



ORGANIC AND  
REGENERATIVE  
INVESTMENT  
COOPERATIVE

Dear Members,

It is with much pleasure that we present this **2025 Annual Chair Report** from your Board.

**Key areas that ORICoop has focussed on this past year are covered in this report include:-**

- **ORCA product growth**
- **Investment Opportunities- Grain Note**
- **Membership and Community Engagement**
- **Organic Market Development & Growth**
- **Organic Industry update**

The ORICoop board is extremely grateful to Executive Director, Carolyn Suggate for her tireless and focused leadership during the year. Carolyn has provided effective leadership on many issues and opportunities encountered during the year.

The Board would like to thank all of our members for their valuable support and belief in the Cooperative structure adopted by ORICoop. As a grass roots member driven organisation - we are about increasing the capacity of organic markets, connecting organic growers and facilitating localised investment where opportunities are identified. The Board looks forward to continuing the exciting journey ahead together as the ORICoop organisation evolves with the continuous achievement of our key strategic outcomes.

### **ORCA Stockfeed Business**

This year has been a big one! With the release of our **ORCA Certified Organic Stockfeed** that utilises southern grown organic grains - with a tailored, nutritionally balanced poultry layer and crumble mix. We are averaging 60 - 80 tonnes of stockfeed per batch, and are aiming for more than 1000 tonnes in the coming calendar year. The ORCA Stockfeed Business is driven by a mix of the development of our members' grain products, and the market demand generated from poultry operators, which includes a nutritionally balanced stockfeed, good laying rates, reduced food miles and affordability. Our aim is to continue to expand this opportunity into 2026 - as our growers expand their grain products and volumes in organic systems. Particular thanks to Kevin and David at the Murtoa Mill - who continue to make this happen and accommodate the needs of manufacturing a premium organic product direct from the mill to our poultry growers.



We are also pleased to note that we have a number of other collaborations of processing opportunities for premium grains. Including rolled grains (i.e. rolled oats, rye and wheat), kibble, flour plus the packaging of bulk cleaned grains for human consumption (for export). These markets take time to develop but we are optimistic that in the coming year there will be more opportunity for our 'Farmers Own' bulk brand to tap into these opportunities both domestically and importantly for export.

### **INVESTMENT -**

#### **- Grain Finance Note**

This year we have trialled the **Grain Finance Note** with our key supplier members as the demand for the ORCA stockfeed has increased. This has enabled a win-win for our growing grain members. Our growers store the organic grain on-farm under contract for ORICoop, and deliver it upon request (as needed) for the stockfeed. While our investors enable our growers to be paid a portion of the grain while the grain is in storage. This enables a more balanced cashflow over the year for growers (noting that grain harvest is often once per year) while also the quality of the grain can be maintained and monitored through an organic storage system. The last of these original Grain Notes have recently been retired - as the 2025 harvest is upon us. So with great excitement the ORICoop Board have agreed to release \$345K more Grain Notes, which will fund the next 45% of the total grain required for our stockfeed (as per the demand currently). It is likely that the demand for the stockfeed will continue to grow - which will mean that we can expand this investment provision over time. Currently the 2026 Grain Note is over 50% subscribed and we hope to have it fully subscribed shortly! Any ORICoop members still interested to invest can do so by logging into their ORICoop Membership Portal.

#### **- Other Investment Initiatives**

Includes potential investment projects in Tasmania and NSW. Both are in progress at present to different extents and involve land assets for existing organic enterprises. ORICoop is excited to see these projects coming to fruition and looks forward to creating opportunities to expand our investor network.

The ORICoop Board has agreed to pay an annual dividend to all Investor only members based on the period of time funds have been deployed in the 2025 Grain Note. This is a progressive step for our investor members and the Board looks forward to expanding our investment opportunities in the coming year.. All Investor Members have three options for their existing



ORGANIC AND  
REGENERATIVE  
INVESTMENT  
COOPERATIVE

investment which include:-

- a. Receive dividend cash payment
- b. Rollover dividend payment to existing investment
- c. Donate dividend payment to Resilience Fund

### **TECHNOLOGY AND WEBSITE**

The ORICoop Board made a strategic decision in the last financial year to update the original ORICoop website. It has been a journey - but thankfully with a great outcome. The new ORICoop website now is a much friendlier member experience. The new design provides us with the capacity to add more resources and the ability for our members to engage and share their business stories. This includes the ORCA products (bulk organic), the Member Directory plus capacity for our members to acquire Investor Shares. Over the coming year there will be further updates - including a QR code for all our subscribed members to use in their marketing and products that shares their business story and enables more single origin products to reach the marketplace from our Grower Members.

### **ORGANIC MARKET**

This year has been a mixed season for our grower members. Those in South Australia and across to Western Victoria have done it tough. With limited ground moisture and only a few welcome showers of rain - each grower has had to make the most of every opportunity in growing their crops or products. Those further north in QLD have had some extreme weather events - including cyclonic winds and tennis ball hailstones.

In the deep south (and our Tassie mates) it has been a relentlessly cold and wet winter that continues into November! We hope the sun shines soon so they can have an abundant harvest and look forward to an exceptional Autumn given the impressive amount of rain that has continued to fall.

The overall market for organic products has been positive. With a number of our members exploring new markets and tapping into innovative supply and value add opportunities. It has been great to see our newer members tapping into positive local markets - particularly around the increase in our pastured poultry grower members accessing our stockfeed and the expansion of more organic egg operators. Plus also a number of new potential organic grain growing members.



## ORGANIC AND REGENERATIVE INVESTMENT COOPERATIVE

In general this year there has been continued general growth in retail sales incremental on last year. Inflation in retail price is observable, and particularly in recent months with summer crops coming on. There are signs of an expanding 'must buy' consumer group which refers to high wealth consumers that have made an ethical or health related decision to buy organic foods regardless of price delta from non-organic alternatives.

The reinvigoration of the AS6000 domestically is expected to introduce greater scrutiny over imported goods and substance for organic claims in the coming year, which we hope will level the playing field for organic production and costs.

### **ORICOOP MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

ORICoop has increased its membership to 297 members this year. With a focus on Grower members - but also a number of key members that are interested in our investment opportunities. It has been encouraging to see our member engagement improve post the website upgrade with an increase in our subscribed members (Annual Subscription \$50/year). With our subscribed members now able to update their Farm Profiles and share more of the story of their farm products and management styles. This and the opportunity for our grower members to engage via our Whats App Groups (which now includes grain, livestock, poultry and bulk fresh product). It is particularly important for organic operators to be able to connect directly with each other - as often in farming communities there is a limited number of organic or biologically minded growers. It has been very encouraging to enable our grower members to network and engage regularly online. Particularly around grain growing - from the West of Australia, to far north QLD down to Victoria and South Australia. The growers have been able to share their differing organic management strategies including organic weed management, grain cleaning and storage, together with updates on the markets and guidance on the future potential markets.

For our organic pastured poultry growers - it was a pleasure to host an event at Paola & Andrew Crofts farm, [Tall Poppy Farm](#) in September. This enabled more than 20 poultry/egg growers from across Victoria and NSW to engage and connect around pastured poultry enterprises, plus a number further afield joined us online. Sharing notes, wins and losses of this innovative business model. We look forward to another of these events in 2026! ORICoop has also put in for a substantial grant with Eggs Australia - around the need for pastured poultry field trials - given that all these operators are contributing their egg/chicken levies with very little recognition to date. We look forward to hearing more on this soon!



ORICoop also hosts the largest [Organic & Biodynamic Farmers FB Group](#) (on Facebook) where valuable information across the organic industry is shared regularly. From industry updates, feedback regarding submissions around the Organic Standards, plus the sharing of resources for organic operators to the latest news in the media that impacts organic operators (noting the recent blueberry updates for any organic berry growers!). Plus field days and events.

For our Investor Members - we continue to build a pipeline of investment opportunities. Where our members can directly co-invest - supporting localised and Cooperative driven investment opportunities. We are looking forward to expanding this further with a Cooperative Fund into 2026. Stay tuned for more details on this!

ORICoop intends to rebrand the Eco-Credit early in 2026, watch this space! All our Grower Members will be able to record and report their existing certification and potential sustainability outcomes. This is an exciting step forward - after a pause on the carbon credit scenario given the caution around truth in claims and ensuring that our members have the tools to verify any claims that are made. We look forward to sharing more details of how each of Members can be involved early in 2026.

## **ORGANIC INDUSTRY**

ORICoop has certainly had a busy 12 months in terms of advocacy on behalf of our members. This was stimulated by the Bill that was presented in Parliament (which did not proceed) to attempt to address the urgent need for domestic regulation in the Australian organic market. Together with the need for broader industry representation from actual organic operators aside from individual certification agencies (as service providers to the organic sector). ORICoop is pleased to see [Organic Operators](#) providing an independent industry voice to DAFF and we look forward to further progress on this note in 2026. An overview of the advocacy that ORICoop has provided this last year includes:-

- Six active submissions to the APVMA - FSANZ - ACCC including the definition of NBT, truth in labelling, the need for increased vigilance of 'safe' chemicals and food standards.
- Addressing issues in regards Input regulations and controls on use, matters relating to GMO's incurring on market potential of organics and encroachment of organic producers certification particularly via Fire Ant treatments.
- ORICoop put together a submission to the Government Food Security Strategy Plan [HERE](#)



## ORGANIC AND REGENERATIVE INVESTMENT COOPERATIVE

- ORICoop has been an active contributor to the **Organic Development Group** ensuring producers and organic businesses are heard.
- ORICoop continues to provide support, input and provide advocacy to [Organic Operators](#) - the only independent industry body.
- ORICoop contributed to a number of submissions to update/revise the organic standards, particularly the proposed amendments to the livestock section of the National standard (which has still not been finalised by the department) plus discussions regarding the Standards Australia AS6000 Organic and Biodynamic Standard
  - these submissions will be shared with all members in 2026 for your feedback and input
- ORICoop has been expanding new and innovative organic markets for our membership including grains, fresh products plus livestock (organic meat) and fibre. More to come on these soon!
- To assist the further growth of the organic sector we have developed and are trialling a Group Certification program to make entrance cost into the Organic sector more reflective of scale. This is using the same domestic organic standard (AS6000). Providing the ability to potentially protect the rights of landholders of their right to farm in accordance with their own determination and to educate and facilitate landowners through engagement with the Organic Industry and other local organic landholders.

A dynamic example is this Korean case that showcases the strength of Co-operative capacity when engaged with Agriculture and localised investment!

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-koreas-small-farms-thriving-while-wests-dying-peter-james-qhpbpc/?trackingId=UOSxl3YgpTU%2FamOV1cc%2FYA%3D%3D>

The ORICoop Board has agreed to continue a strong focus on these key areas into this next year:-

- Continued growth and diversification of the organic market and throughput of organic supply driven by our member supply and demand base
- Increase the number of certified organic operators through increased knowledge, market opportunities and improved trust from consumers
- Enable strategic investment pathways into key assets and opportunities that enhance the organic industry driven by our membership
- Continue to provide targeted industry and grower feedback to industry bodies



In summary - the Board understands and appreciates that the current market for organic products and supply chains is complex in the current economic climate. With our strategic localised, mycelium effect of growers, eaters and investors- we believe that we can enable better outcomes, more resilient markets and stronger food and farming sectors across more communities. We look forward to our Cooperative expanding further into the coming year, with more resources and capacity than previously. We thank our members and ask all of you to engage and connect - as a Cooperative is only as strong as its membership base.

Localisation is not just a theory. But a daily choice and action of each of ours.

Thank you  
The ORICoop Board