

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TINA MCPHERSON, BUNDABERG

Dear Readers,

Knowledge is Power! For us this has been a year to take advantage of education and knowledge... seems like a worthwhile thing to do when other things seem well out of our own control... like weather and pricing! We have been very fortunate that both the horticulture industry and the passionfruit industry have enabled us to pursue some further education and training. Early in the year, Bruce used the Noel Day Scholarship, available through PAI, to complete Nutri-Tech Solution's Certificate in Nutrition Farming. This certificate aims to train food producers to seek a more productive, profitable and regenerative approach to farming. The course challenged him to look at what we do on the farm and aim for continual improvement in everything we approach. This nationally recognised qualification teaches innovative, cutting-edge strategies to improve the health of your farm, your garden, your planet and yourself. The final day concentrates on human health... something we often neglect but which is essential if we want to continue to farm!

As part of my ongoing education I applied to join the LEAD (Leadership, Exploration and Development in Horticultural Industries) course, funded federally and available to members of Passionfruit, Mango, Avocado, Persimmon, Lychee, Melon, Pineapple, Banana and state based strawberry industries. This group already had existing alignment and objectives to increase leadership capacity in potential and existing leaders and banded together to put this programme into place.

The intention of the programme was to collaborate in advocating rural issues, engage with government, build leadership and mentoring skills in a cooperative way at an industry level and work with the existing networks of the Tropical Horticulture Group. The programme included self-awareness development; two residential workshops; webinars and mentoring development over an eighteen-month period. The programme culminated in attendance at Hort Connections in Melbourne in June this year and another workshop in Melbourne. Not only were we equipped with skills for advocacy and engagement and a broad range of industry perspectives, but we were challenged to think beyond our own biases, question the way we do things in our business and in

our own daily lives, and to constantly assess the reasons we conduct ourselves the way we do. Should the opportunity ever present itself again, I would urge any member of our industry to take advantage of such an opportunity. The legacy was not just personal, it will be felt in our businesses and our industry for many years to come. Passionfruit were fortunate to secure 3 places on this course.

As is often the case with these workshops, the most vital component was the networking and the building of relationships. I have long been in favour of industries collaborating where appropriate for advocacy in horticulture, research and development where synergies are obvious, and for support, as after all we are all in the business of "growing". The friendships, understanding and networks that develop from programmes such as LEAD are essential for the collective strength of Horticulture as an industry.

I see that an opportunity to participate in Women in Horticulture Leadership Development has come available. Grants have been allocated as part of a joint funding arrangement between Women & Leadership Australia and Hort Innovation and provide access to one of three part-time practical courses. I urge women in the passionfruit industry to become involved. Should you be unsure whether to participate, please contact me, Jane Richter or Amanda Roy. We would all be happy to chat with you about how to juggle this with an ever-increasing workload, family and "doubts" about whether this is right for you! <https://www.wla.edu.au/horticulture.html>

Nelson Mandela left us with **"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"**. It is up to us to put it in practice, starting with our own worlds!

On a much sadder note, many of you may have heard of the recent passing of Robyn Prossliner from Bundaberg. As an industry we are grateful to Robyn for her contribution and support over the years. Our thoughts are with Gary, Brendan and their families during this difficult time. With best wishes for a fruitful spring...

Tina



Women in Horticulture

\$150,000 in Development Funding Available

Funding grants of up to \$10,941 per person are currently available to women who work in the horticulture sector to support their participation in a leadership development program.

The grants have been allocated as part of a joint funding arrangement between **Women & Leadership Australia** and **Hort Innovation**, and provide access to one of three part-time practical courses.

Participants will network with women peers from a variety of industries, and cover such topics as reinforcing resilience and wellbeing, rewiring your networks, evolving strategic change, team dynamics and supporting leadership performance.

Expressions of Interest

Find out more and register your interest by completing the Expression of Interest form online before 15th November: www.wla.edu.au/horticulture

