



Chair's Address – 2024 AGM

I'm honoured to address you today as Chair of Grain Trade Australia, reflecting on the past year and looking towards the future. The 2023/24 season has been significant for GTA and the wider grain industry.

GTA's strength and strategy demonstrate our commitment to supporting our members and the grain industry as a whole. The Board, management, and I remain dedicated to GTA's vision of "*an efficient, equitable and open commercial grain industry in Australia.*"

GTA facilitates trade and serves as an industry focal point, providing an efficient, equitable, and open trading environment. This is achieved through strong leadership and advocacy, supported by an industry-driven self-regulatory framework. This framework includes the Australian Grain Industry Code of Practice, Grain Trading Rules, Contracts and Grain Trading Standards.

Despite a reduction in grain production in 2023/24 to 51 million tonnes after three record years, the industry continues to grow in value. This is the fifth season in history with production exceeding 50 million tonnes. ABARES reported an industry value of \$43.7 billion for 2023/24— \$10.5 billion more than in 2016/17, when production was 8.5 million tonnes lower than this season. It's a testament to our industry's resilience and positive trajectory.

However, 2023/24 also presented global challenges. Economic pressures, food security concerns, geopolitical tensions, and unpredictable climatic conditions complicated trade.

These factors can lead to protectionism and trade barriers. Facilitating grain trade is crucial for global food security, and GTA's core mission remains to ensure our industry continues to operate in a rules-based, open market.

It is critical that markets are driven by supply and demand, with trade rules based on objective risk assessments and science—not politically motivated distortions.

The resumption of Australian barley exports to China in August 2023 was significant. GTA's successful visit to China, in September last year, including meetings with government agencies and the private sector, further supported the smooth reopening of this important market.

GTA remains actively engaged in international trade policy. Our focus includes advocating for open, competitive markets, and regulatory coherence based on sound science and risk-based assessments. We ensure our industry is represented at the highest levels, including our continued involvement with the International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC).

Through the IGTC, GTA is able to bring to the global level, critical issues like Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs), which continue to challenge the grain export industry, in terms of transparency, risk, and cost.

Our trade with India has also been a focus this year. In July 2023, GTA joined Agriculture Minister the Hon. Murray Watt on a visit to India. A key message we delivered was that Australian grain should be seen as complementary, not as competition, to Indian production, contributing to India's food and nutrition security.

Through initiatives like AGIC Asia—including AGIC Roundtable sessions with local industry and government agencies—we continue to demonstrate value, leading to tangible trade and market access outcomes. Our development of the India-Australia Strategic Grain Partnership is further strengthening ties with this key market.

Growth and efficiency in the grain supply chain are critical. GTA's "Modernising the Grain Supply Chain" strategy aims to drive efficiency gains throughout the value chain. Improving efficiency increases the value of every tonne of grain, benefiting all participants and ensuring Australia's competitiveness globally.

As the grain industry has evolved and grown, GTA's self-regulatory framework has played a crucial role in supporting this growth. There has been a significant increase in investment by GTA members in supply chain capacity, including transport, ports and storage.

The results of this investment are clear. Since 2020-21, we have seen record grain exports, demonstrating the strength of our industry and its ability to meet global demand.

Domestically, our focus on the container supply chain addresses issues such as the land side charges. This is vital to ensure the market remains competitive for containerised grain trade.

The second review of the Bulk Wheat Code of Conduct (WPC) is another important area for us. GTA represented our members in this review via submissions and as a member of the Review Reference Group established by DAFF.

Several submissions to this review, including the ACCC and GTA, have stated the WPC is no longer "fit for purpose". GTA's stance is clear: there has been no evidence of market failure or problems warranting increased regulatory oversight. We continue to advocate for self-regulation as the best approach and believe the WPC should be repealed sooner rather later.

In 2023/24 Pulse Australia's management of Pulse Trading Standards was transferred to GTA. To manage this, a Pulse Sub-Committee has been established as a sub-committee of the GTA Trading Standards Technical Committee. This is a positive step forward.

Now, the largest market for Australian grain is the domestic market. Consumption has increased over many years, reaching a peak of 18.5 million tonnes in 2018/19. Additionally, Australia imports approximately 900,000 tonnes of plant protein meal each year for domestic consumption.

GTA has particular focus on the domestic market through the Domestic Sector Council. In collaboration with DAFF, GTA has established a formal industry Consultative

Committee for grain & protein meal imports. This committee will provide a mechanism for a joint industry and government review of the process for importing plant-based meals and bulk whole grains. We are identifying areas for improved efficiency. Our goal is to ensure import processes are robust, support Australia's biosecurity goals, and ensure that imported meals and grain meet market requirements.

Australian Grains Industry Conferences, or AGIC, remains a key part of GTA's industry stewardship program. The 24th AGIC Australia event in July 2023, themed "*Challenging Success, Maintaining Momentum*," reflected the achievements of three record crops and the need to sustain positive momentum.

AGIC Asia 2024, held in March in Jakarta and Shanghai, attracted over 200 participants at each venue from local industry, government agencies, Australian growers, and exporters. These events were a great opportunity to reconnect with our customers and discuss the mutual value built around confidence and trust in the Australian grain value chain.

AGIC Asia and AGIC Roundtable Meetings continue to show value, resulting in tangible trade outcomes and improved market access. I really encourage everyone to attend if they can and see for themselves.

GTA's training and professional development programs are critical to industry stewardship, providing opportunities for participants to enhance skills and knowledge while improving industry capability.

Launched in August 2023, the 'Five Under 30' program is another example of how we invest in the future. Each year, five young individuals are selected and provided with mentorship and guidance over 12 months, increasing their involvement in GTA activities. This year's program has just finished, and we received great feedback on the program.

GTA's existence and success depend on the support of industry participants who volunteer their time as members of various GTA committees, sector councils, and working groups, as well as GTA Arbitrators. This collective effort drives our industry's "can do" culture.

Similarly, the commitment of the GTA Board and management team is integral to our success. On behalf of the industry, I thank them.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the retirement of two long-serving GTA members, Jason Craig and Lyndon Asser. Their commitment and contributions to GTA and the Board has been first class, and I thank them for their contributions.

The grain industry will continue to grow while facing increasingly complex challenges. GTA must continue to respond and adapt to meet members' needs and facilitate trade. The GTA Board and management is committed to ensuring GTA continues to support members and the facilitation of trade.

Thank you.

Andrew Goyder

Chair – Grain Trade Australia