



# Australian Vegetable Industry Training Needs Analysis in Business Skills & Leadership Development

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A report prepared for the Australian Vegetable Industry Development Group

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## 1: Acknowledgements

The Vegetable Industry People Development Coordinator (PDC) project has been funded by the Australian Government as one of the seven foundation projects identified in the *Vegetable Industry Taking Stock and Setting Directions Report*, November 2005. In March 2006 the Hon Peter McGauran MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, appointed the Australian Vegetable Industry Development Group (AVIDG) to provide focus on industry expectations and priorities for the foundation projects identified in the report.

The Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry has contracted AUSVEG Ltd to conduct the PDC project. Members of the AUSVEG project team are:

- Dianne Fullelove, People Development Coordinator AUSVEG
- Ross Ord, Industry Development Manager AUSVEG

The Training Needs Analysis endeavored to reach as wide an audience as possible within the time constraints. Face to face consultation was undertaken with individual vegetable growers, vegetable industry organisations, other horticultural industry organisations, Horticulture Australia Ltd Industry Advisory Committee members (Vegetable, Potato, Processing Potato), government departments and training providers. Growers in all Australian states were either surveyed or individually interviewed. These people are thanked for their input.

## 2: Executive Summary

In 2005, the Australian vegetable industry undertook an industry stocktake and setting directions project under the Industry Partnerships Programme through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

The Taking Stock and Setting Directions Report clearly identified the importance of developing and having a long-term commitment to the vegetable industry's human resources through leadership and business skills training. The Australian vegetable industry strategic plan, Vegvision 2020, completed in 2006, also clearly identified the importance of developing skills in the industry.

In response to these needs, the Australian Vegetable Industry Development Group developed and funded the vegetable industry People Development Coordinator project, The project commenced in June 2007 with the final report due 30 May 2008. As part of the project, this report focuses specifically on documenting the training needs of the vegetable industry. The Needs Analysis was conducted as five activities, which occurred in parallel. The activities were:

- Desk top review – a focus on business and leadership training in the rural sector
- Case studies of leaders in the vegetable industry – across all states
- Interviews with key vegetable industry members
- Survey of Australian vegetable growers – includes vegetable, fresh and processing potato, processing tomato, onion and protected cropping growers
- Survey of National Vegetable Levy Industry Development Officers

The report established a consensus that vegetable growers require more leadership and business management skills and that these skills should be firmly tied to the profitability of the business. Research indicated that while training is occurring in an ad hoc manner with very little coordination between commodities, there is interest in a wide range of learning topics in business management and leadership. Skills are required in the general areas of business management, financial management, people management and marketing with a preference for high-level management skills.

Identified needs in business management skills are based on business evaluation and planning, understanding costs of production and financial reports, better communication, developing negotiation and conflict resolution skills, improving decision making and managing change, and creating marketing opportunities.

These groups of skills were identified in all components of the study and were consistent across commodities and growing regions. There was consensus that businesses in the vegetable industry would benefit from increased business management skills and there was willingness by industry to participate in this training.

Research of leadership skills revealed that good leaders across the industry have similar characteristics and skills; however, more skills were needed by a wider range of people. There is a lack of leadership development for younger growers and little encouragement for them to participate in industry organisations. Most industry participants felt that leadership training should build on the skill base that exists already in the vegetable industry.

Leadership skills identified from a range of sources were:

- Communication including media skills
- Conflict resolution
- Negotiation skills
- Work/life balance including time management
- Self-management
- Presentation skills
- Team-building skills
- Understanding of government networks

A review of successful leadership programs indicated that inclusion of a personal project encouraged participants to practice skills learned in the program. Current industry leaders also felt that programs should include networking opportunities and a mentoring component.

It was clear from previous studies, grower interviews and industry consultation that a key driver in growers' willingness to engage in training is the convenience of the training. Time, venue location and duration were all factors that influenced uptake. Quality of training organisations and presenters was very important. The Need Analysis consistently identified that exposure to other growing regions and industries will create a greater willingness to participate.

The survey identified a preference for training delivery in small group workshops, grower study tours to other farms and visits to other businesses along the supply chain.

While there are a large number of training programs available, many vegetable growers do not engage with this training. Those who do have formal qualifications have been facilitated through the training process by industry organisations or service providers. The qualifications are based predominantly on Recognition of Prior Learning or giving credits for grower experience and practical knowledge. Facilitated groups were identified in the Needs Analysis as encouraging members of a group to take up training. Industry service providers stated that one of the largest barriers to training is the lack of facilitators for regional groups.

The Needs Analysis has indicated a requirement for more business management and leadership skills within the Australian vegetable industry. Industry members have specified the type of training they require and the method by which this can be delivered. The next phase of the People Development Coordinator project will focus on identifying the existing courses and programs that have the capacity to meet grower needs for skills in business management and leadership and are compatible with the way industry participants wish to be engaged in training to suit grower needs.

### 3: Project Background

In June 2005, the peak body for the Australian vegetable industry, AUSVEG, convened a crisis summit to raise awareness about the challenges facing the industry. At this time, the Australian Government committed \$200,000 to initiate an industry stocktake and setting directions project under the Industry Partnerships Programme through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). The Taking Stock and Setting Directions Report was completed in late 2005.

In August 2005, the Australian Government committed a further \$3 million to implement the outcomes of the Taking Stock and Setting Directions Report. The broad outcomes sought were to improve the long-term profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of the Australian vegetable industry.

The Taking Stock and Setting Directions Report recommended investment in seven industry foundation projects, as well as the establishment of the Australian Vegetable Industry Development Group (AVIDG).

The AVIDG was established in March 2006 to oversee the implementation of the foundation projects. The first foundation project was to develop an industry strategic plan 'Vegvision 2020' and was completed in July 2006.

The members of the AVIDG are:

- Richard Bovill, a Tasmanian vegetable grower and Chair of the Group;
- Michael Badcock, AUSVEG Chairman;
- Peter Cochrane, Victorian Farmers Federation Horticulture Group President;
- Wendy Erhart, Withcott Seedlings Co-Owner;
- John Mercer, Mercer Mooney Wholesalers WA;
- Sergio Cannale, Simplot Australia Supply Chain General Manager;
- Ian Pavey, fresh produce retail executive;
- Ian Robinson, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; and
- Nigel Steel-Scott, HAL Chairman.

The Taking Stock and Setting Directions Report clearly identified the importance of developing skills and knowledge in the industry. Specifically, it includes Foundation Project 5 - Investment in Business Skills Development. A long-term commitment to developing the industry's people resources through leadership and business skills training was recognised as being critical to the industry achieving increased growth.

In response to these needs, planning for the vegetable industry People Development Coordinator (PDC) project was completed in early 2007. The project commenced in June 2007 with the final report due 30 May 2008.

#### The Training Needs Analysis Report

The People Development Training Needs Analysis report will document the business and leadership skill training and development needs of vegetable industry participants.

#### Database

A central database will be created to record available business management and leadership programs providing advice about enrolment and funding subsidies for prospective participants.

#### People Development Investment Plan

The key output of the PDC project will be a People Development Investment Plan for the whole vegetable industry.

## 4: Aims and Objectives

### People Development Coordinator (PDC) Project

The PDC project addresses:

- Foundation Project 5: Investing in Business Skills Development.
- VegVision 2020 strategy 3.1.1 – Identify the industry’s requirements for business skill development and develop strategies for meeting skills demand in the long-term.
- VegVision 2020 strategy 3.1.3 – Increase industry participation in training programs and other human resource development initiatives that add value to vegetable businesses, and where an increase in skills of a business adds value to the performance of the supply chain.

Specifically, the PDC project objectives are to:

- Identify the development needs of people in businesses and organisations at all levels of the vegetable industry value chain and develop a people development training needs analysis to address those needs.
- Engage organisations in the investment plan development process in a way that enhances the prospects of ongoing industry commitment and support to the implementation of the plan post-June 2008.
- Create awareness and motivation for participation, of people in businesses and organisations at all levels of the vegetable industry value chain, in people development activities.

### People Development Needs Analysis Report

An essential prerequisite to developing a PDC Investment Plan is to identify the skills, knowledge and attitudes required by the vegetable industry to undertake current and future work-related activities. A comparison is required between the set of skills currently held by industry workers and those essential for the achievement of the Vegetable Industry’s vision for year 2020.

The objective then of this Needs Analysis Report is to identify gaps in the skills needed by industry in order to implement the industry strategic plan and meet the challenges of a global market place. The report is to quantify and qualify the development needs of people in businesses and organisations at all levels of the vegetable industry value chain. It has also captured those attributes that enhance or detract from training uptake, such as delivery methods.

## **Scope of the Training Needs Analysis Study**

For the purpose of the PDC project, the vegetable industry is defined as including all growers in the following categories:

- Vegetable growers including tomato and herb growers
- Fresh and processing potato growers
- Protected cropping vegetable growers
- Onion growers
- Processing tomato growers.

In this report, the term 'vegetable growers' is used to describe these groups. Mushroom growers were not included in this Needs Analysis.

The study endeavored to reach as wide an audience as possible within the time constraints. Face to face consultation was undertaken with individual vegetable growers, vegetable industry organisations, other horticultural industry organisations, Horticulture Australia Limited Industry Advisory Committees (Vegetable, Potato, Processing Potato), government departments and training providers. Growers in all Australian states were either surveyed or individually interviewed. A more complete list is provided in Appendix 7.

Particular attention was paid to minority groups including:

- Young growers under 35 years
- Women
- Growers with a non-English speaking background.

## 5: Methodology

The Needs Analysis was conducted as five activities, which occurred in parallel. The activities were:

### 5.1 Desk top review.

These included existing audits, studies and reviews of the business management and leadership training needs of the vegetable industry. A review was made of all available current (2000–2007) reports that pertained either directly to the vegetable industry or to other rural industries. Eighteen reports were reviewed, with a further seven reports referenced for general information. The reports were sourced from other industry organisations, via internet search and through personal communication with the authors.

Summaries of the more relevant reports are included at Appendix 6. Comments in the body of this report are confined to key findings.

### 5.2 Case Studies of leaders in the vegetable industry.

Current industry leaders across regions and commodities were interviewed on the issues of industry leadership and business management skills. The aim was to capture the characteristics of leaders within the industry and establish the business management and leadership skill needs. Information was also gathered about industry and business vision and personal leadership attributes to create a profile of the current industry leadership.

Vegetable growers who held industry leadership positions at some level (regional, state or national) were interviewed face to face. A cross section of the leaders included growers of different commodities, small & large businesses, different ages and sex. Twenty-four interviews were conducted.

State-based information is available at Appendix 5.

### 5.3 Interviews with key vegetable industry members.

Interviews were conducted with key industry figures who are not grower members for feedback on direction for business skills and leadership development. These people included rural consultants, executive officers of industry organisations (both state and national), leadership course coordinators in New Zealand, and academic staff involved in management and leadership courses. It was intended to have as wide a cross section of allied service industries as possible.

## 5.4 Survey of Australian Vegetable growers.

The desk top research (Activity 1) revealed the lack of relevant and current information about business management skills at Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate IV and above for all rural industries, in particular the vegetable industry.

To address the significant gaps in the available information, a survey was sent to all vegetable growers to ascertain their need for skills development in business management and leadership. Questions also related to the preferred method of delivery for training. Research identified the categories of business management and leadership training needed by growers and the manner in which they would like the training to be presented.

The survey was distributed to:

- Vegetable growers through an insertion in the *Vegetables Australia* magazine distributed in September 2007.
- Potato growers through an insertion in the *Potatoes Australia* magazine distributed in August 2007.
- Protected cropping growers through an insertion in the Australian Hydroponics & Greenhouse Association newsletter distributed in September 2007.
- Onion growers through insertion in newsletter distributed in August 2007.
- Northern Territory vegetable growers via email.

The survey was also posted on the AUSVEG website. The survey included sections covering:

- demographics,
- categories of skills, and
- preferred learning methods.

The skills were categorized and scored on a rating of 1 (low need) to 4 (high need). The full survey is included in Appendix 1.

## 5.5 Survey of Industry Development Officers.

The survey was distributed to all state Vegetable Industry Development Officers and was extended to include Executive Officers of vegetable industry organisations and HAL's Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee Leadership and People Development Advisory Group. Six surveys were returned and are included at Appendix 3.

## 6: Outcomes - Activities 1-5

### 6.1 Activity 1: Previous Research Reports

A desk top review of reports in rural industries in the area of people development skills has highlighted the lack of research being conducted within the horticulture industry. There has been little if any recent research focusing specifically on the people development needs of the vegetable industry.

Training Needs Analyses from other rural industries are consistent in reporting the need for business and leadership skills, with consensus on skill requirements; group interaction; networking and mentoring; delivery methods and the inclusion of a study project component. Summaries of the more relevant reports are included at Appendix 6. Comments in the body of this report are confined to key findings.

Previous research undertaken in rural industries other than vegetables highlighted the following areas:

#### 1. Skills

There is a need for:

Business skills:

- Marketing – the business activity of presenting products to potential customers.
- Financial skills – ability to manage money.
- Business planning – planning to set out the future strategy and financial development of a business.
- Staff management – the skilful handling of employees.
- Succession planning – a sequence of people or events to manage the long-term business.

Leadership skills:

- Communication skills – exchange of information between individuals, for example by means of speaking, writing, or using a common system of signs or behavior.
- Conflict resolution – solving disagreements between ideas, principles, or people.
- Negotiation skills – the reaching of agreement through discussion and compromise.
- Work/life balance – creating equality of private and business life.
- Self-management – managing own individual interests and welfare in relation to the business.

## **2. Cell groups**

Establishment of groups was consistently identified as valuable. The groups were based at the regional level with a facilitator who brought the group together and managed the activities of the group.

Involving younger growers in a group situation was regarded as necessary to 'educate' these growers and bring them into industry structures. This exposed younger growers to opportunities in leadership and created support networks for them as they became established within their industry.

## **3. Networking**

Creating networking opportunities for growers across commodities and regions is seen as important in all rural industries. The networks were established across rural industries or within an industry but across commodities and regions.

Networking provided training participants with the opportunity to continue their learning in a supported environment with other growers of similar experience. Networking opportunities were delivered in a variety of ways:

- Meetings
- Further training
- Social events
- Through internet-based forums
- Teleconferences
- At conferences.

## **4. Mentoring**

The involvement of older experienced growers was identified as one of the most important factors in ensuring the success of a training program. Having these people as mentors for participants in training and leadership programs ensured a continued involvement of the participants.

## **5. Delivery**

How a program was delivered was identified as crucial to the attendance and successful outcomes. Barriers to training were overcome by careful consideration of the following factors:

- Cost – the course costs was seen as important in value-adding to a business.
- Timing – this can be crucial in availability of growers and their staff.
- Relevance of material – having course content that is specific to the rural industry.
- Skills and knowledge of presenter – some training providers were not viewed favorably.
- Convenience of venue – either within travelling distance or in a well-regarded location.

## 6. Projects

Training that included a personal component such as a study project was regarded as the most successful. In these instances, participants felt ownership of the program, including their project, and were willing to commit more time to gaining outcomes for themselves and their business.

### 6.2 Activity 2: Case Studies

The aim of the case studies was to capture the characteristics of successful leaders within the vegetable industry and to establish the business management and leadership skills needs of industry participants. A summary of the interviews conducted with vegetable growers is presented below. Further information from the case studies is presented in Appendix 5 on a state by state basis.

#### Characteristics of good leaders

Characteristics of successful leaders were found to be common across commodities and regions, with the main ones being:

- Success in business
- Good listening skills
- Creating a vision
- Establishing a support team around the vision
- Integrity and honesty
- Mediation/negotiation skills.

Those vegetable growers already in leadership positions, whether on a regional, state or national level exhibited strong characteristics of transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership starts with the development of a vision and moves into constantly selling the vision. The leader thus takes every opportunity and will use whatever works to convince others to become involved. They are very careful in creating trust and their personal integrity is critical.

The route forwards for a transformational leader may not be obvious but with a clear vision, the direction will always be known. The final stage is to remain up-front and central during the action. Transformational leaders are always visible and will stand up to be counted. They show by their attitudes and actions how everyone else should behave. They also make continued efforts to motivate and rally their followers.

Industry leaders showed a strong sense of achievement in leading and providing good outcomes for their industry, whether at a regional, state or national level. Many interviewees were involved at all levels in leadership positions.

Leaders within the vegetable industry identified with mentors and have a strong belief in the value of a mentoring program. Several participants felt there was a need for a mentoring skills program for would-be mentors, reinforcing their regard for training at all levels.

#### Required skills.

The following skills were seen by existing vegetable industry leaders as essential for developing leadership qualities across the industry:

- Negotiation skills
- Communication skills including media skills
- Presentation skills
- Team-building skills
- People management
- Understanding of government networks
- Time management.

The need for improved business management skills drew specific comment. Business management skills were identified by vegetable industry leaders as crucial to further development of the industry. These skill programs were seen as important to grower/owners and middle management. Consistently, current leaders stated that future leaders should be first and foremost successful business people in their own right.

The more important business management skills were identified as follows:

- Marketing and interaction with customers; niche marketing
- Financial management including costs of production; financial ratios eg return on investment; economies of scale
- Budgeting
- Financial planning; farm/business analysis
- Taxation
- Legislative/employment obligations
- Succession planning
- Building business
- Networking business opportunities
- Benchmarking
- Staff/people management
- Strategic planning/understanding world trends
- Computer skills
- Off-farm investment opportunities.

### Other comments

Industry leaders were positive about the prospects for the vegetable industry and their own businesses, although a small number were on the eve of retiring from farming or were in the process of handing over the farm to younger family members. For these growers, succession planning was naturally seen as a very important issue.

Leaders identified food shortage as being an opportunity for Australian produce, particularly in Europe. Marketing and exporting skills were identified as necessary, along with the ability to communicate and negotiate.

There is clear crossing over between skills identified as 'leadership' and those useful in 'business management'. Leadership skills were seen as equally important in their own business as in industry representative structures.

The opportunity to undertake training was recognised as an important and valid part of operating the business. Most industry leaders had undertaken further training with some having done courses to the Advanced Diploma level. Although many had left school at the post-compulsory stage, they had undertaken apprenticeships and furthered their education with short courses in a variety of subjects including business management. A small number had attended formal leadership courses and were strong advocates of the program they had completed. One grower missed a cell group meeting on soil nutrition to attend these interviews and stated that "This was much more important".

### **Case Studies – summary of key findings**

Interviews with vegetable industry leaders revealed that:

1. Good leaders across the industry have similar characteristics and skills.
2. Leadership skills are needed by a wider range of people in the industry.
3. There is a lack of development of younger growers and little encouragement for them to participate in industry organisations.
4. Business skills were needed by the industry, with a preference for higher-end management skills, eg financial planning rather than business processes such as bookkeeping.

### **6.3 Activity 3: Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with key industry figures who are not vegetable growers for feedback on direction for business skills and leadership development.

Most of those interviewed felt business management and leadership training has occurred in an ad hoc way in many regions of Australia. Some of this training has been directed at vegetable growers, while other training has been generic to rural industries.

In response to this, agricultural service providers such as consultants and suppliers have developed or coordinated training in:

- Financial management
- Enterprise analysis
- Benchmarking
- Cost production
- People management
- Farm planning.

This training had been coordinated by the service providers to fill a need they saw in the industry. Training providers have been engaged to supply the training. There was general consensus that further training in these areas was important for business improvement.

The success of training within established grower groups has been highlighted in a number of regions. Factors that contributed towards success included:

- Groups are most successful when facilitated by an outside organisation, government or non-government.
- A good facilitator adds value in coordinating the group and providing direction.
- The group needs clear direction and should not deal with political issues.
- Industry visits: In all interviews, importance was placed upon industry visits and tours to other vegetable properties, other industries and changing growers' outlook with overseas and domestic travel. Programs should involve tours for growers to understand other parts of the industry. Across-industry involvement was seen as important.

### **Interviews – summary of key findings**

1. Training is occurring in ad hoc manner with very little coordination between commodities and none within states.
2. One of the largest barriers to training is the lack of facilitators for regional groups.
3. Improved business skills are recognised as necessary in horticulture in some areas of Australia but this is by no means universal and efforts are uncoordinated.
4. There is very little engagement with leadership courses, particularly with a specific focus on the vegetable industry.

### **6.4 Activity 4: Survey of Growers**

Vegetable growers responded to a mailed survey that asked them to clarify their training needs for business and people management skills. Demographic information about age, position in the business, learning history, and language was collected, as well as information about crops grown, number of employees engaged by the respective businesses and the region in which they farm.

The demographic information was cross-referenced to the skills requirements and preferred learning method by averaging the identified level of need for a skill within a group of growers.

Most surveys were received from growers who were between 30 and 50 years of age and were the owner/manager of the business. The business most often employed fewer than 10 staff. No information was returned from non-english speaking background (NESB) industry participants. Cross sections of responses were received from all states of Australia including the Northern Territory. All 'vegetable' crops were represented although vegetables (as a group) and potatoes were the largest groups. As growers were not asked to identify themselves as either fresh or processing potato growers, a response of 'potatoes' was recorded as fresh potatoes, which may have artificially increased the numbers in that group.

### Skills needed

A summary of the growers' skill needs survey is included in Appendix 2. The scoring for the skills, 1 low-need to 4 high-need, has been averaged for all responses.

The responses were spread across the skill categories of Managing your business, Managing Finances, Information Technology, Managing People and Marketing the Product. An average of the scores within the five categories indicated that the need for skill improvement was spread evenly across Managing your Business, Managing Finances and Marketing the Product. Information Technology and Managing Finances scored slightly lower.

<b>Skill Category</b>	<b>Average Score</b> 1 low-need to 4 high-need
Managing your Business	2.58
Managing Finances	2.51
Information Technology	2.49
Managing People	2.58
Marketing the Product	2.58

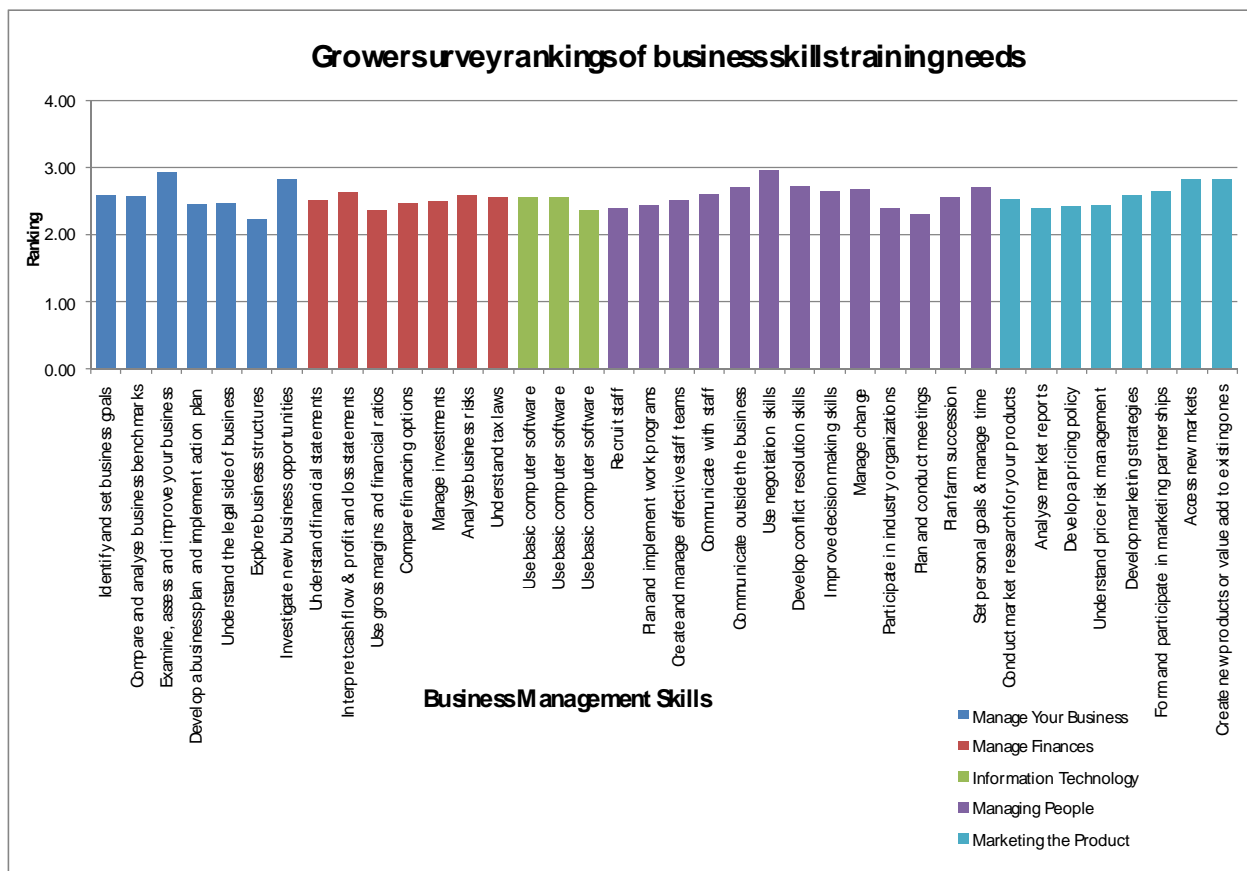
The skills with a response rating above 2.6 are listed below:

- Examine, assess and improve your business
- Investigate new business opportunities
- Interpret cash flow & profit and loss statements
- Communicate with staff
- Communicate outside the business
- Use negotiation skills eg price negotiations

- Develop conflict resolution skills
- Improve decision making skills
- Manage change
- Set personal goals & manage time
- Form and participate in marketing partnerships
- Access new markets
- Create new products or value add to existing ones.

Many other skills were rated on average around 2.5 which indicates there is a need for a broad spectrum of skills in business management. No skills were rated on average less than 2.

A comparison of all skill ratings is shown in the graph below:



In a comparison of growers from different age groups, there was a marked difference between skills needs and preferred delivery method.

Grower age group	Business skills required	Delivery method
18 – 30 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare and analyse business benchmarks</li> <li>• Examine, assess and improve your business</li> <li>• Form and participate in marketing partnerships</li> <li>• Create new products or value add to existing ones</li> </ul>	All delivery methods were rated highly indicating a willingness to participate in different types of training.
31 – 50 years	<p>There was a wider spread of scores in this group rather than very high scores.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore business structures</li> <li>• Investigate new business opportunities</li> <li>• Use negotiation skills</li> </ul>	Study tours and farm visits rated highly as well as workshops for larger groups.
Greater than 50 years	<p>This group scored consistently lower in all skill categories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set personal goals &amp; manage time</li> </ul>	Workshops for groups larger than 10 participants rated most highly. Tours and visits were less popular with this group.

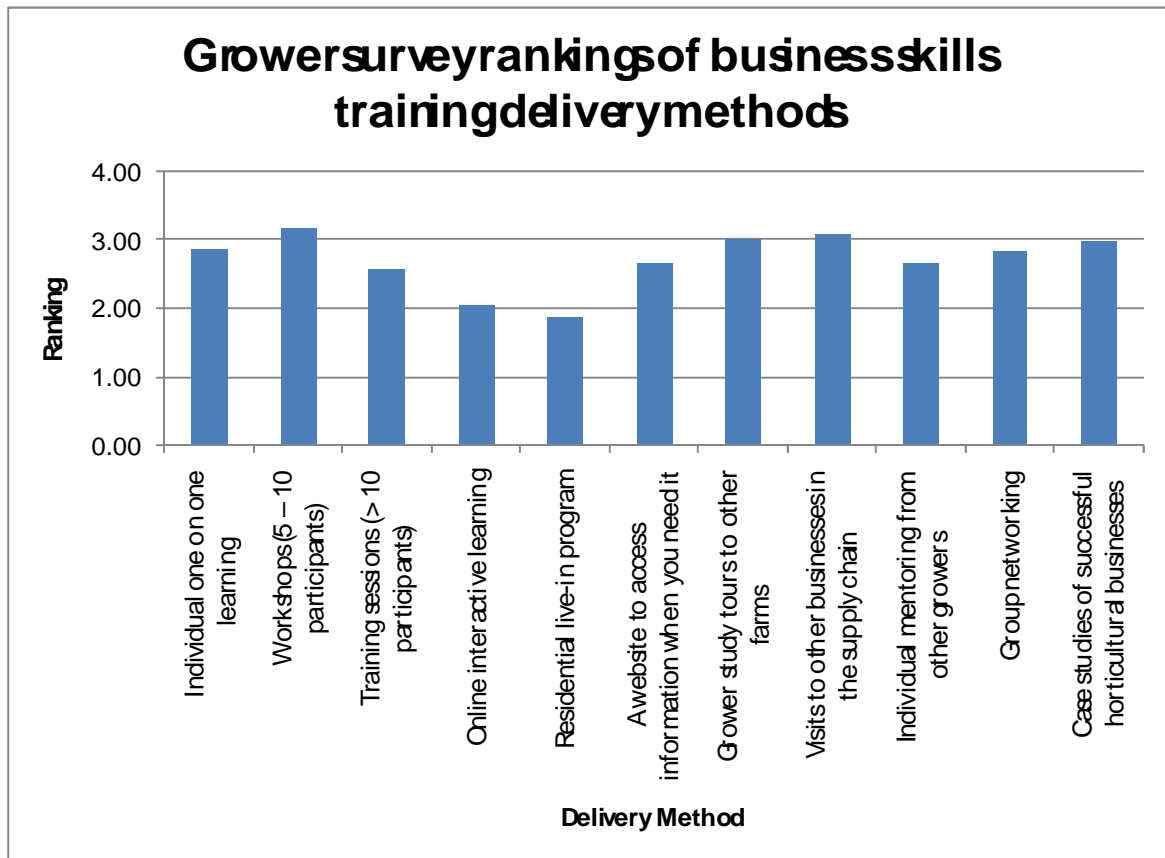
### Training delivery methods

The most popular methods for gaining increased skills were (in order of preference):

- Workshops with 5 to 10 participants
- Visits to other businesses in the supply chain
- Grower study tours to other farms
- Case studies of other successful horticultural businesses.

Online interactive learning and a residential live-in program scored the lowest result. It is interesting to note that of the 11 choices of delivery method, four scored about three on the 1 to 4 scale. This indicates a willingness by vegetable growers to engage in training in varied training delivery formats.

Research in other sections of this report highlight the importance of experiential learning for vegetable growers in visiting other farms and businesses and participating in grower tours. This is reinforced by the survey and indicates the need to incorporate this type of learning when delivering learning programs.



#### Survey – summary of key findings

1. Preferred skills covered a cross section of business management training including planning, finance, marketing and people skills.
2. There are differences between the skills needed and preferred delivery methods dependent on age group.
3. The preferred methods of training delivery incorporate experiential learning through farm visits and tours and small group workshops.
4. Vegetable growers are prepared to use different formats for training delivery.

## 6.5 Activity 5: Survey – IDOs

Vegetable Industry Development Officers in each state were asked to comment on the business management and leadership skills required by growers. Executive Officers for Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers, Processing Tomatoes and Onions Australia were also surveyed. The results are tabulated in Appendix 4.

This group identified the passion and commitment that current industry leaders bring to their positions. The business success of these leaders was found to be important in their industry roles. It was felt that the current leaders were accessible to growers in the general community, had a good understanding of industry issues and their involvement was commended.

The difficulties for leaders are the lack of financial support with too few growers carrying the bulk of the workload. The need for a coordinated approach in developing leadership in the vegetable industry was identified. Succession planning for leadership was important.

There was a need to place more emphasis on the importance of industry leaders and support them by communicating industry needs. The ways to encourage more leadership participation were:

- Making available more information to growers about industry
- Demonstrating what industry leadership is about
- Having a program for developing the different areas of leadership such as running a meeting and governance.

The Industry Development Officers identified the different levels of leadership in which growers may become involved eg local group or Industry Advisory Committee membership.

They stated that tours and visiting other businesses both rural and from the wider business community was important in developing the vegetable industry's skill base. This reinforces the concept that growers learn best from community centered training and from becoming a key participant in their learning. Both domestic and international travel opportunities were seen as important.

Key business management skills identified were:

- Marketing and supply-chain management
- Staff management and people skills
- Succession planning
- Negotiation skills
- Business planning and strategic planning
- Cost analysis and record keeping.

The barriers to increasing participation in industry training were identified as:

- A lack of understanding of the cost benefits of increasing skill levels
- Isolation from others in the vegetable industry
- Creating opportunities to learn from other industries
- Lack of focus on young growers
- Workshops were not always presented at the most convenient times for growers
- Training is seen as boring and not very practical with very little inter-industry contact.

### **IDO survey – summary of key findings**

1. Business management training is important to increase growers' competitive ability.
2. Current industry leaders should be encouraged and recognised in their roles.
3. Leadership training should build on the skill base already existing within the vegetable industry.
4. Young growers should be encouraged into leadership positions.
5. Uptake of training can be improved by focusing the training on grower needs in topic and presentation. Exposure to other regions and industries will create a greater willingness to participate.

## 7: Key Findings

The Australian Vegetable Industry Development Group is a major driver in providing direction for business skills training for vegetable growers in Australia. The focus on business management skills and leadership development will provide benefits for individual businesses and the industry as a whole.

There is a consensus across Australia that vegetable growers require more leadership and business management skills. That these skills should be firmly tied to the profitability of the business is seen as paramount to the success of a program to improve these skills. A successful business person is identified as central to creating a good industry leader. This is a culmination of having a clear business vision that can be translated into a way forward for the vegetable industry.

Research indicated that training is occurring in an ad hoc manner with very little coordination between commodities and none within states. Improved business skills were recognised as necessary in horticulture but this is by no means universal and efforts are uncoordinated.

Despite the lack of a joint effort in promoting increased skilling to vegetable growers, the research for the Needs Analysis has indicated there is interest in a wide range of learning topics in business management and leadership. Training is required in the general areas of business management, financial management, people management and marketing with a preference for higher-end management skills.

The skills are:

- 1 Business management
  - Building business
  - Business planning
  - Strategic planning/understanding world trends
  - Case study of business successes.
- 2 Financial management
  - Costs of production
  - Financial ratios, eg return on investment
  - Budgeting
  - Financial planning
  - Farm/business analysis
  - Off-farm investment opportunities
  - Benchmarking
  - Understanding the balance sheet
  - How to present to the bank manager
  - Cost analysis and record keeping.
  - Taxation.

### 3 People management

- Networking business opportunities
- Negotiation skills
- Staff management
- Succession planning
- Legislative/employment obligations.

### 4 Marketing

- Supply-chain management
- Niche marketing
- Interaction with customers
- Long-term planning for a market.

The survey identified that training should be based on the following delivery methods:

- Small group workshops
- Grower study tours to other farms
- Visits to other businesses in the supply chain.

Leadership skills identified from a range of sources were:

- Communication including media skills
- Conflict resolution
- Negotiation skills
- Work/life balance including time management
- Self-management
- Presentation skills
- Team-building skills
- Understanding of government networks.

Case studies revealed that good leaders across the industry have similar characteristics and skills but that leadership skills are needed by a wider range of people in the industry. There is a lack development of younger growers and little encouragement for them to participate in industry organisations.

Most industry participants interviewed or surveyed for the Needs Analysis felt that leadership training should build on the skill base already existing within the vegetable industry and that there was a small but important leadership base already existing within the industry.

Desk top research indicated that leadership programs should include an individual project to encourage participants to practice skills learned in the program. Current industry leaders also felt that programs should include networking opportunities and a mentoring component.

It was clear from previous studies, grower interviews and industry consultation that a key driver in growers' willingness to engage in training is the convenience of the training. Time, venue location and duration were all factors that influenced uptake. Quality of training organisations and presenters is very important. The Need Analysis consistently identified that exposure to other growing regions and industries will create a greater willingness to participate.

While there are a large number of training programs available, many vegetable growers do not engage with this training. Those who do have formal qualifications have been facilitated through the process by industry organisations or service providers. The qualifications are based predominantly on Recognition of Prior Learning or giving credits for grower experience and practical knowledge. Facilitated groups were identified in the Needs Analysis as encouraging members of a group to take up training. Industry service providers stated that one of the largest barriers to training is the lack of facilitators for regional groups.

It is intended that further research will focus on identifying a number of courses that will meet grower needs for skills in business management and leadership which deliver the program in a compatible way to suit grower needs.

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## Appendix 1 Business Skills Development Survey

### **Business Skills Development Survey**

The vegetable industry, with the support of the Australian Vegetable Industry Development Group (AVIDG), is currently developing a business skills and leadership development strategy.

Managed by AUSVEG, the peak representative organisation for vegetable growers, the strategy is focused on increasing growers' skills in business management within their own businesses and the industry as a whole.

The industry strategic plan VegVision 2020 identified a need to encourage stronger participation of growers in their industry from regional to national level. Improving business skills will make all of industry stronger and more competitive.

Vegetable growers are being asked for their input across Australia to ensure that the program meets the practical needs of all growers.

We need your help in identifying business skill requirements of the vegetable industry. If you are interested in being involved in this process, please complete the following survey and return in the pre-paid envelope or to *Vegetable Industry Business Skills Survey PO Box 563 Mulgrave Vic 3170*.

All responses will be treated with the highest confidentiality. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I appreciate your time in completing this survey.

Regards

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### **Survey**

<b><u>About you</u></b>	<b><u>Business Description</u></b>
Age:	Crops grown
Position in the business:	
Courses completed eg Diploma in Rural Production or Chem Cert.	Region and Postcode
Language spoken at home	Number of Full-Time Employees

For each skill, rate your need for learning by placing an 'X' in the box

<b>Business Skills</b>	<b>1Low</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4High</b>
<b>Manage the Business</b>				
Identify and set business goals				
Compare and analyse business benchmarks				
Examine, assess and improve your business				
Develop a business plan and implement action plan				
Understand the legal side of business				
Explore business structures eg cooperatives				
Investigate new business opportunities				
<b>Manage Finances</b>				
Understand financial statements				
Interpret cash flow & profit and loss statements				
Use gross margins and financial ratios				
Compare financing options				
Manage investments				
Analyse business risks				
Understand tax laws				
<b>Manage Information</b>				
Use basic computer software eg Microsoft Office				
Use farm management software eg irrigation scheduling				
Use the internet and email				
<b>Managing People</b>				
Recruit staff				
Plan and implement work programs				
Create and manage effective staff teams				
Communicate with staff				
Communicate outside the business				
Use negotiation skills eg price negotiations				
Develop conflict resolution skills				
Improve decision making skills				
Manage change				
Participate in industry organisations eg local grower group				
Plan and conduct meetings				
Plan farm succession				
Set personal goals & manage time				
<b>Marketing the Product</b>				
Conduct market research for your products				
Analyse market reports				
Develop a pricing policy				
Understand price risk management eg forward contracts				
Develop marketing strategies				
Form and participate in marketing partnerships				
Access new markets				
Create new products or value add to existing ones				

The last part of the survey is to determine the best learning method for you. Rate your preferred learning methods by placing an 'X' in the box for each option.

<b>Learning Method</b>	<b>1</b> <i>Least preferred</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <i>Most preferred</i>
Individual one on one learning				
Workshops – (5 – 10 participants)				
Training sessions – (more than 10 participants)				
Online interactive learning				
Residential live-in program				
A website to access information when you need it				
Grower study tours to other farms				
Visits to other businesses in the supply chain				
Individual mentoring from other growers				
Group networking				
Case studies of successful horticultural businesses				

Have you any comments which will help with developing a business skill program for vegetable growers?

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## Appendix 2 Grower survey summary

<b>Business Skills</b>	<b>Average (1 – 4)</b>
<b>Manage the Business</b>	
Identify and set business goals	2.66
Compare and analyse business benchmarks	2.58
Examine, assess and improve your business	3.02
Develop a business plan and implement action plan	2.52
Understand the legal side of business	2.46
Explore business structures eg cooperatives	2.29
Investigate new business opportunities	2.82
<b>Manage Finances</b>	
Understand financial statements	2.57
Interpret cash flow & profit and loss statements	2.63
Use gross margins and financial ratios	2.38
Compare financing options	2.46
Manage investments	2.59
Analyse business risks	2.61
Understand tax laws	2.54
<b>Manage Information</b>	
Use basic computer software eg Microsoft Office	2.70
Use farm management software eg irrigation scheduling	2.61
Use the internet and email	2.52
<b>Managing People</b>	
Recruit staff	2.49
Plan and implement work programs	2.51
Create and manage effective staff teams	2.56
Communicate with staff	2.69
Communicate outside the business	2.89
Use negotiation skills eg price negotiations	3.06
Develop conflict resolution skills	2.81
Improve decision making skills	2.74
Manage change	2.78
Participate in industry organisations eg local grower group	2.41
Plan and conduct meetings	2.41
Plan farm succession	2.57
Set personal goals & manage time	2.72
<b>Marketing the Product</b>	
Conduct market research for your products	2.55
Analyse market reports	2.39
Develop a pricing policy	2.36
Understand price risk management eg forward contracts	2.45
Develop marketing strategies	2.55
Form and participate in marketing partnerships	2.61
Access new markets	2.84
Create new products or value add to existing ones	2.86

## Appendix 3 Industry Development Officer Survey

### **People Development Investment Plan**

### **Industry Development Officer Survey**

The vegetable industry, with funding from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) through the Australian Vegetable Industry Development Group (AVIDG), is currently implementing a business skills and leadership development strategy.

Managed by AUSVEG, the peak representative organisation for vegetable growers, the strategy is focused on increasing growers' skills in business management within their own businesses and the industry as a whole.

The industry strategic plan VegVision 2020 identified a need to encourage stronger participation of growers in their industry from regional to national level. Improving business skills will make all of industry stronger and more competitive.

A program to deliver business skills development will commence in mid 2008. Vegetable growers are being asked for their input across Australia to ensure that the program meets the practical needs of all growers.

In conjunction with the grower survey, input from other industry participants is being sought. We need your help in identifying business skill requirements for the vegetable industry. The questions are based on those being used in focus groups around Australia with the vegetable industry leadership eg Industry Advisory Committees.

Please complete the following survey and return as email. If you use 'Reply' to this email, you can type directly into the document. I appreciate your time in completing this survey. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Regards

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How would you define *Business Skills*? Give some examples

What are the business management skills a grower needs in:

- Their business
  
- The industry leadership

What is the vegetable industry's leadership:

- Strengths
  
- Weaknesses

What sorts of strategies are needed to better develop industry leaders? How can these be delivered to growers?

What strategies are needed to improve the industry's learning culture ie to improve uptake of learning and skill development?

## Appendix 4 Industry Development Officer Summary

Question						
<p><b>How would you define Business Skills? Give some examples</b></p>	<p>The set of tools a grower needs to complete a range of tasks relevant to running a successful enterprise. Management skills are people management skills, matching labor requirements to production demands. Financial skills cover business practices such as tax, cost of production, payroll items, invoice control, financial risk assessment, etc. Industry business skills involve the capacity of an individual grower to participate in events that develop, inform, and promote commodity growth off farm.</p>	<p>The set of skills held by individuals in operating and managing their business. 'Operating' refers to the day to day activities linked to the business' core functions, such as crop production activities. 'Managing' is more strategic and sits above the operational activities, such as the financial requirements of running the business, analysing market trends and opportunities, sourcing new information to improve aspects such as crop production, understanding and meeting regulatory requirements.</p>	<p>Having the ability to run their business to its optimum performance – knowing how to record, change, monitor, assess and continually do this. Understanding legal requirements and the farm operating environment (which is continually changing) and how to find out this information.</p>			<p>Effective long-term planning Understanding your 'bottom line' Accurate assessment of input costs, break-even points Full understanding of your supply chain, forwards and backwards.</p>
<p><b>What are the business management skills a grower needs in their business?</b></p>	<p>Recognition of best practices should be the major focus when attempting to improve on farm management business skills. Building skills and confidence to broaden commodity markets. Industry business skills that allow the grower to recognize consumer trends define appropriate supply chains and develop alternative growing practices to target niche markets. Communication business skills</p>	<p>Skills in marketing produce and assessing market opportunities; recruit and manage staff; record and book keeping; environmental protection. Devote insufficient time and energy to other tasks such as product development and promotion.</p>	<p>Benchmarking their business – how to measure their performance and keep records (how can growers measure the success or failure of a change in practice if they are not measuring or recording what they did before the change) Understanding the supply chain Business skills such as understanding contracts, keeping records, costing your farm enterprise production inputs.</p>	<p>People management – managing staff, valuing staff, investing in staff development OHS – understanding legislation and their requirements as an employer Succession planning – business/industry Understanding markets and marketing Negotiating with buyers, conflict/negotiation skills Business planning, strategic planning</p>	<p>Human resource management, Knowledge of OHS and QA systems, negotiation skills, financial management, , Computer skills, understanding of legal aspects of farm businesses.</p>	

<p><b>What are the business management skills a grower needs in industry leadership?</b></p>	<p>Ability of individuals to recognize the importance of cohesion in the industry and the ability to communicate with a range of structurally variable groups. Time management is important in leadership as not enough growers place time and effort into industry development. One skill particularly important is the building of confidence.</p>	<p>Understand issues at the macro level, such as effective lobbying and political machinations; looking at international food industry trends, threats and opportunities; negotiation and dispute resolution; recognising and balancing the conflicting needs of stakeholder groups; remaining objective and impartial.</p>	<p>How to chair/facilitate a meeting Public speaking Writing letters to government, council, etc. Setting up an association/legal requirements of an association Understanding the key components of a research proposal Understanding funding possibilities for regional groups/associations</p>	<p>Investment in development of young and or emerging leaders to take on a role in the industry (not just their business)</p>	<p>Negotiation skills, understanding of legal aspects of industry structures etc, leadership skills</p>	<p>An understanding of how policy is formed and influenced. A better grasp of the global market and the future changes that are / will occur. The ability to see beyond the farm gate. To remove individual concerns from the table and focus on 'The industry'</p>
<p><b>What are the vegetable industry's leadership strengths?</b></p>	<p>Champion growers, there are many examples of businesses that have excelled in their industry. Leadership within the industry is readily accessible to growers, and those involved are passionate about their cause. Well informed on practices.</p>	<p>Industry's leaders are passionate about the industry, and therefore continue to find the energy and enthusiasm to keep going at a fairly thankless task. They also have a fairly good understanding of issues at the grass-roots level and empathy of many of the industry's most significant problems.</p>	<p>Growers with exceptional passion and belief in their industry. A range of backgrounds and skills.</p>	<p>A number of young growers taking an active interest in the industry. Move to a more technological industry with capacity</p>	<p>Processing tomato industry is small, few growers and processors enables efficient communication</p>	<p>Great diversity and the ability to be flexible Some innovation Some very forward thinking individuals</p>
<p><b>What are the vegetable industry's leadership weaknesses?</b></p>	<p>Not enough financial support to showcase industry leaders. Making it more financial attractive to put a larger emphasis on the critical need for vegetable industry leadership is essential.</p>	<p>The veg industry has an ad-hoc manner in which its leaders come to the fore. There is a need to articulate the industry's needs and foster unity and build cohesion amongst stakeholders.</p>	<p>Too few growers doing the bulk of the work. Apathy to get involved. Succession planning (some growers have been in their positions of leadership for over 35 years). Growers not having the confidence to get involved.</p>	<p>Not enough of them Awareness of the importance of leadership development</p>	<p>Friction between growers and processors. Research issues need to be kept separate from political industry issues. Number of growers and processors is getting very small, hence the number of people willing to take on leadership roles is very limited</p>	<p>Farm gate focus. Personal agendas not in the best interest of all. Diverse commodities with lack of clear direction. Wanting to return to the success of the past instead of working differently into the future. Individuals who are in 'to make a quick buck'</p>

<p><b>What strategies are needed to better develop industry leaders? How can these be delivered to growers?</b></p>	<p>Place more emphasis on the importance of industry leaders, and less into the importance of production. Making available more information to growers about industry leadership opportunities. Recognise the need for the establishment of regional groups that can be used to nominate relevant parties suitable to become industry leaders. Present more structured conferences to develop the skills of industry leaders.</p>	<p>Industry needs to demonstrate and communicate what industry leadership really is about and how others can be involved in a practical and achievable way. This includes developing and presenting pathways for involvement; defined roles and an understanding of outcomes; shared and supported visions; and inclusive activities.</p>	<p>Workshops (through a funded project) to deliver business skills training and understanding the industry and what roles are available. Case studies of the benefits of being involved and what has been changed by the growers who have been involved. Also the cost-benefit to a business by having business skills.</p>	<p>Holistic program for developing the different areas of leadership: Basic skills like running a meeting, governance Advanced skills like understanding self and others, working with groups of diverse people, understanding leadership style, taking responsibility and getting into action. Delivered in a number of ways: Study tours to meet leaders on the industry/other industries – case studies. Study tours of other sites Experiential learning – immersed into leadership experiences (facilitated programs)</p>	<p>The processing tomato industry did have an informal “succession plan” in place for taking on industry leadership roles. This was looking okay until processors squeezed more growers out of the industry. Prior to this the plan was that the 20 and 30 year olds would slowly step up through the ranks. It is also important to remember that individual growers will have different aims; some growers are willing to take on “political” leadership roles within industry, whereas other may only wish to take on leadership roles with a research focus.</p>	<p>The Pathways to Rural Leadership course from DAFF was very beneficial in understanding Gov and policy development. It was for 18-35 which makes many growers, even those considered young, Ineligible. A Mentoring system whereby up and coming leaders are rotated amongst various agriculture industries, even some corporate / commercial. More travel and overseas experience to highlight what else is going on in the world of horticulture.</p>
<p><b>What strategies are needed to improve the industry's learning culture ie to improve uptake of learning and skill development?</b></p>	<p>Strategies to communicate the benefit of skill development to growers are essential. Analysis of the most effective way growers uptake information. Focusing on young growers that are the future of industry leadership. Co-ordinate skill workshops that coincide with the best time for growers. Identify international models of skill development that may be applicable to the vegetable industry.</p>	<p>Our methods of delivering skill improvement and information uptake amongst farmers remains very reactive - we produce the information or provide a training program that we think is relevant, then hope someone comes along and takes it up.</p>	<p>Understanding by growers of the cost-benefit to their businesses. Matching development to the way growers would like to learn – e.g. community based learning, web, one-on-one. Time and flexibility of courses.</p>	<p>Work on sharing ideas/successes among those within the industry (probably more locally) Increased understanding of investing in people development</p>	<p>Opportunities exist for growers to learn skills from other industries, i.e. the processing tomato industry visited the cotton industry to look at business management practices. Growers learn best by talking to others. Domestic and international study tours if growers get outside their own farm gate they become exposed to other ideas etc which in turn helps to encourage growers to undertake training in specific areas to gain skills.</p>	<p>Greater value and emphasis needs to be placed on it. Highlight the success of those that have undertaken personal and professional improvement Generate uptake in growers valuing training for their employee's and hopefully they too will see the value. They are incredibly time poor, courses and training need to be as FLEXIBLE as possible.</p>

## Appendix 5 Case Studies of Vegetable Industry Leaders

### Case Study for Leadership Skills – Tasmania

Grower	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Positions</b>	National; State	State: Regional	Regional	Regional	National; State; Regional	State; Regional
<b>Training &amp; Education</b>	Nuffield Scholarship Assoc Dip Horticulture Scholarship Foodex 2000	ChemCert; EurepGap; FreshCare; Communications course	EDPPP Rabobank leadership program TAFE courses Business/ landcare discussion group	Attended Glen Ormiston College Regional leadership course FarmBis courses		Chemcert EurepGap Landcare discussion group
<b>Vision for industry</b>	More produce will be grown in Tasmania due to urban encroachment. Processing vegetables will decrease. Need a mind shift in government to change this.	Exciting future with trends towards supply of alternative fuels. Food shortages in northern hemisphere will open opportunities. Need to secure vegetable industry in Australia as costs are ever increasing. More mechanization will occur.	More imports will challenge industry. More niche marketing in Tasmania, (niche as in specialization) Importance of Food Miles vs Carbon impact, (Carbon impact being the best for Aust/NZ) Consumers will want to know where their food is grown and with what impact Increase in disposable income will increase consumption of higher quality niche products and pre-prepared foods.	Industry should introduce training as part of business life not as a program out of hours.	Rapid change with increase in supply in the short term. Need to develop new markets	Industry is open to market forces. Farming will become more corporatized
<b>Vision for business</b>	Recent expansion which doubled production area and > double production. New heating system. Need to move offsite for further expansion.	Focus on supply chain business. Look at outside investments	Setting up systems to manage current enterprises and developing new farm tourism venture.	Diversification of industry in supply chain	Succession planning is important. Experimenting with fresh market vegetables.	Expanding into other crops; Value adding, particularly in storage
<b>Human management skills</b>		Ability to: Talk through problems Select key figures to instigate change		People skills are very important	Encourage involvement Good listening skills	Encourage others by giving responsibility to staff, fitted to their skills; Be well prepared when negotiating

<b>Leadership Skills</b>	A good leader is: A good listener Uses considered decision making supported by fact Demonstrates good outcomes A successful business person Needs skills in: Time management for staff & self Listening skills Mediation skills	Leader needs: Broad knowledge of industry Clear vision of opportunities Willingness to be committed to their vision Support from industry Skills required are: People management Negotiation Communication Media skills Government network development	A leader should be: Honest and transparent Accountable Able to present sound new ideas Able to set achievable goals Needs skills in: Communication Network creation Personal development	Leaders should learn from others and surround themselves with a skilled team; need people skills	A good leader is: Experienced in life Prepared to work with others Engaging with industry Capable of getting the best out of others Able to be trusted Prepared to take ownership of vision Able to step outside the norm Skills needed are: Mentoring Team building Media Listening Time management Networking Negotiation skills Ability to encourage participation	A good leader is: Experienced in successful farming Able to communicate with people Able to change Honest with integrity Need skills in: Communication Negotiation Forward planning Using other experts Good farming practices
<b>Business skills</b>	Financial skills; costs of production; financial ratios eg return on investment; people management; legislative obligations; business research	Marketing Understanding of world trends Computer skills Financial skills Off-farm investment opportunities Staff management Understanding of diversification	Budgeting; benchmarking; financial record keeping; designing and writing operation manuals; strategic planning; gross margins	Farm management; staff management; planning; marketing skills; financial planning; financial ratios; business analysis	Financial planning; Computer skills; market negotiation skills	Farm analysis, gross margins, farm planning, budgeting
<b>Personal Skills</b>	Encourage others to work together by inspiring others; having a good research plan as a framework. Change is seen as an opportunity. Good farm planning	Like to lead change and create direction. Bureaucracy is frustrating	Thrive on change; Like to create a plan for change.	Change is a constant	Encourage others by praise, "Pat on the back" Delegate responsibilities to others with worthwhile tasks Giving ownership to team	Able to undertake any task on the farm; Work through change by changing to other rural enterprises while maintaining core crops

<b>Expectations</b>	Rewarded by satisfaction of achieving a goal	Satisfaction from developing the industry and achieving outcomes	Sense of achievement in reaching goals		Gain reward by recognition for efforts; high expectations	High expectation to improve profit margin for business and industry
<b>Mentoring</b>	Family act as mentors but gain much experience from overseas businesses in the greenhouse industry. Mentors need to be older with further experience		Would like to create networks to learn from others. Willing to be a mentor/mentored		Prepared to act as a mentor as this can be very influential Rural Youth groups provide a good grounding of leadership skills.	No, business commitments are very high

## Case Study for Leadership Skills – Western Australia

Grower	1	2	3	4
<b>Positions</b>	National; State; Regional	National; State	National	State; Regional
<b>Training &amp; Education</b>	TAFE computer training Secretarial training	Apprenticeship TAFE Computer training – Cert I & II; Chemcert ; HACCP – SQF 2000; Freshcare	TAFE business and finance courses	Computer skills
<b>Vision for industry</b>	1. Inclusion of women in leadership positions by increasing their cultural identity 2. Leadership course should be based in understanding of industry and have a networking component with growers	1. More adaptation to customer requirements 2. Growers and consumers have more power 3. Closer supply chains	1. Marketing & promotion for an increase in vegetable consumption and price to growers 2. Contingency plans for disaster response 3. Cohesive national industry body	1. Existing growers becoming larger 2. Trend towards protective cropping due to environmental issues 3. More national buying and central selling 4. Developing younger grower's abilities in leadership 5. Greenhouse growers need to be seen as an industry
<b>Human management skills</b>	1. Knowing your staff is very important 2. Improving staff ability to enjoy their work 3. Conflict resolution by flowing procedures with discussion of issues, rather than focusing on the people 4. Positive feedback	1. Equality in dealing with people 2. Give immediate feedback to staff 3. Positive feedback and conflict resolution should be immediate and open.	1. Helping employees to develop themselves 2. Fair and reasonable - empathetic 3. Respectful of other cultures 4. Deals with conflict by listening to all sides and using cooling off periods, then negotiating a solution	1. Conciliatory approach to discuss and work through issues 2. Important to take a stand but not to impose own views 3. Communication needs to be clear and open
<b>Leadership Skills</b>	1. Calling on other people's skills to provide information "Makes a good business manager" 2. Be flexible 3. Supportive of others 4. Focusing on the positives 5. Be inclusive 6. Give feedback "Proof is in the action"	1. Strong belief in helping industry 2. Facilitate information dissemination to help others 3. Take advice from others 4. Prepared to make changes in business 5. Accepting of others' positions 6. Engage people in decision making 7. Maintain strong communication links	1. Methodically analytical – step back from situation to look at all components 2. Responds to challenges and pressure 3. Comfortable to make changes & shake up the business 4. Working with others 5. Consider advice 6. Should include supply chain partners in leadership training	1. Considers industry as a broad community first 2. Able to network experiences (good and bad) to create a shared experience 3. Have confidence in your ability 4. Forward looking 5. Helping other people 6. Give positive feedback and value other's opinions
<b>Business skills</b>	1. Marketing 2. Accounting financial skills 3. Taxation 4. Employment obligations 5. Succession planning 6. Building business 7. Interaction with customers is important	1. Expansion of farm size and capacity 2. Succession planning	1. Marketing skills are important 2. Investigating niche marketing for packaging and product 3. Networking business opportunities 4. Understanding costs/ returns/ economies of scale	1. Greenhouse management
<b>Mentoring</b>	Involved in Young Rural Women's Mentoring Program Happy to be involved	Requires stable, clear thinking people Happy to be involved	Important to have other successful industries as role models Happy to mentor younger growers	Encourage young growers to be involved Need for formal mentoring skills

## Case Study for Leadership Skills – Victoria

Grower	1	2	3
<b>Positions</b>	None	National; State; Regional	National; State
<b>Training &amp; Education</b>	Diploma in Horticulture (some RPL) ChemCert SQF 2000 – Quality Control Manager Irrigation courses	Executive Link RCS Short courses – IPM/ Soil/ Fertilisers SQF 2000 ChemCert	General management courses
<b>Vision for industry</b>	Small farms will not be able to provide enough income for families. Urban encroachment is an issue.	Concern at urban encroachment Value adding will become more important eg packaging	To be run like a corporation and to replace aged individuals who are complacent with energetic contributors
<b>Vision for business</b>	Business will not continue after current owners due to succession issues	There is an import replacement threat which will increase Smaller growers will find it increasingly difficult to make an income	Consistently grow market share and deliver results to the business
<b>Human management skills</b>	Human resource management of staff/ Relationship building/	Creating good working conditions for staff	As industry continues to change individuals will be forced to work together.
<b>Leadership Skills</b>	Need sound knowledge of industry; negotiation skills; public relations skills; Communication & public speaking	Leader should be willing to lead by example; non-confrontational and have good listening skills Good industry knowledge Personal development – understanding self Networking skills Public speaking skills Negotiation skills	Respect and the ability to share information with your peers, lead by example and contribute. A good leader must also be balanced and visionary and be prepared to take risks. A good leader must also be able to listen and be non judgmental and constructive in times of criticism. Before leadership skills they should receive general management skills and then migrate to leadership skills.
<b>Business skills</b>	Legislation and compliance skills, licenses/ Computer skills/ Off farm investment skills/ Succession skills/ Finance management eg budgeting	Understanding financial tools eg budgets; P & L Understanding of legislation & compliance Succession planning Human resource management – staff management	The vegetable industry is in a major change curve with private equity entering our industry companies; need skills through the whole supply chain.
<b>Personal Skills</b>	Create a work ethic for overcoming problems by creating a joint vision. Cope well with change by prioritizing issues. Important to instruct and praise staff.	Encourage others to work together by discussion of difficulties; set boundaries; create an atmosphere where staff feel comfortable Change is welcomed with a practical attitude of 'getting on with it'	Change generally means things are going to be more difficult but this is a challenge. The harder industry becomes, the better the leader and the opportunity for those who want to succeed. Good research and traveling around the globe being able to put in place my learning and know that I was right in my appraisal.
<b>Expectations</b>	Family values are very important with a strong spiritual commitment. High expectations and am willing to tackle anything.	Like to achieve by dealing with issues' delegating to capable staff Rewarded by having resources needed to develop the business	High expectations for continued strong involvement in the industry. Want to continue my momentum and intensity and passion.
<b>Mentoring</b>	Family. Not enough women in industry positions. Already acts as a mentor for young farmers.	Family provide mentoring examples; local growers Happy to mentor, particularly for women	Absolutely willing to be a mentor.

## Case Study for Leadership Skills – New South Wales

Grower	1	2	3	4
<b>Positions</b>	National, state & regional	Regional & state	Regional & state	Regional & state
<b>Training &amp; Education</b>	SmartTrain Water wise course Computer courses IPM workshops FreshCare	Cert III Horticulture Part Cert IV in Hort Production Computer skills SmartTrain	SmartTrain Waterwise training R & D workshops	Horticulture Small Business
<b>Vision for industry</b>	Growers with established markets will prosper, open market will be difficult, Small growers need more government assistance. Water is an issue with production being concentrated in some areas.	Good future but there is many obstacles in community understanding eg chemical use. New methods are continually being adopted. Difficult to know where to invest for future farming.	Fresh market will be steady, processing industry will go offshore, price competition will increase	To see the industry fulfill the growing needs of the domestic market and move into the export market in a positive sustainable clean green way.
<b>Vision for business</b>	Increase supply for value adding, contract growing	Lack of sustainability due to outside regulation which influence further investment. Immigrants' family will not follow in the farming business. Capital gain in land is the future of the business.	Eventually will sell business	To produce high quality fruit & vegetables, filling niche and specialized markets both locally and within the state.
<b>Human management skills</b>	Need to set rules for staff, discussion of needs, encourage ideas and deliver recognition.	Staff management is a difficult issue. Growers should be working together to compete in the market to create market power.		Clear rules and agreement on reaching / achieving an outcome. Also good management of those concerned.
<b>Leadership Skills</b>	Good leader should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate at grower's level</li> <li>Believe in what they are doing</li> <li>Represent the industry</li> </ul> Skills needed are public speaking, knowledge of the industry, self confidence, personal development.	Good leader should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate well</li> <li>Listen to growers</li> <li>Accept other's opinions</li> <li>Be certain in conveying views of growers</li> <li>Promote industry to the general public</li> </ul> Skills in self confidence, meeting skills, communication, industry structures, political structures, lobbying skills, public speaking.	Good leader should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practical experienced grower</li> <li>Prepared to stand up for what they believe</li> <li>Forthright</li> <li>Well informed</li> </ul> Skills needed are self development, lobbying ability, public speaking, experience in industry	Someone who is open minded, listens to the team members, and has the ability to take ideas forward from conception to completion. Need people with good people skills, dissemination skills, People who will listen and act, People with vision.

<b>Business skills</b>	Skills needed are computer skills, management of financial records, farm planning, cost analysis, staff management	Skills needed are computer skills, cash flow analysis, financial planning, business planning, negotiation skills, marketing skills, understanding contracts, quality assurance.	Skills needed are business management, planning, documenting, cost analysis, gross margin analysis	Business planning skills, Project management skills and Methods of how to determine profitability for new projects.
<b>Personal Skills</b>	Time management is an issue, ambition to increase the amount of crop grown and increase the uptake of technology.	Business built from nothing.	Want to be involved in industry	I embrace change when supported by good data and clear thinking is involved. To bring industry leaders to the area to develop the skills of local growers & to benefit the levee payers.
<b>Expectations</b>	Farming is a lifestyle choice.	Will retire and sell farm for capital land value	Aim to be the top and strive towards this.	Meeting expectations and financial goals. To achieve set goals for myself, business and industry.
<b>Mentoring</b>	Family and local farmers in other hort industries	Experience from older family members.	Local farmers. Encouraged by previous chairman to participate.	Successful industry members and those who have a good work/life balance. Would be willing to become a mentor

## Case Study for Leadership Skills – South Australia

Grower	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Positions</b>	State	Regional, State and National	State and National	State	Regional, State & National	Regional & State
<b>Training &amp; Education</b>	Soil & fertilizer workshops Young Growers Tour to NZ Industry workshops Farm tours Chemical use certificates Enviroveg	Chemcert Apprenticeship Fitter & Machinist	Adv Dip Business Management		Adv Dip Hort (Production) Chemcert	Adv Dip Hort (Production) Chemcert First Aid certificate
<b>Vision for industry</b>	Small growers will struggle to be financially viable Businesses will get bigger	Needs better structure to plan future for growers, Need increased viability for growers, Better price outcome needed, Value adding is necessary	Water problems, product needs to be indispensable, plenty of opportunities but problems of bureaucracy	Lack of water is an issue, Younger growers are leaving industry	Less numbers of growers who are larger operators. Less employment opportunities, need more infrastructure to support industry	Trend towards specialty crops Lack of water will restrict production Lack of trained people will impact
<b>Vision for business</b>	Growing different crops Water is limiting	More specialization, Succession is process	Business will continue until retirement with no intention for succession, Production affected by lack of water	Packing more of own produce Have a merchant stall in market More control of supply chain	Farm expanding to a larger area, looking at other ways of growing	Expanding into other states with contract growing Become more vertically integrated. Huge growth in prepackaged lines Growth in market share
<b>Human management skills</b>	Staff supervision	Communication	Discussion of problems in workforce, delegate responsibilities	Proper planning should be the base of managing people. Treat people equally with distinct roles. Mediation is important to talk through problems	Resolve issues by having groups of staff who interact well together. Discuss issues with staff to resolve problems. Delegate responsibility to leading hands.	Communicate to sort out problems. Be prepared to listen. Model appropriate behavior. Examine where problems occurred and make changes

<b>Leadership Skills</b>	A leader should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be receptive to new concepts</li> <li>• Be aware of new markets</li> <li>• Be involved in market development</li> <li>• Have good communication skills</li> </ul>	A leader needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive attitude</li> <li>• Be proactive</li> <li>• Be strong and resilient</li> </ul>	A good leader should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be credible</li> <li>• Have industry aims at the fore</li> <li>• Be a good grower and businessman</li> <li>• Listen to grower's needs</li> <li>• Represent grower's needs</li> </ul> Skills needed are development of networks	A good leader should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have good knowledge of industry</li> <li>• Be respected by industry</li> <li>• Be a good businessman</li> <li>• Be a good communication</li> </ul> Need skills in communication, presentation, public speaking	A good leader should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be proactive</li> <li>• Make decisions based on all options</li> <li>• Be diplomatic</li> <li>• See the whole picture</li> </ul> Skills needed are public relations skills, teamwork, communication, decision making.	A good leader should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a good listener</li> <li>• Strategist for setting goal</li> <li>• Have a positive outlook</li> <li>• Be self confident</li> </ul> Need skills in communication, personal development
<b>Business skills</b>	Need skills in staff management, benchmarking, business analysis, time management, succession planning, analysis of capital investment, financial management, record keeping systems. Staff also need training in staff supervision & packing shed efficiencies	Production should be tied into business skills. Skills needed are marketing and promotion, cost analysis, financial analysis, supply chain & vertical integration	Strategic planning, budgeting, financial analysis, legislation compliance, business planning, staff management	Skills in succession planning, marketing, computer skills, people skills, financial skills, self confidence, negotiation	Skills needed are business planning, strategic planning, understanding finance sector, succession planning, bookkeeping, production planning, staff management, simple economics	Profit & Loss analysis, cost analysis, staff management, people management
<b>Personal Skills</b>	Time management. Training needs to be timed well to ensure participation.	Positive to achieve an outcome with good production	Staff are encouraged to teach each other, development of business is satisfying	Personal development is important	Enjoy challenges.	Goal to complete every task successfully
<b>Expectations</b>	Continue to grow a good product	Time is an issue for young growers. Training should be timed to suit local industry.		Hard working by developing business from a small farm	Very high expectations and enjoy developing off-farm investments	High achieving to prove that can be successful
<b>Mentoring</b>		Not enough time.	Identify with other successful growers	Mentor family members	Enjoy one on one mentoring	Growers who are starting in hydroponic growing

## Case Study for Leadership Skills – Queensland

<b>Grower</b>	1
<b>Positions</b>	Regional, state and national
<b>Training &amp; Education</b>	Apprenticeship MBA Monash University RPL
<b>Vision for industry</b>	Corporate model of business, value adding will increase, packaging and presentation will be more important
<b>Vision for business</b>	Expanding to embrace new technology and innovations. Increase skill base of staff. Need a competitive industry to make businesses competitive
<b>Human management</b>	
<b>Leadership Skills</b>	<p>A good leader should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a good businessman</li> <li>• Acknowledge change</li> <li>• Learn from others</li> <li>• Be skill based</li> </ul> <p>Needed skills are personal development, studies in psychology, entrepreneurial skills.</p>
<b>Business skills</b>	Skills in supervision, financial analysis, benchmarking, people management, decision making, computers, supply chain management.
<b>Personal Skills</b>	Change is welcomed, always looking for new technologies. Staff are given a reason for being there, given responsibility and decision making ability
<b>Expectations</b>	There is a challenge and satisfaction in achieving.
<b>Mentoring</b>	Staff is mentored already. Time is a factor in being able to mentor others.

## Appendix 6 Desk top review of research in business and leadership training

### Study 1 Beyond Training and Development - Achieving On-Farm Adoption. January 2007

**Commissioned by FarmBis SA and Ag Excellence Alliance Rural Directions Pty Ltd; Lynch Farm Monitoring; Solly Business Services Pty Ltd**

The broad acre grain industry in South Australia has researched the barriers to participation of farmers in industry training. Participants generally justify attendance based on one of the following categories:

- Direct benefit relative to the costs – People are more likely to participate when the benefits are greater than the costs and there is a direct attribution between the cost and the benefit.
- Expected return – People will participate based on an expectation of future increased earnings.
- Case-based benefits – Participants are seeking information to solve a particular problem.

The barriers to participation are classified into four groups:

- Situational barriers – Time, money, transport, weather, childcare.
- Institutional barriers – Factors concerning the service provider (fees, course type, flexibility of learning options).
- Socio demographic – Age, gender, race, income, level of education, geographic location.
- Dispositional barriers – Self esteem, group members, lack of confidence.

Higher participation rates in training are encouraged by the following factors:

- The benefits need to be identified and outweigh the costs.
- There needs to be a champion for change who is motivated to make the change happen and ideally that person needs to be in a position of influence or control in the business..
- Training needs to be relevant to the needs and skills/knowledge base of producers.
- The training should preferably have a “whole of business” and project focus.
- The training program should incorporate opportunity for planning, action, adaptation and reflection.
- The presenter and the materials should be credible.
- The training should be timed to suit seasonal activities.
- The training should cater for the different learning styles of participants (seeing, doing, and listening).

- Training should be seen as part of a lifelong learning process and there should be opportunity to recognise current skills and knowledge and make connections with other training opportunities.
- The environment should be challenging, without being threatening.
- There should be sufficient resources (time, money, land, and infrastructure) to allow the adoption of the new concept(s).
- Support (family, friend, coach, and mentor) needs to be available during the early parts of adoption and at key stages when reviewing past performance and planning next steps.

Training in which participants undertake farm related projects as part of their training help to improve levels of implementation. It is important that the training concludes with some action plan development.

At the end of a training activity, participants are ideally left with changes but unless the transition from the training environment is well managed with suitable support systems, the level of practice change will fall. This support can be provided in a number of ways:

- Family members can support the change by providing access to key resources and by providing “in principle” support for new concepts.
- Other farmers can provide support by acting as sounding boards, providing information based on their own experiences, assisting in reviewing progress and in modifying plans for future implementation.
- The support role can also be formalised through the roles of a coach or mentor.

## **Study 2 Horticultural Training Strategy A project by the Victorian Farmers’ Federation June 2007**

### **Ann Young/Annabel Training and Support**

The report recommended that training be focused on increasing grower participation through facilitated local groups with a particular emphasis on development of young growers’ skills.

A characteristic of all groups was the support and assistance of staff and use of facilities and equipment from an outside body. These were provided through Department of Primary Industry and Local Government. The groups had also accessed funding from a range of sources to support their activities. The groups generally have a certain lifespan where members move onto other things. They therefore need to be “started up again” after a period of time.

All regions, areas and industries commented on the need for encouragement of young growers and the need for effective and appropriate knowledge transfer. A characteristic of all of the programs was that the group members had developed their own programs that included such things as farm tours of each other’s properties, guest speakers, and excursions to view the irrigation and dam systems, overseas marketing trips along with social activities. Often outside facilitation was undertaken to identify what they wanted to do and achieve. Some of these participants have now gone on to take on industry leadership roles.

The better training providers have an understanding of grower and rural community needs and industry issues. Training/information delivery needs to be “timely”, in “grower speak”, appropriate and comfortable locations in

subject areas where growers see value in increasing their knowledge base and this is then reflected in \$\$ returns to their business. Content needs to be simple and should reflect “industry best practice”. Many growers commented on some programs being pitched at wrong levels – both too high and too low. They also commented on programs having far too much theory and not enough practical.

Selected growers had attended programs such as Governance and Company Director’s Courses, National, State and Regional Leadership programs and other similar programs. There were varying opinions on the usefulness of these programs to their businesses and organisations although all felt that they had gained something.

All stakeholders felt that the horticulture industry overall lacked people who were good communicators, public speakers and were able to facilitate and run meetings at a high standard. There is a need to start training younger members of the industry but it needed to be done in an appropriate way that is non threatening way and enjoyable.

The researcher found that there is a need for short course training in building organisations and leadership within the industry and for appropriate “Succession Planning” (Leadership) programs within industry and individual businesses.

A key activity was the appointment of coordinators to work with the industry in regions of high and growing horticultural activity. These coordinators need to have a wide role that increases uptake of skills levels through a range of initiatives that creates pathways from secondary levels right through to management. Some of their role could include:

- Prepare industry training plans
- Set up (where not in existence) and secretariat to Local/Regional Horticultural Industry Reference Groups.
- Promotion of cooperation, integration and joint initiatives in training and delivery between involved parties.
- Liaison with all RTO’s, schools, Job Networks and other relevant areas that are providing training to the industry to generate.
- Working with local schools and the community to promote rural careers.
- Promote and initiate take up and delivery of Recognition processes through existing industry.
- Liaison with industry and organisations to increase the uptake of training and building of a trained and skilled workforce for the horticultural industry
- Ensuring that training delivered is aligned to what industry needs and wants

The barriers to training were recognised as:

- Real cost of training
- Difficult to meet all commitments
- Courses often too long
- Content often doesn't meet needs
- Tutors/trainers not familiar with "Best Practice"
- Local grower groups and industry organisations needed to place more emphasis on "growing their people" and training will happen
- Appropriate funding to undertake industry and benchmarking tours to view research and developments in other industries.
- Training sessions should focus on sharing knowledge and skills of industry members – natural groups not artificial members. "Talk with rather than talk at – in farmer speak".
- Some level of funding to attend industry conferences and similar events with content that increases knowledge levels of growers

Skills needed by horticultural growers were:

- Planning: Strategic, business, financial and succession
- Basic on farm computer training for managers who then use customised packages
- Office management, budgeting, administration training for new younger growers taking over family operations
- Appropriate Succession Planning for horticulture growers within their own farms -
- Horticulture based Leadership Skills that equip people to be able to have input to industry, speak at meetings, negotiate, collectively bargain, run meetings etc

**Study 3: Leading the Way: Evaluation of existing leadership programs and assessment of the relationship between these and the attraction of women to leadership positions in rural industries. December 2006**

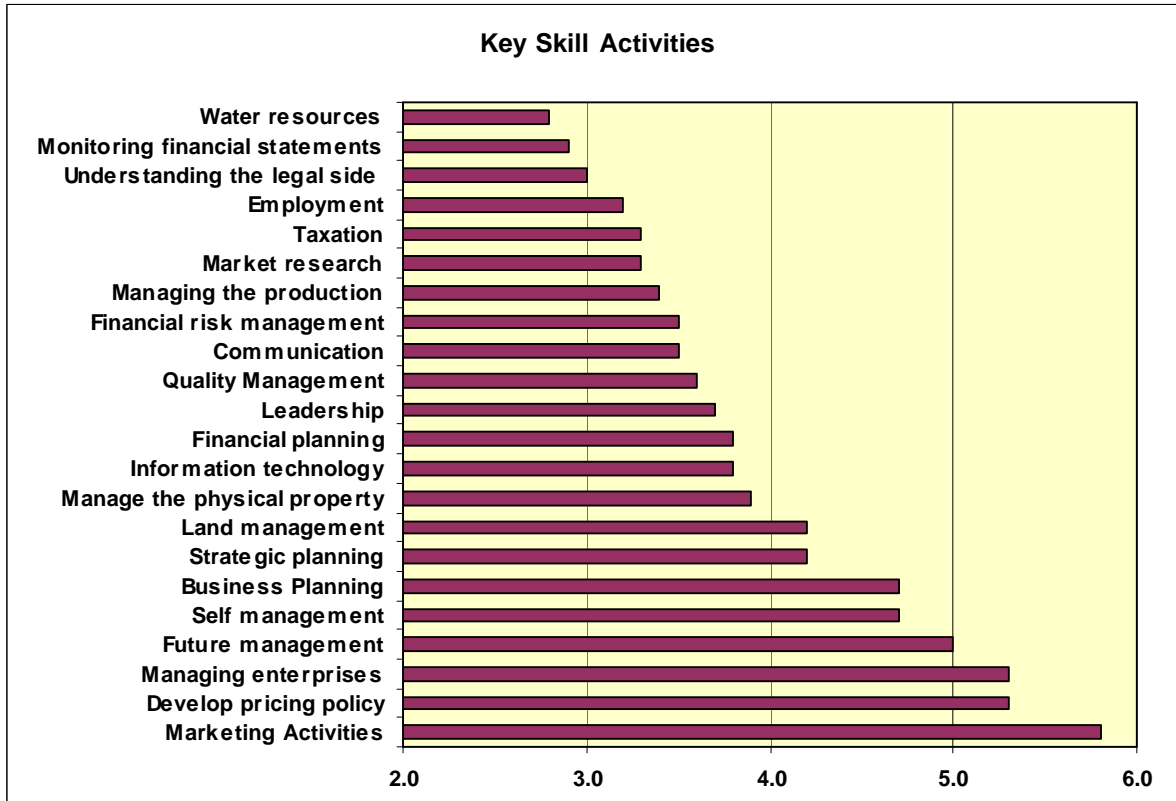
**A report for the Cooperative Venture For Capacity Building by Jo Eady, RuralScope Pty Limited**

Women in current rural leadership positions from across Australia provided input to this research via online survey responses. Key factors in determining the success of a program are:

- Mentors, role models and family support
- The role of the leadership program facilitator
- Follow up (post leadership program participation)
- Flexible delivery elements reducing the level of face to face activity required by women
- The key content areas which are identified as the area of personal development encompassing self awareness, self esteem, personality typing and confidence building. In addition other key areas women find useful in leadership programs include leadership styles, conflict resolution, managing difficult situations, problem solving and legals, governance, financial management, boards.
- Networking opportunities. Encouraging women into wider networks that can specifically support the gaining of leadership roles / positions would be highly valued. Encouraging women into mixed gender networks is also suggested as being of value. Networking opportunities presented through online and advanced technologies would be attractive to rural women.

**Study 4: Farmbis Industry Training Initiative March 2006**  
**Western Australian No-Tillage Farmers Association (WANTFA)**  
**AgKnowledge® 51 Mottram Rd Carmel WA 6076**

Western Australian No-Tillage Farmers Association (WANTFA) identified skill priorities in a FarmBis survey. The following graph highlights the priorities in ascending order.



The surveyed members of WANTFA identified business management and leadership as high priorities for training. Production management skills were seen as less important than marketing, business planning and self-management.

WANTFA’s grower extension program at conferences, trial sites, field days and seminars were all ‘training’ opportunities. It was recommended that all events planning considers the formal training activity available and in many cases a simple modification or addition could significantly enhance the program or day with take home messages and easy to assimilate ideas. These ‘events’ were the training classroom.

## **Study 5: INDUSTRY TRAINING DEMAND PROFILE AGRICULTURE (VEGETABLE SECTOR). December 2005**

### **Office of Post-Compulsory Training & Education, Tasmania.**

Essentially, farmers undertake training if they see a benefit and the drivers of training demand for processing vegetable farmers are similar to other farmers. The benefit may be one or combinations of the following factors:

- Implementation of new technology
- Succession: When a farmer's son or daughter decides to follow on in the family farm, many farming families will recommend that they undertake formal training
- New full time employee needing training
- Problem solving: When specific problems arise, for example constraints on water use or a commodity price downturn, farmers will frequently seek out appropriate short course *training*.
- Exploiting opportunities: If an opportunity arises to buy an additional farm property, expand a contract, diversify, vertically integrate or change to producing a new product, they will frequently seek training for themselves or consider employing an additional person and seek subsidised training for that person.
- Change in farm practices: A voluntary or forced change in farm practices may also result in recognition for farmers to seek out training

There must be more of an emphasis on the provision of single units of competence at the higher levels, delivered flexibly in a manner suited to farmers and their employees. That is, in groups (because they are social and experiential learners) off-the-job, using expert facilitators and practical application.

There should be more of an emphasis on off-the-job training. There is no base of high level skilling in the farming sector, particularly in the emerging skill sets identified in this report, and therefore, off-the-job training strongly coupled with on-the-job application is very important.

Specialisation in a 'cluster' of appropriate skills relevant to local areas and specific industries must be provided.

## **Study 6: INFORMATION PAPER What motivates people to do higher level training? September 2004 FarmBis**

### **Helen Grenfell**

The objective of the survey was to elicit some qualitative analysis of participants who have done higher level training under FarmBis. Twelve participants of the three Rural Company Directors courses run April and September 2002 and June 2004 and the Executive Development Program for Primary Producers run September 2003 were surveyed by telephone.

Q5 What future activities are you planning? Do you have any ideas of their future training needs?

92% answered "Yes" that they had future training activities planned as follows.

- Quality Assurance training.
- Off farm investment, time management.
- More computing courses for the family nearing retirement.
- A range of courses to train next generation. Need direct management skill for business, not at the corporate governance level but at lower level.
- Basic marketing, business planning. Help to understand finance and maximising this resource called finance.
- More human resources and managing employees and working as teams.
- Succession planning.
- Stock market investment course
- Computer and management skills.
- Farm Business Plan.

**Study 7: Industry Skills Report Agri-Food Industries. June 2006 AgriFood Industry Skills Council  
Department of Education, Science & Training**

The Agri-Food Skills Council was formed in 2004 as one of the 10 industry skills councils representing enterprises and workers across the spectrum of Australian industries. The aim is for the council to become a cornerstone of industry-driven vocational and technical education and training to strengthen the capacity to fully engage the Agri-food industry at all levels across the food, beverages and pharmaceuticals, meat, seafood, rural and related industries.

A main task of the council has been to undertake reviews of existing Training Packages eg Review of Rural Production Training Package RTE 03 and Review of Amenity Horticulture Training Package RTF03

Small businesses represent a significant part of the industry and are considered the backbone of both the agrifood industry and the wider community. In the face of rapid technological change and pressure to increase productivity, it is considered that these small operators need to develop innovative business management techniques through training. In a predominantly regionally based industry, this will require ready access to flexible learning solutions such as e-learning.

Specific needs identified in rural industries include:

- business management skills
- leadership skills
- loss of young people from the regions

Without better business managers and succession planning, the agrifood industry will lose the competitive edge as older workers leave the industry with no initiatives in place to develop new entrants.

In a global market, competitors with skills in international business tend to have comparative advantage. The lack of such skills (eg the inability to select and manage a portfolio of business opportunities) in the agrifood industry makes the industry less competitive.

The need for skills in business management is not confined to the small business end of the industry. Across the industry, managers with skills in marketing, production costing, and communications are needed. This issue also places greater emphasis on effective succession-planning.

This has implications for work practices and the need for workers to be skilled in information technology.

- Develop targeted marketing and recruitment campaigns to attract more women into the industry and provide networking opportunities for females in the industry.
- Develop skills in international business management, a culture of business to business collaboration on issues and opportunities, and share information on latest technology.
- Implement mentoring partnerships to facilitate the transfer of skills and corporate knowledge to new and existing employees on how to meet consumer and customer demands.

#### **Study 8. A Review of People Development in the Australian Fishing Industry. A report prepared for the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) April 2006**

**Graham Evans and Ivan Johnstone CIT Solutions Pty Ltd**

The FRDC is now seeking to take a more strategic approach to funding its people development program to ensure that its investments are closely aligned with broader industry priorities and needs. A more strategic approach will assist the creation of a learning culture within the industry so that FRDC investments will encourage a broader interest in learning and development beyond the immediate funding recipients.

An effective people development program will benefit from a move to a strategy-based (rather than a project-based) approach to funding. This approach is underpinned by endorsement of an operational plan that clearly identifies broad objectives (or challenges) and action strategies that will determine funding priorities. Projects may be initiated by the FRDC, or proposed by external stakeholders, that will support the achievement of the strategies. Similarly, all FRDC research and development projects should contain a discrete people development component to ensure that the project has identified a clear strategy for building capability to apply the outcomes.

The specific recommendations pertaining to this project are listed below:

- That the FRDC seek to build close and continuing relationships with key stakeholders in the VET sector through cross-representation on committees and working groups
- That the FRDC give a priority within its people development program in the commercial sector to building collaborative business relationships in the supply chain. It should focus on regional initiatives such as development of teams and networks to address local and regional initiatives; development of mentors and champions to drive these regional initiatives; conduct of additional innovative pilots of cooperative ventures across other sectors.

- That the FRDC direct its people development investment within the higher education sector in a more strategic way to address market failure and skills shortages. For example, the FRDC could promote post-graduate scholarships directly to undergraduates in particular disciplines that are judged to be in demand by industry or government; seek membership of course advisory groups at particular universities to influence undergraduate offerings.
- That the FRDC review its current investment in national leadership development in view of a more regional focus; the selection processes used to provide sponsorship, to ensure participants have a demonstrated commitment to leadership at the local/regional level; the outcomes of the investment, in terms of performance in post-program leadership roles; a more comprehensive approach to national leadership development that may include mentoring at the local level prior to a national role; structured leadership development programs; post-program activities to provide opportunities for ongoing application of knowledge and skills.
- That the FRDC redirect its leadership development program to support capacity building at the local and regional level to identify and address real problems and issues. In doing so, the FRDC should broaden its support for leadership development to include development of toolboxes and other resources to facilitate local delivery; team-based approaches to leadership, including within and across sectors and the supply chain.
- That the FRDC build capability to develop and manage a people development operational plan through engaging an expert project manager to oversight the day-to-day activity, for at least 2-3 years; overseeing the activity within an existing FRDC business unit; professional development of existing FRDC staff over time through involvement with the project manager and other relevant strategies.
- That the FRDC manage its investments in people development through a “strategy-based” approach, rather than a reliance on one-off project proposals that may be subject to annual funding rounds

**Study 9 FarmBis Survey Final report for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia. September 2002  
Prepared by Sue Kilpatrick & John Guenther Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia  
(CRLRA) University of Tasmania**

Of all the training areas, people management emerged as the main priority for all regions across all commodities. Other priorities were marketing, general business management and financial management.

People management training was demanded most at an advanced level while marketing was needed mainly at a basic level and general business management was needed at both or all levels of training.

Specific skills demanded were in:

- People management: Communication and leadership
- Financial management: Risk management and financial statements
- General business management: Quality assurance and strategic planning
- Marketing: Market access and marketing in general.

While the main training area identified as a need in the needs analysis survey was people management, the major participation area was production management.

**Study 10 The education and training needs of vegetable growers, with particular reference to the EnviroVeg program. May 2007**

**Report prepared for AUSVEG by Judith Nettleingham**

Responses indicated the following areas of need:

- General business administration
- Computer and software use (e.g agriculture computer software), bookkeeping and farm record keeping
- Financial management
- Financial planning
- Profitability
- Labour and people management
- Balancing on-farm work and farm business management work
- Bringing new ideas and customs into a family business

## Study 11 Training needs analysis of Western Australian greenhouse growers

### Report prepared by ARID Consulting October 2007

This project was undertaken to identify learning that would make the Greenhouse Grower group more effective and efficient. As part of this project, suggested training priorities and alternative methods of delivery were identified and recommended. The report examines the learning and development needs of individuals, and the association as a whole, to perform effectively. The aim is to ensure that training addresses existing issues, is tailored to the organisational needs and objectives, and is delivered in an effective and cost efficient manner.

Priority for training was:

- Understanding the need for investing time and resources into market development and strategies
- Understanding markets and the growers 'place' and an individual grower's role in the market place
- Understanding the use of product recognition and labeling
- Negotiating with buyers for on price, quantity and quality (specifically tailored for the industry)
- Employing staff
- Training that examine efficiencies, motivation and retention of staff within the current labour market
- Specific guidelines for the process of dismissing staff (casual, part time or fulltime)
- Understanding the legal requirement of employing staff and the new workplace laws
- Understanding Occupational Health & Safety legislation and legal requirements
- Analytical knowledge and skills on how to view the bigger picture and think laterally about their enterprise
- Knowledge and skills on understanding and managing change to help their businesses to evolve and remain viable
- Analytical skills to review business operations, setting goals within the business and a planning process to achieve goals
- Investing in young people within the industry
- Developing industry leaders
- Developing technical skills and research abilities

A range of learning and development opportunities were identified as suiting the different learning styles of growers. These include:

- Guest speakers – from within the industry; from an associated industry or a recognised expert
- Study groups or tours - include state, interstate and perhaps international tours
- Exchange programs with interstate and international growers
- Accredited training through registered training organisations for business management, financial management, computing skills.
- Informal gatherings to develop rapport and relationship building within the Greenhouse Growers Association

## Appendix 7 Consultation meetings for project

Date	Name	Organisation	Venue
12-Jun	Jo Eady	Rural Scope	Moorooka
	Jan Davis	Growcom	Fortitude Valley
18-Jun	Jim Turley; Executive Officer	vegetables WA	Perth
19-Jun	Maureen Dobra	Loose Lettuce Coy	Perth
	Jim Trandos	Board AUSVEG	Perth
20-Jun	Kay Bodman; Denise Hamilton	FarmBis WA	Perth
	Col Holt; Deb Rice	ARID Consulting	Perth
	David Anderson	Pres vegetables WA	Perth
	Paul Humble	Chairman WA Hydroponics & Greenhouse Growers	Perth
	Denise Ellement	Chair L & PD Advisory Group	Perth
25-Jun	Arthur Blewitt	Agri-Foods Industry Skills Council	Canberra
	Kris Newton	HAC	Canberra
	Sally Oatey; Linda Quinn	DAFF	Canberra
	Andrew Wilsmore	NFF	Canberra
26-Jun	John MacKenzie	Cooperative Centre for Capacity Building	Canberra
	Ivan Johnstone	Canberra Institute of Tech	Canberra
	Andrew MacDonald; Kate Taysavang; Dane Roberts ; Terry Walker	DAFF; FarmBis	Canberra
03-Jul	L & PD Advosory Group	HAL	Sydney
05-Jul	Tony Imeson; Tom Schreurs; Patrick Ulloa	Vegetable Growers Assoc Victoria	Melbourne
16-Jul	Di Edelman; Greg Crossan	Rural Labour & Skilling QDPI	Brisbane
20-Jul	Simon Powell	IDO Growcom	Brisbane
23-Jul	Interview panel	Nuffield Scholarships	Brisbane
24-Jul	Luke Jewell	NSW Farmers	Sydney
24-Jul	Richard Stephens	HAL	Sydney
25-Jul	Lis Blandamer	Victorian Farmers Federation	Melbourne
	Cheryl Toffolon	Vegetable Growers Association Victoria	Werribee
26-Jul	Deborah Corrigan	Vegetable Growers Association Victoria	Cranbourne
	Executive Committee	Vegetable Growers Association Victoria	Melbourne
01-Aug	Cora Baille	Lincoln University NZ	Christchurch
02-Aug	Sue Pickering	Horticulture New Zealand	Christchurch
10-Aug	Paul Ziebarth	Growcom	Brisbane
14-Aug	David Addison	Grower	Devonport Tas
	Ian Young	Ausveg	Devonport Tas
15-Aug	Phillip Beswick	McCain's Processing Committee	Sister's Creek Tas
	Daryl Lohrey	McCain's Processing Committee	Sister's Creek Tas
	Anthony Brandsema	Australian Greenhouse Growers Association	Turner's Beach Tas
	Richard Bovill	Chairman AVIDG	Devonport Tas
16-Aug	Brian Bonde	Imm Past President AFGA Vegetable Council	Devonport Tas
	Buz Green	Chief Executive Serv-Ag	Devonport Tas
22-Aug	Bob Ward	Rural Skills Australia	Brisbane
29-Aug	Greg Crossan	QDPI&F	Brisbane
4-Sep	John & Steve Newman	Grower	South Australia
	John Cranwell	Grower	South Australia
5-Sep	Matt Rogerson/ Tony Burfield	Arris/ SARDI	South Australia

	Frank Musolino	Grower	South Australia
	Dino Musolino	Grower	South Australia
	Danny Deleso	Grower	South Australia
	Peter DeLacy	Training Manager, Virginia Hort Co	South Australia
6-Sep	Graeme & John Pitchford	Grower	South Australia
10-Sep	Clinton McGrath	QDPI&F	Stanthorpe, Qld
10-Sep	Andrew Dick/ Tim Mason	AFFCO/ Westpac	Stanthorpe, Qld
11-Sep	Sam Collins/ John Smith	AIM Qld	Brisbane
12-Sep	John Said	Grower/ Packer	Werribee Vic
	Tony Russell/ Alma Reynolds	APAL	Melbourne
	Potato IAC	HAL	Melbourne
13-Sep	Graeme Smith	AHGA	Melbourne
14-Sep	David DePaoli	Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers	Bundaberg
	Matt Dagan	Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers	Bundaberg
19-Sep	Leadership & People Development Advisory Group	HAL	Sydney
20-Sep	Joe Elbustani	Grower	Sydney
	Eddie Galea	Grower	Sydney
	Mario Muscat	Grower	Sydney
	Sydney Markets	Traders/ Trader Growers	Sydney