



Australian Agribusiness Advisers' Guide

The definitive guide for accountants and other professional advisers acting for clients in the agribusiness sector

Peter Slegers, Joshua Pascale and Daniel Marateo



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About the authors

Peter Slegers is a Director of Cowell Clarke and leads the firm's Tax and Revenue, Private Client and Superannuation Groups, as well as the firm's Agribusiness Industry Group. Peter advises and acts for a wide range of agribusiness companies and primary producers dealing with everything from conventional pastoral and cropping concerns to commercial fishing and aquaculture enterprises, wineries and viticulture businesses. Peter undertakes complex succession planning and superannuation work and is heavily involved in significant business restructures. Originally from South Australia's Limestone Coast, Peter has a passion for regional Australia and takes great joy in introducing young city folk to the best of Australia's top rural and regional tourist destinations.

Joshua Pascale is a Senior Associate in Cowell Clarke's Tax and Revenue Group specialising in capital gains tax, goods and services tax, superannuation law and succession planning. Josh has been involved in a wide range of agribusiness transactions and restructures. Josh also has a significant role in succession planning for high net worth individuals in the agribusiness sector. Josh enjoys the art of winemaking and viticulture, personally picking and crushing grapes each year to make homemade wine sourced from Australia's iconic regions.

Daniel Marateo is a Senior Associate in Cowell Clarke's Tax and Revenue Group. Daniel advises on superannuation law and Federal taxation law and is involved in dealing with various stakeholders in the agribusiness industry. In addition to advising on Federal taxation law issues, Daniel has specialist capabilities in state taxes across the various Australian jurisdictions. Daniel delights in visiting costal regional food hubs and makes the most of enjoying Australia's wide range of locally produced premium seafood (particularly Coffin Bay oysters and Moreton Bay bugs).

The authors have also previously authored the SMSF Income Stream Guide, which is published by, and available from, The Tax Institute.

Contacting the authors

This publication was largely written from the authors' technical knowledge and years of experience in advising on tax, structuring, transactional and succession planning issues for agribusiness. If any reader believes that an important topic or issue is not covered, or that the commentary is incomplete or incorrect, they are invited to contact the authors. The authors are always interested in receiving feedback for further suggestions in later editions of the Agri-Guide and can be contacted at PSlegers@cowellclarke.com.au.

About Cowell Clarke

Cowell Clarke is a leading Australian commercial law firm which provides specialist legal services, advice and support to clients in all sectors of business and industry. Cowell Clarke has a dedicated Agribusiness Industry Group comprising specialist lawyers from its Tax and Revenue, Property, Wills and Estates, Corporate and Commercial and Superannuation Practice Groups.

Our experience and expertise spans across the entire agribusiness sector, including broadacre farming, livestock and food production, fishing and aquaculture, viticulture and wine, timber and forestry, processing, packing and wholesaling and farm machinery. We work closely with other advisers to agribusiness such as external and internal accountants, agri-consultants and real estate firms.

Some of the recent agribusiness projects Cowell Clarke has been involved with include:

- Prominent agricultural sales and acquisition matters, including marquee transactions such as "Clifton Hills Station".
- Advising and acting on a large scale primary production group restructure
 of pastoral land with a value of over \$800 million across multiple state
 jurisdictions to achieve the desired commercial and succession outcomes in
 a tax and stamp duty effective manner.
- Advising on the listing of Australia's only ASX listed entity that provides investors with direct exposure to the Australian water market.
- Providing specialist tax advice and implementing the restructure of two large private tuna fishing groups to better streamline structures and minimise risk exposures as well as undertaking sophisticated succession planning post-restructure.
- Advising the pastoral landowner of a proposed \$650 million solar thermal power plant.
- Advising numerous chartered accounting firms on the application of challenging issues under the Small Business CGT Concessions and Small Business Restructure Roll-Over, as well as the relevant state and territory stamp duty laws in relation to the sale and restructure of numerous agribusiness concerns.
- Acting for Australian Independent Rural Retailers Limited, a public company that supplies rural products and related services throughout Australia, on a \$187 million takeover by Elders Limited by way of a scheme of arrangement including obtaining an Australian Taxation Office class ruling on the specific taxation issues relating to the transaction.

Cowell Clarke's offices are based in Adelaide and Sydney, however, our lawyers regularly travel to regional areas throughout Australia for client commitments. Of course, we also regularly meet with clients via audio visual technology.

Members of our Agribusiness Industry Group present at our annual Agribusiness Summit - a series of topical webinar presentations for our national accounting firm adviser network. We also tour regional centres for our annual CCARS (Cowell Clarke Accountants' Regional Seminars) events.

Cowell Clarke is a member of Agribusiness Australia, providing access to a national network within the agribusiness sector and connecting us with likeminded people through a variety of events.

Readers of the Agri-Guide should feel welcome to contact Cowell Clarke should they require our assistance or wish to know more about our capabilities, services and client events.





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Preface

"Where tillage begins, other arts follow."

- Daniel Webster 1782-1852

It is often said that Australia is destined to become the great food bowl of Asia and the South Pacific. With its rich agricultural heritage, high quality food standards, clean and green practices and cutting edge technology, Australia is well positioned to continue to grow and expand its thriving agribusiness sector.

With this in mind, it is critical for those involved in the agribusiness sector to obtain optimal advice and guidance as the sector faces the challenges, opportunities and possibilities presented by the changing global economy, and the demand for its produce, in the twenty-first century marketplace.

The authors have prepared this Australian Agribusiness Advisers' Guide for professional advisers in the agribusiness sector. It arises from the authors' passion and experience in dealing with specialist tax structuring, transactional and succession planning issues impacting on the various industries comprising the agribusiness sector.

The Agri-Guide is primarily targeted at accountants, financial advisers, agribusiness consultants, commercial lawyers and other professional advisers to the sector. It also has relevance to CFOs and internal management personnel employed by corporates connected with the agribusiness sector.

The Agri-Guide commences by posing the question: "What is the business of primary production?". It then traverses the challenging issues associated with optimal business structuring for the agribusiness sector, dealing with agribusiness acquisitions and sales, business succession agreements, navigating the tax maze and addressing the ever-changing issues related to inter-generational succession planning.

Peter Slegers Joshua Pascale Daniel Marateo

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The Agri-Guide provides a comprehensive review of the tax, structuring, transactional and succession planning issues for agricultural-based businesses and other primary producers, as well as businesses closely related to primary industries ... a significant sector of the Australian economy.















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