



Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia

Case Study

For immediate release

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Growing the next generation of green leaders

Overview

Strategy is what we want – culture is how we achieve it.

That was the message from the latest *Green Industry Growing Leaders* workshop held in Brisbane for a group of upcoming leaders within Australia's nursery and turf industries.

Twenty industry participants were selected to take part in the inaugural program, which is aimed at building the leadership capabilities of the next generation of the nursery and turf industry, so as to ensure their businesses remain at the forefront of growth and innovation.

The program is being run by professional development facilitators at The Right Mind and is funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery and turf research and development levies and funds from the Australian Government.

The program seeks to challenge participants to reflect on what is expected of a modern leader, and to equip them with the tools they need to prosper. To date, participants have attended workshops in New South Wales and, most recently, in Queensland.

The ultimate aim is for participants to walk away with a greater sense on how to lead their respective teams and to build a more positive workplace culture, so as to boost business and, more broadly, industry prosperity.

Leader Insights: Hayley Whitehorn, Poplar Grove Wholesale Nursery



For Hayley Whitehorn, Sales Manager at Poplar Grove Wholesale Nursery, the course is already paying off, with key learnings being applied to the way she communicates and manages different teams across the business.

Poplar Grove Wholesale Nursery is an award-winning South Australian nursery located on eight acres at Lonsdale Sellicks Beach just south of Adelaide, producing around 450,000 plants for the retail plant market every year.

“Having been promoted to a leadership role recently, I needed the skills to take the team in a new direction that would help grow the business,” Hayley said.

“I was particularly interested in learning how to communicate to, and engage with, different team members and retail customers, through more effective dialogue and body language.



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“The program has enabled me to implement change immediately, such as using new techniques to increase team work and prevent issues arising in the first place.”

As part of the program, participants developed and presented a workplace project that showcased ‘why’ and ‘how’ they would apply the principles acquired in the program to their respective nursery or turf businesses.

“My project is focused on implementing clear steps for the dispatch process, whereby employee roles and expectations are clearly defined, and we are all working towards the same goal of producing a timely, quality product our customers appreciate with excellent service” she said.

“For instance, we have started to introduce staff meetings – a learning from the program – as a way of encouraging employees to be involved not just at the technical level, but a strategic one too.

“By the team having a greater understanding of their roles, they are able to take on more responsibility over time, and this helps to build real momentum in meeting customer orders.

“The program has been a great opportunity to meet with other like-minded people in the nursery industry, which has made me more motivated to implement new strategies within our business and to see them through.”

Leader Insights: Jesse Andrew, Anderson’s Horticulture

Understanding how to communicate effectively was also a key focus for Jesse Andrews, Nursery Manager at Anderson’s Horticulture, an avocado wholesale nursery in Duranbah, New South Wales.

Having trained as a chemical engineer, Jesse’s move to the nursery industry was driven by strong family connections to farming. However, he needed the people and leadership skills to take his career to the next level.



“When my boss came across the program, we thought it was a great fit,” he said.

“Prior to this, my career had been very focused on the technical side of things, so it’s been a great experience to hone in on improving my people, communication and leadership skills.

“There’s been so much enthusiasm from day one – and we’ve covered a lot of information in a short amount of time.

“The theory around psychology and how it affects the way you think and communicate was really useful, and I have already started applying these concepts.



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“After attending both workshops, I walked away with a greater sense of confidence and ownership in my role as nursery manager – and my colleagues have already noticed a change in my approach at work.”

Realising industry’s full potential

Both Jesse and Hayley believe that in order for the nursery industry to have a strong, sustainable future, it must have strong leaders to realise its full potential.

Valued at \$1.13 billion dollars, the nursery industry is faced with a range of opportunities both domestic and abroad, spurred on by the rising ‘green movement’ and the industry’s broader push to increase green life in urban areas.

However, the ongoing threat of biosecurity pests and disease, together with the need to produce more, with less, means that industry must be proactive in terms of putting in place preventative measures to reduce risks, and being on the front foot with innovation.

The recently released Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) for the nursery industry sets out key marketing and R&D priorities for the next five years, which seek to address issues around profitability, sustainability and, importantly, career development.

To find out more about the SIP – and its goal to develop the next generation of young leaders within the industry – please visit: www.horticulture.com.au/nursery.

Get ready for the 2018 program

The Right Mind is currently taking expressions of interest for participation in the 2018 *Growing Green Leaders* program. For more information, please visit: www.therightmind.com.au/green_industry_growing_leaders_program/.

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