

Final Report

Green Industry Growing Leaders Program

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Green Industry Growing Leaders Program MT16002

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Summary

The Right Mind International Pty Ltd (TRM) conducted the Green Industry Growing Leaders Program from 2017 to 2019 and this program has now concluded under the terms of the current funding arrangements. The program successfully achieved the objective of identifying people from the Australian nursery and turf industries, who were motivated to further develop their leadership skills.

The overarching aim of this project was to:

1. Develop the leadership capacity of a core group of diverse participants from across the nursery and turf industry supply chain and build their capability to transform the Australian nursery and turf industries through vision, engagement, action and leadership; and
2. Enable positive exposure of the industries and better networked industries through the active involvement and participation of stakeholders from across the supply chain and beyond via project activities¹. [Request For Tender (RFT)]

The key activities were:

1. Two by 2-day leadership forums which included the fundamentals of good leadership (for example, communications, leadership styles, leading teams, managing conflict and three personal assessments: a behavioural styles instrument test, an emotional intelligence ability test and a fitness assessment). Also included was a group “secret mission” assignment that was team building and had a philanthropic component;
2. A workplace project, signed off by the participant manager;
3. One-on-one coaching with the program leaders;
4. Weekly emails with short reads or videos;
5. Participation in webinars;
6. Networking with their “buddy”; and
7. Post-program involvement with an industry event or program profiling.

Hort Innovation desired outcomes were (as per RFT):

1. Increased demand from levy payers for participation in the program.
2. Increased participation by graduates in on-going and relevant industry leadership programs following completion of the Growing Leaders Program.
3. An increased pool of industry leaders from across the supply chain with the skills and training to take on leadership roles in their own business and across the industry.

Increased demand for industry training and education initiatives outside of this program via linkages with the broader nursery and turf industry education and training initiative and the Hort Innovation Leadership and People Development strategic co-investment fund.

Whilst the success of some of the program outcomes will become evident beyond the reporting period, we can confidently state graduates of the program are already helping Hort Innovation realise these outcomes.

1. **Increased demand.** In each of the three years, applications exceeded the number of placements available and those completing the program exceeded Hort Innovation targets. In total, there were 135 requests for application forms, 121 submitted applications of which 102 were fully complete and thus eligible for evaluation for 60 places. Graduates exceeded Hort Innovation targets of 12 per year.
2. **Increased quality of leaders applying.** The overall calibre of industry applicants increased over the program duration. Whilst a subjective assessment, feedback from participants internally to their organisations and interviews via “Your Levy at work, etc.” contributed to making the program more attractive to higher calibre industry participants.

¹ It should be noted that Hort Innovation removed the value chain tours and industry guests due to budget constraints which reduced the ability of the program to meet this objective.

3. **Industry awareness.** The marketing campaigns undoubtedly increased awareness of the program. CoxInall's "Your Levy @ Work" was particularly successful for the Nursey industry and NxGEN presentations by The Right Mind worked exceptionally well for the Turf industry. Subsequent presentations by graduates – either in the form of personal interviews in e-news, at industry events and to their own workforces continued the momentum.
4. **Increased understanding of leadership issues.** Applicants were hungry for an increased understanding in this area. When asked in the application form what areas of improvement was desired, different leadership styles, communication and conflict management all ranked in the Top 5 in all intakes.
5. **Increase in pool of skilled leaders.** Intakes in each year exceeding Hort Innovation's minimum numbers indicate a desire to increase skills. Graduates of the program have contributed significantly to a wide range of industry events. More importantly, they are applying their skills within their associations: **five** of the graduates have taken up positions on their industry boards.
6. **Increased demand for industry training.** TRM have had 5 nursery industry participants in their public leadership programs who enrolled outside of this program and we are in the process of negotiating internal training with four organisations who had participants in the program. Additionally, the NGINA commissioned TRM to conduct a one-day Governance Program for their Board and other selected participants. TA has again invited Jill Rigney to be part of their on-going leadership development for Women in Turf in 2020.

Recommendations

Leadership and Front-line Management

a. Continued investment in leadership training

This program demonstrated solid demand for this type of training within the nursery and turf industries. The data provided on page 15 clearly illustrates the nursery and turf sectors have outstripped other industry sectors in interest and enrolments in their first three years.

The nursery industry has identified training and development as a significant priority. This is documented in the Nursery Strategic Investment Plan (2017-2021)², and was recommended in the recent Nursery Industry Career Path Development Strategy³ that the industry have "continued support and promote participation in established leadership and development initiatives, e.g. Green Industry Growing Leaders Program, Masterclass in Horticultural Business."

b. Invest in multi-sector training

Whilst, there is a belief in many industries that singular sector training is best, it may not be the most cost-effective. This program has proved that two sectors (nursery and turf) benefited significantly through a combined program, with no adverse impacts. Traditionally, levy funded programs have limited intakes to around 20 participants (perhaps on the basis of dollar commitment). We see no evidence limiting the experience and personal growth objectives through conducting multi-sector and larger programs, both are extremely effective (both from a group dynamic and cost perspective). It is a consideration we strongly recommend.

c. Front-line leadership

Further, on the basis of participant feedback and follow-up during the program, we recommend support for shorter 1-2-day programs that fits the needs for supervisors and team leaders. That is, a program based on communication, managing difficult conversations and keeping the team aligned with organisational

² Hort Innovation (2017,) *Nursery Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021*.

³ RMCG (April 2019), *Nursery Industry Career Path Development Strategy*.

performance goals. Front-line leadership⁴ (or similar) is the recommended program to provide a less intensive option which supports continued growth in the pool of skilled leaders.

2. Monitoring and follow-up

a. Organisations

The organisations who have invested in the development of their leaders should be encouraged to continue with their staff development. In particular:

- i. The nursery and turf industry's wider industry training and education initiatives; and
- ii. Leadership based organisations across Australia who can provide ongoing opportunities to participants following graduation (eg. The Australian Rural Leadership Program).

b. Graduates

- i. Formation of a graduate's network or alumni to support their continued development; and
- ii. Encouragement of graduates Hort Innovation's Leadership and People Development Strategic Co-investment Fund.

(NOTE: TRM will offer a commercial alumni program in 2020 to gauge support.)

Keywords

Nursery industry; turf industry; Green Industry Growing Leaders; professional development; leadership; communication styles; leading teams; managing conflict; networking; next generation.

⁴ TRM's Front-line Leadership Program has been delivered to 120 participants in 2019 alone. It is substantially different to Front-Line Management.

Introduction

Combined, the Nursery and Turf industries and their respective supply chains are a significant contributor to the Australian horticultural sector. These two industries are made up of around 2,000 businesses with nearly 25,000 employees.

Despite the considerable size of the industry, providing a career path and upskilling staff is difficult. As stated in the recent RCMG report, *“Tertiary training is limited and has been reducing. There is a national trend of declining enrolment and graduation in higher education qualifications across all of agriculture and horticulture, at both a vocational and university level.”*⁵

One of the Nursery Industry’s Strategic Investment Plan (2012-2016) key objectives was Capacity building to ensure the whole industry has access to appropriately trained human resources. This specific program grew out of recommendations from the Nursery Industry’s Young Leader Development Program (NY13017). The recommendations from this project included:

1. Continue with activities to promote the scope of nursery industry and position the nursery industry as a career of choice; and
2. Continue to engage future leaders in an annual/biannual forum to provide input into leadership groups and decision makers and to leverage the forum as a succession planning channel in the nursery industry.

Hort Innovation considered there was considerable scope to move beyond “young leaders” and focus on developing leadership from across the industry supply chain to address the above recommendations. The Australian Turf industry has historically invested in young leaders through its NxGEN and this program was seen as a fitting progression for continuing investment in leadership development.

This Green Industry Growing Leaders Program is the first significant levy funded leadership program for both the Nursery and Turf industries and is one of the few levy funded programs that are not single industry. As such, it provides a good basis for evaluating ways and means of having more cost-effective programs without compromising the value of outcomes.

Adjustments to the RFT

After discussions with Hort Innovation, there was a variation to the budget and it was agreed the following items would be dropped from the program: Webinars, Industry and Value-chain tours and Guest attendees. However, TRM elected to continue to offer the webinars and invite a smaller number of guests, including panellists to the programs.

⁵ RCMG (April 2019), p 6.

Methodology

Getting started

1. **Establishing an advisory group.** This was not mandatory: however, the invitation was accepted and in year 1 this comprised members from NGIA, Turf Australia (TA) and Hort Innovation. Years two and three, on the suggestion of (TA), the group was expanded to include a Nursery and Turf participants from the first year's program. These graduates were very active and contributed well to the group. The objectives were:
 - a. Establish the criteria for participant selection;
 - b. Approve the final participant selection;
 - c. Provide updates post each residential meeting; and
 - d. Seek input and suggestions on what could be better.
2. **Marketing and networking.** In the first year the time between signing the contract and having the first residential was very tight. Presentations were made to both SIAPs and telephone contact was made with all national and state industry representatives. Cox Inall prepared two short video interviews with Jill Rigney (Co-presenter of the program) which were widely distributed by both sector networks. TRM presented in person to both SIAP meetings to provide an opportunity for members to meet the presenters face-to-face and to have an opportunity for input into the program content.

TRM personally telephoned and/or emailed a significant number of key influencers within both industries to ensure uptake in Year 1. Finally, direct emails from TRM's own database were made.

In Years 2 and 3, a more structured marketing campaign was developed with industry associations and Cox Inall.

3. **Recruiting participants.** In keeping with TRM's efficiency parameters, the registration process was completely on-line. The registration steps were:
 - a. Enquiries were directed to TRM and interested persons provided with an invitation to complete the registration form;
 - b. Applying. The registration form was detailed and provided very sound background information on those applying; and
 - c. Evaluation. Using an agreed process, the candidates were ranked and the results (including full application forms) were emailed to the Advisory Group and the final participant list confirmed. Only fully completed applications were evaluated and selections made solely on the basis of the submitted application. Personal standing in industry, etc. were not considered.
4. **Logistics.** The logistical processes that were employed to ensure the program was successful included:
 - a. Venue. Securing venues for the residential meeting was a top priority;
 - b. Materials. All participants received a full colour high quality manual and a session logbook. Additional group activity objects were prepared for each meeting;
 - c. On-line intranet. Each applicant was provided with log-in details for duration of the meeting with the participants having their own section. The facility gave access to all materials used in the program enabled sections where coaching calls could be booked and progress reports, etc. uploaded; and
 - d. Between meeting support. Setting up webinar platform, weekly email lists, etc.

The Program

The program was based on The Right Mind's very successful Rural Leader's Bootcamp⁶ to incorporate timing and other factors as per Hort Innovation's Request for Tender.



The program is delivered within the framework shown here and participants expand the knowledge and skills each of these four stages. Each stage is supported by a set of principles and practical tools to enable maximisation of benefits to each participant on completion of the program.

The core components of the learning modules are outlined below:

1. Leading self

Example components were:

- Appreciating different leadership styles;
- Understanding the fundamentals of good communication;
- Learning the importance of good emotional management; and
- Learning the power of managing the four forms of energy.

2. Leading others

Example components were:

- Learning how to adapt to different behavioural styles;
- Learning to appreciate another's point of view;
- Structuring conversations to maximise mutual gains; and
- Managing difficult conversations.

3. Leading the organisation

Example components were:

- Learning the principles of scenario and strategic planning and knowing the difference;
- Understanding the Performance Optimisation⁷ model;
- Understanding the Power of Values vs Unwritten Ground Rules; and
- Learning how to apply Values-Based Correction.

4. Leading the industry

Example components were:

- How to be an influencer;
- How to get the message out without being a slave to social media; and
- Taking responsibility to the direction and shape of your industry.

⁶ This program was a finalist in the Australian Institute of Training and Development's *Australian Learning Innovation* category.

⁷ A Right Mind Business and Organisational model and tools to improve outcome performance.

Program activities

Pre-residential meeting No 1

Prior to this meeting, participants completed two on-line instrument tests: 1) a DISC behavioural profile and 2) the MSCEIT Emotional Intelligence assessment. Additionally, they were given details about what a workplace project entails (with a working example) and requested to come to the program having discussed with their immediate supervisor what areas of leadership and/or management development they wished to see in their participant that would: a) benefit them personally, and b) have a positive impact on overall performance of their organisation.

Residential meeting No 1

The first 2-day residential meeting was designed with the following objectives:

1. Provide participants with an understanding of the breadth and scope of “leadership”⁸;
2. Provide a solid framework and tools for communication;
3. Give constructive feedback on the purpose and outcomes of the two instrument tests;
4. Have participants observe how they behave under stress and tiredness;
5. Have participants complete a personal fitness and health assessment; and
6. Provide some practical “take-home” tools that can be utilised in the workplace.

Between residential 1 and 2

The core activities expected of participants were:

1. Develop and submit their own “purpose plan”⁹;
2. Submission of their workplace project which has been signed off by their immediate manager;
3. Progress their teams “secret mission”¹⁰;
4. Book (on-line) for their one-on-one coaching call/s;
5. Register and participate in the webinars programmed; and
6. Provide responses (where requested) to weekly messages (only a selection of the weekly messages required this).

Manager’s follow-up:

1. An email outlining the benefits of supporting their participant in the project; and
2. An email inviting them to sit in on the lunch-time webinars.

Residential meeting No 2

The core objectives of this 2-day meeting were:

1. Deeply reflect on the degree they were successful in doing what they said they were going to do;
2. Hear and give constructive feedback on each other’s workplace project;
3. Develop plans to manage difficult conversations; and
4. Set the framework for “stepping up”: promoting the program, giving something back to the industry or getting more involved in their industry.

Post the final residential meeting

1. On completion of Years 1 and 2, two short surveys were sent to:
 - a. Managers of participants in the program; and
 - b. Industry stakeholders (employees of industry associations and committee members) on awareness of the program, ways to help them promote the program, key areas they felt were missing in leadership development.
2. All graduates received a follow-up on their industry engagement projects.

⁸ Delivered through structured learning and “Q&A” style interviews with Guests at each residential;

⁹ A unique TRM document that guides participants in establishing “what matters most” to them and steps to progress the actualisation of their personal self.

¹⁰ The details of this have been kept remarkably confidential by all participants in our programs over the years.

Outputs

1. Conduct of three leadership programs

a. Increased awareness of the program

This was achieved through:

1. Media:
 - a. Video's produced explaining the program, video interviews with participants during and post the program; and
 - b. Media posts in 'Your Levy @ Work', on national and state industry websites, industry and organisational social media pages and printed press.
2. Direct surveys and or contact:
 - a. Industry stakeholder. Survey Monkey surveys post Year1 and Year 2 to bring the program to the attention of city and regional stakeholders; and
 - b. Direct email to all Board Members of the two industries outlining the program and benefits.
3. Advisory group:
 - a. Regular tele-links on progress and ideas for getting the message out.

b. Registration and selection criteria

1. On-line registration form:
 - a. Selection criteria discussed with Hort Innovation and Advisory Group; and
 - b. Registration form drafted and circulated to Advisory Group and Hort Innovation for feedback.
2. Participant selection:
 - a. Recommendations made to Advisory Group.

c. Leadership training material

1. Manual:
 - a. Professional full-colour 258-page A4 manual and 14-page personal action planner;
 - b. On-line copies of above; and
 - c. A 20-page facilitator guide.
2. On-line web portal (through and access the wider group reference library):
 - a. Each intake having their own on-line web portal for communications, uploading of their projects and board papers;
 - b. Access to the wider group's reference library (short articles, etc.); and
 - c. Video links to videos used in the program.
3. Webinars:
 - a. On-line presentation of 4-5 webinars per program;
 - b. Copies on-line with link sent to all participants; and
 - c. Personal email to all participant managers inviting them to join the webinars.

d. Workplace projects, "secret mission" projects and industry exposure

1. 50 workplace projects completed and presented to group;
2. 12 secret mission projects completed with considerable benefits to teams' chosen charity; and
3. At least 40 worthwhile industry exposure projects¹¹.

¹¹ There could be more – this number accounts for the projects we could validate with reasonable confidence.

2. Meeting awareness, enrolment and graduation targets

a. Enrolment

Table 1 summarises the initial request through to fully completed applications.

Awareness

The marketing campaign was very successful in attracting interest in the program. It was focused, personalised and had great support from Cox Inall. This was particularly pleasing given the very short timeframe in Year 1.

The 183 requests for application forms demonstrates the program generated substantive interest with the industry and, as indicated in Table 8 page 6, organisations were keen to pass this information on to their staff.

Table 1: Applications by year			
	Requests for application form	Applications received	Applications fully completed ¹
2017	47	37	36
2018 ²	89	45	33
2019	47	41	37
Total	183	123	106
¹ Only fully completed applications were assessed for admission.			
² 2018 – 21 requests were unopened.			

Whilst there is scant empirical evidence, these numbers alone indicate interest equal to any other industry funded leadership program. For example, the vegetable industry leadership program has been running for 10 years and the various reporting documents indicate a total of 160 applications for the period.

b. Graduations compared to commencement

All three years accepted 20 participants to start. The Hort Innovations targets against actuals are summarised in Table 2. As indicated in this table, the program exceeded the targets set.

Table 2: Graduations to commencement					
	Commenced		Graduated		
	HI Target	Actual	HI Target	Actual	
				No	%
2017	15	18	12	13	72%
2018	15	20	12	18	90%
2019	15	20	12	19	95%
Total	45	58	36	50	86%
NOTES: Year 1. Two accepted participants had unpreventable reasons precluding their commencement of the program. Both reapplied for the following year and graduated. Post Res. 1, one failed to have any engagement, one attended Res. 2, however failed to complete the two-days. Three were unable to attend for a range of reasons. Year 2. One participant did not engage at post residential 1 and the second had a change of jobs and was unable to attend. Year 3, One participant was unable to attend meeting 2 due to a family funeral however completed the workplace project via video links and was provided feedback by the group. The last training component was also completed via webinar with the facilitators. The other, was overseas, however no attempt was made to complete externally.					

- Commencements **exceeded** Hort Innovation targets by 29%;
- Graduations **exceeded** Hort Innovation targets by 39%; and
- 86% of those commencing the program graduated.

These graduation statistics stand well against other industry funded programs. For example, Cotton Australia has conducted the Australian Future Cotton Leaders Program with intakes of 10-15 biannually since 2007. The program has 61 graduates to 2015 (latest program report not in). The vegetable industry leadership program has been operating for 10 years had 13 participants in Year 1 with 12 graduates. In the last funded round (2015-2108) the vegetable industry program had 50 participants graduate: the same number as this program.

3. Understanding the applicant/participant

a. Sector the applicants came from

As to be expected, applications were dominated by the nursery sector. Table 3, summarises the sectors identified by the. None-the-less, it was disappointing that this first round was unable to attract the number of supply chain partners hoped for in the program. It should be noted that, on the recommendation of the Advisory Group, there were two supply chain partner applications that were rejected due to poor quality (they were completed applications).

Table 3: Sector the applicants came from			
	2017	2018	2019
Nursery industry employee/owner	62%	55%	80%
Turf industry employee/owner	27%	33%	20%
Supply chain partner	5%	9%	0%
Extension/research ¹	5%	3%	0%
¹ Question asked to see if this sector of the industry were attracted to the program. They were allocated to Supply Chain Partner category.			

The applicants came predominately from Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. A small number of nursery sector applicants came from South Australia. NT and WA had applicants from the Turf sector only.

Table 4: Levy vs supply chain applicants			
	2017	2018	2019
Applicants			
-Nursery levy:	22	19	29
-Nursery supply chain partner	2	3	0
-Turf levy	9	9	7
-Turf supply chain partner	3	2	0
Total	36	33	36
Participants			
-Nursery levy:	13	14	15
-Nursery supply chain partner	2	1	0
-Turf levy ¹	2	4	5
-Turf supply chain partner	1	1	0
Total	18	20	20
Notes: ¹ 2018. Two turf levy payers had to withdraw just prior to commencement of the program and could not be replaced.			

b. Length of time applicants have been in the industry

All applicants were asked how long they have been in their particular industry. The data in Table 5 has been drawn from all completed application forms. Table 5, indicates the majority of applicants have more than 10 years' experience or between one and 4 years.

Table 5: Length of time applicants have been in the industry			
	2017	2018	2019
Less than one year	0%	3%	3%
One year and less than 5 years	32%	42%	35%
5 years and less than 10 years	24%	24%	18%
10 or more years	43%	30%	45%

c. Training history of the applicants

Table 6 summarises what training the applicants have undertaken. Many have undertaken more than one training program, with a number doing multiple Cert programs at the same level (i.e. Cert III or Cert IV). The last two intakes (2018 and 2019) indicate higher number of applicants with a higher-level Cert or Diploma/Degree qualification.

Table 6: Training history of applicants			
	2017	2018	2019
Nil	35%	9%	20%
In-house seminars, misc. short courses	24%	9%	33%
NxGEN	5%	30%	-
Cert II	-	6%	3%
Cert III/IV	19%	18%	61%
Diploma/Degree	8%	48%	24%
Diploma/Degree incomplete	8%	6%	5%
Higher Diploma/Degree	-	3%	8%

There was close correlation between the overall training history all applicants versus that of those selected as participants in the program (as summarised in Table 7).

Table 7: Training history of participants

	2017	2018	2019
Nil	35%	9%	7%
In-house seminars, misc. short courses	30%	13%	28%
NxGEN	-	-	-
Cert II	-	13%	4%
Cert III/IV	15%	26%	32%
Diploma/Degree	10%	21%	18%
Diploma/Degree incomplete	10%	17%	7%
Higher Diploma/Degree	-	-	4%

d. How the applicants heard about the program

The application form requested applicants indicate the source of their information about the program. Despite there being variances in the years, overwhelmingly the information was dominated by recommendations from participants own organisations. In most cases, this was either their manager or a colleague who had participated in an earlier program. E-news was the second most likely source of information, and anecdotally, the “stories” (see page 13) generated considerable interest. The other category was largely a direct call from TRM, an association employee direct contact or a relative recommending the program.

Table 8: How the applicants heard about the program

	2017	2018	2019
My industry newsletter	24%	0%	10%
Conference/Workshop/Field day	5%	3%	3%
Industry website	0%	6%	0%
Other (please specify)	19%	18%	5%
My industry e-news	19%	27%	15%
My organisation (Manager/HR/Colleague/Internal memo/etc.)	51%	42%	68%

e. Participant average age and sex

Of those selected for the program their age and sex profiles are indicated below. As indicated elsewhere in this document, selection was based on the quality of the written application only. No positive discrimination was made based on age, sex, locality, etc.

Table 9: Participant male:female ratio

	a. Males	b. Females	c. Ratio (M:F)
2017	14	6	2.3
2018	12	8	1.5
2019	14	6	2.3

Participants' average age in each year of the program have been in the low 30s with just under 50 percent of all participants in the program in the 26-35 age bracket.

Table 10: Age of participants

Age group	2017	2018	2019
18 -25	12.5%	35%	25%
26-35	37.5%	60%	25%
36-45	37.5%	5%	35%
46+	12.5%	-	15%
Participant average age	33	29	34

f. Topics of most interest to applicants

Applicants were requested to list *“what skill/knowledge they would to develop/obtain in order to be a better leader”*. This was deliberately an open-ended question to avoid a “tick and flick” which can occur when selecting from a list. The answers were grouped according to key words and the topics collated to represent the top 80% nominated in each year of the program. The results are illustrated in Table 11. In each year three categories: Different leadership styles, Personal communication and Time management/setting priorities were ranked as important by in excess of 50 percent of the applicants.

Table 11: Topics of most interest to the applicants

	2017	2018	2019
Different leadership styles	16%	12%	20%
Personal communication styles	35%	20%	19%
Time management/Setting priorities	9%	21%	17%
Conflict resolution/Negotiation	5%	5%	10%
New ideas	-	-	6%
Different behavioural styles	5%	8%	8%
Motivational skills	9%	17%	-

g. Topics industry employees and industry stakeholders felt important

At the conclusion of the first year of the program two surveys were undertaken. These were:

1. Employees at national and state level of both the nursery and turf industries.
2. Stakeholders in both industries. These represented board and committee members.

The invitation was sent to 88 industry employees or representatives. The results are summarised in Table 13.

Table 12: Employee and stakeholder survey					
	No in survey	Surveys opened	Response rate	Surveys completed	Completed Response Rate
Industry Employees	25	11	44%	10	40%
Committee Members	63	16	25%	10	16%

The response rate from industry employees was considered very high whilst the response rate from committee members was above expectations (we expect in this type of survey around 10% response rate).

Each group was asked the question: ***"how important do you believe the following topics are for the Growing Leaders Program?"*** and the results are summarised in Table 13.

As a result of this survey, the analytical component of the program was increased.

Table 13: Employee and stakeholder survey			
Industry employees	Rank ¹	Committee members	Rank
Leading teams	5.7	Analytical skills	5.2
Goal setting	5.5	Goal setting	5
Time management	5.5	Motivation skills	5
Analytical skills	5.2	Strategic planning	5
Change management	5.2	Time management	4.9
Conflict resolution/Negotiation	5.2	Conflict resolution/Negotiation	4.7
Motivation skills	5.2	Leading teams	4.6
Different behavioural styles	5.1	Coaching skills	4.6
Different leadership styles	5.1	Leading your industry	4.5
Leading your industry	5.1	Change management	4.4
Strategic planning	5.1	Different leadership styles	4.2
Coaching skills	4.9	Different behavioural styles	3.9

¹A weighted average from Very Important (6) through to Not Important at All (1).

Outcomes

1. How participants valued the program

Successful outcomes start with how satisfied the participants are with the program and if they believe it has value to themselves and the wider industry. Table 14 provides a summary and the trend over the three years of the program. This table clearly indicates that over 90% of the graduates believe the program has highest possible score with respect to value to the industry and use of industry funds.

Table 14: Overall satisfaction with the program and its value			
With respect to you and your industry....			
	a. How valuable has this program been to you personally?	b. How valuable do you believe this program is to the wider industry in developing leadership skills and knowledge?	c. Do you believe this, and similar leadership/management programs are a valuable use of levy funds?
2017	4.6	4.6	4.5
2018	4.9	4.9	4.9
2019	4.9	4.9	4.9
Average response based on: 5=Very Valuable. 1=Little Value.			

2. Capability to articulate into a higher qualification

All the modules in the program have been designed to meet the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) standards. The minimum level is a Cert IV and the majority are Cert V or higher. This enables participants wishing to progress to a higher qualification can do so using some of the material from this program for Recognition of Prior Learning.

3. Immediate impact on participant's organisation

Through engaging in a workplace project that: a) had their manager's approval, and b) had to demonstrate at least one clear leadership principle is an outcome of **DOING LEADERSHIP**. By actively putting into practice a project with a practical objective, participants embed the experiential learning with the intellectual. This process, when combined with the reflective feedback of their peers and trainers, heightens awareness. It should be noted, that not all projects achieved their stated objective, however the learnings were not lessened: indeed, in a number of cases they were significantly enhanced.

4. Stories create awareness

The awareness of this program was augmented significantly by a large number of participants being willing to "tell their story". All of these stories have been self-directed with no support or guidance from the facilitators.

The mediums for the stories included:

1. **Journals and magazines.** Groundswell, Horticulture Journal, Lockyer Valley News, Talk Turf, Turf Australia, Growth Magazine, Sports Turf Association;
2. **E-news and social Media.** Local e-news (nursery and turf), Your Levy @ work; LinkedIn, Facebook (Women in Turf and Lawn Solutions Australia), organisation and personal social media pages;
3. **Industry panels.** eg. NGIV Tree and Shrub, Lockyer Valley Growers;
4. **Presentations to industry leaders.** eg. NGIA, NGIV, NxGen and Hort Innovation;
5. **Presentation to supply chain partners;** and
6. **Involving young people.** Presentations to a number of Schools in Sydney.

5. Influence

Program graduates have “stepped up to the plate” and performed. The outcomes fall into three areas:

1. **Increasing organisational knowledge** to improve performance or culture, create a desire for personal improvement through a better understanding of what s/he got through participation. Some of the participants undertook to progress changes and/or improvements that severely challenged them. Examples of activities undertaken include:
 - a. Assist their teams and/or their immediate direct reports demonstrate leadership through improved accountability;
 - b. Implementing or supporting the implementation of more effective communication through the organisation, including a number of organisations requesting DISC profiles for their staff after completing the program;
 - c. Encouraging their managers and other staff to attend the webinars;
 - d. Requesting (or recommending) their organisation invest in in-house training for staff to further embed the skills and knowledge gained in the program; and
 - e. Implementing steps to change their organisational culture (e.g. Improving respect, reduce bullying, etc.)
2. **Increasing industry awareness.** Examples include:
 - a. Hosting an information day on-site;
 - b. Presenting to their respective industry bodies on the learnings and benefits of the program; and
 - c. Supporting and/or organising industry events, for example NxGEN, Trees and Shrubs, etc.
3. **Industry governance.** Taking on higher leadership with an industry body. On completion of the program, we have very pleased to see the number of graduates stepping up to support their industry. This is outstanding and far exceeded our own expectations. Example include:
 - a. Nursery Industry. Three graduates have taken up positions on their respective state industry bodies (one from each year).
 - b. Turf Industry. Two nursery participants have joined their Turf Australia’ Board: one national and one Turf Queensland.

Monitoring and evaluation

1. Meeting Hort Innovation targets

a. Delivery of the program for 3 years

The program was successfully conducted over the 3 years.

b. Target no of enrolment's and graduates

As indicated Table 2, page 6, both targets were exceeded.

- Commencements exceeded Hort Innovation targets by 29 percent; and
- Graduations exceeded Hort Innovation targets by 39 percent.

c. Levy vs supply chain ratio's

The program was open to support 1/3 of the participants from each sectors supply chain. This target was not met. It was disappointing that more supply chain partners could not be attracted to the program.

2. Participant feedback

a. Effectiveness of the program in enhancing leadership skills

The participants were requested to evaluate the program for its effectiveness in developing the skills and knowledge to be better leaders. The results shown in Table 15, indicate an increasing approval rate in both questions over the three years.

Table 15: Effectiveness of the program in developing leadership skills		
	a. The presenters have increased my understanding of the skills and knowledge needed to improve my leadership skills? 1= Strongly Disagree; 5= Strongly Agree	b. Were the topics taught over the 4 days appropriate in gaining practical skills and knowledge to be a better leader? 1=Little Value 5= Very Valuable
2017	4.8	4.7
2018	4.9	4.9
2019	4.9	5.0

b. Effectiveness of the workplace project

The workplace project has the objective of benefiting the participant's leadership skills through application of a concrete project during the program. It is also designed encourage managers to show leadership in the growth of their staff during the program. As indicated in Table 16, participants ranked engagement with their managers as the least satisfactory.

Table 16: Feedback on the workplace project

	a. Did you find it made you revisit some critical aspects of leadership and /or management?	b. How well did you and your manager engage in the design, implementation and review of your project?	c. Did TRM discuss or assist in the implementation of your project?	d. Has or will the business benefit from the instigation of this project?
2017	4.2	3.5	4.1	4.8
2018	4.6	3.6	3.7	4.4
2019	4.6	3.5	4.1	4.4
Average response based on: 5=Very Valuable. 1=Little Value.				

When managers were surveyed separately, they considered themselves well satisfied with their discussions re a workplace program prior to commitment and their participants commitment to the program, however they were considerably less satisfied with their follow-up and review. Quite a number indicated they would put more effort into this should they have another participant in the program.

Table 17: Manager self-assessment of support

	Self-satisfaction ¹
1. Discussing what you would like them to achieve in their workplace project prior to them making the application.	88%
2. Discussing their commitment to the program.	87%
3. Reviewing their workplace project once they had completed a draft after Meeting 1.	73%
4. Undertaking a post program review with them in what they learnt and achieved.	77%
¹ Weighted response based on Very Well (4) to Poorly (1).	

c. Effectiveness of the webinars

Webinars were included in the Request for Tender, however due to budget constraints they were removed. TRM elected to offer them none-the-less. Selection of webinar topics was made in the first year by asking participants for indications on the first residential feedback sheet. In subsequent years, the group were given the topics and asked if anything else would be of interest. The webinars were scheduled for lunchtime and participants encouraged to “get their lunch and participate. Participants and their Managers were sent dates for each webinar and managers encouraged to sit in. Each year, the number of managers increased, and in some cases, there were quite few other team members sitting in. As one participant said, “I had 4-5 members of my team eating their lunch and sitting in.”

Table 18: Effectiveness of webinars

Of the webinars you participated in (or recordings you requested), please indicate how valuable you found it/them?

2017	a. Essence of Strategic Planning	b. Recap of Communication Principles	c. Values Based Correction	d. Dealing with Difficult People	
	4.3	4.5	4.8	4.3	-
2018	a. Essence of Strategic Planning	b. Recap of Communication Principles	c. Values Based Correction	d. Excellence in Execution	e. Dealing with difficult People
	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.4
2019	a. Scenario Planning/Unc onscious bias	b. Recap of Communication Principles	c. Values Based Correction	d. Excellence in Execution	e. Dealing with difficult People
	4.0	4.6	4.3	3.6	4.7
Average response based on: 5=Very Valuable. 1=Little Value.					

d. Coaching call effectiveness

While all participants were encouraged to participate and use this resource, not all did and their comments reflect this; viz: “I should have used the resource”, “Nil -lack of organisation on my behalf”.

Table 19: Effective of coaching calls

	Did you find the coaching calls beneficial?
2017	4.3
2018	3.8
2019	4.5
Average response based on: 5=Very Valuable. 1=Little Value.	

e. Participant evaluation of the presenters

Effectiveness in any program is in part due to the presenter's skills and knowledge, not solely content. As indicated in Table 20, all ratings were 4.5 or better.

Table 20: Effectiveness of the program presenters					
	a. How would you describe the course presenter's knowledge of the subject matter? 1= Limited; 5= Extensive	b. How did you find the course presenter's style of delivery? 1= Uninteresting; 5= Dynamic	c. Were the concepts, principles and techniques explained in an understandable manner? 1= Seldom; 5= Consistently	d. Did the course presenter invite and encourage Individual and group participation? 1=Seldom; 5= Consistently	e. Did you feel adequately challenged by the content and exercises? 1=Seldom 5= Consistently
2017	4.9	4.4	4.5	4.8	4.7
2018	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.6
2019	5.0	4.8	4.6	4.9	4.9

f. Evaluation of the guest panellists

Each residential meeting had one or two guest panellists¹² where a "Q&A" style discussion was conducted. Two key criteria for selecting the panellists were:

1. First, their own leadership journey and, in particular, how they have continued to invest in higher education. All had undertaken jobs before getting their first Degree/Cert qualification. And three out of the five progressed to completing an MBA¹³. The journeys were important given: a) the lack of recognition and, b)/or opportunity for progression to higher qualifications; and
2. Second, the commitment to supporting their respective industries. All five panellists have been very active in their industry organisation/s with two commencing in NxGen (or equivalent) or Under 35 organisations.

Table 21: Effectiveness of the guest panellists					
	a. Rob Niccol (Sales & Marketing Manager, Australian Native Landscapes)	b. Anna Speers (CEO Auction Plus and past ARLP graduate)	c. Kym Byrne (Youngest graduate from TRM's Rural Leadership Program)	d. Ken Bevan (CEO, Alpine Nurseries)	e. Simon Adderman (Business Manager, Lawn Solutions Australia)
2017	4.2	4.1	3.7	-	-
2018	4.1	-	-	4.2	3.9
2019	4.4	-	-	4.5	4.7
Average response based: 5= Dynamic. 1= Uninteresting; ARLP – Australian Rural Leadership Program.					

¹² As noted elsewhere, funding for this component of the program was withdrawn due to budgetary constraints, however TRM elected to provide it as a value component of participant learning.

¹³ Kym Byrnes, the youngest (21) could well progress to undertaking post-graduate studies and has already completed two leadership programs: TRM's *Rural Leader's Bootcamp* and Cotton Australia's *Future Cotton Leaders* program.

Recommendations

1. Leadership and front-line leadership

a. Continued investment in leadership Training

This program clearly demonstrated solid demand for this type of training within the nursery and turf industries. The data provided on page 6 clearly illustrates the nursery and turf sectors have outstripped other industry sectors in interest and enrolments in their first three years.

The nursery industry has identified training and development as a significant priority. This is documented in the Nursery Strategic Investment Plan (2017-2021)¹⁴, and was recommended in the recent Nursery Industry Career Path Development Strategy¹⁵ that the industry have “continued support and promote participation in established leadership and development initiatives, e.g. Green Industry Growing Leaders Program, Masterclass in Horticultural Business.”

Similarly, the Turf Strategic Investment Plan (2017-2021)¹⁶ has a key strategic objective to “Identify and engage future leaders and/or innovators into leadership programs”.

b. Invest in multi-sector training

Whilst, there is a belief in many industries that singular sector training is best, it may not be the most cost-effective. This program has proved that two sectors (nursery and turf) benefited significantly through a combined program, with no adverse impacts. Traditionally, levy funded programs have limited intakes to around 20 participants (perhaps on the basis of dollar commitment). We see no evidence limiting the experience and personal growth objectives through conducting multi-sector and larger programs, both are extremely effective (both from a group dynamic and cost perspective). It is a consideration we strongly recommend.

c. Front-line leadership

Further, on the basis of participant feedback and follow-up during the program, we recommend support for shorter 1-2-day programs that provides supervisors and team leaders with the skills and knowledge to be more effective. That is, a program based on communication, managing difficult conversations and keeping the team aligned with organisational performance goals. Front-line leadership¹⁷ (or similar) is the recommended program to provide a less intensive option which supports continued growth in the pool of skilled leaders.

2. Monitoring and follow-up

b. Organisations

The organisations who have invested in the development of their leaders should be encouraged to continue with their staff development. In particular:

- i. The nursery and turf industry’s wider industry training and education initiatives; and
- ii. Leadership based organisations across Australia who can provide ongoing opportunities to participants following graduation (e.g. The Australian Rural Leadership Program).

b. Graduates

- i. Formation of a graduate’s network or alumni to support their continued development; and
- ii. Encouragement of graduates Hort Innovation’s Leadership and People Development Strategic Co-investment Fund.

(NOTE: TRM will offer a commercial alumni program in 2020 to gauge support.)

¹⁴ Hort Innovation (2017,) *Nursery Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021*

¹⁵ RMCG (April 2019), *Nursery Industry Career Path Development Strategy*.

¹⁶ Hort Innovation (2017,) *Turf Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021*

¹⁷ TRM’s Front-line Leadership Program has been delivered to 120 participants in 2019 alone. It is substantially different to Front-Line Management.

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Intellectual property, commercialisation and confidentiality

Intellectual property

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No part of the program can be commercialised without first an agreement in writing with TRM.

Confidentiality

All annexures and milestone reports contain references and feedback to/from participants and managers. These should not be distributed.

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Advisory group

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Emma Burstall – Year 1 Graduate – Turf
John Vatikiotis – Hort Innovations

Hort Innovations

Bianca Cairns – R&D Manager

Organisations

The Nursery and Garden Industry of Australia
The Nursery and Garden Industry NSW and ACT
The Nursery and Garden Industry Vic
The Nursery and Garden Industry WA
The Nursery and Garden Industry Qld
The Nursery and Garden Industry Tas
Turf Australia
Lawn Solutions Australia
Cox Innull

Panellists

Rob Niccol – ANL
Ken Bevan – Alpine Nursery
Anna Speers – Auction Plus
Kym Byrnes – Participant in TRM Rural Leader’s Bootcamp
Simon Adderman – Lawn Solutions Australia

Program participants

To all participants. No program is complete without you. You demonstrated courage in being part of the first leadership program of this kind for your industry.