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Horticulture industry opportunities swell amid rapid growth

Australia's fastest-growing agriculture sector, horticulture, is ripe with career development opportunities as fruit, nut and vegetable producers enjoy record gains.

Recently, horticulture took the number one growth spot in agriculture with a 40 per cent rise in production value over the five years to 2017-2018.

Exports also recently saw unprecedented gains after Australian produce trade reached almost \$2.8 billion for the first time – a 27 per cent increase on the 2017-2018 financial year.

Hort Innovation head of research and development Byron DeKock said a range of initiatives are available to help those already in the industry, and graduates who aspire to join.

“Domestically and overseas, the interest in quality Australian fruit, vegetables, nursery products and nuts has shot up significantly over the past five years, and that popularity is projected to continue over the next decade,” he said.

Based on current projections, the value of horticulture production is expected to rise by 33 per cent by 2030.

Mr De Kock said Hort Innovation is working with growers and some of the nation's leading educational providers to deliver initiatives to help the industry through this phase of growth.

“We have a host of industry-subsidised opportunities on offer for businesses who want to upskill staff, individuals who want to improve their credentials and graduates who are keen to build a rewarding career in horticulture.”

Subsidised training and scholarship programs on offer include:

- Women and Leadership Scholarships: For women who are emerging leaders, mid-level managers or those with senior/executive-level experience.
- Masterclass in Horticulture Business Scholarships: For upcoming leaders across horticulture.
- Churchill Scholarships: For those with a passion for the industry wishing to refine their skills and knowledge by studying an international research topic related to horticulture. Issues can be on farm or post farm gate.
- Attracting New Entrants to the Horticulture Industry: For graduates from all types of study areas who are interested in a career in horticulture.

Graduate process engineer Danniell Trye found the lure of horticulture while studying at university and recently completed a scholarship through the Attracting New Entrants to the Horticulture Industry program. Today, he works at one of Queensland's leading vegetable production companies, Kalfresh.

“Horticulture is a great fit for me. Coming from an engineering line of study, I was not sure what field to specialise in, so I tried out an internship at Kalfresh through Hort Innovation. Since then, I have not looked back. I am excited to see where my career takes me.”

Hort Innovation is committed to sustainable growth in horticulture, with the overarching aim of increasing the sector's value to \$20 billion by 2030.

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