PCA Members

Photos L - R: David Randall instructing students from Western Sydney University (WSU). Middle: The National Vegetable Protected Cropping Centre (NVPCC). The NVPCC, and its associated research projects are funded by Hort Innovation using grower levies and funds from the Australian Government, with co-investment from WSU. Right: An undergraduate student learning crop production techniques in a practical class.

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

Tackling the Skills Shortage
In the Protected Cropping Industry

The need for locally educated protected cropping specialists and growers has been identified for over a decade.

In response to this need, Western Sydney University in partnership with Tocal College and TAFE NSW is developing an education and training pathway which is flexible in its delivery and allows a number of paths in the progression of learning for participants.

Stand-alone units

The university is aware of the constraints that working in the industry places on learning and training.

The flexible online and workshop format of these courses should meet the needs of workers and managers in the protected cropping industry to upskill, while still remaining active in their workplace.

At the core of this education and training pathway are four units of study being developed at Western Sydney University.

Each of these units will be delivered in a composite learning framework. Composite learning involves accessing lectures on your home computer and coming to the university for a week long practical and skills workshop.

Two units are being developed for delivery in early 2019, with two more units to come.

The initial units will encompass advanced skills and problem solving in pest management and hydroponics.

By studying at Western Sydney University participants will develop practical skills, advanced knowledge and also meet and network with other like-minded people from your industry.

The practical and workshop component will be delivered by utilising the Western Sydney University, Hawkesbury Campus facilities (pictured below).

Flexible accreditation

An exciting and innovative part of this program is the way these units of study will be accredited.

Each unit will be credentialed individually by the university, so participants do not need to enrol in a full degree.

If participants were to enrol in a degree at a later date the completed units would be credited towards the Bachelor of Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security (B.SAFS) degree at Western Sydney University.

In addition to the university accreditation, each unit will be mapped closely to a unit of competency from the Advanced Diploma of Horticulture. This will allow recognition for prior learning within a VET diploma.

Arrangements are being developed between Tocal College, TAFE NSW and Western Sydney University to allow the Dip. Production Horticulture to be given credit towards the degree program at Western Sydney University.

This arrangement will give even greater flexibility to professionals in the industry to achieve tertiary education qualifications.

Opportunities for professional training

These education programs present a great opportunity for producers and workers in the protected cropping industry.

The diploma program at Tocal College will be targeted towards workers in the industry who require formal training and qualifications at diploma level.

Western Sydney University's "stand-alone" units are available for those who need to acquire advanced skills in specialised areas of protected cropping.

As a bonus the diploma and stand-alone units will allow progression towards a bachelor degree at Western Sydney University.

You will be able to meet Western Sydney University staff at the Costa PCA Conference 2019 for more information on these innovative education packages.

For more information
www.westernsydney.edu.au