



Happy Retirement
Andrew!

Andrew and Fiona's time in the pistachio industry

When Andrew and Fiona Bowring joined the pistachio industry in the mid-1990s, the Australian industry was surviving, but only just. The best yields were under 3,000kg/ha; the average yields across the industry would have been about 1,000kg/ha. *Xanthomonas* was wreaking havoc. Today, the best orchards average over 5,000kg/ha with the industry average for mature trees around 2,700kg/ha.

In the late 1990s, Andrew together with others, particularly Dr Ben Robinson, re-thought farming pistachios in the Murray Valley and its shallow soils. With his strong irrigation background, Andrew led the altering of watering to “less more often”.

Together with better understanding of the nutritional requirements of pistachios in Australia, the change in watering led to a steady growth in yields.

The orchard that Andrew and Fiona inherited was one of the first Australian pistachio orchards. Many errors were made in those early days. These were repaired, to the extent possible, by Andrew. By the mid-2000s, Andrew had gained an understanding of pistachios to propose a better approach to the planting and development of a young orchard. These ideas were implemented in the plantings of 2006 and 2007 in the Wakool Orchard. This succeeded to achieve world standard yields with the resultant profitable returns. This orchard has achieved average yields, over the on-off crop cycle of >5,000kg of merchantable yield, per hectare, per annum since 12th leaf.



These high yields have been maintained for the past decade, except for the rain disaster of 2026.

The success of the Wakool orchard was apparent from the mid-2010s.

Andrew shared his methods with all. Until the Wakool orchard, there were almost no new plantings from 1990 until 2016.



It was the Wakool results together with Andrew sharing his methods that provided the confidence for the expansion of the Australian pistachio industry that continues to this day.

Whilst understanding pistachios in Australian conditions was Andrew's first great contribution to the Australian industry, it was not his last.

Andrew is now regarded as one of the world gurus on the Modified Central Leader tree structure. He was not the first to apply MCL to pistachios, indeed, he was initially a very reluctant convert. But, together with a small number of growers in Australia and California, he has successfully implemented it. Over the past decade he has proved its success. The pruning costs of young trees have been dramatically reduced, early yields have been advanced by at least one year.

The branch splitting typical of the broad spreading Sirora looks like history. He is consulted on tree shape options by not only Australian growers but by growers in other countries, together with the lead Californian researcher on the topic, Bruce Lampion.

At the recent Pistachio and Almond research conference in Spain, MCL was referred to several times as "the Australian method". Such a title is grossly unfair to the two Californians who instigated MCL, Brian Kempf and Jeb Headrick, though it does reflect the perception of many growers around the world of the significant contribution by Andrew to changing the way the world largely now shapes new pistachio plantings.

I mentioned that Andrew was a reluctant convert to MCL. Reluctant is an understatement. He was initially a denier.

Following the Wakool success, Kyalite began a new orchard in 2016. David Crawford and I had been to California in 2014 and seen the then 4th leaf MCL orchard of Jeb Headrick. We were converted to MCL over the conventional pruning. David and I failed to convince Andrew of its merit, so the 2016 project was planted for conventional pruning. Andrew then visited Jeb and Brian, and returned from California as a convert. The traditional shorter stakes were lengthened with tie-on poles; the shoots were then allowed to reach the 1.8m before heading. The 2016 project became one of the first MCL plantings in Australia, albeit adjusted to MCL during its first season.

Andrew has been the champion on the PGAI Research Committee on chemical registrations, particularly for fungicides. He was the industry contact in 2012 for the work being done by Dr Prue McMichael and SARDI in determining the requirements for both Anthracnose and Botryosphaeria that destroyed the 2011 crop. He was the PGAI driver in ensuring the approvals for the fungicides that now manage these two fungi.



As a result, the industry survived a similar La Niña heavy rain season in 2022/23. It is a tough task; working through and satisfying the requirements of the APMVA. Andrew drove these approvals on behalf of the industry. This drive is the result of the persistence Andrew displays in striving to achieve the best result. But, implementing MCL, changing practices to suit pistachios growing in Australia and overseeing gaining chemical registrations will not be the greatest legacy that Andrew leaves the Australian industry.

Andrew has freely shared his knowledge and insights with other Australian pistachio growers. He has been available to discuss problems with individual growers and suggest solutions. There will be many growers, perhaps most growers, that will have spoken to Andrew and gained from the conversation. All Australian new growers have watched his videos on pruning trees for MCL.

This openness and sharing of Andrew have been a large contribution in creating and growing the cooperative culture of the pistachio industry. Our industry is unusual in the high level of cooperation between its members. Because of that cooperation, our industry has survived two diseases that probably should have killed it. By cooperating, we have learnt how to grow pistachios profitably under Australian conditions.

Andrew Bowring has been a key player in developing that culture by freely spreading his knowledge. Hopefully, Andrew's legacy of cooperation in the industry will continue as Andrew and Fiona move on to their next adventure.

We wish you all the best!

Contributed by:

Chris Joyce,
Kyalite Pistachios
& R&D Committe Chair



Messages from the PGAI committees, growers & staff

Andrew and Fiona left the security of the almond industry to take on the many challenges of a pistachio orchard in the early 1990's at Kyalite NSW. I'm unsure if they knew what would lay ahead in the first decade, whether the same decision would be made, it was tough! But that's history.

For our business and more broadly that of the Australian pistachio industry, this proved to be a fortuitous decision. The fact that Andy would have been successful at growing any crop but chose pistachios has been to all our advantage. Along with his energy, intellect, and enquiring mind he soon became arguably the most proficient pistachio farmer in Australia. Did I mention "attention to detail"?

He embraced continuous learning, drawing on the experiences of Californian colleagues through short courses, touring California making close relationships with researchers and farmers alike.

Andrew became a significant contributor to the Australian pistachio industry, always keen to share the knowledge. He embodied the Australian pistachio industries' mantra of collaboration and transparency - helping all and keeping no secrets. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge Fiona's contribution. Living on the property, "Rivernook", she supported Andrew and the business while raising their two children, through both the good times and the challenges. It still seems a little surreal that after such a long time and after so many challenges met and successes gained, Andrew and Fi will leave Rivernook at the end of July.

On behalf of our CMV Farms team—past and present—thank you for your friendship, generosity and willingness to share knowledge. We wish you both all the very best in the next chapter of your lives. There may yet be time for another kayak trip down the Murray—but one thing is certain: you won't be idle."

David Crawford,
CMV Farms & Australian Pioneer Pistachio Company



Andrew has always been warm and welcoming, and shown generosity in sharing his incredible knowledge, while always remaining open to new ideas. I very much hope that he stays involved in the industry for a long time to come.

Ian McFarlane,
Cobdogla

I have such admiration for Andrew. Such a generous supporter of knowledge-sharing in the industry. Such a resource of excellent information. Such a respected pistachio man and manager – here and internationally.

Prue McMichael

Andrew's openness and willingness to share his knowledge to all that enter the industry is a testament to his kind nature. He has an ability to get to the bottom of issues that other's put aside as too hard, whether this is for the betterment of his property or the industry in general.

Andrew has been an integral cog in shaping our great industry over his time so far.

Ryan Norton,
CMV

Andrew, Mate, a Big Thank You from all of us here at Mallee Orchard Pistachios and especially from me. You have been a huge support for me personally over the last 16 years trying to improve a neglected Orchard. I especially liked how sometimes you asked me for advice even though we both knew you didn't need it.

Your horticultural knowledge, encouragement and sense of humour has been invaluable for this whole Industry and will be missed as you move on. Wishing you all the best in what ever you have planned next and hoping it is a lot more relaxing! Cheers and best wishes!

**Ian Mau,
Mallee Orchard Pistachios**

I just wanted to take a moment to thank Andrew and congratulate him on such an impactful career in the pistachio industry. He's been an incredible resource to me — always open, always willing to share his knowledge, and a steady sounding board whenever I needed guidance.

The depth of experience he's built over the years is a real testament to his tenacity and dedication to the industry. I'm genuinely grateful for the support and insight he's so generously given me.

Wishing him all the very best for the next chapter — it's well deserved!

**Pip Crawford,
CMV**



Andrew is the ultimate Quiet Achiever and has beavered away for many years, uncovering the mysteries of the pistachio; designing systems for husbandry & handling.

His willingness to share information and his wisdom are legendary. Happy retirement Andrew!

**Graham and Annemarie Brookman,
The Food Forest**



Over the years, Andrew has demonstrated exceptional dedication and commitment to the association, consistently contributing his time, expertise, and passion towards the advancement of the pistachio industry.

Andrew's involvement has been instrumental in promoting best practices and fostering a sense of community amongst members. He has always been willing to lend a hand, share his knowledge, and advocate for the interests of all pistachio growers and stakeholders. His leadership and vision have played a significant role in shaping the positive direction of the association.

Andrew joined the Century Orchards Board 5 years ago as Horticultural Director and has overseen the 100 hectare pistachio plantings at Century. Under his guidance, the orchard has achieved remarkable growth, with a focus on innovation, sustainability, and best horticultural practices. His strategic approach and commitment to continuous improvement have made a tangible difference in the establishment of our pistachio plantation.

His contributions will leave a lasting legacy and set a standard for others to follow.

**Brendan Sidhu,
Century Orchards**

All the very best for your retirement Andrew and Fiona!

Andrew, it was clear from day dot in my role with PGAI that you carry such a generous spirit and kindness in everything that you do. Qualities that make the world of everyone around you brighter!

Thanks for helping out at every single PIT group that I pulled together, and for always being a smiling face at the R&D committee meetings. You epitomise the collaborative spirit of the industry.

**Kelsy Burns,
PGAI**



After years of nurturing the pistachio industry, it's time to enjoy a retirement!

I enjoyed discussions with you Andrew and am grateful for the information you shared during my settling days in the industry.

Wishing you all the best for the years ahead

**Shoaib Shah,
PGAI**



Andrew,

On behalf of myself, my wife Luba and all the MOP team, in particular Ian, I'd like to say that it has been an honour, a privilege and an immense benefit to us to have had you as a pistachio industry colleague and friend for the last 20 years.

Your knowledge of pistachio horticulture and more particularly pistachio farming in Australia is second to none and we are extremely grateful that you were very generous with both your time and knowledge, which has been very much to our benefit.

We would like to wish you and Fiona all the best for the coming years and hope that you see your way clear to having some continued involvement with the pistachio industry for years to come.

**Sincerely,
Terry Mau and the whole MOP team
Vice President, PGAI**

Andrew, It has been an absolute pleasure to work with you. Your responsiveness, depth of knowledge and insight has been invaluable.

I don't know how we will get on without you but we will cope 😊 I wish you and Fiona the very best for your next chapter.

**Brenda Kranz,
Executive Officer, PGAI**

All the best for
your next
chapter!

