

# SOILLESS AUSTRALIA

Protected Cropping Australia Industry Trade Magazine



## Visit state-of-the-art business Provenance Propagation

NITTY GRITTY:  
HOW TO IMPROVE  
YOUR IRRIGATION  
SYSTEM

PCA 2023  
conference  
review

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SINCE 1990



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## FRONT COVER

We tour a new state-of-the-art propagation glasshouse and meet owner Dr Jack Mooney on site at Provenance Propagation on the New South Wales north coast. Read the full story on page 18. Photo Phil Dudman.



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# Conference delivers for growers and allied traders



*Minsoo Choe, owner of Allegro Farm in the Lockyer Valley, showed conference delegates through his state-of-the-art greenhouse for tomato production, which uses energy from solar panels.*

**Fast-paced, inclusive, thought-provoking and not-to-be missed were some of comments from the 620 delegates and 80 speakers who were part of PCA's memorable 2023 conference.**

**Jennifer Stackhouse reports.**

After a day of grower workshops, the full conference kicked off on Tuesday, July 18 with an address by Hon Mark Furner, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities in Queensland. He spoke about the Gatton Smart Farm in the heart of the Lockyer Valley and an emerging agrifood site at Toowoomba, along with the work being done at DAFF's research and development farm at Ayr in protected cropping.

"Queensland's smart farms initiative will support producers to optimise protected cropping and take advantage of a range of technologies and drive sustainable economic prosperity in the regions," he said in his address. He added he was looking forward to learning more about protected cropping. The Queensland Government was one of the sponsors of the conference.

## **Lead with head and heart**

Keynote speaker Dr Kirstin Ferguson kept the momentum going with her fast-paced, multi-faceted talk about leadership, urging everyone to lead with both their head and their heart.

Dr Ferguson began her career in the defence forces and drew on her own and other defence personnel's experiences to show how important it is to lead with humility, insight, courage and empathy. She also incorporated snippets from another of her passions, dog videos on social media, to underline her strategy with humour.

She has written about the balance between head and heart in leadership in her recently released book *Head & Heart the Art of Modern Leadership* (Viking, 2023), which was available to buy after her talk.

## **Vertical farming across the globe**

Henry Gordon-Smith, founder of the blog and business, Agritecture, was the keynote speaker who launched the second full day of the conference on Wednesday, July 19. Speaking via Zoom, Henry championed vertical farm technology as one of the answers to sustainability in urban agriculture.