

## Media release

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For immediate release

Monday 3 April 2017

### Nurseries urged to consider interns

Expressions of interest are being sought from nurseries interested in taking on an intern, with funding available to assist with costs during both the internship and the first year of employment if that is offered.

The Hort Innovation Internship Program is co-funded by participating businesses and Horticulture Innovation Australia using horticultural research and development levies and funds from the Australian Government.

The program is open to final year graduates in any course, providing nurseries with access not only to students who already have an interest in horticulture, but a whole range of other skills such as IT and accounting which are also vital in any business.

The program provides \$8,000 per student to assist with costs such as travel, accommodation and living expenses which may otherwise prevent them taking up the 12 week internship placement.

If the nursery decides to take on the graduate once their degree is completed, Hort Innovation also provides co-investment to support the first year salary and to support participation in a five day industry leadership training program.

Funding has been provided through the nursery levy to ensure the industry has at least two guaranteed places each year.

A highly successful pilot was run at the beginning of the year, with intern Lisa Huynh saying she'll certainly be letting her fellow graduates know about the opportunities available in horticulture.

Ms Huynh will graduate with a Bachelor of Agriculture from the University of Melbourne mid-year, and then return to Australian Fresh Leaf Herbs full time.

She says it's been very rewarding to apply her university knowledge and food science skills in an industry that's not a traditional choice for ag students.

"Most of the 200 students in my cohort are from farming families and they look for jobs in agribusiness or traditional agricultural industries such as livestock, cropping, and dairy.

"I don't think a lot of my friends and young people in general realise how much opportunity exists within the horticultural industry," she said.

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Australian Fresh Leaf Herbs employs more than 80 staff across their two sites south east of Melbourne, and Ms Huynh has experienced each area of operation in the business, spending time with the horticulture, farming, production, dispatch, and quality teams.

Supervisor Sharon Coutts has appreciated being part of the pilot internship program and says she'd certainly recommend it to other businesses.

"Our company's executive director, Jan Vydra, was a 2016 Nuffield Scholar and travelling overseas he saw the same thing again and again - an ageing industry that needs innovation and technology to supply a global population.

"As a young, expanding company, it is fantastic to work with organisations such as Hort Innovation to develop our graduate program and promote the opportunities that exist within our industry," Ms Coutts said.

Recruitment is now underway, looking for both interns across the country and businesses interested in hosting them.

More information, including details on how to make an application, is available through GradLink, a dedicated online graduate recruitment portal specific for agribusiness managed by Rimfire Resources. Visit <https://www.gradlinkprogram.com.au/hort-innovation-internship-program/>

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