



## Industry's best interests at forefront of national conversations



### Australia's agricultural industry has been the heart and soul of many a generation.

The backbone of townships, large and small, the industry is central to identity and prosperity.

Yet in recent times, the industry and its correlating sectors have gone through somewhat of a renaissance in terms of science and technology.

The speed of technological advances, rate of innovation and the introduction of global markets have well and truly made an impact.

It's no more surprising than to Andrew Bishop, Chair of Ag Institute Australia (AIA).

"When the institute first started in 1935 with 150 people at the inaugural meeting it was primarily a professional organisation for agricultural scientists," Mr Bishop said.

"As the industry started to evolve, the institute needed to reflect these changes and it has been in the last decade that the AIA has moved into a corporate structure."

As Australia's peak advocacy group for professions in agriculture and natural resource management, the institute helps to provide an independent voice to issues affecting members and the industry.

Each state and territory hosts a division of the AIA with nearly 1000 members across Australia including advisers, consultants, scientists, agribusinesses, farmers and policy makers.

"There continues to be rapid changes occurring across many areas of the industry and it's our job to keep across these changes to help advise our members and keep governments on their toes," Mr Bishop said.

He said while the AIA has a public face, it also is member-focused providing training and professional development opportunities as well as promoting mentoring.



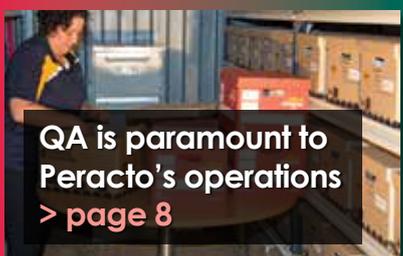
Pot trials offer advantages in managing plant diseases

> page 4



A career truly enjoyed

> page 6



QA is paramount to Peracto's operations

> page 8

continued on page 3



## Editorial...

**Ian Macleod**  
Managing Director

### Investing in industry partnerships can never be underestimated.

The importance of building connections with like-minded businesses on an international platform is a vital foundation to any company.

It has been almost a year since Peracto merged with France-based contract research organisation (CRO) Staphyt.

Over the past 12 months, much has been achieved to grow and expand the suite of services to not only local clients, but new international audiences too.

One of the most recent examples was on my recent trip to North America.

Through our ongoing relationship and support from companies including Lee and Steve Wests' RD4AG, Peracto and Staphyt are truly evolving into global enterprises.

North America and Canada are key markets where our services are valued, and where we can offer a point of difference.

It was during this recent visit, in conjunction with a NAICC meeting, that myself and Yves Coconnier from Staphyt had the chance to meet with a number of CROs and form new alliances.

These alliances open us up to markets in North America and Canada.

We are now in a position to respond to the growing global demand for our services, with key contacts and exposure.

These achievements are a credit to Peracto's and Staphyt's reputation, but also to the building and maintaining of networks and relationships throughout the years.

While tending to networks is not at the fore of what we promote, it is a foundation from which we can grow and expand. 🌱



*Yves Coconnier from Staphyt (front, left) and Ian Macleod from Peracto (front, right) meeting with partners from America and Canada.*



[www.peracto.com](http://www.peracto.com)

#### **Ian Macleod, Managing Director**

Telephone: +61 3 6423 2044

Email: [imacleod@peracto.com](mailto:imacleod@peracto.com)

#### **Andrew Woodcock, Business Manager**

Telephone: +61 3 6423 2044

Email: [awoodcock@peracto.com](mailto:awoodcock@peracto.com)

#### **GENERAL PROJECT ENQUIRIES**

##### **Phillip Frost**

Mobile: 0409 841 692

Email: [pfrost@peracto.com](mailto:pfrost@peracto.com)

#### **RESIDUE PROJECTS**

##### **Bronwyn Haller**

Mobile: 0420 520 582

Email: [bhaller@peracto.com](mailto:bhaller@peracto.com)

#### **TASMANIA**

##### **David Kohler**

Mobile: 0417 864 990

Email: [dkohler@peracto.com](mailto:dkohler@peracto.com)

#### **Hoong Pung**

Mobile: 0409 400 063

Email: [hpung@peracto.com](mailto:hpung@peracto.com)

#### **VICTORIA**

##### **Mitchell Redpath**

Mobile: 0409 470 184

Email: [mredpath@peracto.com](mailto:mredpath@peracto.com)

#### **SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND**

##### **Chris Thensen**

Mobile: 0408 197 180

Email: [cthensen@peracto.com](mailto:cthensen@peracto.com)

#### **NORTH QUEENSLAND**

##### **Chris Monsour**

Mobile: 0429 134 537

Email: [cmonsour@peracto.com](mailto:cmonsour@peracto.com)

#### **NEW ZEALAND**

##### **Paul Munro**

Telephone: +64 9 238 1102

Mobile: +64 2142 4466

Email: [pmunro@peracto.co.nz](mailto:pmunro@peracto.co.nz)

Editorial: Anna Osborne

Design: Simon Schorn

# Industry's best interests at forefront of national conversations

*continued from page 1*

The institute regularly produces submissions and policy position papers to federal inquiries and commissions on issues including research and development levies, competitiveness, education and biotechnology.

The institute's role is to ensure the industry's best interests are at the forefront of national conversations which shape its future.

"The primary industries sector is a good example of where a huge amount of change has occurred in a relatively short amount of time," Mr Bishop said.

"There are now jobs in areas that didn't even exist years ago, such as precision agriculture.

"On a broader aspect, we are more than aware of the impact technology is



*At a recent AIA conference (from left) speakers Liza Noonan (CSIRO), Professor Mike Keller (Head, School of Agriculture - Food and Wine, University of Adelaide) and Dr Alan Finkel (Australia's chief scientist).*

having on the science industries and the demands it places on the professions."

While the institute is standing up for and representing the professions of today, it is also keeping an eye on the future too.

"In recent times we have seen an increase in the number of students

pursuing agricultural degrees at university," Mr Bishop said.

"I think this is based on several factors including the way people now view agriculture as a knowledge-based enterprise and the numerous rewards that can come from pursuing a career in the industry.

"The free-trade agreements have also provided a number of new and varied career opportunities which previously didn't exist."

Mr Bishop believes the future is in good hands.

Every year, the institute hosts a national event where undergraduate students who have completed an Honours research project as part of an agricultural science (or related) degree are selected from each AIA state division to present their work to a panel of judges.

"In the years we have been hosting the awards, the level of entries and quality of the work is extremely impressive," he said.

The AEV Richardson Memorial National Student Award began in 2012 and is now an official AIA event, sponsored by Peracto.

"Judging by the standard of these presentations the industry is attracting the brightest minds and is certainly in good hands heading into the future," Mr Bishop said. 



*Former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Neil Andrew AO (left) introduces Australia's chief scientist, Dr Alan Finkel.*



# Pot trials offer advantages in managing plant diseases

**Controlled environment in pot trials offer many advantages when it comes to managing plant diseases.**

In order to understand and prevent disease, research scientists have to firstly create the disease before screening products and producing control measures.

It is creating the disease which requires a very complex symmetry between disease, host and conditions.

One way of achieving this effectively is through pot trials.

Field trials can present too many variables, and the crucial factor of time comes into play.

Currently, field trials are mainly used to evaluate products for disease control during the target crop season.

This provides only a narrow window of a few months every year to screen products.

Field trials are also subject to highly variable weather conditions, which influences the presence or absence of pests and pest epidemics.

Controlled environment in pot trials can offer greater certainty in getting diseases compared to field trials relying on natural field infections.

Trials can be conducted either outdoors in shade house facilities, or indoors in glasshouse or plant growth chambers.

High disease pressure and suitable conditions for disease can be created in pot trials to optimise disease development.

Pot trials can also offer a quick turnaround time of four to six weeks, compared to three to six months in field trials.

Dr Hoong Pung, Peracto's Principal Research Scientist, leads a team of researchers that have over 80 years of experiences in carrying out pot trials on a range of plant diseases.

"We can screen products in pot trials for control of diseases which in field trials can be difficult to get reliable results from," Dr Pung said.

"We do pot trials for screening seed treatments against soilborne diseases that affect crop establishments like rhizoctonia, pythium and fusarium on cereal crops."

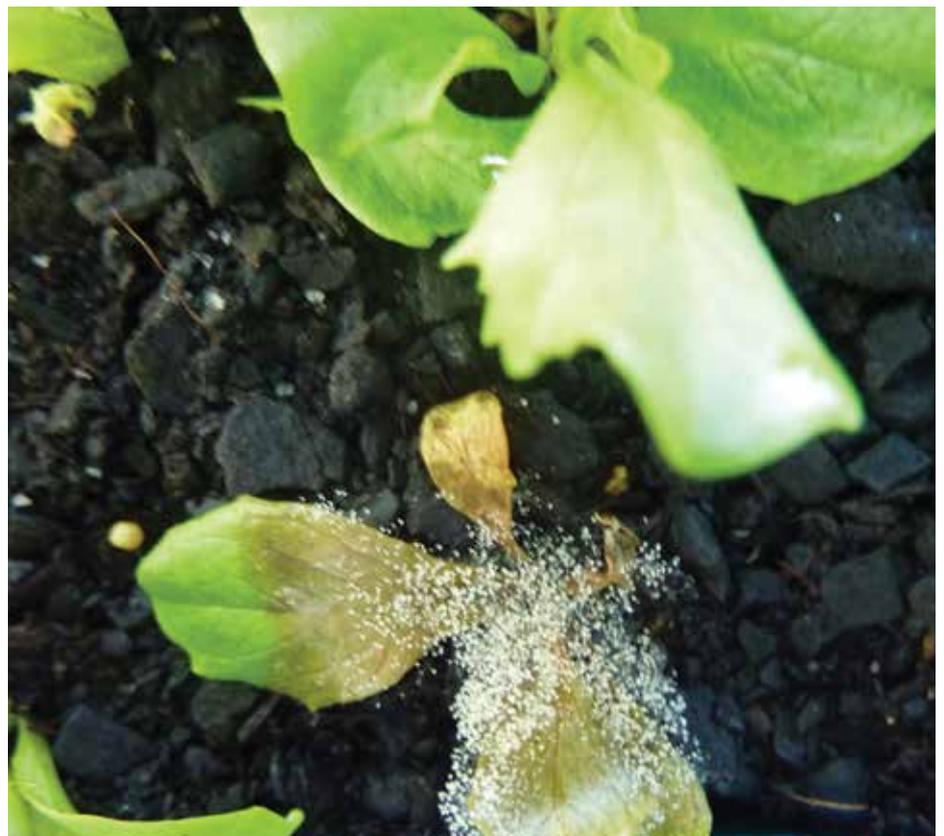
"For our clients, pot trials can also offer the convenience of out-of-season trials, so that valuable information can be generated for rapid product development," Peracto Technical Manager Phil Frost said. 



## FACT FILE

### Peracto's services in pot trials include:

- Screening of seed treatments in pot trials to control soil borne diseases in cereals, vegetables and pastures
- Seedling drench treatments to control damping off diseases
- Screening of products to control foliar diseases such as downy mildew, white blister, anthracnose and blights.





# A career truly enjoyed

**Technical Officer Pam Batt continues to enjoy a career she truly loves.**

## **What attracted you to a career in the agricultural industry?**

I did not come from a farming background, but I've been involved in the agricultural industry in one way or another for many years. I have picked and packed bananas in North Queensland and ran my own gardening business on the North West Coast of Tasmania. I have also worked in the micro propagation area, mostly working on eucalypts and pyrethrum. Prior to joining Serve-Ag Research (which Peracto was previously known as) in 1997, I worked as a quality

control officer and harvest inspector for carrot and tulip production and was also involved in setting up and maintaining the ISO9002 quality assurance system. Always having an interest in plant diseases and quality problems, I kept records of my own observations on most paddocks and crops that I visited and had the good fortune to share this information with Dr Hoong Pung who was involved in a carrot disease project. It was at this stage that I was truly bitten by the research bug and joined the research team under the guidance of Hoong.

## **How long have you been at Peracto? What is your current role?**

I first joined the research team over 20 years ago. Initially I worked for

eight years, but due to ill health, I left and became involved in disability support work teaching commercial cooking and service industry skills. This led me to becoming a qualified commercial chef. After five years in the cooking industry I realised the need to return to the agricultural research industry. Fortunately, I had kept in contact with my former colleagues and management from Peracto and jumped at the chance to return to the team in 2013. In my role as a technical officer I am involved with assessing, managing and recording trials whether they are diseases, weeds or insects. I have been involved in a diverse range of projects, surveys and product evaluation trials both in the field and glasshouse.

## What have been some of the major changes that you have witnessed in the industry?

The major changes have been the introduction of technology and the geographical spread of Peracto. For example, the use of iPad, iPhone and iCloud has not only astounded me but at times totally confused me (old school – pen and paper girl!). Although I realise these changes make for a more accurate and efficient way to share information. I am keen to learn all I can about the use of drones in the agricultural research industry as I feel that this technology can generate data which allows us to more accurately assess trials. The ever-evolving geographical spread of Peracto, now merged with Staphyt, has enabled us to broaden our expertise and services in many ways.

## What do you enjoy most about working in the industry?

What I enjoy most is knowing that every day I go to a job that I honestly love, and each day I learn something new. How many people can say that? I have loved this work for over 12 years. I have had access to the most amazing mentors that have been more than willing to share their knowledge with me. Also, the graduate program has allowed me to meet and interact with young people who share in my passion for the industry. It gives me faith that the industry will continue to be in good hands. I love field work and the chance to be outside. The camaraderie of field work with a great team is second-to-none where even the most mundane task can be fun. 🌿





# QA is paramount to Peracto's operations

## Quality management systems are housed in almost every business.

These systems are central to a company's foundation, growth and expansion, serving to ensure staff and clients are protected and supported by robust and current practices.

Having an effective and compliant management system is paramount to Peracto whose reach, both in staff and clientele, is global.

"Management systems are fundamental to any business," Peracto's Quality Assurance Manager Melissa Webster said.

"For Peracto the GLP Quality System not only ensures compliance to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Principles of GLP, but provides support to staff involved in the conduct of residue studies.

"Robust certified management systems provide many benefits to any business including supporting staff, client confidence, management assurance and increased business saleability."

Ms Webster said Peracto's quality management systems were first assessed for GLP recognition in April 2002.

Peracto has since been recognised by NATA (National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia) as a GLP compliant facility for the conduct of residue studies.

The company has continued to meet the strict industry standards.

"QA is not just about auditing systems, it's also about communicating with the people who use them," she said.

Ms Webster said systems were built from the knowledge and experience of those who accessed them.

"Good systems need to be balanced," she said.

"They must be written to accurately reflect what it is that people do. They must align with a company's objectives and be compliant with the standard they are designed to meet."

In her role overseeing these systems, Ms Webster has seen first-hand how effective QA can make a real difference in a workplace.

"When staff are given the opportunity to contribute to the creation of a system a culture of ownership develops and implementation becomes easier," she said.

"Peracto encourages staff to have their say about the way things are done especially with the GLP Management System." 

