



# Newsletter

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Have you registered yet for the Costa PCA Conference 2019 at The Star Gold Coast, Australia on 7 - 10 July 2019?

PCA has an enviable track record of hosting well-attended conferences since 1990. This year, we are anticipating 500+ delegates will attend - including many of the key decision makers from the industry. More than 100 exhibitors will also be displaying their wares, including the most up-to-the-minute technologies and practices.

At this year's conference, we will be exploring the theme 'Seduction by Technology - Knowledge Exchange for Greenhouse Growers', and a program

chock-full of high profile speakers and presentations will all contribute to shaping your thinking.

Tristan Kitchener has held senior positions with Sainsbury's (UK) and Coles supermarkets. He will lead a panel of industry experts to look at trends in the retail sector. Meiny Prins, CEO and co-owner of Priva, will share some thoughts on disruptive technologies. Ros Harvey, from award winning Australian technology start-up, The Yield, will look at how data is changing the way we farm. You can see the latest program details [here](#) - and we're confirming more speakers every day.

There'll also be a chance to get hands-on at technical workshops focussed on medicinal cannabis, pollination, and integrated pest management. Two farm tours will showcase some of the region's top operations.

We've negotiated some great accommodation rates at The Star for delegates, so register now to lock these in before they run out.

If you need any more encouragement, this is a great opportunity to escape the winter blues and head to the sunny Gold Coast! So don't miss out - click [here](#) to register right now!

## Hort Connections 2019

AUSVEG and PMA Australia-New Zealand Limited (PMA A-NZ) have again united to deliver the joint industry conference and Trade Show, Hort Connections 2019. Hort Connections 2019 will be held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre 24–26 June 2019. Members in the horticulture industry will be inspired to aim high, with the theme 'Growing our Food Future' headlining the conference.

The event will cater to buyers and sellers from every segment of the fresh produce and floral supply chain including seed companies, growers, packers, processors, shippers, importers and exporters, wholesalers and retailers, foodservice, associated suppliers to the industry, and many more.

Following on from the successful Hort Connections 2018 in Brisbane, this year's event is set to become the most influential space for networking, education and business for the entire fresh produce industry.

Register [here](#) – and don't forget to sign in as a PCA member!



## Encouraging the Next Generation

Are you a horticulture student, or do you know a student studying in horticulture? PCA would like to invite students in horticulture to share their research at our conference on the Gold Coast in July.

Students selected to participate will be required to complete a 3-minute presentation to discuss their topic of choice.

In return, they will receive a complimentary registration to the conference (worth \$600), one night's accommodation at the Star, plus the opportunity to win a cash award for the best presentation! Not to mention the networking and potential job opportunities.

If you're a student in horticulture or can recommend someone PCA wants to hear from you!

Please direct all enquiries to [Emily Rigby](#) – but you'd better be quick!

Protected Cropping Australia is the peak body for Australia's fastest growing horticulture sector. We represent commercial growers producing crops under cover in greenhouses, glasshouses and hydroponically. Our members also include equipment and installation suppliers, specialist consultants and advisors, researchers and educators.



## Bumblebees on trial

The federal government has agreed with a Senate committee recommendation to use Tasmania's feral bumblebee populations for a two-year trial for pollination purposes in protected cropping production systems.

The inquiry sought to find out the risks and opportunities from using the state's bumblebee population for commercial horticultural purposes.

Experts from the University of Tasmania said international research on the use of bumblebees, rather than honey bees, for pollination had increased the yield for glasshouse crops that grew tomatoes, capsicum, eggplant, cucumber, raspberries and strawberries.

North-west Tasmanian tomato grower, Marcus Brandsema, said he manually pollinates his tomato plants three times a week using a repurposed leaf blower.

"By using bumblebees for pollination, we don't have to manually pollinate our

plants, and that not only gives us a yield increase but also a labour saving," he said.

"Also, bumblebees set the fruit more effectively, so each individual fruit has more seed in it so that means that it has slightly increased weight.

Combined with a better setting, that means growers could achieve a yield increase between 10 and 20 per cent at a lower cost."

Mr Brandsema said the bumblebees would be contained within his glasshouses.

The trial will require amendments to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act which the government has agreed to. The first stage of the trial will test if bumble bees caught in the wild can pollinate tomatoes effectively. If this is successful, a second stage will look at a breeding program. The final stage will review the outcomes and identify any potential adverse environmental impacts.

Tasmania is the only Australian state where bumble bees have become established. The bees were accidentally, or illegally, introduced in 1992 and, within 14 years, had spread throughout the state.

Bumblebees are less affected by adverse and cooler weather conditions, like those experienced in Tasmania, than honey bees and thus are more effective for pollination.



# Snapshots

## ABARES Regional Conferences

The 2019 Regional Outlook conference series is presented by ABARES, the research arm of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. ABARES provides professionally independent research, analysis and advice for government and private sector decision makers on significant issues affecting Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.

You can find publications, reports, industry surveys, data, events, media releases and more on the ABARES website.

## 2020 Nuffield Scholarships

There's only a few weeks left to apply for a 2020 Nuffield Scholarship. Is this the year you will discover innovative practices overseas, cultivate friendships through the global Nuffield network, and drive change in your business?

This year, there are more than 25 Nuffield Scholarships on offer, each valued at \$30,000. The application period will close on **Friday 14 June**.

The Nuffield program opens doors to exciting and rewarding experiences. Whether it's walking the halls of Westminster, accessing one of the world's largest dairy farms in China or touring a leading wheat and maize research facility in Mexico, a Nuffield Scholarship presents a career defining opportunity for young farmers. Find out more [here](#).

## Looking for a Mentor

Andy Clarke is in his final honours year studying industrial design at Swinburne University.

His major project is focusing on making hydroponics systems more accessible for cafes and restaurants, with the aim of creating a new innovative product.

He will be working on the project for the remainder of the year, and it will involve all typical aspects of product development including everything from sketching and creating mock-ups to a final prototype and business plan for potential commercial development.

He's looking for a mentor to provide advice and introductions. If you're interested, email [Andy](#).



## National Harvest Labour Visa

Support our industry push for a specialised ag visa by registering your labour needs with the National Harvest Labour Information Service.

[Registering your job requirements](#) will give the government valuable information and help it understand the depth of the labour shortages facing Australian horticultural growers.

## Strawberry grower recognised for on-farm biosecurity efforts

Luciano Corallo, a strawberry grower in Victoria's Yarra Valley, is one of two winners of the Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Award, which is part of the Australian Biosecurity Awards presented by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. [Read more here](#).

## Expecting an overseas delivery?

If you're receiving parts, equipment or machinery from overseas, particularly Europe, China and the USA, keep an eye out for the brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*). [Read more here](#).

## How surveillance protects our bees

The National Bee Pest Surveillance Program monitors for the presence of exotic bee pests and pest bees, as well as regionalised bee pests, across 32 sea and air ports. In 2018 over 14,600 surveillance records were made across the program's activities by government, industry and volunteers. [Read more here](#).

## Bee on the ball

You can download a copy of the Varroa Mite booklet and become familiar with protecting bee health [here](#).

## El Nino still on the cards

There is still a 70 per cent chance of an El Niño developing in the coming months, around triple the normal likelihood. But if it does develop, it is likely to be short-lived and weak. Read [BoM's ENSO outlook here](#).

## Regionality Farm2Plate Exchange

Farmers, food and beverage producers, chefs, tourism and hospitality businesses, destination managers, food groups, practitioners and policy makers will gather to exchange knowledge, ideas and learn from experience at the Regionality Farm2Plate Exchange, from 14-15 May at Tweed Heads.

There are also pre and post event activities including case study tours, [keynote speakers](#), workshops and the Farm Gate Festival.

Read more [here](#); or contact the [organisers](#); or phone 02 6674 1056.

## New national Ag vehicle rules in place

Growers will now be able to move most of their machinery without permits on public roads.

A new National Class 1 Agricultural Vehicle and Combination Notice is now in place (from today) across large parts of regional Australia, removing the need to apply for permits to move agricultural machinery and combinations on public roads. There are now five zones across the country, down from the previous 26 zones, with maximum vehicle and machinery dimensions defined for each zone.

## Membership alerts

Have you recently received a membership alert from us? Don't worry - we're moving to a new membership database and it has a mind of its own. It is taking some time to work the kinks out – but we'll get it sorted soon.

Invoices for membership dues will be sent out later this month. We'll be double-checking on the contact details we've got on record then.