

# Berries Australia team visits the Apple Isle

Jane Richter & Mark Salter, Berries Australia

In mid-November, Rachel Mackenzie and the Industry Development team from Berries Australia travelled to Launceston in Tasmania to attend the Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (APEN) and enhance their extension skills. At the same time, the team took the opportunity to tour some local farms, meet with growers and learn more about what the key challenges are for the Tasmanian berry industries.

## About APEN

APEN is the professional organisation for extension professionals working with people to enable change and innovation in primary industries, natural resource management and communities. Extension is about working with people in a community to facilitate change in an environment that has social, economic and technical complexity. This is achieved by helping people gain knowledge and confidence so they want to change and providing support to ensure it is implemented effectively.

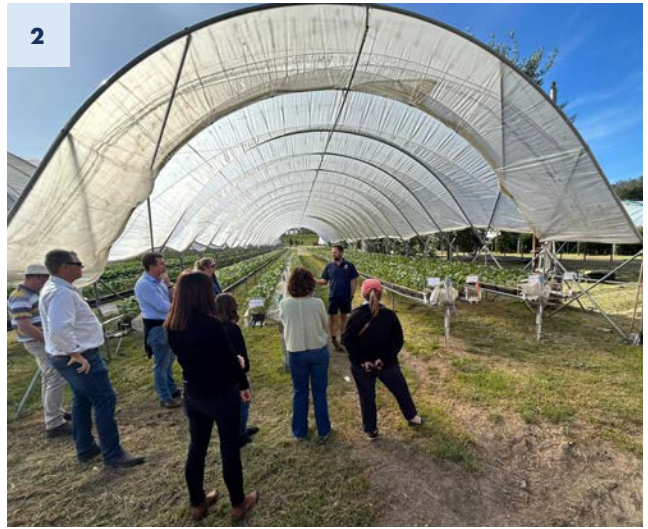
Thanks to the Dornauf Family, attendees had the opportunity to tour Hillwood Berries which is a 52 hectare multi-berry farm with a significant pick-your-own on farm tourism component located near the Tamar river about 25 km north of Launceston.

The Dornauf family history with berry growing started in 1985 when father Robin planted the first raspberry canes at a different site now known as Christmas Hills Raspberry Farm in Elizabeth Town about one hour south west of Hillwood. The business now farms in two states and grows all four major berry crops in substrate under a variety of polytunnel systems.

Following the Hillwood Berries tour, a group of about 30 growers, Berries Australia team members and industry stakeholders congregated at Hillwood Sharks Football Club to hear industry updates from Rachel Mackenzie

(Executive Director at Berries Australia) and Peter Cornish (CEO of Fruit Growers Tasmania), and had the opportunity to highlight their challenges before enjoying a BBQ dinner kindly sponsored by E.E Muir and Sons, Serv-Ag and SLTEC. The group was also joined by Adrian Englefield (Industry Services & Delivery Manager for Berries) and Bronwyn Walsh (Industry Development & Innovation Manager) from Hort Innovation.

The evening provided the opportunity for everyone to raise any concerns they have about the current state of the industry as this years' major harvest window gets underway. It was also a valuable chance for our Hort Innovation team members to meet growers and the IDO team face-to-face.



1. (L) Melinda Simpson (NSW DPI) and (R) Adrian Englefield (Hort Innovation) at Hillwood Berries. Photo credit: Wendy Morris
2. Simon Dornauf leading the tour at Hillwood Berries. Photo credit: Jen Rowling
3. Peter Cornish from the Tasmanian peak industry body Fruit Growers Tasmania providing an update. Photo credit: Jane Richter
4. Rachel Mackenzie from Berries Australia provided an update for growers across a number of topics including the upcoming Berry Basket Marketing program. Photo credit: Jane Richter
5. Simon Dornauf from Hillwood Berries opened the evening and welcomed the attendees. Photo credit: Jane Richter