

TLCAA AGENT PROFILE

Phil Hetherington – RWGC, Tamworth



This is the first in a series of agent profiles. This week our new TLCAA President, Scott Simshauser, sat down with Phil Hetherington from Ray White Garvin & Cousens, Tamworth. Phil (pictured above in action with the RWGC team and below with Tom Tanner from Quirindi) was in high spirits after he sold Friesian steers for 206c/kg.

How long have you been an agent?

Been with Garvin and Cousens for 30 years this year.

Where are you from originally?

Born and bred at Dungowan and educated at Farrer.

What's been the biggest change in your 30 years as an agent?

Without a doubt, computerisation. When I started you had a sheep book and a cattle book and away you went. There was an old fellow in the clock house/scales and you'd handwrite the tickets out, when the beast came on the scale he'd slide the ticket in, pull the lever down and it would print the weight on the ticket. You'd then go back to the office and write them all out. It used to be a clock face in the old scale house and there was a certified weighing person and everything was carbon copy – buyer, vendor, agent all got one. Every lot of cattle was weighed. So, computerisation is the biggest change.

When I started we were selling sheep to Charles David. They were loaded onto the train on Monday night, straight after the sale, and sent to Gosford abattoir. They were loaded onto the trains by Doug Rixon and Denise Cox (Denise still works at TRLX).

What do you think of the new TRLX?

The new saleyards are excellent – you can really present livestock well. The animal welfare is also excellent. When you buy cattle here you can walk them out and when they get home they're not lame or sore footed like they are out of some other centres.

What do you think is the biggest issue moving forward in the livestock industry?

Sourcing re-stocker cattle in the short term because of how the cattle market has gone since Christmas. It's jumped clean out of the woodwork. We have to readjust our values.

Other interests outside of work?

My son does show jumping so I spend a lot of time with that and have the occasional game of golf.

What do you like about Tamworth to live and work?

Tamworth's a great place – so central. You can go to the coast to buy cattle, go west to buy sheep, north, south or wherever you want to go. Everything is in Tamworth, education, the whole lot.

Your company recently had a trip to Throsby's abattoir at Singleton. Tell us about that.

It's one of the newest built abattoirs in the state. It operates 2 shifts a day and it's interesting to see how hands on Edward Throsby (owner) is; he knows all his staff. The numbers killed are substantial for a works their size and it's only 40 minutes from when a beast walks in until they are in a box in the freezer.

Edward tries to buy 90% of his cattle through saleyards – he's probably the biggest supporter of TRLX. He started as a kid with his father, Charles David at Gosford, and he's gone from there. He's very happy with cattle out of Tamworth because of soft floor and the fact that they yield well.

