

**OPENING OF AGFEST AGRICULTURAL FIELD DAYS 2024
ON BEHALF OF RURAL YOUTH TASMANIA
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
QUERCUS PARK, CARRICK, THURSDAY 2 MAY 2024**

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to this year's Agfest.

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community and recognise and respect their enduring culture and continued connection to land, sea, and waters.

I am very pleased to be here, and I am looking forward to looking at all the exhibitions, displays, and animals, especially the dogs, as we have two border collies.

We take great pride in Agfest being one of the top three field days in Australia; it has won major awards in Tourism and in Business Excellence.¹ It is an important event that highlights the strength and diversity of our Tasmanian agricultural industry.

Agfest attracts thousands of visitors each year and last year 55,000 people attended. This visibility raises awareness about the agricultural industry's importance to Tasmania's economy.

One of the hallmarks of Agfest is the diverse array of exhibits, which offer viewers an insight into all areas of the agricultural industry. From machinery and equipment demonstrations to livestock displays, horticultural showcases, and artisanal food and beverage stalls. These not only highlight the expertise of our local producers and innovators, but also provide an opportunity for visitors to learn, engage, and be inspired.

Agfest is also an important educational event. It offers workshops, demonstrations, and presentations that provide valuable knowledge and skills

¹ <https://www.agfest.com.au/history>

to participants, which is important for our next generation of farmers and agricultural professionals. And it helps ensure that our industry's future is grounded on current and best practices.

This year's official Agfest charity is Rural Alive and Well (RAW), a confidential outreach service for rural communities. RAW assists individuals through mental health and wellbeing programs and is an essential service for our rural communities.

A new initiative this year is Gumboot Day on Friday, which aims to raise awareness about the challenges faced by young people. Money raised will be donated to RAW to support their work for our youth and communities in rural areas.²

Some of you may be surprised to learn that Agfest is run by just 50 volunteers, from the Rural Youth Organisation of Tasmania.³ I applaud everyone involved for their efforts and commitment to make this event a success every year.

Our Rural Youth Organisation is the backbone of the Agfest legacy. Since the beginning, this organisation has effectively trained and motivated our rural youth.⁴ Through their efforts, they have contributed to the future of agriculture in Tasmania and fostered community spirit.

May I conclude my remarks by congratulating the Rural Youth State President Brady Robins, Agfest Chair Dylan Bellchambers, and the Volunteer Committee of the Rural Youth Organisation of Tasmania for their outstanding efforts, hard work and dedication. Well done!

Now, I have the great pleasure to declare Agfest 2024 officially open! I invite you all to enjoy the Agfest Field Days.

Thank you.

² Email Lucie Venn/Paula Chatwood 16 Apr 2024

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⁴ <https://www.ruralityouth.com.au/about-rural-youth/>