

## **Final Report**

# **Growing Leaders 2015**

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Affectus Pty Ltd

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VG15030

**Project:**

Growing Leaders 2015 – VG15030

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## SUMMARY

Growing Leaders 2015 – National Vegetable Industry Leadership Program successfully completed its 10th year of delivery. The current project has now concluded.

Growing Leaders 2015 Project (GL2015) objectives were:

- To develop the leadership capacity of forty-five (15 participants per year) diverse participants from across the Australian vegetable industry supply chain and build their capability to transform the Australian vegetable industry through vision, engagement, action and leadership
- To support the industry to deliver on its vision ‘to be a cohesive. Financially and environmentally sustainable and highly efficient industry focused on growing demand profitably’
- To enable positive exposure of the industry and better networked industry through the active involvement and participation of stakeholders from across the supply chain and beyond via project activities.

These project objectives have been evaluated through the final report stakeholder evaluation.

Additionally, GL2015 was required to meet the following targets:

- Review, enhance and develop “Growing Leaders” program.
- Develop and deliver a recruitment and application process for “Growing Leaders”
- Promote “Growing Leaders”
- Deliver “Growing Leaders” on an annual basis
- Monitor and evaluate “Growing Leaders”
- Report on “Growing Leaders” including a Final Report

The project delivered on the above.

The program was required to meet the following targets:

- 15+ graduates of the GL program each year the program is delivered.
- Minimum of 80% of program participants to complete GL program each year.
- Program participants to meet following supply chain ratio of 2 levy paying growers: 1 value chain member.

All of the above targets were met or over-delivered.

Annually the GL Program content included a minimum of: -

- 29 skill development workshops,
- 13 industry networking events and
- 10 guest speaker/panel sessions.

Eighty-eight applicants were received across the three years of the program. Fifty-four (54) participants, eighteen each year, were accepted in the program. Fifty (50) Growing Leaders graduated across the three programs. This represented a 11% over-delivery by the project manager within the project funds. The graduates were reflective of the whole industry and were intelligent and engaged, willing to take on new ideas and be challenged. Program outcomes were perceived to have been delivered at multi-faceted levels of personal, business and industry.

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Annually, the Growing Leaders delivered a Mission. The Mission is an integral component of the leadership development of the participants. Through the mission work participants delivered outputs for the industry which is financially contributing to their participation in the program but further to this Affectus experience has shown that experiencing a leadership action during a learning program stretches the learning of the individual and no matter how challenging assists in consolidating the workshop theoretical exposure.

The annual GL Missions were: -

- GL 2016
  - Vision: To be a united vegetable industry, passionate about ensuring a legacy that Australians can be proud of.
  - Mission: Growing Leaders 2016 will benefit the Australian vegetable industry by encouraging collaboration and embracing change.
- GL 2017
  - Vision: To build a connected vegetable industry with a sustainable future,
  - Mission: Through collaboration and education of all stakeholders secure the long-term sustainability of the Australian Vegetable Industry
- GL 2018
  - Vision: Producing clean and green vegetables for everyone, everywhere.
  - Mission: Planting the seed of change to mobilise Australians to cultivate sustainable, ethical and safe practices in the vegetable industry.

Throughout the three years all strategies were researched and developed and resulted in the graduates gaining a deeper understanding of leadership through the process of self-managing and leading others towards a goal.

Program evaluation found that the participants and stakeholders identified that the GL2015 achieved significant outcomes for participants, their businesses and the industry. They spoke very highly of the program, were extremely supportive of it and believed that it was a key program for the industry's future development and leadership succession planning.

GL2015 has delivered highly successful outcomes for industry, business and participants and comprehensively met its objectives. It over-delivered on its key targets for participant graduation. It is recognised, valued and supported by key industry stakeholders and has a reputation as a quality program that is key to the industry's leadership capability development and succession planning.

## KEYWORDS

Leadership, capacity, development, people, graduates, Growing Leaders, capability, Mission, Vision, learning, experience.

## INTRODUCTION

Horticulture Innovation Australia (HI) identified a need to continue to address leadership enhancement of people across the vegetable industry. The Australian Vegetable Industry Strategic Investment Plan 2012-2017 outlined the need for the industry to cohesively grow and Growing Leaders was seen as able to address this need.

The initial research to develop a national leadership program for the vegetable industry originated from the Australian Vegetable Industry Training Needs Analysis in Business Skills and Leadership Developed (2007) and Vegvision (2006).

The above industry leadership needs analysis and industry consultation concluded:

‘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

More recently in the HI Vegetable Strategic Investment Plan (2017-2022) identified that leadership and professional development remain an area of focus for the industry.

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.

From this industry specific research, and with ongoing conversation and informal consultation particularly with Growing Leaders graduates the Growing Leaders 2016-2018 Programs (GL16-18) continue to be refined and adjusted. GL16-18 content and activities continues to align strongly with the industry’s direction.

There is continued need for leadership development in the vegetable industry. Every vegetable project that is funded through industry levies with matching Federal Government funds must produce outcomes that enhance the industry. From the perspective of decision-making and responsive leadership it would appear that the vegetable industry continues to provide significant injection of new leaders who have been exposed to this knowledge and who have experienced the implementation and success of applying that knowledge.

The Federal Government through the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources current white paper has five (5) priorities for the agriculture sector where leadership is required.

- Considering global markets and drivers;

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- Tackling labour market long-term shortfalls and working visas opportunities;
- The ability to engage with research and policy and understand future directions regarding production, resource use and management;
- Understanding the industry value chain; and
- Alignment of the whole industry with end consumers.

GL2015 objectives were:

- To develop the leadership capacity of forty-five (15 participants per year) diverse participants from across the Australian vegetable industry supply chain and build their capability to transform the Australian vegetable industry through vision, engagement, action and leadership
- To support the industry to deliver on its vision ‘to be a cohesive. Financially and environmentally sustainable and highly efficient industry focused on growing demand profitably’
- To enable positive exposure of the industry and better networked industry through the active involvement and participation of stakeholders from across the supply chain and beyond via project activities.

GL2015 project was required to deliver the following targets:

- Review, enhance and develop “Growing Leaders” program.
- Develop and deliver a recruitment and application process for “Growing Leaders”
- Promote “Growing Leaders”
- Deliver “Growing Leaders on an annual basis
- Monitor and evaluate “Growing Leaders”
- Report on “Growing Leaders” including a Final Report

GL2015 delivered on the above.

GL16-18 was required to meet the following targets:

- 15+ graduates of the GL16-18 each year the program is delivered.
- Minimum of 80% of program participants to complete GL16-18 each year.
- Program participants to meet following supply chain ratio of 2 levy paying growers: 1 value chain.



## METHODOLOGY

The method to deliver GL2015 was divided into five areas of activity. Each area was undertaken annually with the exception of a component of Task 5 and Task 6. The following outlines processes or methods undertaken to ensure the delivery of the project.

### **Task 1 – Review, enhance and develop the “Growing Leaders” Program.**

The development of GL16–18 involved the following components to ensure the ongoing integrity of the program.

- A review of final report for Growing Leaders 2013-2015 was completed and GL16-18 was adjusted.
- The development of the program incorporated the formation of a program advisory group.
- Content and materials were developed to align with current leadership research and applied theory including an in-kind professional coaching component.
- Connection with and engagement by the key industry stakeholders through activities such as speaking sessions, panel sessions, networking events and industry tours.
- Development of and facilitation of the GL16-18 Mission (the Mission).

### **Task 2 – Develop and deliver a recruitment process for Growing Leaders**

The development of the participant recruitment process for GL16–18 program involved the following components to ensure the required participant ratio of 2:1 levy-paying vegetable growers to industry value chain members.

- An initial whole of industry communication process including program general information and application materials provided to graduates, stakeholders and industry organisations
- A second recruitment activity delivered through general information sheets and application forms distributed to key industry organisations and associations requesting hosting of application and program information materials on their website. Social media platforms connected to Affectus were used to direct potential participants to the hosted and housed application materials and a media process was managed for general circulation of information.
- The third recruitment activity involved the distribution of information to Affectus’ industry database personal distribution of application and program information via email and MailChimp postings.

The application form was re-developed for online use but remained simple but still provided sufficient information from applicants for a thorough selection process. The participant selection panel formed annually and comprised advisory committee members tasked with safeguarding the diversity within the participant group.

All individuals who submitted an application received a “received application” personal communication. Successful applicants were provided with acknowledgement of acceptance into GL16-18 and transferred to a formal program briefing process. Unsuccessful participants

were called and provided with options regarding future program.

### Task 3 – Promotion of the “Growing Leaders” Program.

Growing Leaders promotion was incorporated initially into the application process with industry and beyond being provided with program information and press releases through a hard copy, in 2016 and 2017, and the electronic distribution of materials in 2018 with a small number of hard-copy documents being circulated.

Additional promotion of the program occurred throughout the annual program delivery cycle. This program promotion had two components; the distribution of program materials and; demonstration of leadership learning through the GL16-18 Mission.

**Table 1 – Promotion of Growing Leaders**

Program Activity	Growing Leaders Participants Demonstration of Leadership	Distribution
Industry Value Chain Tours	Chairing and Managing the Session and Networking Opportunity	To all involved
Industry Lunches	Networking Opportunity	To all guests
Industry Dinners	Chairing and Managing the Session and Networking Opportunity	To all guests
Hort Connections	Networking Opportunity	To all members
Guest Speaking Workshops	Chairing and Managing the Session and Networking Opportunity	To all speakers
Mission Delivery (Leadership Project)	Chairing and Managing the Session and Networking Opportunity	(Of documents) to guests and database
Media Releases	2 Media releases annually for participant distribution	To select media outlets (participants to distribute)
Online Communications	Social media engagement and involvement via three (3) social media platforms managed by Rural Training Initiatives	To the general public
Mentoring	Networking Opportunity	To mentors
Alumni events	Networking and Knowledge Development Opportunities	To all GAIN members

### Task 4 – Deliver the “Growing Leaders” Program on an Annual Basis.

The annual delivery of GL16-18 was comprised of three core areas of work - Pre-program, Program and Post-program.

GL16-18 **Pre-program** was a four-month period of organising logistics, program communication to the industry and participant recruitment.

However, Pre-program management also incorporated the following tasks.

- Program tours organization
- Industry dinner event management
- Networking event management
- Dinner and networking guest sourcing and briefing
- Applicant support during recruitment included
- Guest speaker sourcing, briefing and management
- Location and venue management
- Supply of application materials
- Supply of additional program details

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- Phone support and email support for completing and lodging applications
- Formal receipt of application
- Formal response to successful and unsuccessful applicants
- Successful Applicants support during the pre-program period included
- Travel and accommodation assistance and preparation
- Phone and email conversations between project manager, program facilitators, project administrator and program participants
- Participant engagement in up to three social media platforms
- Formal briefing communications

**GL16-18** nine-day program was managed and risk-controlled by Affectus. Annually, Growing Leaders Program was: -

- A six-month period of time involving the delivery of 9 days of face-to-face facilitated learning divided into 3 x 3-day Residentials;
- Participant support and coaching including social media activities throughout the six-months.
- Industry involvement, program mentoring and participant leadership projects (Leadership Learning Plan and Growing Leaders Mission).

*Participant support and coaching during the program:* The support of participants involved the program facilitators contacting and conversing with participants and encouraging them to continue to implement their individualised Leadership Learning Plan and discuss workplace leadership transformation and innovation. Additionally, participants were encouraged to connect with a mentor and partake in the three (3) professional coaching sessions offered to all the participants. The participants were contacted a minimum of nine (9) times during the program. Ongoing support was initiated and supported with materials and online workshops and communications.

*Industry involvement:* During the program networking and industry involvement took place. This involvement required inviting industry stakeholders and individuals to attend the program networking activities. A minimum of thirteen networking events occurred throughout the program. Throughout the three (3) years of successful delivery by Affectus the program activities and events have annually attracted close to guests.

Each industry stakeholder and individual involved in Growing Leaders received personal correspondence from the program manager including information about the participants, the Growing Leaders Mission and the program information. Wherever possible Nuffield Australia, Department of Agriculture, Minister for Agriculture and Australian Rural Leadership Foundation were included in program communications and activities.

### **GL16-18 Post-Program**

Post-program management had two (2) components the first component involving managing the graduates and is outlined immediately below. The second part was the reporting and evaluation elements.

- GL16-18 graduates were invited to participate in a number of post-graduation activities
- A program exit communication document which included recorded leadership progress throughout GL16-18, progress targets for the immediate future, assistance with

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transforming the graduates' workplace and understanding of possible education qualifications available through completion of GL16-18.

- An exit professional coaching session for each graduate. This was an added element to the program and was absorbed into the GL2015 budget.
- The continuation of the mentoring relationships both internal and external including detailed mentoring materials and a mentoring workshop.
- Full integration into the Growing Leaders Alumni (GAIN) and participation in the GAIN Alumni calendar of events which will annually include: -
  - An industry networking event
  - Online workshops (2)
  - An industry tour
  - Ongoing Informal graduate support includes four newsletters and invitations and involvement in following years Growing Leaders

## **Task 5 – Monitoring and Evaluation of the “Growing Leaders” Program.**

Monitoring has been undertaken by the project advisory group. The purpose of the Growing Leaders Advisory Group (GLAG) was facilitated to provide support for the program through advice and insight into the industry. GLAG responsibilities have included: -

- Attending GLAG meetings (4 annually)
- Selection of Growing Leaders participants by a subgroup of GLAG (guided by a terms of reference)
- Reviewing and discussing program deliverables and annual evaluation
- Assisting with access program speakers and guests

The GL16-18 evaluation has included data gathering on the following program components

- Pre-program activity
- Program delivery
- Venue and logistics
- Guest speakers
- Participant learning, goal setting, innovation and transformation

This data gathering has occurred three times annually during the program.

A final whole of project evaluation has incorporated the following elements and was delivered to the industry via an online survey. (see Appendix 2)

- Participant learning and leadership development
- Participant outcomes
- Program outputs
- Industry involvement
- Growing Leaders Mission delivery
- Industry engagement with Growing Leaders graduates

## **Task 6 – Project reporting including a “Growing Leaders” Project Final Report.**

All reporting has been delivered in accordance with the project contract VG15030

## OUTPUTS

The outputs of the project are best understood through grouping the elements under the project tasks headings. Examples and details can be found in Appendix 1.

### **Task 1 – Review, enhance and develop the “Growing Leaders” Program.**

The outputs for the section were the following.

- GL16-18 Delivered
- Completed GL16-18 Workbook
- Logistics for each work including venue, accommodation, facilitator management and guest speaker and database development.

### **Task 2 – Develop and deliver a recruitment process for “Growing Leaders” Program**

This project task developed the following outputs.

- An Expression of Interest Form
- A Website portal
- An online and hardcopy application form
- A Communication Strategy
- A selection procedure

A minimum of fifteen (15) GL16-18 documents were produced prior to the first residential commencing. These documents included

- Pre-program material included a number of emailed documents and PDF’s
- A letter of invitation to industry
- Two information releases
- Program photo banner
- Dinner invitation
- Letter of participation
- Communication with GL2015 advisory group

### **Task 3 – Promotion of the “Growing Leaders” Program.**

Outputs for this task ranged from social media through to guest packs and all are listed below.

- Social Media - Successful Participants Video
- Social Media - Introduction to the Participants
- Social Media – Events and Activities throughout the program
- General mail distributed throughout the program
- Thank-you communication to all guests engaged with the program
- A Guest Pack for each guest
- Media Releases

**Task 4 – Deliver the “Growing Leaders” Program on an Annual Basis.**

- Three GI16-18 residentials
- Annual Mission
- 50 Graduates (GL2015 target was 45 Graduates).
- Eighty-eight (88) applications were received for GL16-18 this is a 50% increase in applicants from the previous project. The increase has been at a grower level mostly however there has been an increase in the interest from the industry supply chain.

**Table 2 – Expressions of Interest (EOI) and Applicants**

GL	No. of EOI's	Supply Chain Applicants	Grower Applicants
2016	23	6	17
2017	29	11	18
2018	36	13	23

**Table 3 – Participant demographics**

	2016	2017	2018
Males	10	12	11
Females	8	6	7
Indigenous	0	0	0
ESL Background	3	5	6
Low Literacy Level	3	3	2

**GL16-18 Pre-program** preparation was managed via email, phone calls and direct mailing. All applicants received a letter of receipt of application and a personal call from the Program Manager to indicate success of application, with many expressing gratitude for the call.

Additionally, there were participant support materials developed and delivered throughout GL16-18.

- Participant Workshop Extra Materials – 15 documents
- Participant and Guest Speaker Profiles – all residentials
- Participant Roles and Responsibilities Briefings – all residentials
- Industry Dinner Guest List – all residentials
- Guest Information Packages
- Guest Speaker Profiles – all residentials
- Graduation Certificates
- Coaching Schedule and Coaching Outcomes

**GL16-18 Post-Program Communication**

GL16-18 Post-program materials were two-fold – one thank-you and promotional material sent to all individuals connected to the GL16-18 program (such as speakers and sponsors) and two provisions of further information for graduates. The documents included:

- Information and photos of program provided to all graduates
- Guest speaker letter of thanks

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- Dinner guest letter of thanks
- Mission Launch letter of thanks
- General media release for the general media
- Media release for all participants with graduation photo attached
- Final “exit letter” for each participant
- GAIN induction information

## **Task 5 – Monitoring and Evaluation of the “Growing Leaders” Program.**

- Nine (9) Evaluations for the project provided by the participants
- Whole of Project Evaluation developed and delivered to industry and program stakeholders.

## OUTCOMES

### Recruitment

Fifty-four participants were admitted into GL16-18 and fifty graduated (11% above the project target). Initially the ratio of value chain to grower participant was 1:3. During the annual delivery of the program a small number of participants withdrew from the program and this had a marginal effect on the ratio.

### Leadership Learning Plan

All the participants set significant development goals in the learning plans which included:

- Delegation
- Professionalism
- Flexibility
- Work/Life Balance
- Communication
- Change management
- Negotiation
- Network building
- Respect
- Understanding Power
- Demonstration of knowledge
- Build relationships
- Delegation and training
- Setting Goals
- Influencing
- Clear Vision
- Focus on Tasks
- Team building
- Improve personal organisation - clutter
- Conflict management
- Checks and balances for goals and outcomes

Participant identification of personal leadership learning goals was valuable as these targets provided a focal point for participants in areas of self-identified need. Progress was measured at the end of the program during the “Taking the Next Step” workshop and participants considered successes and peer-reviewed their leadership growth with two GL16-18 participants. The plans were also used by the GL16-18 Professional Coach as a reference during the three professional coaching sessions provided. Combining the learning plans with the implementation of the team vision and then mission and a group strategy focus on leadership growth was maintained throughout the GL16-18. Particular emphasis was placed on four essential leadership areas – personal growth, workplace transformation, industry involvement and GL16-18 Mission delivery. GL16-18 has been designed at a Certificate V and VI level. Participants are encouraged to speak with Affectus if they are seeking Recognition of Prior Learning.

### Development of the GL 16-18 annual Vision and Mission

During GL16-18 Residential #1 each group was asked to discuss and agree upon:

- What is the GL16-18 vegetable industry vision?
- For the purpose of this GL16-18, you are to develop a mission statement that the GL16-18 participants will scope, develop and deliver by Residential 3. What is the GL 16-18 six-month Mission?
- Draft up a general plan of action for delivering the GL16-18 Team Mission.



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Annually GL16-18 participants were required to present its vision and mission at each industry dinner. It was also required to present the vision, mission and strategies as a whole team, involving individual presentations, to the industry at the formal GL16-18 presentation (Mission Launch) session in Canberra.

The detailed annual GL16-18 Missions can be found in Appendix 1. Below are the overviews of the considerable work undertaken by Growing Leaders for the Australian vegetable industry.

- GL 2016
  - Vision: To be a united vegetable industry, passionate about ensuring a legacy that Australians can be proud of.
  - Mission: Growing Leaders 2016 will benefit the Australian vegetable industry by encouraging collaboration and embracing change.

The strategies developed by GL 2016 were: -

- Assist the vegetable industry to attract and retain the right people for the future of the industry.
- A strategy to tackle the ongoing issue of waste, due to high cosmetic standards.
- Farm tour kits to help educate consumers as to where their food comes from
- An idea to better connect the industry with research and development outcomes; and
- A solution to open up communication channels within the vegetable industry
- GL 2017
  - Vision: To build a connected vegetable industry with a sustainable future.
  - Mission: Through collaboration and education of all stakeholders secure the long-term sustainability of the Australian Vegetable Industry

The strategies developed by GL 2017 were: -

- Get Vegged – getting people to work in our industry.
- Veg Connect – a resource package to assist growers connect on social media
- Collaborative Marketing – understand the need for collaborative marketing and how to implement a process.
- Veg Trace – building and trialing an international product traceability system
- GL 2018
  - Vision: Producing clean and green vegetables for everyone, everywhere.
  - Mission: Planting the seed of change to mobilise Australians to cultivate sustainable, ethical and safe practices in the vegetable industry.

The strategies developed by GL 2018 were: -

- Grow Your School - An initiative to get growers into schools to help teachers implement a school garden program.
- Seed to Sale - Engaging university students through industry involvement
- Upskilling for the future of fresh produce – Australian Vegetable Farmers Groups - Grower driven extension for knowledge transfer
- Championing Change – success stories motivating change through industry movers and shakers

All strategies concepts were worked on and developed up into a presentation and resulted in the GL16-18 graduates gaining a deeper understanding of leadership through the process of self-managing and leading others towards a goal. The footage of the Mission Launch is available in YouTube.

## Program Events

### **Speakers, Meetings and Tours delivered on the following identified industry knowledge gaps: -**

- Industry organisations and leadership provided to the industry
- Research organisations and leadership provided to the industry
- The Australian vegetable industry value chain
- Understanding and working with the media
- The future global trading opportunities
- Wholesale markets and their value
- Training and retaining employees
- Beyond the vegetable industry – leadership lessons from another horticulture commodity.

### **Stakeholder meeting (GL16-18) were organised with:**

- Plant Health Australia
- APVMA
- Department of Agriculture (and Water)
- CSIRO
- Agrifood Skills Australia
- National Farmers Federation
- Department of Trade
- Department of Education
- Minister for Agriculture staff
- Shadow Minister for Agriculture
- Assistant Minister for Agriculture
- Various Members of Parliament – Government, Opposition and Cross-benchers

### **Industry Dinners**

The GL16-18 dinners were designed to provide the GL participants with various responsibilities e.g. table hosts, formal presenters, logistics, special guest hosts, venue liaison and chair. Table rotations form part of the evening to facilitate networking. The GL groups presented its industry mission and vision to guests at each dinner and two participants also delivered a profile on their business and role in the industry.

The dinners were highly successful and well attended, providing GL participants and the guests' excellent networking opportunities. The Canberra graduation dinner was particularly well attended each year with the Federal Minister for Agriculture, being represented by senior staff, the Parliamentary Secretary attending, and Shadow Minister for Agriculture, attending or being represented. Key industry organisation and business figures were also in attendance along with government representatives and graduates from past programs.

The result of the industry dinners and guest speakers and industry tours is that the participants developed an extensive network throughout the industry value chain and beyond, from growers to federal policy development. At a sector level graduates now have more awareness and understanding of the complexities of the value chain, global markets, policy environment, and future issues. This knowledge and information will be transferred through to participants' workplaces and sectors, and value will be further added if participants are actively encouraged, and provided with opportunities, to share their knowledge.

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A total of 281 invited guests attended events during the GL2015, 65 during the first residential, 78 during the second residential and 138 during the third residential in Canberra (refer Appendix 1 for guest information). Guests who attended the networking events were provided with a hard-copy or electronic invitation and during the event received the program guest information pack that included participant contact details, program overview and an expression of interest for future GL2015 projects.

The project database is reviewed prior to each Residential, specifically a significant database enhancement occurred throughout the delivery of GL16-18.

A detail list of program guests can be found in Appendix 1 and below is an overview of the calibre of guests who attended the events during the project.

**Table 4 – Guest statistics - Summary**

Guest Profile	Res #1	Res #2	Res #3
2016			
Politician and/or staff	1	0	0
Industry Organisation	2	9	10
Industry Business	7	3	16
Government Agency/Department	1	4	17
Industry Leader	1	2	6
Industry Individual		1	2
Growing Leaders Graduate	9	4	4
2017			
Politician and/or staff	2	0	2
Industry Organisation	4	9	10
Industry Business	7	14	12
Government Agency/Department	2	2	12
Industry Leader	3	0	2
Industry Individual	0	1	0
Growing Leaders Graduate	7	8	12
2018			
Politician and/or staff	0	0	0
Industry Organisation	10	8	8
Industry Business	11	12	12
Government Agency/Department	1	4	12
Industry Leader	1	2	0
Industry Individual	1	1	2
Growing Leaders Graduate	7	12	7

### Speakers Meetings and Tours

Seventy speakers addressed the participants throughout GL16-18. Topics covered during the program ranged from, 'How to make the most of your leadership learning experience', through

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to 'International Trade'. Guest speakers were all supplied with briefing documents and were supported prior to their address. Participants who were assigned the task of managing the guest speaker sessions during the program also attended to the needs of the speakers.

Participants also had the opportunity to participate in Stakeholders meetings and a Global Innovations at Hort Connections during the GL16-18.

A complete list of speakers and tours undertaken are detailed below.

**Table 5 – Guest speakers and program tours**

Topic	Individual	Organisation
2016		
Graduate	Anthony Palma	
Panel #1	Sze Flett Shane Schnitzler Robert Rowley	DPI Victoria Fresh State Australian Fresh Salads
Tour #1	Melbourne Market Staff and Store Holders	Melbourne Markets
Tour #2	Hort Connections	
Guest	Shaun Lindhe	
Panel #2	Julie O'Halloran Rachel Mackenzie Sharron Windolf	DAF Growcom Windolf Farms P/L
Meetings	Various	
Tour #3	APVMA and Parliament House	
Panel #3	Andrew O'Sullivan Byron de Kock Janice Barbic Greg Fraser	Dep of Ag & Water Resources Hort Innovation PHA Dep of Ag & Water Resources
Guest	Kareena Arthy John Roach	APVMA
2017		
Graduate	Phil Cochrane	PJ and J Cochrane P/L
Panel #1	Sze Flett Shane Schnitzler Adam Schreurs	DPI Victoria Fresh State Schreurs and Sons
Tour #1	Melbourne Market Staff and Store Holders	Melbourne Markets
Tour #2	Hort Connections	
Guest	Shaun Lindhe	AUSVEG
Panel #2	Monika Fiebig Andrew Meurant	Monika's
Meetings	Various	
Tour #3	APVMA and Parliament House	
Guest	Greg Fraser John Roach	PHA
2018		
Graduate	Jamie Alabakis	FreshSelect
Panel #1	Sze Flett Shayne Hyman Jessica Lye	DPI – Victoria Vegnet AUSVEG
Tour #1	Melbourne Market Staff and Store Holders	Melbourne Markets
Tour #2	Hort Connections	
Guest	Shaun Lindhe	Ausveg
Panel #2	Rachel Archbald Rachel McKenzie	Syngenta GrowCom
Meetings	Various	
Tour #3	Chris Parker	APVMA
Panel #3	Jenny Van de Meeberg John Power	Hort Innovation Dep of Ag & Water Resources
Guest	James Whiteside	Ausveg

## Media

Social media has been a major feature of the GL16-18. The major social media platforms used in the program are Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube. Twitter and Facebook are the major social media platforms used by Affectus program to engage with participants and followers during the residential. GL16-18 uses the Twitter the hashtag #growlead and this is referred to constantly throughout the program. Participants are encouraged to use Twitter to connect with each other, keep in touch, share their experiences and new information, and broaden their networks.

All GL16-18 participants are asked to set-up two social media accounts and each annual group has engaged with each other through the Facebook platform and many are active on LinkedIn and Twitter. Affectus has used Facebook to provide information to the participants however due to the nature of social media a review is underway regarding the opportunities for other more functional platforms for information delivery.

GL16-18 facilitators are experienced social media users and a major part of their role is to communicate with the program’s participants and followers about what is happening during the residential. Affectus plays a role of social media content curator by posting relevant industry information, leadership opportunities, and encouraging connections on the various platforms.

A social media workshop is also delivered by the facilitators during the program which discusses the role of social media in the industry and highlights some of the features and uses of the different platforms.

GL16–18 graduates were invited to connect with a graduate-only group on LinkedIn and Facebook. Appendix 1 shows examples of the social activity managed throughout the program.

GL16-18 participants were encouraged to develop skills in engaging with the media. The Project Manger supported their ability to do this by providing participants with a media press release template prior to the commencement of and at the conclusion of the program where participants can insert their own quotes and photos (refer Appendix 1). Media coverage during the program was most effective coming from within industry organisation.

A minimum of 3 media releases are managed annually for the program and the participants.

**Table 6 – Media Releases**

Year	Media Message	Date Distributed
2016	Applications Open	November 2015
	Successful Participants	January 2016
	Program Graduation	October 2016
2017	Applications Open	November 2016
	Successful Participants	January 2017
	Program Graduation	October 2017
2018	Applications Open	November 2017
	Successful Participants	January 2018
	Program Graduation	October 2018

## Coaching and Support

Affectus provided support for the participants at three levels, beyond the nine days of face-to-face program activities. Travel, accommodation and general administrative support is provided

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for the participants throughout the program. General facilitator support is provided throughout the program and professional coaching is facilitated at key dates during the program.

The Project Manager connected with the participants throughout the duration of the program as well as post-program. These connections include personal phone calls, team emails and whole-of-group communication. Between each residential a minimum of three contacts per participant were made and one professional coaching session is provided.

Contact is maintained with participants to provide encouragement and support for the group's progress on the mission and vision; to check in with progress on each participant's individual leadership learning plan; to keep in touch with personal issues being experienced by participants (e.g. health, work stress, family life); to pass on key program information and to support participants during the formal program mentoring process.

Affectus endeavours to keep connected with participants in all program years after they graduate to keep providing support and encouragement, pass on key industry information and to maintain the GL network and relationships. Affectus also continues to play the role of content curators and network support through posting on the GAIN social media platforms.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative evaluation techniques was used to undertake the program evaluation which involved both participants and program key stakeholders.

### Participant Evaluation of annual GL Program

Participants were provided with hardcopy (GL 2016) and online (GL 2017 and 2018) evaluation questionnaires at the conclusion of each residential. These questionnaires sought feedback regarding content and structure; program facilitation; speakers; logistics (including venue); participant reactions to the program; the changes participants intended to make at an industry, business and personal level; and participants' leadership learnings.

Generally, program objectives were perceived to have been delivered at multi-faceted levels of personal, business and industry levels and the following concepts highlighted by the Growing Leaders participants illustrate the program success.

At a **personal development level**, the major outcomes for participants were identified as:

- Increased confidence,
- Improved public speaking and communication skills including an ability to present coherent ideas to their peers and the wider industry,
- Increased leadership skills and recognition and respect shown by others (peers and industry organisations) of their leadership abilities,
- Improved ability to build networks and an increased knowledge of, and connection with, an established industry network, and
- Improved ability to work successfully with others through new information and understanding, skills and processes and greater understanding of themselves and others.

At a **business level**, participants reported that they have applied their new-found knowledge and skills back in their businesses. They have an improved ability to communicate concepts to co-workers, more effectively manage and/or participate in meetings; have the tools to undertake consultations and listen to others more effectively and they recognise the value of involving staff at all levels in decision-making. They have also shared their new knowledge with management and applied their learnings to improve their business' systems. Some also expressed a willingness and desire to step up and take on new roles and have done so including implementing succession processes in their family businesses or their workplace.

The **industry outcomes** seen to be delivered by GL participants were significant and valuable. They included:

- Increased industry leadership capability,
- The development of a large group of graduates this is active in the industry and are better informed about the industry's decision-making processes and that has a strategic understanding of the whole-of-industry value chain, and
- The development of a core group that has more involvement and increased participation in the industry including participating in decision-making bodies at a local, state and national level; participating in industry events and sharing ideas for industry improvement.

The full information from the program participant feedback has been provided to HI through milestone reports. However, the comments from the participants across all residential across three years was positive. Specifically, participants spoke positively about the workshops provided and venues used, and the guest speakers provided. There were mentions of the pressure applied during the delivery of the annual GL Mission and some concern about the value of the engagement with Hort Connections.

## Project Stakeholder Evaluation

To gather further data about program outcomes, improvement opportunities and industry perceptions of the program’s value an online questionnaire was facilitated with 10 participants (growers and value chain) and 10 program stakeholders including growers, employers, program supporters, national organisations and state grower organisations, in December 2018. The questionnaire was designed with a number of closed questions and a number of open questions. Full evaluation details can be found in Appendix 2

The evaluation found that the participants and stakeholders consulted identified that the GL program achieved significant outcomes for participants, their businesses and the industry. They responded positively to the questions about the GL2015 and the Growing Leaders annual program and believed that it was a key strategic program for the industry’s future development and leadership succession planning. They identified that the skills gained by participating in this industry leadership program were different to the skills industry personnel develop from on-the-job experience.

The questionnaire was structured to correlate directly to the project proposal objectives and deliverables and are listed below.

- Question 1 – Name (optional)
- Question 2 – email (optional)
- Question 3 – Postcode
- Question 4 – As a stakeholder I was a...
- Question 5 – Would you consider you were ----- involved in Growing Leaders
- Question 6 – Considering your involvement in Growing Leaders, what components of the program do you believe were the most useful?
- Question 7 – Have you witnessed Growing Leaders graduates leadership capacity improve?
- Question 8 – If you answered “yes” to Q7 how have you observed the improvement in confidence?
- Question 9 – Please provide us with an example of this improved confidence.
- Question 10 – If you answered “yes” for Q7, how have you observed the increase in leadership capacity?
- Question 11 – Please provide an example of the increased leadership capacity.
- Question 12 – Considering Growing Leaders, what improvements/enhancement/development have you witnessed (options provided)?
- Question 13 – Please provide an example of improvement/development
- Question 14 – Has Growing Leaders delivered Project Objective 2.
- Question 15 – Please provide an example of how Growing Leaders has delivered Objective 2
- Question 16 – Has Growing Leaders delivered Project Object 3

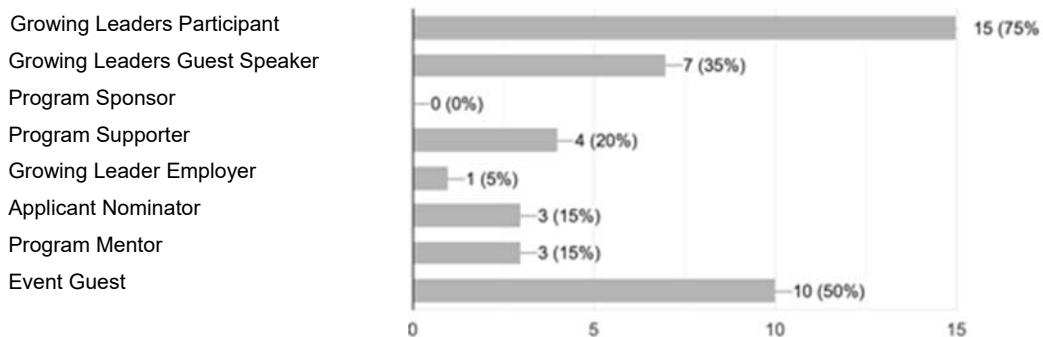


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- Question 17 – Which of the project activities below (options provided) ensured the delivery of Objective 3?
- Question 18 – Please provide an example of the importance of these project activities.
- Question 19 – Considering the success of Growing Leaders, are there additional elements or activities that should be included in future programs?
- Question 20 – Considering the effective recruitment of participants to Growing Leaders, what could be improvements to program participant recruitment?
- Question 21 – There are always ways to increase the promotion of Growing Leaders. Do you have any to assist us?

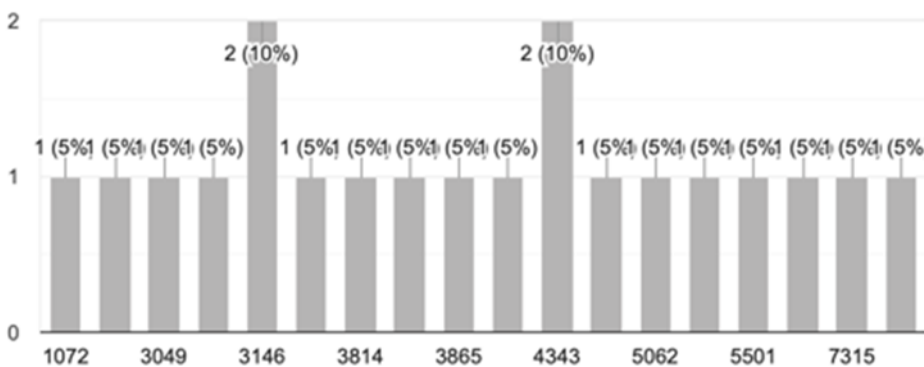
Question (Q) 4 provided understanding of what “position” or “role” each stakeholder held while engaging with GL2015

**Figure 1 – Growing Leaders Stakeholder Questionnaire respondents**



Stakeholders who responded to the evaluation were from across the country. The below figure provides an evidence of the geographical spread of respondents.

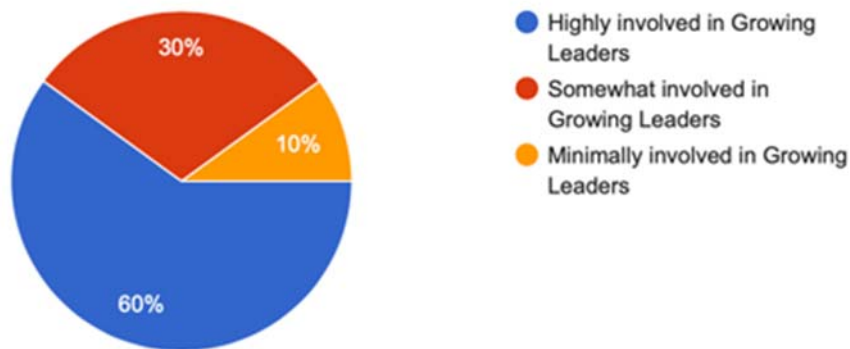
**Figure 2 – Geographical location of respondents**



## Stakeholder Responses

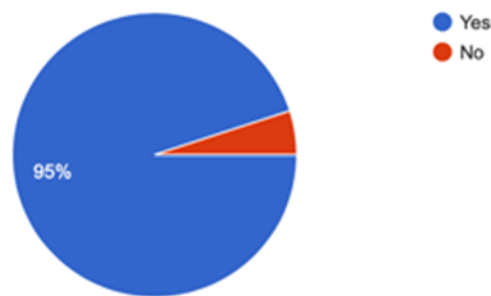
The stakeholders were asked to provide insight into delivery of the project objectives and evidence of the delivery. Of the responses received the stakeholders were asked for their self-assessment of involvement in the program. Figure 4 shows the responses. Some of the questions that were seeking details of stakeholder observations reflect this involvement.

**Figure 3 – Stakeholder involvement**



Q6 through to Q13 were seeking responses to Objective 1 of the Growing Leaders project. Q6 asked stakeholders to consider the value of components of the program. Responses indicate that skills building workshops were the most valuable while networking building and industry events were also seen as very important. Q7 asked for stakeholder understanding regarding the level of capacity built and 95% indicated that there was improved capacity. Considering stakeholder connection with the program (Q4) responses were very positive.

**Figure 4 – Improves capacity**



Q8 asked stakeholders to estimate what level confidence and ability had increased. 80% indicated a high increase and 20% indicated an increase.

Q9 sought examples of improved confidence and ability and below is a sample of direct quotes from stakeholders.

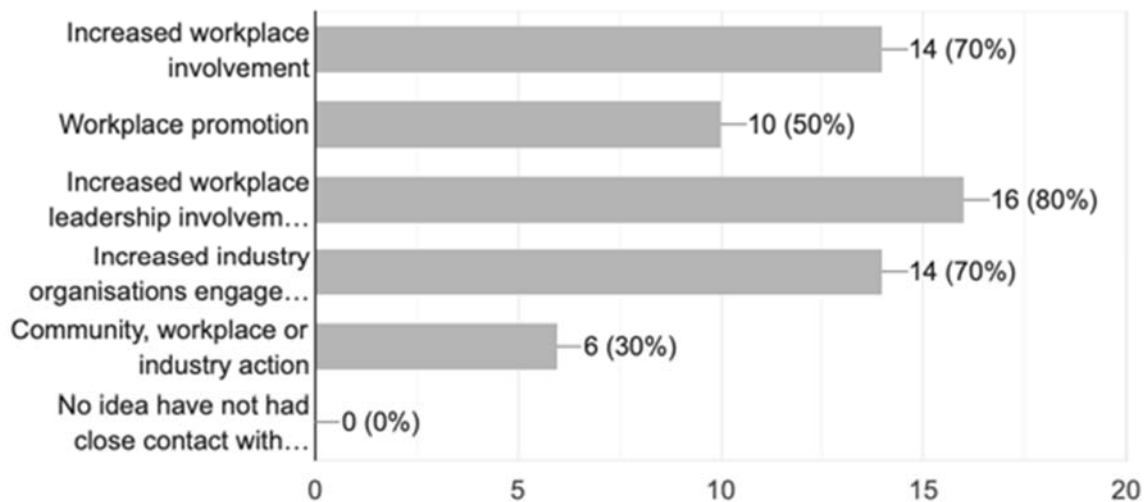
*“Since graduating, the participant has completed two public speaking engagements and participated in a number of media interviews and recently recorded a podcast - all things he would have found very difficult prior to completing the program”*

*“The graduate now has the confidence to ask the tough questions and then probe for further information”*

*“More willing to engage, network, collaborate and speak in public”*

*“Ability to understand people and their personalities and manage them effectively, more refined in stressed situations”*

**Figure 5 – Leadership enhancement**



Examples of these enhanced abilities are quoted below.

*“Multiple participants have actively increased their community engagement, whether through schools, universities and other grower and community groups. I have seen many participants seek industry development opportunities, such as international grower tours, workshops and leadership courses.”*

*“Succeeded in tasks I thought they would struggle with before doing Growing Leaders”*

*“Growth and promotion in every graduate – they now run the business”*

*“taking over from mum and dad, dad is retiring and we look set to expand the business scale again”*

*“Input into strategic goal setting and encouraging leadership training of other staff”*

Additionally, stakeholders suggested (Q12) that communication, public speaking, networking and industry/workplace meetings were the specific areas of development for GL graduates. Examples of these improvements were provided by stakeholders and a selection are provided below.

*“Greater input regarding active communication. Increased confidence in public speaking. Participation within industry activities, they now believe they can add value and make a difference. Helping others to take a step up and grow around them.”*

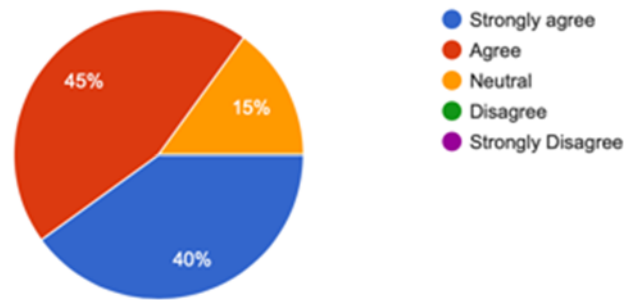
*“All participants, particularly grower participants, become much more confident in public speaking, particularly telling their stories at the Residential Dinners. Each grower has such a unique and interesting story, and their ability to deliver it to a room full of people improves with each residential.”*

*“Being of Vietnamese heritage participants have found confidence in their ability to talk to a subject rather than sit back & listen.”*

*“I now run my own agricultural consultancy business which is extremely successful. I doubt whether I would have had the skills or confidence in myself to achieve this had I not completed Growing Leaders.”*

Growing Leaders 2015 Objective 2 delivery was assessed with Q14 and Q15. 85% stakeholders indicated that GL has assisted the industry deliver on its vision.

**Figure 6 – Delivery of project objective 2**



Evidence, from stakeholders, provided to support this response included: -

*“Growing young leaders in an industry screaming for talent.”*

*“Have witnessed numerous graduates being involved in industry organisations. By bringing passionate young leaders together you form a strong network of like for like people who may never have had the opportunity to previously meet. They will naturally benchmark, share and help each other’s businesses improve by actively participating in the program.”*

*“The program builds the capacity of its members to be more strategic in their thinking and to develop their businesses - this in turn has led to an increased capacity of the industry to produce high quality vegetables and has helped the industry greatly.”*

*“Program has given participants information to take away with them from the program that they would not have necessarily been available to them in their workplace.”*

*“It has strongly addressed / fast-tracked succession planning i.e. developing our next gen of managers.”*

*“The network helps to better focus RD&E levy funds towards this goal with participants providing input to this in different ways.”*

*“The skills and networks that growing leaders provides are all the tools required to achieve this project objective, it is the drive of the participants that will determine the future outcomes.”*

In response to Q16, 100% of the respondents agreed that GL had delivered on Objective 3, a better networked and engaged industry. The respondents provided insights to support their positive response. Unsurprisingly industry activities such as dinners, tours and guest speakers were scored highest in assisting in a better networked and engaged industry.

Supportive comments and examples (Q18) included: -

*“Through each of the activities ALL GL participants get to practice the skills learnt to contribute within the industry in a small protected group, gaining confidence from practicing on people who all want the participants to succeed.”*

*“Having attended several of these events, the diverse range of attendees provides excellent professional networking opportunities. These events and tours also assist to promote the profile of the vegetable industry more broadly to stakeholders.”*

*“The mission provided an opportunity to work with a solution with our peers that under usual working conditions would not happen”*

*I believe the inside access you gain through participation with this program provides great learning opportunities about our industry. The networking is*

*second to none and the chance to hear from growers and industry stakeholders first hand, and previous participants who are very willing to give back makes this an invaluable learning experience.”*

*“The Growing Leaders project each year exposes participants to a wide range of industry contacts, including growers, politicians, industry representatives and other industry members. This has resulted in a highly valuable network for Growing Leaders alumni to take advantage of following their graduation from the program.”*

*“Through networks I created during growing leaders I have been able to solve several problems in the workplace, I am also more open and confident to offering my own advice in regards to my knowledge”*

Stakeholders were asked to consider the success of GL 2015 project (Q19) and provide any areas that should be included in future programs. The majority indicated that the program was providing for the needs of the industry however the following suggestions were provided.

Four stakeholders said that the project was good/perfect the way it is.

Suggestions provide that could be adopted within the GL framework

- Cross industry collaborations
- The external tours and networking are by far the best part of the course
- Maybe some farm visits where applicable.
- Follow up of projects generated.
- Include Tasmania and WA to get true National perspective.
- Market tours were very important.
- Engagement with the major supermarkets and food processors, financial institutions
- Alumni

Beyond the scope to GL 2015 project were these suggestions

- Free/honorary membership to PMA or AUSVEG
- Exchange program either nationality or internationally would be of benefit

Similarly, the response to the above stakeholders felt that the recruitment process was well done (Q20). Responses regarding recruitment improvement included finding participants from the Northern Territory and more from West Australia. Stakeholders also provided encouragement to continue to share the positive story of GL to the industry and to engage the GL Alumni to talk to the industry about the program.

Q21 asked for any additional feedback and below is a selection of the responses

- I think that 1 group annually is good, to have too many per annum may lessen the appeal to it.
- More of this is needed in a more developed and defined format for our industry to succeed. Wholly support growing leaders future projects and further development.
- Please maintain this program. Investing in new and emerging leaders will continue to pay great dividends for our industry well into the future.
- Great Program!
- It is a great program that is recognised as an effective leadership and development program - it would be great to see it continue.
- Visit NT as well. Canberra visit is critical
- keep up the good work....
- This is a very useful program, delivering importantly outcomes for the vegetable industry.
- game changing, we need more for the industry, we need maybe a shorter less intense course that

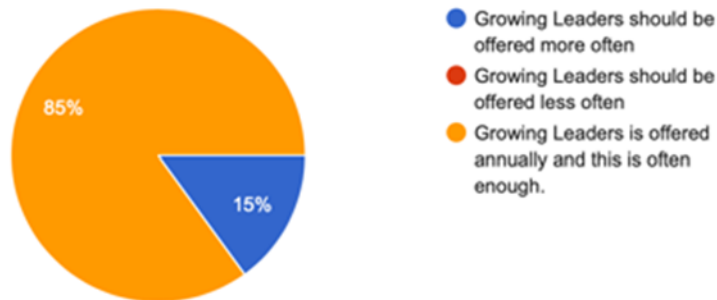
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- I truly appreciate the effort Jill and team put into this and the positive impact that it is having on all areas of the industry
- I can't recommend growing leaders highly enough.

Affectus also asked the stakeholders two “futuring” questions in relation to the Growing Leaders program and although these are not directly related to the project delivery and/or objectives the responses to the frequency of the program and the opportunity to grow the program are valuable insights for Affectus and Horticulture Innovation.

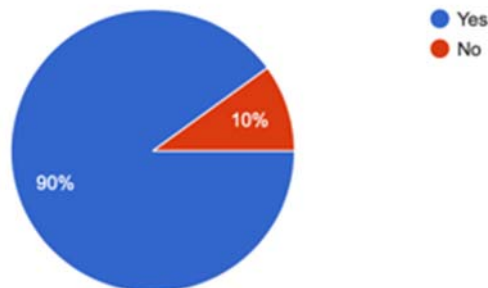
Stakeholders indicated that the following regarding the regularity of the delivery of Growing Leaders program.

**Figure 7 – Growing Leaders frequency**



Stakeholders also made comment regarding the inclusion of Growing Leaders for the north of Australia.

**Figure 8 – Growing Leaders for northern Australia**



Finally, the project evaluation asked a number of questions seeking respondents to provide insight into improvements for future Growing Leaders programs. These have been incorporated into the Recommendations Section of the report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation section has been separated into three sections – project manager recommendations, graduate/participant recommendations and stakeholder recommendations.

### Project Managers Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – continue to review the value of the annual Mission with specific focus on participant value and transferring outputs to industry

Recommendation 2 – continue to communicate with the wider vegetable industry funding the importance of connection with the graduates

Recommendation 3 – continue to review succession processes for industry organisations and ensure graduates are provided with opportunities to engage

Recommendation 4 – consider this program as a “game changer and future-proofing” for the horticulture industry of Australia continue to resource all components of the program

Recommendation 5 – Graduate activity that provides project ongoing activity – A Shark Tank experience for the most valuable strategy from the annual Mission activities.

### Graduate/Participant Recommendations

Recommendation 6 – continue to build the opportunities for graduates to take on leadership challenges within 5 years of graduating from Growing Leaders.

Recommendation 7 – consider doing more programs like Growing Leaders across the national – look at Northern Australia.

Recommendation 8 – continue to encourage participants to transfer knowledge back into workplaces and continue the professional coaching

Recommendation 9 – encourage participants to take up the opportunity to attend Hort Connections in some capacity.

Recommendation 10 – continue to review the structure of the program and continue to explain the importance of the Mission process.

Recommendation 11 – continue to invest in the value of GAIN.

### Stakeholder Recommendations

Recommendation 12 – more of this is needed – continue the support of Growing Leaders and further development.

Recommendation 13 – develop a short program that can lead into Growing Leaders that is more accessible to industry players.

Recommendation 14 – continue to encourage participants to transfer knowledge into the workplace.

Recommendation 16 – continue to work on the communication plan for the program to ensure the industry is well informed.

Recommendation 17 – develop a business (truncated) program to roll out for all vegetable businesses.

Recommendation 18 – Growing Leaders is delivering for the industry and ongoing support should occur.



## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, COMMERCIALISATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

As per the contract there has been no pre-existing Intellectual Property.

It should be noted that the materials generated (found in the Appendices) through Growing Leaders 2015 Project should not be distributed.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Affectus would like to thank the vegetable industry for providing significant individuals to participate into the program. We would also like to thank all the Growing Leaders 2016-2018 graduates for their commitment to the industry through completing the program.

Affectus would like to thank a number of industry organisations and individuals within those organisations who have contributed to GL 2016-2018. A significant contribution to the program was made by participant businesses and organisations. In addition, the support offered by the following organisations was a major contributor to the project's success:

- Project Funder Horticulture Innovation Australia
- The program sponsors who have contributed in-kind or real dollars adding approximated value of \$11500.00
  - APVMA
  - Adelaide Markets
  - Melbourne Markets
  - Strategic program supporter AUSVEG

Thank you to all guest speakers and panel members who generously provided their valuable time, experience and industry insights at all three residential sessions. Thanks also to Project Members – Bianca Cairns (Hort Innovation), Shaun Linde (AUSVEG), Growing Leaders Advisory Group and Affectus staff and contractors including Virginia Eckels, Jenny Smith, Heidi Mumme and Cynthia Mahoney and Rina Cooper.

**Jill Briggs**

**Managing Director**

**Affectus**