assessing our survey data and collaborating with industry and stakeholders. We currently have a pending grant application to undertake a collaboration with Tas Farmers to run a series of workshops enabling farmers to learn about low stress stock handling, animal nutrition and welfare as well as stockyard and race design.

It continues to be a tough time for Tasmanian communities, with climate variability and cost of living pressures, but this gives me further drive to continue this work we do, to ensure we can build a food system in Tasmania that can withstand these pressures; so we can see our farmers thrive into the future and communities with access to amazing, accessible local produce.

I want to thank Ollie for his amazing commitment to our producers. Ollie's energy at Sprout is unwavering and he sincerely cares for the outcomes for all of you as farmers. It is this dedication that drives Ollie to constantly look for ways to improve what we do at Sprout, and I love that! Thanks for being such an incredible part of the Sprout team Ollie.

I look forward to what lies ahead for 2025 and beyond for Sprout.

Jen Robinson

ADVOCACY

It gives us a real buzz and sense of purpose having the privilege of being a collective voice for the small-scale producer sector. We know this work is needed and we want to always be there to champion the things that are important to those operating at this scale of agriculture. here are some of the areas we have worked on, or continue to work on, on your behalf:

Small-scale egg production

Engaging with the sector and listening as they are navigating the challenges around the regulatory environment and enabling clear frameworks and steps for farmers wanting to set up their own pastured egg business.

New Horticultural Standards - leafy veg/berries/melons

Engaging with State Government regulatory bodies to ensure consultation and two way feedback is possible when developing new regulations in response to Standard changes for farmers in these sectors.

Meat processing in Tasmania

Speaking with State Government to make clear the very tenuous situation we are in when it comes to service kill provision right across the state, particularly in southern Tasmania right now, and look at ways we can bolster and de-risk this part of the supply chain.

Livestock Processing Animal Welfare Taskforce membership

Sprout sat as a member of the government appointed taskforce, addressing the animal welfare issues raised in December 2023 in five abattoirs in Tasmania. Bringing to the table the needs of small scale producers in this space.

Stakeholder engagement:

- Tas Farm Innovation Hub - partner day
- Tas Farmers Red Meat Industry Strategic Plan

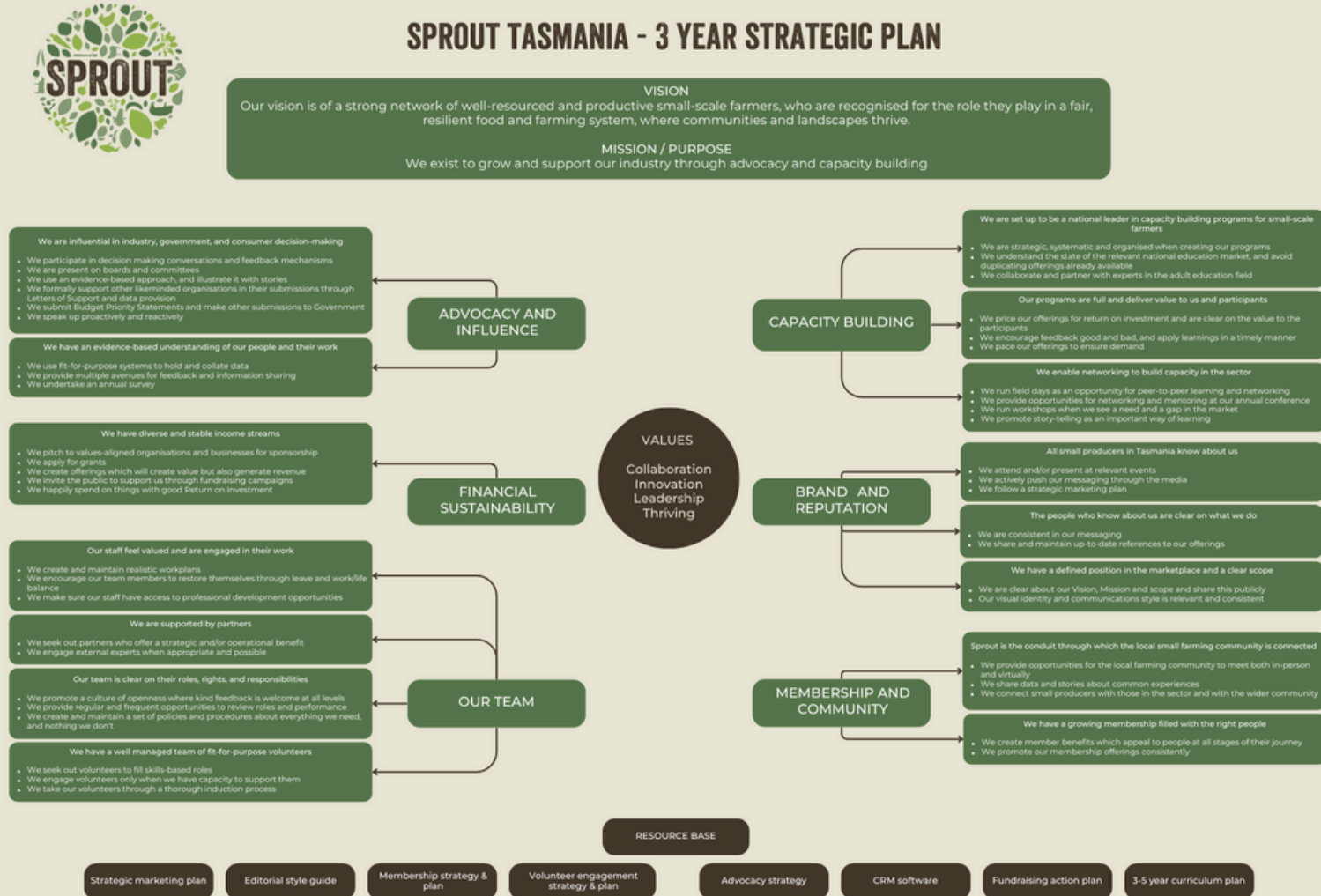
STRATEGY

At the start of 2024 we developed a new 3 year strategic plan, with the help of business consultant Bonnie Tuttle. Work on the plan had been started with the assistance of Sprout's board, and in particular Libby Graham.

The plan included a new vision, mission, and a set up updated values. We also identified six strategic pillars, that address our core competencies, immediate needs and long-term objectives. Each pillar is supported by specific statements or goals, setting a clear path for the coming years.

To ensure accountability we will track our progress through annual strategic reviews. This plan marks an exciting chapter in our journey, positioning us to achieve sustainable success while staying adaptable in a rapidly changing landscape.

The full strategic plan can be found on Sprout's website. Below is a simplified chat outlining the new vision, mission, values and pillars.



PROJECTS

2023-24 has been a milestone for our organisation, marking a period of significant impact through a range of successful projects. Our work this year was driven by a commitment to strengthen the support systems and opportunities available to small-scale farmers, food sectors, and communities across Tasmania.

These projects reflect our dedication to fostering a resilient and vibrant local food economy, responding to industry challenges with practical solutions and a collaborative spirit.

As we look back on these achievements, we recognise the support and partnerships that made them possible, and we look forward to building on this momentum in the coming years.

The Land Access Toolkit

Surveys conducted by Sprout Tasmania during 2021 and 2023 highlighted that small-scale farmers often encounter formidable obstacles in accessing suitable land for agricultural production. With approximately 50% of the nation's farmland expected to change hands in the coming decades, this shift could dramatically alter our farming landscape. Rising land costs, driven by competition from investors, developers, and corporations, further exacerbate the challenge, making it increasingly difficult for everyone, but especially for new and young farmers, to secure the land needed to start viable small-scale farms.

The challenges in our state reflect broader national trends and in response we saw that farmers are increasingly exploring alternative land tenure models, such as leasing, share farming, and other collaborative arrangements.

In 2023 Sprout Tasmania applied for and received funding from the State Government (NRE) as part of the Strategic Industry Partnership Program (SIPP) in order to undertake a collaborative project on lease and share farming.

When discussing the project with organisations interstate that had conducted similar work we recognised that there was scope to share some of the resources we aimed to produce. In order to realise this, and to open up the project further to allow for collaboration with Young Farmers Connect, we successfully applied for additional funding through the Sustainable Table Fund.



The Land Access Toolkit was co-authored by Sprout Tasmania and Young Farmers Connect and published in September 2024. The toolkit is a comprehensive report that is designed to shed light on different land tenure models and offer practical guidance. Using six steps, it allows land owners to consider ways land can be farmed while for small-scale farmers looking to access land the guide aims to show there are options. It provides insight from real life case studies, practical advice on how to navigate the complexities of non-ownership farming models along with links for further reading and research. We also worked together with a Tasmanian legal firm to produce templated lease and share farming agreements.

The toolkit can be downloaded in full, or in individual components, via Sprout's website.

Livestock Processing

We submitted a grant application to the State Government as part of the Strategic Industry Partnership Program, to undertake a review of the meat processing industry in Tasmania, a project set for completion in the first quarter of 2025. This initiative responds to the growth of small-scale livestock farming across Tasmania, where farmers prioritise providing high-quality products directly to families, retail, restaurants, and cafes. The economic, social, environmental, human health and food security benefits of this scale of production are significant, but challenges within the supply chain—particularly in processing, butchering, transport, and logistics—are affecting the sector's viability. Over time, consolidation within processing services and a reduction in independent butchers have limited options for farmers seeking custom processing services, making it difficult to bring local meat from paddock to plate.

The aim of this project is to identify current risks and opportunities within the entire supply chain for Tasmania's small-scale meat industry. By examining this sector's infrastructure from farm to end consumer, we will be better equipped to explore solutions that support sustainable growth and help de-risk the industry for small-scale livestock producers.

This project is ongoing. We have our farmer survey live right now gathering feedback from farmers who are currently using service kill processing, those who used to and even thoughts from those farmers who have not used this service before but may be looking to do so in the future.

It is due for completion at the end of February 2025.

Local Food on Local Plates

Sprout has long been working with the hospitality sector, building relationships with chefs and connecting producers to enable the produce to find its way onto plates in cafes, restaurants and pubs more easily. We know there are huge benefits to the economy, human health and viability of small-scale agriculture when we have local channels to market for producers to access.

The Tasmanian Hospitality Association has established their 2030 Vision that included putting Tasmanian Produce at the heart of their businesses. Sprout reached out, to talk about how we may be able to collaborate to see adoption change in this sector over time. So, the Local Food on Local Plates project was born.

Tasmanians and visitors alike expect that when they eat out in Tasmania in our cafes, restaurants, and pubs that they will have the opportunity to savour and enjoy Tasmanian grown and produced food. Often the expectation and preference for eating local food do not align with reality or are only partially met. The reasons for this are varied and beyond anecdotes are not clearly understood in Tasmania. For many years there have been discussions about barriers to getting Tasmanian produced food on menus and at the same time we have seen case studies of businesses who are able to achieve it like Tom McHugos, Peppina, Fico and more. This project is the first step in understanding how the THA can make sourcing, serving, and promoting Tasmanian food more achievable in cafes, pubs, and restaurants across Tasmania by focusing on, in the first instance, the fresh food supply chain and knowledge of staff working in hospitality and education sectors.

This project is near completion and will help us better understand how we and the THA can make it easier for Tasmanian cafes, pubs and restaurants to source, serve and promote Tasmanian food by understanding the challenges and identifying possible solutions to further explore.

The final report for this project and infographic of survey results are available on our website.

THE SPROUT PRODUCER PROGRAM

The Sprout Producer Program provides farmers with a diverse range of experience, enterprises and backgrounds with the skills, resources, and support needed to succeed in small-scale agriculture.

Throughout 2023-24 we continued to adapt the program, striving to ensure participants are provided with the best level of support. In 2024, thanks to some improved infrastructure and automation, we were able to increase the number of producers taking part, doubling the cohort size from 6 to 12.

As always, the new cohort brought with them a shared passion for knowledge sharing and advancing community-based farming practices. Combining field days with online education and in-depth workshops participants have gained practical knowledge in small farm design, soil health, weed and pest management, and biosecurity, along with business planning essentials and marketing advice. New to our online learning, we have introduced some broader topics, looking at the language of farming, food systems, and climate change. Our scholarship recipients also benefited from networking opportunities, connecting with established farmers, as well as the peer-to-peer support that the program offers.

Feedback from the 2023 cohort demonstrated that key outcomes the program generates include “knowing we can ask for help, getting to know so many different growers and the relationships that come from it and more involvement within the regen ag community in the state”.

2024-25 is shaping up to be another great year for the program, with more adaptation to come!



SPP 2023 Cohort

THE SPROUT PRODUCER PROGRAM

2023 Graduates	2024 Inductees	
Dandelion Tasmania - Bronwyn Douglas	Abruzzo Farm - Vanessa & Shane	Appinoka Regenerative Farming - Nanette & Thomas
Hamley - Andrea Scott	Bryn Gwyn - Andy Walton	Elicia Casey-Winter
Rowelley Farm - Jamie & Shelley Brokenshire	Fat Pig Garden - Keeley Bytheway	Gardners Bay Farm - Phil & Jimmy
Seabrook Valley Farm - Ben & Ellie Sutcliffe	Lalla Valley Farm - Rowan Frost	Preston Ridge Free Range - Stella & Dave
Sparrow Foot Farm - Ines Dos Santos & Dave Simmons	Rising Farm - Emma Bowen	Tasmanian Buffalo - Phil & Sheridan
Tassie Seeds - Abbey Howard	Underwood Park - Angela and Josh	Wattle Wind Farm - Mollie & Emmet



GROWING GOOD 2023

Growing Good has quickly established itself as a critical event in Sprout's calendar - and certainly one of the most fun!

The 2023 event was held at the magnificent Agrarian Kitchen, supported by the wonderful Severine and Rod, as well as key members of their front of house team. More than 100 people were treated to a sumptuous feast cooked by Stephen Peak, Tom Westcott, Glenn Byrnes and Sophie Pope. Laura Dyba was instrumental in running the event, helping us with planning as well as on the day, for which we are hugely grateful.



Growing Good is such an important event for us, becoming a key component in funding our operations. We are very lucky to have some wonderful corporate sponsors, as well as support from the Tasmanian Government who continue to fund important projects, however the fundraising we achieve through Growing Good helps directly with our day to day operations, and allows us to continue advocating for the sector, providing a voice for small-scale farmers, and ensuring our message is heard.

Through revenue from ticket sales and the Growing Good auction, 2023's event raised close to \$20,000.

The event is also where we award the winners of the Small Producer of the Year, our annual award which is nominated by the public. 2023's worthy winner was Fat Carrot Farm, a market garden run by Stan and Briony in Southern Tasmania. The previous year's winners, Kim and Dan Croker from Fork It Farm were on hand to present the traditional wooden spoon, carved from wood taken from their farm. Blundstone's CEO, Adam, was also there, presenting Stan and Briony with a cash prize and vouchers for Blundstone boots.



GROWING GOOD 2023



CROSS POLLINATE 2024

Our annual conference, Cross Pollinate, was once again a highlight of the year, and a remarkable gathering of small-scale farmers, food producers, industry experts, and advocates. Held at Moonah Arts Centre, the event was a hugely successful opportunity to share ideas, feel connected and learn.

Conference Highlights

Themed around ideas for hope, Cross Pollinate 2024 showcased a diverse range of speakers, short theatre-style presentations, videos and panel discussions on a variety of topics that that:

- illustrated opportunities for farming businesses to succeed
- inspired improved landscape management
- enabled positive personal outcomes
- helped communities to thrive
- galvanised farmers to collaborate and support each other, to in turn bolster capacity in the small-scale producer sector.

Live speakers included Robyn Hewson, Joel Orchard (Young Farmers Connect), Mitch Thiessen, Keeley Bytheway, Christina Giudici, James McLennan and Ben Shaw (Farm My School), Leah Galvin, and Sam Bartels. Jen held a one-on-one conversation with renowned chef Peter Gilmore, and we had recorded presentations from Felice Jacka (Food & Mood Centre) and Jo Poulton (UBI 4 Farmers). We also had two incredible presentations, facilitated by the wonderful Felicity Richards. The Beauty of Persistence explored ways farmers find joy in farming and featured Robin Tait, Liz Mahnken and Joel Orchard. The Future of Food then delved into how our future food will be produced, and featured Dr Alana Mann, Matthew Evans, and Sam Perkins from Cellular Agriculture.



CROSS POLLINATE 2024

Building Community and Collaboration

One of the primary goals of Cross Pollinate has always been to strengthen the connections within our farming community. This year, we emphasised collaboration and collective problem-solving, local food movements, calls to action, and where to find seeds for hope. We looked at how data and tech can help prove the claims of regenerative agriculture, and how it can demonstrate links between farming and human health. And we heard what opportunities lie in store for farmers.

And of course, the event provided the chance for people to engage directly with peers and experts, sharing their own ideas for hope. These connections are essential for building a support network that extends beyond the conference.

Looking Forward

Cross Pollinate 2024 also set the stage for ongoing collaboration. By bringing together key players from across the sector, the conference kick-started discussions on how we can remain hopeful amidst the unique challenges facing small-scale agriculture.

We look forward to building on the momentum of this year's conference, creating even more opportunities for connection and learning. Cross Pollinate is more than an annual event; it's a vital part of our commitment to nurturing the small-scale farming sector and ensuring a vibrant, sustainable future for local agriculture.





Ideas For Hope
MAC

MAC

FINANCES

Summary of 2024 FY

Note: in the absence of a current treasurer, this summary has been prepared by the CEO.

FINANCES

PROFIT AND LOSS SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION, RESEARCH AND TRAINING INC. FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

ACCOUNT	2024
TRADING INCOME	
CONSULTANCY INCOME	1,520.00
DONATIONS - PUBLIC	8,599.52
EVENT - REGISTRATIONS	18,506.79
FUNDRAISING INCOME	12,533.24
GRANT INCOME	119,522.45
MEMBERSHIPS	3,080.16
SPROUT PRODUCERS PROGRAM	13,840.00
TOTAL TRADING INCOME	177,602.16
GROSS PROFIT	177,602.16
OPERATING EXPENSES	
ACCOMMODATION	290.00
ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE FEES (XERO)	745.48
ADVERTISING	528.14
BANK FEES	85.06
BOOKKEEPING	420.00
CONSULTING	28,517.00
CRM FEES	1,982.38
DONATIONS OUT	325.00
EQUIPMENT HIRE	3,563.62
EVENT PRODUCE & CATERING	9,462.25
FREIGHT, COURIER & POSTAGE	21.74
GIFTS	1,780.40
INSURANCE	3,108.64
INTEREST EXPENSE	10.00
INTERNET EXPENSE	286.94
MERCHANT FEES - PAYMENT GATEWAY	109.16
OFFICE EXPENSES	2,687.51
PRINTING & STATIONERY	1,607.87
PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL	108.61
REGISTRATION (ASSOC INC) FEES	97.90
RENT	4,707.16
REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	110.00
SUBSCRIPTIONS	2,010.13
SUPERANNUATION	8,892.05
TELEPHONE	260.00
TRAINING, EVENTS & CONFERENCES	835.11
TRAVEL - STATE & NATIONAL	6,711.19
VENUE & SITE HIRE	1,130.50
WAGES - AL AND LSL EXPENSES	(16,695.76)
WAGES AND SALARIES	80,837.00
WEB HOSTING	245.90
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	144,790.98
NET PROFIT	32,811.18

FINANCES

BALANCE SHEET SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION, RESEARCH AND TRAINING INC. FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

ACCOUNT	30 JUNE 2024
ASSETS	
BANK	
BUSINESS ACCOUNT - DEBIT CARD	1,240.15
MAIN WORKING ACCOUNT	107,003.83
TOTAL BANK	108,243.98
TOTAL ASSETS	108,243.98
LIABILITIES	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
ATO INTEGRATED CLIENT ACCOUNT	2,880.00
GRANT PROJECT - LOCAL PLATES	29,900.00
GRANT PROJECT - NRE MEAT PROCESSING	16,740.00
GRANT PROJECT - SHARE FARMING	12,370.00
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	61,890.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	61,890.00
NET ASSETS	46,353.98
EQUITY	
CURRENT YEAR EARNINGS	32,811.18
RETAINED EARNINGS	13,542.80
TOTAL EQUITY	46,353.98

OUR PEOPLE

OUR BOARD



Kate Plaschke - Chair



Lauren Byrne - Secretary



Libby Graham



Stephen Peak



Lisa Jane O'Neil



Ruth Geale



Lissa Villeneuve

OUR EMPLOYEES



Chief Executive Officer - Jennifer Robinson



Producer Liaison - Ollie Benson



Bookkeeper - Carissa Devereaux



Thank you to our amazing volunteers who support our event and programs throughout each year. We value your passion, commitment and keenness to share, and Sprout is what we are today because of your contribution.

OUR SUPPORTERS

Sprout has a diversified income stream and would like to acknowledge the following supporting organisations and Government departments that have made our programs and events possible during 2023/2024.

SUPPORTED BY

