RURAL YOUTH

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2025 - JUNE 2026

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Rural Youth Positions

<< As at 30th June 2026

Patron
Her Excellency the Honourable
Caroline Wells AC,
Governor of Tasmania

Rural Youth Board
State President
Amber Bramich
Vice President
Rory Eaton
Agfest Chair
Jesse Macdonald

General Board Members
Jessica Temple
Sarah Young
Jake Williams
Fern Kemp
Holly Coad
Hayden Richardson (Intern)

Independent Board Members
Ruth Paterson
Andrew Parsons
David Dunn

Rural Youth Staff
CEO Kate Bucknell
Operations and Finance Manager
Linda Perkins
Events and Venue Manager
Sharee Hogan
Member & Community Engagement Coordinator Billie Hall
Quercus Park Caretaker
Virginia Chilcott
Sponsorship Manager
Rosalynne Rees

Life Members
Mr H.R. Reynolds (dec.)
Mrs Carol Axton
Mr T.B. Stancombe (dec.)
Mr John Dent OAM
Mr Don Walker (dec.)
Mr Noel Beven AM
Mr C.A. Holland (dec.)
Mr Wesley Hazell
Mr Darryl Barker
Mr Chris Williams
Mr D. Bennett (dec.)
Mrs Sharon (Wing) Symons
Mr Henry Burbury
Ms Helen Geard AM
Mr Peter Gladwell
Mr E.C. Mackay (dec.)
Mr Dale Badcock
Mr Keith Topfer (dec.)
Mr Richard Colman
Mr Graeme Tole (dec.)
Ms Elizabeth Skirving
Mr David Dunn
Mr Brett Mackenzie
Mr Ian Mackenzie
Mr Paul Bennett
Mrs Jayne (Badcock) Clark
Mr Ronald Gunn
Mr Bruce Harvey

State President Report

The 2025-2026 membership year has been a big one, from the completion of capital works at Quercus years in the making, new member opportunities and staff changes.

Through it all, Rural Youth's vision, to connect, develop and celebrate young Tasmanians has been at the forefront.

Various scholarships and awards have been presented over the course of the year. Charlotte Dean was the recipient of the Rural Youth Scholarship to support her studies in agriculture. Jessica Temple was recognised with the prestigious Graeme Tole Award at our last AGM and recently travelled to New Zealand to attend the Mystery Creek Field days. In 2026 the Young Endeavour sailing trip was also offered as a Young Leadership Award, presented to Jordan Gale. Most Outstanding member was presented to Sarah Young for her contributions to her club, Agfest and the Board. Best New Member went to Jess Richards who has enthusiastically jumped into Rural Youth activities and Agfest after recently joining as a member. Top Club was awarded to Kingborough Huon, who have done an exceptional job in attracting new members, running activities and getting involved in their community.

International exchanges continued this year, providing members with the opportunity to explore agricultural industries overseas and make friends across the world. This year we had Jess Elphinstone travel to Northern Ireland/ Scotland and Jesse Macdonald travel to Canada on international exchanges. We have also had the opportunity to host incoming exchangees from New Zealand, Scotland, Switzerland and Austria.

The social committee were very successful this year, hosting a debate night, trivia, musical bingo and of course a wonderful state ball held at Cataract on Paterson in Launceston, among other events. These events continue to bring members together outside of working bees and committee meetings, strengthening the friendships that are at the heart of Rural Youth.

Our clubs have once again done an outstanding job engaging members throughout the state with meetings, social events and community involvement. This year the Dorset Rural Youth club was revived and has great membership numbers and activity since the inaugural meeting in April.

We've made significant upgrades to Quercus Park in the past 12 months with a number of capital projects years in the making now being completed or close to completion, this has included the new member ablution blocks, DairyTas Pavilion, fire system, removal of accommodation block 'Tullah', and the new Rural Youth office on site at Quercus Park.

This year also saw several staffing changes. Luci from our office went on maternity leave, welcoming a beautiful little girl. Luci has now finished up with Rural Youth, and we've had Billie join the team in the Member and Community Engagement Co-ordinator role. Jade, our Property Caretaker moved on with Virgina now taking care of Quercus. We also had the departure of Karen, our CEO of eleven years who put her heart into the organisation. With a smooth transition period, Kate Bucknell has now taken on the CEO role. A massive thank you to Jade Hall, Luci Venn and Karen Robinson for their grit and hard work over the years.

None of what Rural Youth achieves would be possible without the commitment of our members, coming from far and wide, from Smithton through to the Huon. Every hour volunteered contributes to making Rural Youth the organisation it is today. I believe the ability Rural Youth has to adapt to a changing world and tackle challenges will mean the organisation will remain relevant, setting Rural Youth up to thrive in the future. I am incredibly proud of the organisation we have today and hope that other young people take the opportunities on offer to develop themselves.

It has been such an honour serving as the State President for the past two years, backed by a curious and dedicated board, a mighty team of staff and wonderful, enthusiastic members. This role has taught me so much and has opened up opportunities that I'm incredibly grateful for. It's true what they say, the time and effort you invest into Rural Youth returns to you tenfold.

Amber Bramich
2025-2026 Rural Youth State President

MAKING A DIFFERENCE 2025–26

For 75 years, Rural Youth Tasmania has been creating opportunities for young people to connect, develop skills, contribute to their communities and build confidence for the future. Through volunteering, leadership, training, industry engagement and lifelong friendships, generations of young Tasmanians have been empowered to make a lasting difference across our state. As we celebrate this significant milestone, we remain committed to investing in the next generation of leaders, strengthening rural communities and ensuring young people continue to thrive for decades to come.

Our Impact at a Glance

244 Members

10,000+ Volunteer Hours

25+ Training & Development Opportunities

12+ Communities

Reached through 12 clubs statewide

124 Club Events

4 Incoming Study Tours / Exchanges

7 Awards & Scholarships

125 Agfest Volunteers

including 99 Rural Youth members.

35 First time Agfest Volunteers

RURAL YOUTH

INVESTING IN TASMANIA'S FUTURE

- Agfest attendance of 55,703 people over the 3 days
- 657 Exhibitors
- Ongoing Sponsorship secured
- Infrastructure investment at Quercus Park through the two Government funded projects: DairyTas Pavilion & Fire Hydrant System upgrade worth up to $1m
- Estimated $25 million Economic contribution generated through Agfest

Through Agfest, Quercus Park and strategic partnerships, Rural Youth continued to strengthen Tasmania's agricultural sector and regional economy.

MEMBER IMPACT STORY

When Molly joined the newly formed Dorset Rural Youth Club, she was looking for ways to connect with other young people in her community, build her confidence, and become more involved locally. As one of the club's founding members, she had the unique opportunity to help create something meaningful for young people in the region from the ground up.

Through Rural Youth Tasmania, Molly took on leadership opportunities, developed new skills, and played an active role in shaping the culture and direction of the Dorset Club. The experience encouraged her to step outside her comfort zone, build confidence, and contribute to creating opportunities for others.

Today, Molly is a confident young leader with stronger communication, teamwork, and leadership skills. Her involvement has helped her develop meaningful connections within her community while playing an important role in establishing a thriving new Rural Youth club.

"Being part of the newly formed Dorset Rural Youth Club gave me the chance to help create opportunities for other young people while building my own confidence and leadership skills. Through Rural Youth, I've developed skills, made lasting connections, and discovered opportunities I never thought possible."

Because of Rural Youth Tasmania...

- Young people found a place to belong.
- Emerging leaders gained the confidence to step forward.
- Thousands of volunteer hours contributed by Rural Youth members helped bring Agfest to life, supporting one of Tasmania's most significant events.
- New skills opened doors to employment and leadership opportunities.

Tasmania's rural future became stronger through the investment, passion and contribution of young people.

CEO Report

As Rural Youth Tasmania celebrates 75 years of empowering young people, we reflect on both the achievements of the past year and the legacy created by generations of members, volunteers, staff and leaders. Since 1950, Rural Youth has helped young Tasmanians connect, develop skills, build confidence and contribute to their communities. The 2025–2026 year showed that this purpose remains as relevant as ever, with a continued focus on strengthening the organisation, creating member opportunities and investing in the future.

Agfest remains our flagship event and one of the strongest demonstrations of what Rural Youth members, volunteers, staff, sponsors, exhibitors and supporters can achieve together. Agfest 2026 welcomed 55,703 patrons across three days, including 23,714 visitors on the final day, and delivered strong crowds, positive exhibitor feedback and a vibrant atmosphere. As one of Tasmania's most significant events, Agfest is a major contributor to the Tasmanian economy, generating an estimated $25 million in annual economic activity. This impact flows across the state through visitor spending, accommodation, hospitality, transport, retail, and business services, delivering substantial benefits to regional communities and supporting economic growth throughout Tasmania.

Agfest also remains central to how Rural Youth delivers its purpose. It gives members opportunities to lead, volunteer, build skills, expand networks and contribute to something larger than themselves. Funds generated through Agfest are reinvested into training, study tours, leadership development, education programs, improvements to Agfest and Quercus Park, and new opportunities for young people across Tasmania.

Youth development and member engagement remained a key focus. The Member Engagement Survey confirmed that members value Rural Youth for its community, friendships, skill development, personal growth, large-scale events and hands-on learning. It also highlighted areas for continued improvement, including communication, transparency, leadership development, behavioural expectations, connection between clubs and inclusion of members across the state.

Most importantly, the feedback reinforced the impact Rural Youth has on individual lives through friendships, confidence, leadership opportunities and a sense of belonging. These outcomes remain at the heart of the organisation and will help guide future planning, programming and engagement.

Work also continued across governance, systems and organisational culture, including clearer communication, stronger engagement, aligned policies and improved support for clubs, committees, members and volunteers. While much of this work happens behind the scenes, it provides the foundations for a safe, inclusive, and sustainable organisation.

Investment in Quercus Park remained a significant focus. The new DairyTas Pavilion was completed on budget and on schedule for Agfest 2026 and officially opened by Minister for Agriculture, Gavin Pearce. The facility supports dairy industry participation at Agfest and provides a valuable industry asset beyond the annual event. The new Fire Hydrant System was also completed and officially opened by Premier Jeremy Rockliff alongside key project partners. This State Government investment strengthens safety and future development opportunities across Quercus Park.

Together, these projects are long-term investments in the future capability of Quercus Park as an agricultural, training, and community hub supporting members, industry partners, exhibitors and regional Tasmania.

Looking ahead, there is an opportunity to position Quercus Park as more than the home of Agfest: a year-round destination for training, community events, industry engagement and partnerships that support young Tasmanians and regional communities.

Partnerships & Sponsorship continue to play a critical role in our success. These relationships extend opportunities beyond what Rural Youth could achieve independently and strengthen training, wellbeing, community engagement and industry connection for members.

As we look at the year ahead, our challenge is to ensure Rural Youth remains relevant, accessible and valued by future generations. This means investing in leadership development, supporting strong clubs, strengthening social connection and mentoring, enhancing partnerships, and ensuringmembers from every part of Tasmania feel included and valued.

Finally, I acknowledge our members, volunteers, staff, Board, committees, sponsors, partners, exhibitors and broader community. Rural Youth Tasmania exists because people continue to show up, contribute, support one another and believe in developing young people in rural and regional Tasmania. Thank you for your commitment to our organisation and to our vision to Connect, Develop and Celebrate Young Tasmanians.

Kate Bucknell
Rural Youth CEO

2026 Property Management Working Group Report

Reinvesting in Quercus Park, the Home of Rural Youth Tasmania

2026 has been a year of significant progress and renewed investment in Quercus Park. While ageing infrastructure and previous storm damage have presented challenges, Rural Youth Tasmania has continued to take a proactive and forward-looking approach to developing the property as a safe, functional and welcoming home for our members, Agfest and the wider Tasmanian community. These improvements support the longer-term vision of establishing Quercus Park as a leading event and community facility.

A major achievement during the year was the completion of the Fire Hydrant System Upgrade, one of the most significant infrastructure investments undertaken at Quercus Park in recent years. Following extensive planning, consultation and collaboration with specialist engineers and fire authorities, the project was successfully delivered with the support of $500,000 in State Government funding. The upgrade has brought the site's fire protection infrastructure up to the required standard and represents a major investment in the safety, compliance and long-term resilience of Quercus Park. This critical project strengthens the foundation of the Park and ensures it is well positioned to support members, volunteers, event organisers and visitors for many years to come

Construction of the new DairyTas Pavilion has also been a key project. Supported by $350,000 in State Government funding and contributions from both Dairy Tasmania and Rural Youth Tasmania, the facility will provide a permanent home for Dairy Tasmania's presence at Agfest. In addition to supporting agricultural industry engagement, the new Pavilion will create a versatile, year-round space available for hire by events and community groups. The project reflects the strength of the partnership between the two organisations and delivers valuable infrastructure that will support education, innovation and industry connection for years to come.

Another exciting development has been the signing of a lease for the use of the rear section of Quercus Park as a Civil Construction Training Facility and associated offices. This arrangement brings new activity and purpose to the site, strengthens Quercus Park's role as a place for training and development, and supports the productive year-round use of the property.

The new Rural Youth Tasmania Head Office has reached its

final stage of completion. This important investment will provide a dedicated and professional base for staff, members and volunteers, while reinforcing Quercus Park's position as the home of Rural Youth Tasmania.

Another important milestone during the year was the completion of the new member ablution facilities. This long-awaited project has significantly improved the amenities available to members at Quercus Park. The new facilities provide a more modern, comfortable and accessible experience, enhancing the functionality of the members' compound and supporting the delivery of events and activities throughout the year. The completion of the ablution blocks represents another practical investment in the infrastructure that underpins the Rural Youth member experience.

The removal of Tullah from the members' compound was also completed following the identification of asbestos and difficulties associated with the insurance process. Although saying goodbye to a familiar building marks the end of an era, its removal has improved safety and created an opportunity to consider how the compound can better serve members into the future.

During 2026, approximately 800 metres of permanent static site fencing was also completed, representing a significant investment in the safety and security of Quercus Park. The remaining section along the southern boundary is scheduled for completion in 2027. Once the project is fully completed, it will significantly enhance site security, improve access control, and provide a safer environment for exhibitors, patrons, and site users.

Together, these projects represent much more than improvements to buildings and infrastructure. They demonstrate Rural Youth Tasmania's commitment to reinvesting in its home, protecting the organisation's assets and creating a Park that is safer, more sustainable and better equipped to support members, partners, events and the community.

With clear priorities identified through the longer-term planning for Quercus Park, the organisation is well positioned to build on this momentum. As Rural Youth Tasmania celebrates its 75-year legacy, these investments provide a strong foundation for the next generation and ensure Quercus Park continues to be a place where young Tasmanians can connect, develop and thrive.

A sincere thank you to our dedicated Property Management Committee, Kyle (Chair), Jesse (Agfest Chair) and Caine (Agfest Operations Manager), for their passion, commitment and countless hours of work in supporting the ongoing development of Quercus Park. We also extend our appreciation to the many members and volunteers who continue to roll up their sleeves and contribute at working bees throughout the year. Their willingness to give their time, skills and energy plays a vital role in maintaining and improving the home of Rural Youth Tasmania, and these achievements would not be possible without their support.

Kate Bucknell
On behalf of the Property Management Working Group

Agfest Chair Report

Agfest 2026 was a tremendous success and stands as a testament to the dedication, passion and commitment of the many people who work tirelessly to bring this iconic event to life.

This year we welcomed 55,703 people through the gates, an outstanding result in a climate where many agricultural field days across Australia are experiencing significant declines in attendance. These figures demonstrate not only the ongoing strength of Agfest, and the support of the Tasmanian people, but also the importance of continually evolving and remaining relevant in a constantly changing landscape.

While the public experiences Agfest over three days in May, the event itself is the result of countless hours of planning, preparation and hard work undertaken throughout the year. I have had the privilege of witnessing the extraordinary commitment shown by our committee members and volunteers. Their willingness to give their time, skills and energy, whilst often balancing Agfest commitments alongside family, work and other responsibilities is no small achievement.

Our volunteers remain the heart of Agfest. Their dedication ensures that every aspect of the event is delivered to the exceptionally high standard that patrons and exhibitors have come to expect. They are supported by a small team of staff, that are always there to help. I extend my sincere thanks to everyone for their contribution. Agfest simply would not be possible without you.

A significant contributor to this year's success was the willingness of the committee to embrace and implement new ideas. Change is always hard and the team took the challenge head on.

Finally, I would like to personally thank our exhibitors, sponsors, contractors and patrons for their unwavering support. Agfest is what funds Rural Youth throughout the year. Each of you plays a part in helping positively shape young people in Tasmania.

It has been an honour to lead such a dedicated and passionate team. Together, we have delivered another outstanding Agfest and further strengthened the foundations for the future of this iconic Tasmanian event.

Jesse Macdonald
Agfest Chair 2026

RURAL YOUTH

2023 - 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR VISION

TO CONNECT, DEVELOP AND CELEBRATE YOUNG TASMANIANS TOGETHER!

OUR GOALS

PEOPLE & CULTURE

Recognised for making positive contributions to the development of individuals & their communities.

SUSTAINABILITY

Ensure Rural Youth remains successful & relevant for the next generation of young Tasmanians.

OPERATIONS

Provide appropriate resources to grow income streams & maximise return on investment.

OUR PRIORITIES

- Improve communication & engagement with our members.
- Create a positive culture where our values are a lived experience for our members & stakeholders.
- Support and work more closely with Clubs.

- Ensure roles & opportunities are fit for purpose to meet current & future members needs.
- Partner with like minded organisations to provide new opportunities and share resources to reduce costs as appropriate.

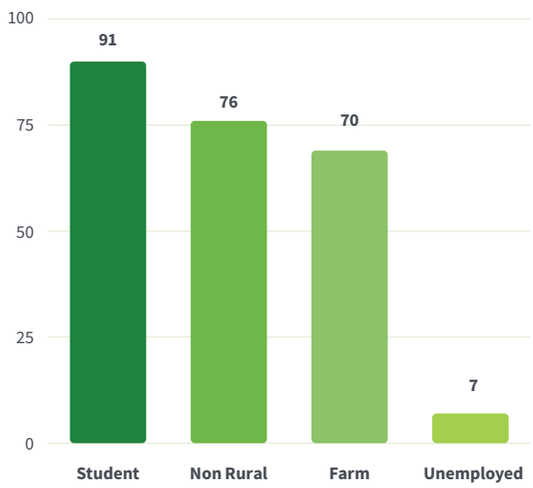
- Develop a master plan for Quercus Park.
- Investigate & implement alternate income streams which maximise the use of Quercus Park.
- Invest strategically in the development & growth of Agfest.
- Agricultural Field Days to grow market share.

OUR VALUES

BASED ON FRIENDSHIP, FUN, PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH & ENCOURAGING A 'HAVE A GO MENTALITY' WE BELIEVE YOUNG PEOPLE DO GREAT THINGS!

RY MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

OCCUPATION

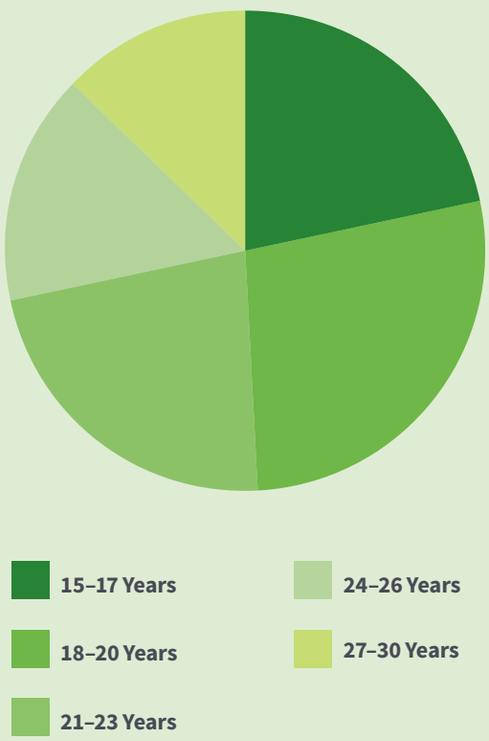


AGE SUMMARY STATS

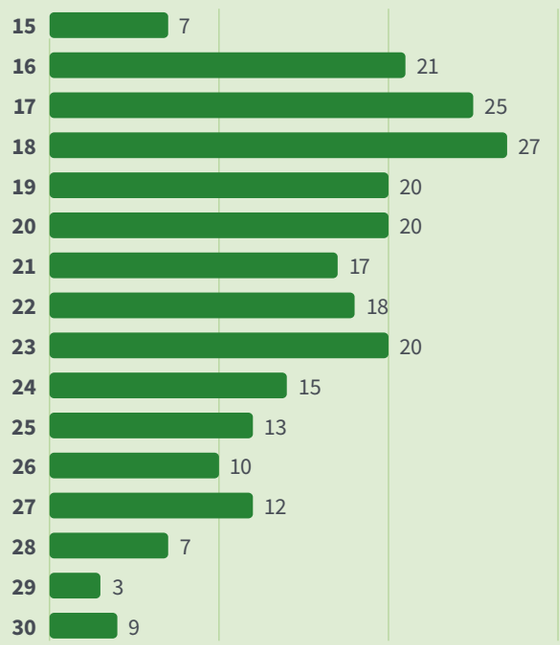
Range:
15–30 years

Median:
21 years

BY AGE GROUP



BY INDIVIDUAL AGE



CLUB	MEMBERS
Hagley	28
Kingborough-Huon	25
Brighton	32
North Motton	30
Devonport	30
Oatlands	15
Westmorland	14
Tamar	21
Sorell	15
Central Highlands	10
Tasman	4
Dorset	20
TOTAL:	244

Young Farmer Competition

The 2025 Young Farmer Competition once again brought together talented young farmers to test their skills across a demanding and diverse range of modules, culminating in a hard-fought State Final. The competition remains a highlight of the calendar, celebrating the practical knowledge, resilience, and versatility required of the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Beyond the competition itself, the event continues to play a valuable role in the broader agricultural community. It gives young people a reason to step outside their day-to-day work and test themselves against peers from different regions and backgrounds, often building friendships and professional connections that last well beyond the competition day. For many competitors, it's also a rare opportunity to be assessed and mentored directly by experienced industry professionals — feedback that can shape their skills and confidence long after the final module is complete.

Congratulations to Andrew Marshall, named the 2025 Young Farmer Champion. Andrew's performance across the full breadth of runoff and State Final modules — including strong wins in Farm Mapper, Whole Farm Plan, and Water on the Farm — reflected outstanding all-round capability, dedication, and the kind of well-rounded skill set the competition is designed to showcase.

Looking Ahead

The Young Farmer Competition is about far more than a single day of competition — it is a way of bringing young people in agriculture together, connecting them with industry, and giving them the chance to gain new skills that will serve them throughout their careers. Each year, it strengthens the pipeline of capable, confident individuals ready to contribute to the future of Tasmanian agriculture, while fostering a sense of community among those who will shape the industry's next chapter.

We congratulate all competitors who took part in 2025 and thank the judges, sponsors, and mentors who made the event possible.

FINALIST MODULE WINNERS

Module 1 - Fencing
Zac Leonard

Module 2 - Finance
Jordan Burr

Module 3 - Mechanics
Zac Leonard

Module 4 - Farm Mapper
Andrew Marshall

Module 5 - Farm Machinery Operation
Charlton Skirving

Module 6 - Exhibition Poultry
Zac Leonard

Module 7 - Whole Farm Plan
Andrew Marshall

Module 8 - Excavator Obstacle Course
Rory Eaton

Module 9 – Water on the Farm
Andrew Marshall

Module 10 – Beef Industry
Chelsea Rayner

Module 11 – Quiz
Chelsea Rayner

Module 12 – Public Speaking
Chelsea Rayner

THE FINAL FIVE PLACINGS

First
Andrew Marshall

Second
Zac Leonard

Third
Chelsea Rayner

Fourth
Charlton Skirving

Fifth
Sarah O'Grady

Shared over $40,000 worth of prizes including a Polaris UTV for the winner

Member Engagement

Rural Youth Tasmania's core purpose has always been to connect young people — giving members the chance to make lasting friendships, have fun, travel, and build practical skills through training.

At the beginning of the year, members came together to celebrate at the State Ball, held on 21 February at Cataract on Paterson in Launceston. The evening brought members from across the state together for a night of celebration, with member awards presented on the night: Jessica Richards was named Best New Member, Sarah Young took out Most Outstanding Member, and Kingborough-Huon was recognised as Top Club.

A highlight of the calendar was the Southern Farm Tour Day, which took members on a journey through the Coal River Valley to visit and learn from a range of local operations. The day began with Noel Beven setting the scene with valuable context on the region before visiting Lowdina Orchard, Sisu Wines, and Bejo Seeds, where members saw state-of-the-art processing and agricultural practices alongside Rural Youth members from across the state. The day rounded out at Tas Oyster Co., with members getting an in-depth look at the ins and outs of oyster production in Tasmania.

Throughout the year, the Social Committee delivered a range of activities to keep members connected. Rural Youth also continued to grow its presence in schools, visiting Scottsdale High School, Launceston College, Kings Meadows High, Newstead College, Clarence High, Cambridge District School and the Northern Midlands Futures Festival to introduce the organisation to prospective members and the wider community. It's also been a fantastic year for club growth, with the Dorset club successfully revived and now boasting over 20 members. At the end of the 2025/26 membership year, Rural Youth was made up of 244 members – we hope to see this number grow into the future.

Training remained a key pillar of member engagement throughout the year, with a range of practical training days giving members the chance to build real, transferable

skills. Machinery training covered excavators, telehandlers, forklifts and more, equipping members with hands-on experience and accredited skills. Alongside this, finance workshops and leadership training gave members the tools to grow their confidence and capability.

As we reflect on a year filled with new friendships, new skills and growing club momentum, Rural Youth Tasmania looks forward with excitement to what the year ahead has in store for our members and community.

Rural Youth Clubs

North Motton

Another lap around the sun has passed and what a year to remember it has been!

Starting off with State Ball held on the 21st of February at Cataract on Paterson in Launceston. Nine of our amazing members attended the ball and all scrubbed up well. It was a great night to mingle with other club members and create memories we will have for a lifetime.

As a Club, we have participated in a range of activities over the past year including BBQ's, potlucks, bowls, bowling, pub feeds, camping and the crowd favorite, go carting. Having the opportunity to get together and be involved in these fun activities is something we will never take for granted. We are creating friendships that will last a lifetime and memories we will cherish forever.

Fundraising and community involvement is always a standout aspect of our club. In the past year we have hosted two dog high jumps at two respective shows. The first one being Burnie show, which was a nice quiet event that equipped us with the experience to tackle the Circular Head show which always has many furry contestants. Circular head show is also where we got to showcase our new gazebo for the first time!

During the festive season we all got together for a Christmas dinner and had a fun night playing games. We also had a float in the Wynyard Christmas parade, with eager eyed children and adults waving and smiling as we passed.

Agfest is a huge part of all Rural Youth clubs, from working bees to meetings, and volunteering over the event. A great deal of time and effort goes into these three days. We would like to recognize the following members who contributed to the massive success we call Agfest, Samantha and Jessica Elphinstone, Hayden Richardson, Daniel Gladwell, Sarah Gardner, Samara Correy, Cheyenne Turner, Billy Popowski, Alex laing and Dylan Bellchambers. This success was then celebrated with the much-loved Agfest dinner.

One of our members, Jessica Elphinstone, was also granted the opportunity to go on an exchange. Jessica shares a few words on her experience:

My 6 weeks in Northern Ireland and Scotland was so busy. I had an amazing time and was fortunate to meet so many great people who made me feel welcome in their country, including people my parents knew or who had recently come to Tasmania on exchange. I would highly recommend applying for an exchange if you have the time as I will never regret my time away. Don't be surprised by how many people you might meet who have no idea of where Tasmania is. Be prepared to see some sights, but don't be surprised if you have to help out on some of the farms, it is a rural youth exchange after all! I learnt so much about dairy farming, cropping, chicken farming, Christmas tree farming, silaging and so much more. While it was a farming exchange, I was fortunate enough to see lots of touristy sights and have taken even more Photos! If this exchange, and all my previous travels have taught me anything, it would be to travel while you can and take every opportunity that is given to you!

- Jessica Elphinstone

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to our outgoing office bearers, Daniel Gladwell (President), Pheobe Calvert (Vice President), Samantha Elphinstone (Secretary) and Cheyenne Turner (Treasurer). Your dedication and hard work have played a key role in the continued success of our club.

A warm welcome and best wishes are in order for our incoming office bearers, Samantha Elphinstone (President), Pheobe Calvert (Vice President), Sarah Gardner (Secretary), and Daniel Gladwell (Treasurer). We are excited to see what the next 12 months will bring under their leadership, and what is planned for our club going forward.

Rural Youth Clubs

Oatlands

What another fantastic year it has been for Oatlands Rural Youth!

Over the past 12 months, our club has continued to be actively involved in community events, social activities, fundraising opportunities, and Rural Youth events across the state. These experiences have provided our members with opportunities to develop leadership skills, build friendships, support local communities, and most importantly, have plenty of fun along the way.

Some of the highlights from the year included assisting at the Woodsdale Cracker Night, attending the Zone 3 Laser Tag Social Night, and participating in the Pink Up Oatlands Scarecrow Competition. We also enjoyed being involved in community events such as the Oatlands Halloween Trick or Treat and the Oatlands Christmas Pageant, where we were able to connect with local families and promote Rural Youth within our community.

Our club was proud to host and assist with two successful ute competitions during the year, at the Woodsdale Family Fun Day and the Campbell Town Show. These events continue to be valuable opportunities for showcasing Rural Youth while bringing together ute enthusiasts and community members alike.

Members also represented Oatlands Rural Youth at the State Ball, enjoying a memorable evening alongside fellow Rural Youth members from across Tasmania.

Throughout the year, our members have demonstrated enthusiasm, teamwork, and a willingness to contribute wherever needed. Whether helping at community events, attending social activities, or supporting fundraising efforts, every contribution has played an important role in the success of our club.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities the coming year will bring. We hope to continue growing our membership, strengthening our community involvement, and providing engaging activities that encourage leadership, personal development, and lifelong friendships.

As with any volunteer organisation, our success relies heavily on the dedication and support of our members, families, sponsors, and community supporters. On behalf of Oatlands Rural Youth, we would like to sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to our club throughout the year. Your support is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to another successful year ahead.

Rural Youth Clubs

Brighton

It was a busy and rewarding year for Brighton Rural Youth, filled with new connections, community events, and a strong sense of camaraderie among members.

In late July 2025, the club hosted Hannah, an Austrian exchange student, from the 20th to the 27th. Special thanks went to committee member Emma, who welcomed Hannah into her home for the stay. The visit included a spirited day of paintball at Hobart Paintball during her stay — wild weather on the day didn't dampen the group's enthusiasm.

The club reconvened at the Brighton Bowls Club in August, where members collected their newly ordered Brighton Rural Youth merchandise. Attention then turned to show season preparations, with a working bee held on 20 September to get the dog high jump ready for the months ahead.

October brought a pub dinner and meeting at the York Hotel, giving members a chance to reconnect and finalise plans for the Brighton Show. The evening also included a fond farewell to long-time member Monty, who left to join the army — the club wished him all the best on his new journey.

The Brighton Show on 9 November was a highlight of the year, with the dog high jump and Ute Competition drawing strong entries and enthusiastic crowds.

The club rounded out 2025 with festive celebrations, including a Christmas potluck dinner and White Elephant gift exchange, and lent a hand at the Tassie Convoy 4 Kids — the annual truck convoy raising funds for children's healthcare at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Rural Youth Clubs

Tasman

It was a busy and exciting year for Tasman Club, marked by strong community involvement and a real focus on building club identity.

The club invested in its team spirit and presence early in the year, organising a personalised gazebo and brand new jumpers to help members feel connected and proud to represent Tasman.

Tasman stayed active on the fundraising and community front throughout the year, with a busy calendar including beach clean-ups, sausage sizzles, regular meetings, and sheep poo bagging and sales — all contributing towards the club's goals.

The club also ran a raffle, with generous prize donations from local businesses, alongside a silent auction for a load of firewood.

Rural Youth Clubs

Kingborough-Huon

Kingborough Huon (KH) had a standout year, culminating in a highly successful showing at the 78th Huon Agricultural Show.

Following the club's AGM, the team dedicated many hours to organising and planning how they would show up for and give back to their community at this year's Huon Show.

The club successfully ran the ute competition, which attracted seven entrants across best 4x4, street, BNS, and vintage categories. Alongside this, KH organised a popular animal nursery featuring goats, guinea pigs, sheep, ponies, rabbits, lambs, and miniature goats, with special thanks to members Taylah, Issy, and Bianca for bringing along their own pets. The team worked hard to ensure every visitor left with a cuddle and a photo.

KH also ran its first-ever dog high jump, drawing five small dog entrants and seven large dog entrants, along with some welcome returning competitors. The event proved a huge crowd-puller, with an estimated 1,000–1,500 people watching and cheering the dogs on.

The club was grateful for generous prize donations from the community towards its raffle, with proceeds going towards a new KH marquee, new signage, and merchandise for new members.

The club closed out the year proud of its growth, having welcomed new members to their first show alongside experienced members who helped guide the way .

Rural Youth Clubs

Westmorland

It was a milestone year for Westmorland, with strong membership growth and a stronger club identity taking shape.

With a wave of new and transferred members joining over the year, the club proudly reached double digits — a great achievement for the growing group.

Members pitched in to help Hagley at Rural Rumble, running an "On Foot Barrel Race" as a fun side event, another example of clubs coming together to support one another's events.

Rural Youth Clubs

Hagley

It was a busy year for Hagley, marked by social connection, growing membership, and one of the club's biggest events on the calendar.

Members enjoyed a social night out bowling, joined by members from Tamar Club for a fun and friendly evening of competition, a great example of the cross-club camaraderie that runs through Rural Youth.

The club welcomed a number of new members over the year, all eager and keen to get stuck into everything Rural Youth has to offer — a promising sign for the club's future.

A major highlight of the year was Rural Rumble, with the club running ticket sales and rallying members to spread the word ahead of what proved to be a night not to be missed.

Rural Youth Clubs

Tamar

Over the past year, Tamar Club placed a strong focus on communication, teamwork, and building new friendships within the group. Meetings took on a fun, hands-on energy with the introduction of team-building activities.

One standout exercise saw members paired up and given a photo to recreate through drawing — each person had 30 seconds to sketch before passing it to their partner, continuing in relay fashion over a total of three minutes. The exercise was as hilarious as it was effective, highlighting just how much teamwork and clear communication matter when working together.

The club also stayed busy behind the scenes with organisation, running a full calendar of events including a show and shine, school events, car parking duties, and a run of Christmas events. Many of these events involved collaboration with other clubs, and it was rewarding to see that same spirit of communication and teamwork extend beyond Tamar's own membership to create standout results together.

STUDY TOURS

This year, Rural Youth Tasmania's study tour and exchange program continued to build knowledge, friendships and global perspective across our membership, with four incoming visits welcomed and three of our own members venturing abroad.

In 2025 we were delighted to host three international visitors throughout the year. Hannah joined us from Austria, Kirsten from Northern Ireland and Carla from New Zealand. Each brought a unique perspective on agriculture from their home countries, and their time with us was a valuable opportunity for our members to share knowledge, build connections, and learn from people and practices around the world.

We also had the pleasure of sending three of our own members abroad in 2025. Alex Robins travelled to Austria from June to August, Matthew Wadley travelled to Switzerland, and Ashtyn Willey travelled to Northern Ireland and Scotland. These exchanges continue to offer our members invaluable exposure to different farming systems, cultures, and ways of working.

To coincide with Agfest 2026, we then hosted Sarg from New Zealand for three weeks, along with Charlotte from Scotland. Both were immersed in the full Agfest experience, meeting members from across the state and attending key events including the Agfest Dinner, CEO Farewell and Southern Farm Tour Day. In June 2026, we welcomed Flavia and Katharina, travelling from Switzerland and Austria respectively, for an eight-week stay. Hosted by families across Tasmania, they threw themselves into club activities and joined members at both the Young Farmer Run-Offs and the State Final and Dinner.

Rural Youth Tasmania also sent members overseas this year to broaden their own horizons: Jesse Macdonald travelled to Canada, and Jess Elphinstone to Northern Ireland and Scotland. We now look forward to sending Patrick Correy on a study tour to New Zealand in September 2026.

These exchanges remain one of the most valuable ways Rural Youth Tasmania connects members with the wider agricultural world — building lasting friendships, exposing members to new farming practices and perspectives, and reinforcing our reputation as a welcoming, well-connected part of Tasmania's rural community.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Our annual State Ball was held at Cataract on Paterson with 86 guests attending. It was a great opportunity to recognise the achievements and dedication of our members through the presentations of the Best New Member, Most Outstanding Member, Top Club and Marcus Oldham Rural Leadership Program awards. To keep everyone mingling, we also introduced a bingo card where members had to find people who matched different descriptions, encouraging everyone to get to know each other a little better. It created plenty of laughs and added to the relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere of the night, making it a memorable celebration. Throughout the year, we held a variety of social and member engagement events. Our bingo night, debate night and winter olympics were all highlights of the calendar, each bringing plenty of laughs, friendly competition and enthusiastic member participation. Whether members were testing their knowledge, stepping outside their comfort zone in the debate, or competing in the winter olympics, these events gave everyone the chance to get involved, connect with one another and create lasting memories and stories to tell. Following another successful Agfest, members came together for the Agfest Dinner to celebrate all the hard work that went into delivering one of the biggest events. The evening was a chance to thank everyone who volunteered their time and effort and to recognise the commitment and teamwork that made Agfest such a success. It was also an opportunity to reflect on what we achieved together, share a well-earned meal and celebrate. Thankyou to everyone who supported and participated in our social events throughout the year. We look forward to another great year of bringing members together.

FINANCIALS

INCOME	2024-2025	2025-2026
Rural Youth	$161,201	$138,285
Agfest	$1,722,618	$1,851,308
Property Management	$128,113	$532,402
Sponsorship	$518,631	$491,302
Government Funding	$12,667	$868,500
TOTAL INCOME	$2,543,230	$3,881,797
EXPENDITURE	**2024-2025**	**2025-2026**
Administration	$751,938	$862,074
Membership	$83,379	$110,995
Property Expenses	$366,410	$642,156
Agfest Expenses	$669,893	$731,678
Donations	$7,000	$16,250
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	$1,878,620	$2,363,153
NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT	$664,610	$1,518,644

The past twelve months has been a year of action, change and progress for our organisation and members, with huge reinvestment in Quercus Park, both for the longevity of the site and future events including Agfest, as well as improving member facilities.

We once again started the financial year with a challenging budget, and several major capital projects already in progress, namely the construction of the new Rural Youth head office at Quercus Park , current spend to date $1.136m, and the sitewide Fire Safety System upgrade - $667k. We are extremely grateful to the State Government for the grant of $550k to allow us to complete this essential upgrade. The storm damaged Tullah building was removed from the Members Accommodation area, at an approx. cost of $182k, and we also saw construction of the new Members Ablutions block, approx. cost to date $247k. Earlier in the year we formed an ongoing partnership with DairyTas to construct the new DairyTas Pavilion in Main Street, for a total cost of $599k, with a co-contribution from DairyTas of $132k, and a grant from the State Government of $385k. Once again, grateful to both DairyTas and the State Government for their collaboration with this project.

We were also very appreciative of a further grant from the State Government of $21k to put towards improving waste management infrastructure and planning moving forward.

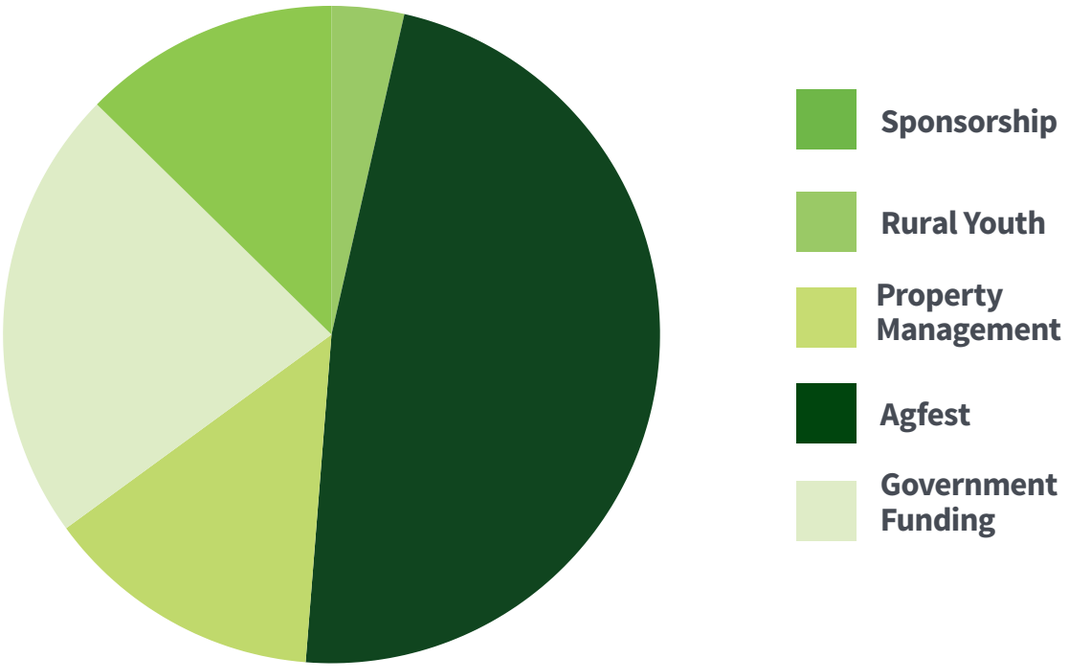
In addition to State Government assistance, we are ever grateful for the continued support from our wonderful sponsors, their support enables us to deliver on the Rural Youth mission to connect, develop and celebrate young Tasmanians.

The year ended with a pleasing nett result of $1,518,644, noting the increased government funding received in this financial year. It is also pertinent to note that current capital works in progress have a planned budget of approx.. $500k to see through to completion.

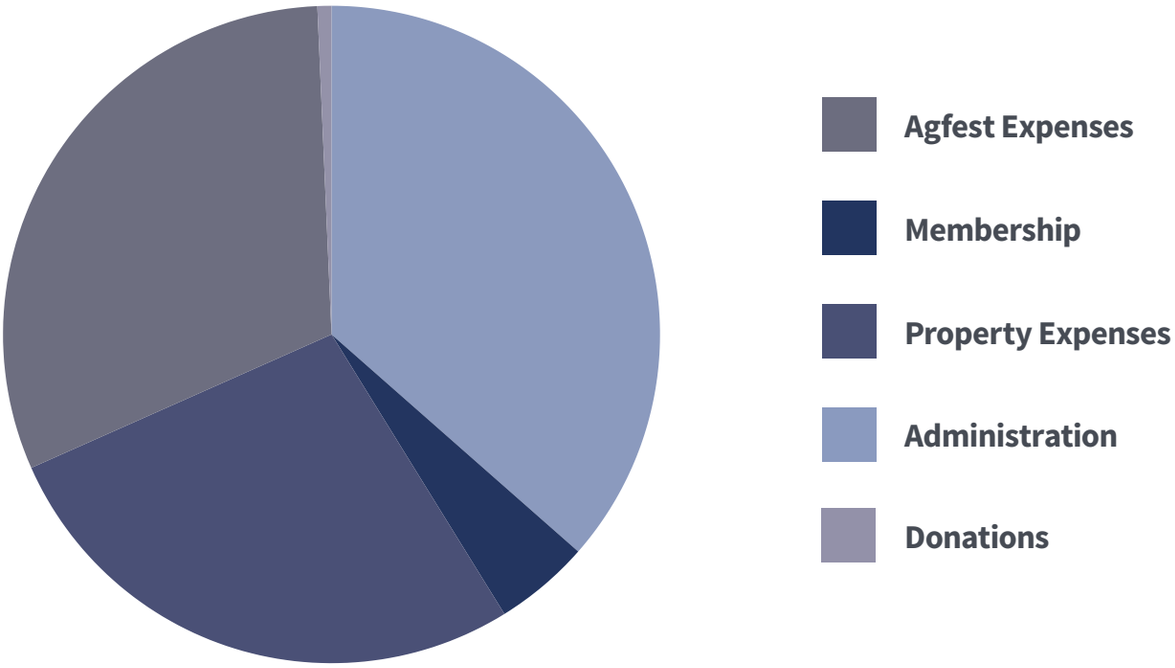
A complete set of audited financial statements is available from the organisation upon request.

LINDA PERKINS
Operations & Finance Manager

SOURCE OF INCOME 2025-26



AREAS OF EXPENDITURE 2025-26



Rural Business Tasmania
Supporting and Growing Rural and Regional Enterprise

Celebrating 40 Years

This year, Rural Business Tasmania (RBT) proudly celebrates 40 years of supporting Tasmania's rural and regional communities. Established in 1986 by Rural Youth Tasmania, RBT has grown from its Rural Financial Counselling Service origins into one of Tasmania's leading not-for-profit providers of rural business, financial counselling and business advisory services.

Today, RBT delivers a multitude of programs, providing trusted, independent support that helps farming families, small businesses and regional communities build resilience, navigate change and create sustainable futures. We proudly acknowledge the vision of Rural Youth Tasmania in establishing the organisation and thank them for their continued support over the past four decades.

Responding to Challenges: Rural Relief Fund

The Rural Relief Fund (RRF) continued to provide emergency assistance to farming families experiencing hardship during 2025–26, delivering timely financial assistance to primary producers and their families requiring immediate support during difficult circumstances. We sincerely thank the Tasmanian Government and our delivery partners for their ongoing commitment to this important initiative.

New Initiatives and Expanded Reach

This year we successfully completed the Community Impact Program (CIP) and commenced delivery of the new RBT Mentorship Program, which will provide three intakes between 2025 and 2027. We also continued delivering the Tasmanian Business Advice Service (TBAS) and the New Business Support (NBS) Program, providing free, confidential business advice across three of Tasmania's four regions.

Training and Capacity Building

Building capability across the rural sector remains a key priority. In partnership with ICAN Learn, we continue to deliver the Rural Financial Counselling Diploma, helping develop the next generation of Rural Financial Counsellors. Alongside this, our Mentorship Program is strengthening leadership capability, confidence and business skills across rural and regional Tasmania.

Our Legacy and Core Services

The Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) remains the cornerstone of Rural Business Tasmania. During 2025–26, our team supported more than 110 farming businesses through over 1,340 client interactions, helping clients navigate financial challenges and strengthen the resilience of their businesses. We are pleased that funding for this essential service has been secured through to 30 June 2027.

Leadership and Collaboration

Collaboration continues to underpin everything we do. Rural Business Tasmania convenes and chairs the Forum of Rural Stakeholders and works alongside the Future Drought Fund, Tas Farm Innovation Hub and many industry partners to strengthen support for Tasmania's agricultural sector.

We are proud to contribute to the Tasmanian Farm Innovation Hub Advisory Board, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture Advisory Board, Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group, Tasmanian Small Business Council, Potatoes Tasmania, the Safe Farming Reference Group, the Tasmanian Recovery Network, the Northern Region Emergency Management Committee and COSBOA.

Looking Ahead

As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, we thank our Board, staff, funding partners, volunteers and the many organisations we work alongside for their ongoing commitment and collaboration. We also acknowledge the continued support of Rural Youth Tasmania, whose vision established Rural Business Tasmania four decades ago.

Looking ahead, Rural Business Tasmania remains committed to delivering practical, trusted and independent services that help Tasmania's rural and regional communities adapt, grow and thrive for generations to come.

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