

## Media release

13 August 2021

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### Local Agriculture Forum talks productivity and sustainability

On Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of August the second WalkerAg Consultancy Industry Forum was held in Ulverstone, bringing together farmers and expert speakers to discuss the latest advances in crop agronomy, natural asset protection and farm education programs.

This forum is becoming recognised as a key event in the north-west agricultural calendar, led by local independent agronomist Tim Walker from Walker Ag Consultancy and supported by the agricultural industry across the region, including the Cradle Coast Authority.

Cradle Coast Authority Agriculture Project Coordinator, Ali Dugand presented at the forum on the use of seasonal cover or 'breaker' crops to reduce the risk of soil erosion, and how to incorporate them into a mixed farming rotation.

*'Cover crops cost approximately one tenth of the value of the soil potentially lost due to erosion and they also have many other benefits for north-west farmers including improving soil structure, water infiltration and nutrient availability'*, said Ms Dugand.

*'We have some very simple implementation guides and seed mixes to get farmers started with cover crops, so they can see the benefits for themselves'*.

Around 90 people congregated to listen to an array of expert speakers, on diverse topics including:

- Onion variety trials and new disease management options
- New aspects of biosecurity legislation in Tasmania
- Slug control options with reduced withholding periods
- Benefits of foliar nutrient applications for crop yield as well as pest and disease resilience
- Training and education opportunities for agricultural apprentices

To conclude this learning and networking event, Henry Terry of Tasmanian Truffles delivered a thought-provoking session, giving an insight into the logistics of establishing a truffle orchard. Since the advent of COVID-19, his business has increased their value adding component to remain competitive in the national and international marketplace – a good message for all producers.

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