

MEDIA RELEASE

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Supporting women in horticulture through new scholarships

The women of contemporary Australian horticulture have spoken. They want affordable access to women's-only development programs, to expand their professional networks and to boost their theoretical education.

In response to their calls, the research and development corporation Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation) is working with Women & Leadership Australia (WLA) to roll out 20 targeted industry scholarships per year for the next five years.

Informed by feedback from over 20 of the industry's leading women at a dedicated Hort Innovation workshop in August, the initiative provides three different scholarship opportunities for women with varying leadership experience.

Each year, 10 scholarships will be available for emerging women leaders, five for women working in mid-level management and five for women working at a senior and executive level.

Both Horticulture Innovation and WLA will co-contribute to the part-scholarship for participants, which will reduce the cost of participating by around 60 per cent.

Horticulture Innovation Australia chief executive John Lloyd said a recent Workplace Gender Equality Agency report showed that the agriculture, forestry and fishery industries are male dominated, with only 33.7 per cent of the workforce female.

"Low numbers of women in horticulture, combined with factors such as an ageing workforce, limited access to formal leadership training, declining interest in studying horticulture and a lack of support around post-graduate research means that it is very hard for women to progress and develop in this industry," he said.

"This scholarship program will address these issues, and give women the tools needed to support long and profitable careers in horticulture."

Grower, advisory workshop participant and Voice of Horticulture Chair Tania Chapman said the initiative will prove invaluable to women.

"Women's leadership is an issue that has probably not been tackled in the right way historically. We all know women have a different set of skills to men and all too often we don't actually get women to bring them out," she said.

"This leadership program will help keep women in the industry, as strong leaders, reminding them of what they've achieved, the skills they've got and spurring them on to do even greater things."

Participation in the programs will also enable women from the horticultural sector to network with women from a wide range of other sectors.

WLA Head of School Kelly Rothwell said the scholarship program is a first-of-its-kind in Australia.

"We are extremely proud to co-invest with Horticulture Innovation Australia. This is a sustained developmental project that will transform the lives of many women right throughout the industry."

For more information and to apply, go to the [Women & Leadership Australia website](http://www.womenandleadership.com.au).

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