



## A message from our Chair

A warm welcome to the June edition of Growing Undercover.

It is hard to believe that half the year has already passed us by. I, together with our new Executive Officer Sam Turner and other members of our team attended Hort Connections in Brisbane recently, Australia's premier annual horticultural event.

It was an enjoyable few days of networking and learning, promoting our PCA 2023 conference to over two hundred exhibitors, and meeting with other peak industry bodies to discuss common solutions to industry problems.

One such example of cooperation is working with Growcom, Qld's peak industry body to develop a protected cropping module for the best management practice program Hort 360. Whilst this will take some time to develop, this is an area where PCA can leverage our expertise to develop a long-lasting industry resource.

I particularly enjoyed catching up with many of our corporate partners and talking to growers about their challenges and how they are overcoming them. The feedback from many growers was how protected cropping has helped de-risk horticultural production given the climatic challenges over the last few years.

I would also like to thank our friends at AUSVEG and the International Fresh Produce Association for organising a great conference and shoulder events – and to our very own Nicky Mann and Tony Bundock for sharing their knowledge and wisdom to delegates at the Annual Vegetable Industry Seminar (AVIS).

PCA contributed to the AVIS this year and the team are finalising further training dates with the Integrated Crop Protection team at RMCG. This training will kick off with Integrated Pest & Disease Management Training on the Central Coast of NSW in August and Virginia in South Australia at the start of spring.



**Matthew Plunkett** • PCA Chair

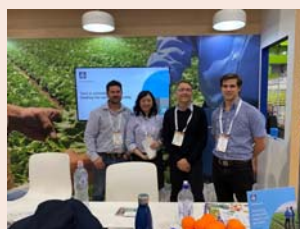
Still on the sustainability issue, I recently returned from Melbourne and was fortunate enough to tour Garden City Plastics recycling facilities in Dandenong.

On a related issue, thank you to all our members who have completed the National Waste Management Survey recently. This feedback will help guide the development of a National Plastic Stewardship program.

It is hard to believe that most of the plastic used in horticultural production is not recycled. Reducing waste and helping industry find pending solutions to these problems is one of PCA's core advocacy areas.

Here in NSW, the sun has returned over the last two weeks and many growers are reporting better growth rates despite colder temperatures. It is still noticeably quiet at Sydney Markets where I work, and many growers are still getting back on their feet after flooding. Notwithstanding the forecast for the rest of the country for the remainder of winter is for above average wet and warmer conditions.

And finally, the Hydroponic Farmers Federation (HFF) conference is coming up from the 12-14 July in Melbourne. I encourage all our members to attend and support this excellent bi-annual conference. Registrations and details can be found at: <https://www.hff.org.au/registration>



Click here to download copy of newsletter



## Register Now!

The Hydroponic Farmers Federation Executive Committee are excited to host their 12th Biennial HFF Conference from **Tuesday 12th July - Thursday 14th July, 2022** at the **Atura Hotel Dandenong, Victoria Australia**.

HFF 2022 is an unmissable opportunity to connect with likeminded people working in the Hydroponic Farming space.

We missed getting together with you and all our friends in the past year. Attending the conference will enable you to share your knowledge, hear the latest industry advancements and catch up with suppliers and growers after a few years with little interaction.

The three-day conference will feature over 15 invited industry experts, half day of farm tours, social functions, and ample networking opportunities. We are excited to share that Brian Nankervis from RockWis will host the Conference Dinner and Bunjil Place before you get your glow on for the After Party.

We hope to see you at Atura Dandenong in July for our 12th Biennial Conference and 25th Celebration of HFF.

For more information please refer to the conference website.

- <https://www.hff.org.au/registration>
- <https://www.hff.org.au/conference>



### View our great line up of speakers below:

- Paul Higgins - Keynote Speaker
- Aart Slobbe - Light & Plant Interactions
- Paul Simmons - Trends in the World Tomato Market
- Sue Pickering - Organisational leadership and change management in Horticulture
- Graeme Smith - Vertical Farms - the missing bits
- Chris Millis - Future High-Tech Panel with Growers & Q&A
- Sohun Gandhi - Biomass Saves Business
- James Pateras - Small Farms, Big Cities
- Greg Carick - Garden City Plastics
- Emily Rigby - Medicinal Cannabis: From Seed to Patient - a Grower's perspective
- Ari Baelde - The transformation to vegetable greenhouse and plant factory production in Asia
- Patrick Ulloa - Process Control. The 'Holy Grail' of Quality Management
- Juxi Leitner - HMI (Human Machine Interaction) and Future Automation in Farming/Protected Farming
- Tony Murphy - Risk Mitigation in a Post COVID World
- Sheree Marris - What can octopus sex teach us about the future of hydroponics? Why are cross-dressing cuttlefish lessons in innovation and what can corals teach us about the power of partnerships?



If you have any questions please contact  
Jordyn Trollove – [jordyn.t@asnevents.net.au](mailto:jordyn.t@asnevents.net.au)

## Encouraging careers in Horticulture

There has been a long time misunderstanding as to what a career in horticulture entails by secondary schools. Indeed, as a youngster of sixteen when I announced to my careers teacher that I wanted to enter horticulture as a career, I was marched off to the headmaster's office where he asked me if it was a proper career? I like to think I have proved him wrong!

So, we have been really encouraged to learn of a fantastic new initiative by the Goulburn Murray Local Learning and Employment Network in Victoria to develop a bespoke online digital platform, loaded with Virtual Reality experiences, that will allow students to engage in workplace experiences and scenarios to build work readiness skills and build aspirations into priority industries, including protective cropping.

Led by Tania Pearce of the Goulburn Murray Local Learning and Employment Network, the project is aiming to help to create the future industry workforce, by creating a virtual reality platform VIC-VICE 'Your Career in Sight', VR experiences will allow secondary students to engage in workplace experiences and scenarios to build work readiness skills and build aspirations into priority industries.

Supported by Victorian State funding, the platform will roll out across the state into every secondary school, with the support of the VicLLEN.

The project will be aiming to enable school-aged students an opportunity to explore careers that they may not otherwise have considered, or had exposure to, such as protected cropping.

To enable the project team to obtain suitable content and locations for filming (showcasing training and growing facilities etc.), the team are reaching out to the Victorian industry to connect with any suitable enterprises or individuals that could assist with the project.

Assistance is also being sought around guidance on developing Virtual Reality content to ensure interactive and engaging tasks, stories and imagery aligning to current careers (and VETDSS course content) and showcase entry level work skills that industry look for when recruiting young people.

Access to suitable employees who have worked their way up or have just completed their studies who would like to share their success stories would also be welcomed.

'This is a great initiative that the PCA are very keen to support – we have a great industry that is largely a hidden secret to the general public, and if we can



**Tony Bundock • PCA Deputy Chair**

start to introduce young and talented individuals into horticulture it has to be a good thing for our industry,' said Tony Bundock.

Tania Pearce added 'We see this is a great opportunity to allow young people to gain a foothold in this exciting industry as well as working towards easing industry labour pressures. We are really excited about taking this project forward with the assistance of PCA members so that we can showcase this wonderful industry'.

The GMLLEN ran a VR pilot, to obtain a feel on how VR can be used to explore careers [click here](#).

If you would like to assist in this dynamic program, please feel free to reach out to either: -

Tania Pearce – Stakeholder and Relationship Manager

E: [tania.pearce@gmlen.com.au](mailto:tania.pearce@gmlen.com.au)

M: 0402 271 844

OR

Tony Bundock – Deputy Chair, PCA – Chair Education & Training Committee

E: [tony.bundock@protectedcropping.net.au](mailto:tony.bundock@protectedcropping.net.au)

M: 0409 007 610

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## Fruit fly researcher wins Bayer Researcher of the Year Award at Hort Connections

By Bayer CropScience Pty Ltd

Entomologist Peter Leach has won the Bayer Researcher of the Year Award at the 2022 Hort Connections conference for his substantial contribution to research in horticulture. Peter has led a major portfolio of national market access disinfestation projects on fruit fly for more than 25 years.

Mr Leach and his team have provided data for the successful negotiation of commercially viable new market access protocols for numerous crops in Asia, the US and NZ, expanded domestic market access through irradiation and contributed to international standards that guide phytosanitary work worldwide. With Bayer as long-time sponsors, the award acknowledges people with a track record of research or extension work that has advanced the industry, offered long-term benefits on-farm uptake, and advanced the international reputation of Australian science.

Bayer's Head of Customer Marketing for the Crop Science division, ANZ, Tony May congratulated Peter for his success in his role as Principal Entomologist and Market Access Team Leader at the Queensland Department of Agriculture & Fisheries, which has underpinned successful domestic and international outcomes for Australia's horticulture industry.

"The Researcher of the Year Award is a fantastic way to recognise the incredible work our researchers are undertaking in the horticulture sector," Mr May said.

"It is estimated fruit fly costs the Australian industry \$300m annually so any work that supports the control

of this invasive pest will deliver a material benefit for Australian fruit growers. On behalf of Bayer, I would like to congratulate Peter on his contribution to the sector's success.

"We have been partnering with AUSVEG for more than a decade now and have a long-standing commitment to industry. This is a relationship we're very proud of and we welcome the opportunity to support innovation in the sector."

In accepting the award, Mr Leach said it was an honour to be awarded the Bayer Researcher of the Year Award.

"We have been conducting our research for 25 years and to be recognised at the Hort Connections conference is humbling. It has been a team effort and I look forward to many more years of finding global and local solutions for fruit flies and crops," Mr Leach said.



Mr Peter Leach (L) is presented his award by Bayer's Head of Customer Marketing for the Crop Science division, ANZ, Tony May.



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**Missed out on a talk at PCA 2022? We have you covered!**

Check out some (or all) of the fantastic talks from PCA 2022 on our website!

**2022 Conference Videos**



The PCA Board would like to extend our warmest welcome and good wishes to our new member.

**Life Member**

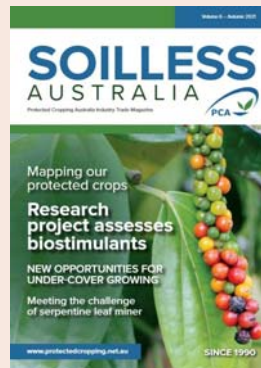
Rosemary Viggers

We look forward to many successful years together!

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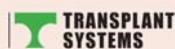
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