



GIPPY2PARLY: November 2011

Report on Young Gippsland agribusiness professionals visit to the top end of town



And thanks to Dr Ron Prestidge (DPI), the VFF, VECCI and Peter Hunt

A group of 20 young Gippsland farmers and agribusiness professionals mixed with law-makers and opinion-shapers in Melbourne – learning about the workings of State Parliament, the background to the Department of Primary Industry, the support structures of the VFF, the Gardiner Foundation and VECCI and the role of media in driving public opinion and responses.

Coming from Bairnsdale, Lindenow, Inverloch, Morwell, Warragul, Tarwin Lower, Leongatha South and Sale, the group of young people aged up to 40 joined an Agribusiness Gippsland tour to the Victorian Parliament.

The day-long visit started with a tour of Parliament House. The visitors were greeted by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Ken Smith - who hosted the group. Mr Smith **(pictured left)** shared insights into paths to a political career as well as the process of forming policy from the party room to the floor of Parliament.



Participants were treated to scones, jam and cream in the members' dining room while they undertook lengthy talks with the Agriculture Minister Peter Walsh, Deputy Premier Peter Ryan. **(Pictured below, right)** Minister Walsh answered questions on a wide range of subjects – from land use to financial incentives for farm ownership. Mr Ryan took questions and spoke of the need to expand agriculture's

vision further down the supply chain to food processing.

The group then visited the Department of Primary Industries in Spring St, having a long talk with executive director of the Future Farm Research Systems, Dr Ron Prestidge **(below, left)** who discussed research into dairying, high-rainfall cropping and horticulture.



The farmers asked Agribusiness Gippsland to organise a visit to DPI Ellinbank to see first-hand the DPI work being undertaken into dairy feed systems and methane mitigation. **That visit will take place on February 2, 2012.**

The visitors then went to visit the VFF, where they were hosted to lunch by the Gardiner Foundation and were welcomed by Gardiner CEO Paul Ford and Matthew Gould, VECCI's

Manager, Local Government and Regional Development Economics and Industry Policy. **Pictured right are Lindenow farmer John Alexander (left) and Paul Ford.**



Rounding off the visit was a rivetting talk by veteran Weekly Times journalist Peter Hunt on the topic of "Using and being used by politicians". He gave three case studies of controversial issues undertaken recently by the paper: stamp duty exemptions for farmland purchases, aerial wild dog baiting and ATV roll-over bars.



“His presentation was very powerful and the visitors were justifiably impressed,” said Alex Arbuthnot AM, **(left)** the Agribusiness Gippsland chair, who attended the lunch. “The aim of the day was to bring future farming leaders into the political sphere – to see how the linkages of power work and to put some of their issues directly to the top end of town.”



The bus – funded by NABagribusiness – was driven by Sale farmer and Agribusiness Gippsland director Courtney Ferguson **(right)** who admitted: “It was the first time I’d ever tried to park a 22-seater bus in central Melbourne before!”

Responses lodged anonymously through SurveyMonkey to December 4, 2011

1. Why did you join the trip?

To meet other young agri professionals in the area and hear from politicians.

2. What did you get out of the day?

It was a great opportunity to meet young agri professionals in the area and also meet & hear from politicians.

3. What worked?

It was a brilliant day, the bus trip was lots of fun and the scheduled lineup of speakers was well organised. Quality speakers and a lot was fitted into the day. It was an excellent day.

4. What didn't?

No Response

5. Would you recommend the trip to a friend?

YES

1. Why did you join the trip?

To meet other young leaders in the region and to get an insight into parliament/government process

2. What did you get out of the day?

It was great to meet the others from Gippsland. I learned a lot from Ken Smith, Peter Walsh and Peter Hunt. It was also good to meet Peter Ryan.

3. What worked?

Everything worked well - great work.

4. What didn't?

No Response

5. Would you recommend the trip to a friend?

YES

1. Why did you join the trip?

i was asked to

2. What did you get out of the day?

an insight into how the political structure works

3. What worked?

the meeting with the weekly times journo

4. What didn't?

trying to get a straight answer out of the politicians

5. Would you recommend the trip to a friend?

YES

1. Why did you join the trip?

Gather knowledge on the legislative procedure, the implementation of the law or funding vehicle to meet the required needs.

2. What did you get out of the day?

More information on the direction the government is heading with certain issues as well as an understanding that the government is aware of the many ramifications of their decisions

3. What worked?

Everything, maybe a little more time at VFF with one of their representatives to talk about their involvement around issues for farmers

4. What didn't?

Time constraints, would have been nice to expand the whole trip to gather more understanding

5. Would you recommend the trip to a friend?

YES

1. Why did you join the trip?

Information and network improvement

2. What did you get out of the day?

political info, DPI's areas of interest, VFF info, News information

3. What worked?

Everything

4. What didn't?

Very concentrated on Politics, and Farming. Not so much for Horticulture / business as is my primary interest.

5. Would you recommend the trip to a friend?

YES

1. Why did you join the trip?

To meet a range of young professionals working in the gippsland farming (and service) sector. To gain an understanding of their needs in the industries they work. (Jason)

2. What did you get out of the day?

I gained an understanding of what participants thought about political process. It also broadened my network. (Jason)

3. What worked?

The fast nature of the day. One meeting to the next. The broad picture of politics from the speaker, access to Ministers and then DPI and the Journalist was the correct flow of the day. ie do not put P.Hunt first as it would make the day very confrontational. (Jason)

4. What didn't?

It would be a lot better if all participants had at least some time to have a chat before and after all the meetings (ie all on bus). I also think it would be good to prepare participants about the meetings and get them to ask questions (semi-prepared) of the pollies and others. (Jason) Happy to chat about this further.

5. Would you recommend the trip to a friend?

YES

1. Why did you join the trip?

Networking

2. What did you get out of the day?

Met lots of new people and learnt more about politics.

3. What worked?

The whole day.

4. What didn't?

No Response

5. Would you recommend the trip to a friend?

YES

1. Why did you join the trip?

Great opportunity to network with like-minded young people in agriculture, learn more about how policy decisions are made, meet leading representatives and hopefully influence a few people.

2. What did you get out of the day?

New friends, new contacts, a clearer understanding of how the Victorian parliamentary system works.

3. What worked?

Travelling together on the bus was great. Whole day was well scheduled, great to meet my local representative Ken Smith.

4. What didn't?

It would have been good to meet with the equivalent shadow politicians and also some female leaders in the industry- apart from the wonderful Sue!

5. Would you recommend the trip to a friend?

YES



Jason McAinch and Ailsa Gibson

Report prepared by Sue Webster, executive officer Agribusiness Gippsland 0402 267 802.