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Leadership is not found in a Book: the Western Australian Rural Leadership Program

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Western Australian Rural Leadership Program
Future Leaders Course
March to July 1999

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a
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In February this year nineteen people from all over Western Australia were brought together to explore their leadership potential. These nineteen people came from different walks of life and professions but they all had a common passion, rural Western Australia, and they all had a common goal - to gain skills so that they could lead this state into a thriving 21st century.

Over the six months we grew very close and experienced great highs and lows. Without the support of our family and friends, employers and others we would not have accomplished half of what we have over the last six months and we would like to acknowledge this support and empowerment. Thank you.

We feel very privileged to have had this opportunity and acknowledge the vision of the Minister, Monty House, to create such a program. Unlike the more standard management leadership programs, this concentrates on the personal journey and the long-term gain, rather than a short-term defined outcome.

We would also like to acknowledge the continual support from Veronique Boulanger and the input of Richard Firth and his team at Merribrook. We all feel that the initial ten days at Merribrook shaped the dynamics of the whole six months significantly.

Has it been worthwhile? The answer is a most resounding YES. It has stretched our horizons, opened doors, and pushed us again and again out of our comfort zone. The group has grown from strength to strength and it is because of the support and empowerment each one of us gives to each other that we know the future is full of exciting possibilities and opportunities.

In this report we would like to share some of the highlights of the last six months with you. The over arching theme of this course was stimulating growth in the primary industry sector of Western Australia. There were three distinct case study groups each covering a specific area - Growing Higher Value products, Adding Value, and Attracting New Investments. However, while we remained in these groups for the first three months, we found that the issues of leadership were common to all three areas and for the purposes of this report divisions became artificial.

The report is in three sections, the first covers our time at Merribrook and regional case studies, the second covers our international tour in Israel and finally in section three we bring it back to the future for rural Western Australia.

Ultimately the message is very clear to us:
Leadership is not homogenous. It cannot be learnt from a textbook, it lies within each person and with nurturing can blossom in every one of us.

Our potential is huge and we plan to make the most of it.

Marisa Gilles
Section One – Leadership Soup

Ingredients

Vision – Andrew Kikeros
Passion – Trevor Dennis
Risk – Kath Stacey
Trust and Empowerment – Fiona Shallcross
Being Out There – Stuart Adams
Leadership; Out of the Pan and Into the Fire - Andrew Kikeros

What is it and will it hurt?

In the weeks leading up to the first block of the leadership course, the Merribrook experience, I found myself questioning whether I needed or even wanted leadership training.

For what purpose did I need leadership training? There was no one for me to lead, I’m not an employer and I don’t play organised team sports. However I quickly found that the concept of leadership went far beyond my original understanding.

Merribrook showed me the dynamic nature of leadership and how within a group of nineteen strong individuals it was possible to reach a consensus. I learnt that leadership is not homogenous. That is, there were times at Merribrook when people displayed different aspects of their personality in order to show “leadership” when the need arose.

The Need to Lead

We often hear about the great leaders of our time – individuals heralded for doing amazing things such as leading battles, forging ahead with ground-breaking research or walking on the moon. One thing many of these people have in common is that they were surrounded by others who were supporting them, trusting them, and in many cases dying for them.

Many of us in our lives are making important decisions every day – it is the level of consequence from these decisions that reflects in others’ eyes whether we are demonstrating “leadership”. We are all capable of leading; it is a question of needing to.

Oops! Did I just lead?

Merribrook allowed me to reflect on the way I react in my professional and personal lives and at times this reflection was a little confronting as it challenged some of my long held views and biases. With the support of others however I was able to air these views and in some respects I have altered my approach. The lesson I learnt was that leadership is not always about adversity and action. At times reflection and adjustment can have equally as powerful and positive an effect.

I have learnt that leadership cannot be quantified, analysed, or homogenised or even pasteurised. Leadership is about different people doing different things at different times for different reasons.

You don’t find leadership in a textbook - you find it in people.
Passion; Fire in the Belly – Trevor Dennis

Passion is needed as a driving force to invoke action. The passion I feel for life was aroused by the Merribrook adventure. I cannot think of another time when I have had to work with eighteen people I didn’t know from a bar of soap, caving, camping and talking. To be continually challenged in an environment of support led to emotion and passion driving me forward to overcome the next challenge. I know with the support of others I can recapture this feeling of purpose in the future and I will not be afraid of my passion.

Every leader we have met on our course has been passionate about something. It is the one common link between all the successful people we met. Steve Birkbeck, Mt Romance, has felt passionately about his industry for many years. His commitment to making a go of something he believed in has seen him take a number of falls only to get back up and grow a million dollar industry. Merv Lange from Alkoomi Wines, felt passionately about staying on the family farm. He worked towards an alternative income and in the beer swilling days of the seventies, a vineyard was born. Merv did not listen to the knockers and sceptics even though their remarks were cutting, he forged ahead with passion. Today, many awards later, Merv and his family are still on the farm and producing some of Australia’s best wines.

Passion by itself can be like throwing petrol on a fire. The positives of leaping into action are soon gone if there is not fuel to burn. The fuel comes to us in the form of support. It is with the support of family, friends and peers that the flame can be kept alight. Here that I must acknowledge the support of my partner and wife, Megan, without whom I would not be able to keep my fire burning so brightly. I ask each one of you to now pause and think about who supports you when you are off on a passionate crusade, now also think about whom you support and how you react to the few people who feel comfortable to express their emotion.

Passion, the fire in the belly; most of the time we suppress it and do not understand the feelings which it evokes in us. We need to remember that by supporting each other more and more, the driven people will be able to express themselves and we will all be richer for the experience.

...the fires are burning
Risk; Take a Chance with Chillies - Kath Stacey

At Merribrook I had just finished watching the last of my group climb up a forty-foot pole, stand on a wobbling platform, and leap out to a trapeze seven feet away from their grasp. I thought (deep breath) well, it’s now or never, and if I take never then I will always be stuck doing what I’ve always done. I looked up, it was a bloody long way!

That was what it was like at Merribrook; everything was always "Challenge by Choice!". Being the people we are, given that challenge – there is no choice!

So I took that risk.

I would like to give you an insight to myself. I do not see myself as a conventional leader. However, I do believe that I have information and ideas that I would like to share with you all. To do that, I have to stand up and explain them to you in such a way that you will understand why I think they are important.

When I started thinking about the people we have met, I saw that some of them were just like me – they were all fascinated by and passionate about their subject.

As General Schwarzkopf puts it:

"No-one is a born leader- they are ordinary people in exceptional circumstances. It is belief in your self. If you want something different, then you have to change"

Over the past six months we have seen people committed to change, who have been prepared to take the necessary risks to do so.

Tom and Jocelyn Wilkinson of the Willow Creek Strawberry Farm started growing strawberries in the early eighties on their traditional sheep and cropping farm. They are innovative people who have trials going at present looking at improving the size, colour, and taste of strawberries. They package their "Willow Creek Strawberries" under their own brand and unique size of containers.

The Wilkinsons can see the benefits of a producer-controlled group marketing body. They realise that if growers banded together and co-ordinated and marketed their high quality produce, the growers would have a greater influence over the marketing of their product. They have been working on this vision for many years, but so far the others are not prepared to take this risk.

Roger Crook, Narrikup, decided two years ago to grow hydroponic tomatoes on his traditional Merino and prime lamb farm after realising he couldn't make money in the...
sheep industry. He considered the usual projects of that area – expansion or trees; neither of which appealed to him – and so went into intensification with a greenhouse. Again, this was a risk, but it seems to have been worthwhile. The original outlay will be paid for within eighteen months, and he is looking for outside investment to be able to double the size of the greenhouse.

Roger has a willingness to utilise innovative technology, research his market thoroughly and look for those niches he can supply. Quality produce is always top priority.

Thirty years ago, Jim Shepherd saw that the market for wool would be in the superfine end and started breeding for these sheep in a traditionally strongwool region. He also realised that the Merino ewe didn’t have good mothering abilities, generally had low body-weights, and needed a lot of everyday attention. So he crossed the Merino with a large number of other breeds of sheep which had the qualities he required. Not only that, he got his clients to objectively measure their ewe flocks on fleece, body, and micron and give to him their top 1% of these sheep. This was another breaking of the rules in the Stud Industry. He was “asked to leave” the Stud Register, and so he set up his own Breed Society – The Australian Merino Society. Today, with 750 000 breeding ewes in the system, he is starting to realise his dreams.

All these people looked at what they had always done and decided to do something different. They took a risk. They could see that what they were originally doing wasn’t good enough. They had a vision that they could achieve something better – for themselves, for their families, and for their industry.

They took that leap off the pole for a trapeze which was just out of their grasp.
Trust and Empowerment – Fiona Shallcross

Imagine looking over a 100 foot cliff, taking those first steps over the edge with all eyes focussed on what you are doing. For a novice this is scary. To abseil down the cliff it would not have been possible without complete trust in everyone in the group and encouragement from others. This was only the start of our adventures and learning at Merribrook.

During the time at Merribrook we barged our way through underscrub in a newly burnt forest, scrambled through a vertically challenged cave and took a 100 foot plunge off the side of a cliff. If this wasn't challenging enough we then had the crocodile infested custard river to deal with; a creative skills game to illustrate the success of effectively working teams. As you can imagine some of us were a little sceptical about this game at first.

However the moment of true testing for myself was an exercise with a 40 foot pole reaching into the sky with an A4 sized platform up the top. The challenge was to climb the pole while attached to a safety rope and stand on the top of the platform. That seemed simple enough, however that wasn't the best part. We then had to jump from the platform and grab a trapeze swinging a mile away. Fair enough - we were all up to the challenge - but it was not until I was looking down that I realised how much I trusted the team we had created. For one, I had to trust the person holding the safety rope. Standing on the platform was incredibly scary even though it looked so easy. My knees would not stop wobbling and the only way I could move or keep going was to listen to everyone below.

Every single voice in our team gave me the courage to leap - and to me that was an example for everyday life.

If we don't trust our team members and accept what they are saying so as to empower us to achieve, sometimes we can get stuck not having the strength to leap out any further.

Following on from Merribrook we ventured into the Albany area. Here we saw that leadership comes in all forms - however the fundamental elements of trust and empowerment came up repeatedly in this journey of discovery.

Phillip, Sheila and Bruce Marshall are asparagus producers who have also diversified into raspberries, sugar snap peas and corn as a way of managing their future in the industry. The cornerstones of their operation are quality and keeping abreast of new ideas, achieved through their individual leadership roles. Together they have been able to:

• increase the price per kilo for sugar snap peas by $5 with packaging and labelling,
• initiate a work incentive scheme for employees so as to increase production,
• add value to raspberries and asparagus through packaging and labelling; and
• lead the way with the Western Australian Asparagus Association, a nationally recognised body.

At the same time the Marshall's are always searching for new ways of packaging and labelling to increase the price. They are also prepared to venture into different
areas of production to grow a higher value product. An eye opener for myself was the way a family can individually take on leadership roles and work together successfully as a team.

Interestingly, the work incentive scheme was a key factor in increasing production and was also under constant evaluation. The Marshall's have found that by paying a piece rate, workers are stimulated to package more and at the same time they are empowered in their position as they are creating their own wage. The strength of empowerment comes from the feeling of ownership and hence a greater motivation to achieve. Phillip also believes it is important to make the employees feel as though they are part of the team so they have trust in the Marshalls and become empowered to actively increase production. The employees are also valued and recognised for their ideas which have contributed to a successful team.

Within this enterprise Phillip was clearly a visionary, with ideas forming through his world travels and searches in magazines and other sources. Bruce, with a business horticultural degree, was able to evaluate whether the new ideas would work, although no idea was dismissed. Sheila Marshall was definitely an activist who took these ideas and made them reality. This was a wonderful example in terms of trust and empowerment. They were able to trust each other in their roles without enforcing their own way of leading onto one another. Phillip was valued for his visions, Bruce was trusted for his pragmatic evaluation, and Sheila was empowered to realise these ideas.

Through our own personal experiences at Merribrook, and through the eyes of others around Albany, our team has been able to explore the true strength of trust and empowerment in any team situation. Without these vital ingredients we would still be trying to defuse that hypothetical bomb in Margaret River six months ago, or still be standing on the edge of the cliff.

I believe, in any team situation, trust and empowerment are critical to success. These two components of leadership are values that can not be undermined otherwise - you may be a leader but whom would you lead?
Out There; Marshmallows – Stuart Adams

Innovation is always “Out There”, something different, something new and there is always someone driving it, be it an individual or organisation of individuals with the same ideals.

New ideas require change and innovation which will intimidate many living in their comfort zones. This usually requires the breaking new ground and being in the unknown.

To survive you must have the will power to remain focused in the most adverse conditions, and the support of those close to you. Hanging off a cliff on the coast of Margaret River, you have faith in the people operating the ropes to get you to the bottom. Communication is important. It is a long way to the bottom and also to achieving a goal, usually the goal posts will move many times during the process.

Being “Out There” also requires a flexible approach to the development of the idea, there is more than one way to the bottom of a cliff, usually the quickest isn’t necessarily the best or the most productive!

Merribrook was “Out there”, in the middle of Cowaramup where mobiles didn’t work, faxes were hard to get, alcohol was prohibited and we were virtually isolated from reality for 8 days. The individuals interviewed from the case studies we selected in the Albany region, regarding their ideas, innovations and leadership roles, all reflected on their isolation when an idea was being implemented.

These individuals were driving towards their goal in the unknown, usually isolated from being able to communicate to most of their colleagues, friends and family. It always takes time for the idea to mature and people to catch up.

“Out There” is the unknown, it is an adventure and not for the faint hearted. Being prepared to have a go is the most important feature of the people interviewed in all our case studies. Fear of the unknown has to be attacked head on, and overcome.

Merv Lange, Alkoomi Wines, Frankland, is such a man. He established his vineyard in the early 70’s in a predominantly wool growing area, much to the surrounding community’s scepticism. He persisted with the vineyard and now exports to the world and has helped to make Frankland a world-renowned wine growing area.

Be prepared to have a go, be “Out there”, listen to the critics and ignore the sceptics.
Armed with this gastronomic knowledge we commenced our search for the leadership flavours of Israel.

Section Two – Gladioli in the Desert

Vision – Wayne Hosking
Passion – Jenny Crisp
Risk & Trust – Stephanie Fletcher
Empowerment – Jenny Crisp
Out There/ Creativity – Sue Pitman

WA Rural Leadership Program – Future Leaders Course 3
Vision – Wayne Hosking

In the heart of Israel’s dry and barren Negev desert, there bloom fields of flowers. The story of how this came to be is an exemplary model of visionary leadership in the face of adversity.

Vision... it's perhaps the one word that has become synonymous with leadership. Leadership manuals are replete with definitions of vision, and so we need not attempt to add to these here. Our privilege was to travel to Israel and witness, first hand, the fruits of one of the most audacious visions of the 20th century: the formation of a homeland for all Jews.

In 1943, Jewish pioneers established 3 remote outposts in the Negev desert, literally overnight. Taking advantage of the British mandate ruling that conceded ownership of land to anyone occupying a roofed dwelling, teams of young Jews set up makeshift houses under cover of darkness, and the kibbutzim of the Negev were born. We visited one such kibbutz, called Revivim, and standing on top of the original stone fortress, surrounded by trenches and bomb shelters, we heard the story of how this now thriving community was forged.

Caption : The original fortifications of Revivim.

In the days before the UN had set the final boundaries of the emerging Israel, Revivim kibbutzniks planted rows of gladioli lining all the pathways of the new settlement. Despite an average annual rainfall of just 50mm, an ambitious irrigation scheme ensured the flowers were in full bloom during a critical visit by UN assessors. It is said that, so impressed were the officials by the innovation and commitment to the desert demonstrated by this new and colourful oasis, they decided that the Negev desert would be included in the new Israel.

Then in 1948, still in the long shadow of World War II, the vision of a Jewish homeland was finally realised. Thanks to the foresight of the first Israelis, the strategic location of Revivim and other kibbutzim was a key factor in the defence
against the Arab invasion that immediately followed. This was to be the beginning of a long and well-documented struggle to maintain and expand the vision.

Today, Revivim continues that tradition, changing with the times. Despite its agricultural origins, a plastics factory now generates 70% of the income of the kibbutz. The democratic structure of the kibbutz still allows the expression of individual enterprise and vision, with new developments including a catfish aquaculture venture, and value adding to the fabled gladioli by selling bulbs and propagation material abroad.

Israelis have a nickname for Jews born in Israel, *Sabras*, which literally means "the fruit of the cactus", tough and prickly on the outside, sweet on the inside. This same analogy might be applied to the kind of insight displayed by Western Australia's own visionary leaders, some of whom we met during our local case studies. People who could see opportunity in disguise, who could imagine a cosmetics industry based on emu oil, aquaculture opportunity from salt affected land or table grapes in Carnarvon. We too have our great visionary leaders of the past who brought water to a desert, against stiff odds.

Through the learning tool of our case studies, both home and abroad, we have discovered that if there is one thing more powerful than an individual's vision, it's a vision shared by a team, a community or, as for Israel, an entire nation. We all have a vision for our children, for our families, or our communities. In Israel, we learnt that the leader who can articulate this vision to a wider audience can leave a legacy well beyond the capabilities of any individual.

But well might one ask, what are the benefits of being exposed to this kind of overseas experience? Well, after learning of the unlikely birth of a nation, no dream seems too big.

Gladioli in the desert: a potent symbol of a vision realised.
Passion (and the Dromedairy) – Jenny Crisp

Professor Reuven Yagil in the Arava region of Israel has a great passion for milking camels. We walked into his office tired, hungry, very hot and not expecting too much (the tour agenda merely said ‘camel farm’, and many of the group felt once you’d seen one you’d seen them all). He grabbed our attention very quickly however, by feeding us camel milk milkshakes and icecream, then delivering his information on the possibilities and potential of his product with such passion and enthusiasm we couldn’t help but be drawn in.

Quite apart from the fact that the camel milk products taste delicious, there are potentially much greater benefits. Prof. Yagil has a medical background, and the major focus of his work is research into the positive effect of camel milk on cholesterol, diabetes, asthma, ulcers and breast cancer. Results so far are only anecdotal, but support for the research is growing. Prof. Yagil has initiated cooperative research projects with hospitals in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Be'er Sheva, and also recently formed an agreement with the Medical Association to look into camel milk as an alternative medicine. He has links with diabetes associations across the world, including Australia.

From a production point of view, camels don’t do too badly. Prof. Yagil’s herd currently produces 15 litres milk per camel per day. For comparison, a dairy cow produces an average of about 24 litres per day in WA. Camels are far more easily pleased than cows when it comes to food and water. His herd eats leftover organic waste from nearby farms, including branches, roots and leaves which would otherwise be burned.

The promotion of camel milk for human consumption in Israel has not been easy. Firstly, Jewish religion considers camel products non-Kosher, and therefore inconsumable. Prof. Yagil argues the religious interpretation with great passion, but in reality to make any headway in this area will be a difficult. A more clearly defined market focus may help.

The second major problem is that the camel milk is not pasteurised, causing health authorities concern. The reason Prof. Yagil does not pasteurise the milk is that he anticipates the health benefits of camel milk will not survive the heating process. In tackling this issue, he has been working with others from the alternative angle of improving the hygiene of the milking process to such an extent that pasteurisation may not be demanded. Helped by the Central Arava Region Business Development Group, Prof. Yagil is also about to move his ‘shop front’ to a main road next to a service station. The objective is to help raise the awareness of his product within the general public and tourists.
Prof. Yagil has shown great vision and passion in developing a forgotten product in Israel. In our short time with him, this very passion caused a few people in our group to ‘turn off’, bringing up another potential problem. To be inspired to action, some people first need the facts and figures, clear reasoning and logic. With Prof. Yagil, there were almost too many good ideas, the goals not quite defined, and with not a clear enough market focus. Possibly too much passion for some people to take him seriously!

This is an important point because it highlights the need to work with, and get the support of others in developing an idea to its fullest, and selling those ideas to a particular audience. The partnership with the Central Arava Region Business Development Group was important in helping Prof. Yagil develop a business focus and plan. The alliances with the three hospitals and the Medical Association are likely to prove critical in providing rigour and credibility to the research into health benefits. He is heading off on the right track.

Sometimes passion is not enough by itself. Sometimes passion can be too much. It is vital in inspiring others to work towards the same vision to achieve great things together.
Risk & Trust - Stephanie Fletcher

Located in the Gaza Strip is the Karni Industrial Park, a joint venture between the Israeli and Palestinian governments. The Karni Industrial Park is responsible for the inspection of imports and exports of freight and produce between both countries as well as border control. With the less than favourable history between the two countries, the risk associated with establishing such a venture was enormous. This shared vision required incredible commitment, communication and courage.

When we talk about risk management in Western Australia it certainly isn't in this category. If we can just stop and try to imagine what they have encountered along the way, we can recognise an exceptional achievement in the construction of the park.

The risks encountered may have included:

- **Identification of people that shared the vision.** If the wrong people had been selected the whole concept could have ended before it was given the chance to develop.

- **Acceptance by the broader communities of the need for the Park.** No matter how strongly the driving individuals felt, they needed wider support to achieve their goal.

- **Funding for the centre.** No doubt people had to be convinced that it wasn't going to be a waste of money.

- **The fear of the unknown.** It hadn't been tried before, was it going to work? Was it going to provide the solution to a long term problem? Was it going to be undermined by people who didn't want it to succeed?

The people behind the Karni Industrial Park would have known of the risks involved. They still believed the vision was worth taking those risks.

To overcome these risks would have required incredible trust between all concerned. They needed to believe in the common vision of improving relationships and trade.
between countries. To trust someone your country had been shooting at for years takes trust to a new level.

This trust continues. We now see Israeli and Palestinian people working alongside each other. What demonstrated this trust most to me was the lack of the armed military presence so commonplace in the rest of Israel - it was a gun free zone. The enormity of creating this partnership made me realise that trust is an extremely powerful tool.

Back at home in Kalgoorlie-Boulder people are recognising the impact native title has on the community. Key people from all sectors are now joining together to resolve the current difficulties by finding solutions. This united approach will play a vital role in overcoming present obstacles and could be the first step in providing WA with positive solutions for all involved. I am confident that these people can overcome the risk of establishing the trust required, producing a leadership example we will all learn from.

If the vision is shared, then any risk associated with developing trust is surely worth it.

Take a risk and put trust first, the partnership can produce the impossible.
Empowerment -- Jenny Crisp

Mr Yankele Yogev, a 70 year old kibbutznik whom we met under the apricot trees at Revivim Kibbutz described a kibbutz as "a communist island in a capitalist world".

This traditional kibbutz system allows individuals to feel equal in their value and contribution to their community, no matter what job they are doing. Everyone is invited to be involved in major decision making and trusted to take responsibility for particular actions that arise from decisions. These elements are the basis of ownership and empowerment in any community.

Kibbutzim were predominantly agricultural, cooperative settlements. Land, buildings and equipment are still owned collectively by the community. All income goes into a general fund and is distributed according to need, and all decisions affecting the group are made democratically. Medical care and education are also provided for. The underlying principle of a traditional kibbutz is "give what you can and take what you need".

Not far from Be'er Sheva, we found such a kibbutz – Kibbutz Hazerim. Although no longer primarily agricultural, Hazerim still holds strong the socialist ideals and values of a traditional kibbutz. This is particularly amazing in the face of their great commercial success. They pioneered drip irrigation techniques in the 1960's, and their factory Netafim is now the world's largest manufacturer and distributor of low-flow irrigation products and drip systems. They have a sales turnover of US $220 million with exports of US $193 million.

Netafim is different to most globally successful companies. The managing director gets the same salary (or budget as they call it) as the cleaner. Also, though they are able to pay outside workers, kibbutznik willingly work longer than normal hours in the factory to stay faithful to the traditional principle of self-labour. More than 95% of the people employed at Netafim are members of Kibbutz Hazerim or their two neighbouring kibbutzim.

We toured the Netafim factory and the general comfort level for workers was superb; fully air conditioned factory floor, all lifting and heavy work done by machines, ergonomically designed, excellent safety considerations, job changing as desired, right down to comfy chairs and a cappuccino machine. I talked to one young floor worker at Netafim who had initially started work there only to save money to travel the world. His loyalty and commitment to his work and Kibbutz Hazerim were obvious. He said to me "I never wanted to be a factory worker, but here it is different. I feel part of things. I have a future here and will come back after my travels."

Central to the theme of empowerment and the kibbutz is the General Assembly system of decision making. This system is common to most kibbutzim. Major decisions affecting the group are made jointly, with every member having the opportunity to put their opinion forward, often with hot debate following. At Hazerim a majority of 75% is needed to go ahead with a proposal. This system of decision making in kibbutzim is a truly democratic and inclusive structure that generates empowerment and community ownership.

The conditions at Netafim were in definite contrast to the less generous working conditions we saw at some of the other kibbutz factories, where capitalism was edging in, and most factory workers were not members of the kibbutz.
difference was obvious - the profit margin rather than the people was the number one consideration.

Things are undoubtedly changing for kibbutzim in Israel. Members are subject to greater economic pressures. They want to maintain a high standard of living, and provide a lifestyle and options that are attractive to coming generations. Today, light industry and tourism are common on nearly every kibbutz. Despite some clear successes such as Kibbutz Hazerim with Netafim, many kibbutzim feel economic pressure to become less cooperative and more structured. There is a definite move away from a pure socialist system towards capitalism. The need for great community strength and support, crucial to building a new Israel in the early years, is no longer obvious or urgent. As our speaker at Kibbutz Afikim said “in today’s world people are getting more selfish and that’s OK”.

The strength of the cooperative approach to agriculture and industry witnessed by our group in Israel has left a powerful and lasting impression. Leadership by the community as a whole, as demonstrated so well in traditional kibbutzim, appears to be the ultimate empowering tool.

It seems a shame that such a sense of community seems bound for compromise on many kibbutzim, yet Israel’s future system cannot fail to be enriched for having had such a powerful foundation.

Telling adults provokes reaction
Showing them triggers the imagination
Involving them gives them understanding
Empowering them leads to commitment and action
(Chamala 1995)
We had been travelling through Israel for almost a week, and the only animals we had seen were camels, the occasional cat and dog, and a single desert gazelle. We were told that tigers lived in the bare hills above the Dead Sea, but we were not sure how much of that story was legend. We didn’t see one anyway. A far cry from the rich wildlife of Australia.

Then we visited Gan-Garu Park, an Israeli tourist destination in the north of Israel. Here we saw lots of animals, but they all looked strangely familiar, kangaroos, cockatoos and emus - it was an Australian zoo!

Mr Yehuda Gat dreamed up the idea for an Australian wildlife zoo about nine years ago. He wanted to open a zoo for Israelis to see other animals of the world and chose Australian animals. Everyone thought he was crazy.

Mr Gat’s first hurdle was to convince the kibbutz he was associated with to invest money in his ‘crazy’ project. This took two years. He eventually persuaded enough members that the idea could work, and the kibbutz invested $700,000. It took the next seven years for him to convince the Australian Government that he had the ability to look after the Australian wildlife in accordance with Australian requirements. He then made three study tours to Australia to learn how to care for these animals.

His idea opened the door for tourism. Over 70,000 visitors came in the first year and in the second year they saw over 100,000 patrons who could relax in a natural environment that we take for granted. Most of these visitors were Israeli. Within two years he had paid back the $700,000 to the kibbutz.
Mr Gat now has plans to double the size of the park and incorporate a function centre. He has koalas arriving this year, and a field of bells planned for the future.

Many crazy ideas are a form of creativity. Perhaps creativity means crazy! What would we do without crazy people? Was Van Gough crazy or creative or both?

We need to listen to these crazy ideas, think with a creative mind and not give up on our ideas. The world is rapidly moving and if we don't listen to these ideas, the simple things like a park for the children of our future will be gone and forgotten.

So you think that I am crazy, watch this..........
Section Two described just a few of the examples of leadership we saw in Israel. While there, our group were privileged to visit an Allied cemetery in Be’er Sheva where Australian horsemen, fallen during the First World War, were buried. The courage and commitment shown by these Australians provide an historic and sombre reminder for future generations.

To mark the occasion with a show of respect, Wayne Hosking wrote the following dedication to the Anzacs of Be’er Sheva.
“Negev Wattles”

Ten thousand miles you roamed
No Southern Cross to lead you home
Just hope and thoughts of family spurred you on

Some too young to drink or vote
But not to die, in this remote
And lonely place you’d never known

We still hear the mighty thunder
Of the horsemen from down-under
On the final charge of man and beast at war

In the heat, the dust is flying
And Australia's best are dying
In the hope that we should have to fight no more

You shed your blood on Negev sands
That we might roam the foreign lands
In prosperity and peace with our new friends

And your bones, here in the dust
Forever calling out to us
To pay respects, ensure your legend never ends

So, though the century's nearly gone
In our hearts your deeds live on
You shall not grow old, as do those who still remain

And should we, the privileged generation
All so strive to serve our nation
Then your story will not be in vain

By Wayne Hosking ©1999

WA Rural Leadership Program – Future Leaders Course 3
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Armed with this inspiration we came home and looked at our own communities and started to think how we could also make a difference and use this new found knowledge.

Section Three—Making the Difference

Passion with Purpose — Leigh Hardingham
Communicating the Vision — Richard Sellers
Adding Value with People — Scott Goodson
Empowering People for Action — Terry Thiemt
Linking People for Power in WA— Tony Seymour
Mustering People for Action in the Kimberley — Bill Rucks
Changing for the Future — Kim Whitehall-Holla

WA Rural Leadership Program—Future Leaders Course 3
Passion With Purpose – Leigh Hardingham

All great leaders have passion

We witnessed many examples of great leadership during this course. Passion for a dream or vision was a crucial factor in the success of any project, but passion alone does not ensure that things will happen.

Passion without action will not change anything

Benny our guide in Israel had a passion. His was for his people, his country and his vision for a welcoming homeland for Jews throughout the world. There was no mistaking his passion. He shared his history, his culture and his vision with us without reservation. You could not help but be moved by his commitment to his goal of helping us to understand his dream for the state of Israel. To have this passion was remarkable, but to find his way to action was more remarkable still. Benny lived on a Kibbutz in southern Israel. He told us it was very hard to get a tour guide licence and he was very proud of his position. He talked about his need to share with us and have us hear his story. To us it was information, to him it was actioning his passion.

We must be accountable for action

Each one of us has skills that can be used by our communities and industries. Each one of us has ideas that could contribute to the advancement of our chosen field. Each one of us has the power to initiate change. But it won't happen unless we become accountable for our own actions and do something.

Personally, I have realised that while I accept I can make a difference, I won't unless I do something different to what I have always done. I must apply action to my goals and determine to make changes. This does not mean going full steam ahead and not being part of a team. It does not mean being dogmatic and not listening to others who may have a better or more appropriate idea for the situation. It does mean sharing...
unselfishly with others, stepping outside the comfort zone and being prepared for people who don’t share my vision.

Great leaders are people who create opportunities for passion to become reality.

Leadership is the unqualifiable process we use to help others achieve their goals. It can be supportive, collaborative, empowering, managerial or dictatorial. For goals to be achieved leaders must acknowledge the strengths of each person, the value of their personal vision and their desire to achieve.

I encourage you to examine your potential, look past what you are currently doing, believe in your ability to make a difference and commit yourself to actioning your passion.
Communicating the Vision – Richard Sellers

Without communication at all levels, nothing is going to happen

Beer and pizza are foods that would mean something to most people. They have been advertised at length, attached in varying degrees to assorted cultures and communicated through just about every medium available to reach this omnipresent status. What are the keys to successful communication? The communication of a vision requires interaction at many levels.

Bring the stakeholders with you

Recognition of the need for change is arguably the hardest concept to gain consensus on within a community or industry. Israel was famous for orange groves but during our study visit we only came across residual orange orchards. There had been a massive shift in the thinking and economics of the agricultural sector. For example at Hazeva in the Negev Desert there were greenhouses full of roses for the cut flower trade. These rose greenhouses illustrate the general principle of supporting new ideas that was evident at various levels throughout the organisations visited both within Australia and Israel. The communities and organisations studied were constantly reviewing their status and valued the investigation of new ideas and practices.

The building of an understanding within a community or organisation is one of the fundamental group or individual leadership roles. How is this achieved?

• an understanding of the current status,
• wide dissemination of information, and
• facilities for addressing perceptions.

Listening to and addressing to perceptions provides the way forward.
At Ben Gurion University the development of commercial varieties of high value cactus fruit illustrated leading by example. The feeling was that the cactus fruit would go nowhere as a commercial crop and it took a charismatic scientist to prove the worth of his idea and move from perception into reality, shifting farmers to his cactus varieties. The management of perceptions and building a group understanding allows the leader to focus strategies to move forward.

The Jewish National Fund (JNF) is an example of a group that has both a strong understanding of the status quo and has communicated the goals and vision of the organisation to all levels. The vision is to ensure the continuity of the land and for all people to feel some ownership of the land. While the JNF is unique in its form, the operation of the group is built around an ability to communicate the vision to the people and support projects at all levels.

**Using the learning**

Many industries and areas of government within Western Australia are already exhibiting improved communication and listening skills. There are business incubators and other innovative processes to lead beyond the current thinking. The Fishing industry is no exception with strong leadership within specific commercial fisheries and aquaculture, keeping Western Australia at the cutting edge of management for the marine environment.

The management of Western Australian Waters is at a crucial stage. While the current status is good, there is a perception that the ocean may follow a similar decline as has been observed in the terrestrial environment since colonisation. This is a real issue requiring community discussion on possible solutions.

Basic to this process will be the provision of information on the health of the ecosystem, current usage, roles of various government agencies and impacts of all users. It must be recognised that these systems are dynamic and the resulting strategies will manage change within the marine system at an acceptable rate. This is already being achieved for most commercial fisheries. The challenge is to manage the change for all users and to plan for the inevitable increase in population and the additional stress that this will place on our marine system.

The key to bringing the community along with government is:

- To listen to the various stakeholders' perceptions,
- Gather the required information to address the sectorial issues, and
- Communicate back to the various groups.

Leadership in this instance will require the settling of underlying issues that could cloud the vision of sustainable use for Western Australian waters. Communication is the key to the success of these endeavours.

**Leaders do not just have good ideas or the ability to recognise a good idea, they have the ability to communicate that idea to others and build a shared vision.**
Adding Value With People – Scott Goodson

Leadership is about value adding to our people.

Recognising the value of other people's ideas and talents is an important element in good leadership.

One of the most fundamental lessons we learnt during this course was the value successful people placed on the people that had helped them achieve their goals. Good teamwork was essential to the success of many of the projects we visited. Many people can contribute to the ideas, inspiration and planning required to achieve great projects, but good leaders recognise and encourage this in their teams.

We learnt this first hand at Merribrook during our team challenges. For some it was a hard lesson to learn, but it was important for us to grow, mature and succeed.

Our quest to improve the quality of life.

I am sure that each one of us strives to improve the quality of life for our families, our communities and ourselves. We care about the future we are handing on to the next generation. Have we left it better than we found it? Have we made a difference?

These are issues that surfaced time and again in Israel. They had a need to create a vibrant economy that could support all the Jewish people returning from around the world. Their daily existence is jeopardised by the constant threat of war, yet their dream and their will to achieve it for the next and all future generations, drives them to success.

Moving forward together.

Our rural communities have a positive future, if we make it so. We all have the ability to stimulate growth, encourage entrepreneurship, value add to our primary industry and create a lifestyle many will envy. To achieve this we must work together. It is not up to one person, one community, one region or one industry. It will require a joint effort by everyone who is passionate about our state, our people and our future.

We can start by working in our communities, sharing our dreams and helping others into action.

Communities need to be prepared to help themselves. With good leadership, willing team members and a common vision we can move forward together.
Empowering People for Action – Terry Thiemt

"Empowerment", just another buzzword, bandied around meetings the state over. Everyone knows that empowerment works, the textbooks say so, but how do you begin?

There is no denying that giving someone the authority to act delivers powerful, positive results. In our study, empowerment came to the fore again and again as being an integral part of successful leadership:

- George Burcher (Country Leather, Albany) sent a young Albany employee to America to successfully run his business interests there;
- Margaret Porritt (Feathers, Melbourne) realised that autocracy would not take her business through the difficult 80's to the 90's and instigated changes to build a championship design team;
- Penny & Kim Jewel (Thurley Herb Farm, Walpole) and Colleen Yates (Tecelote Chillis, Denmark) identified positions in their production lines that disabled workers could fill, and do well.

These people empower by having a vision that is shared and understood by all and inspiring enough for others to work towards. It is not enough to just direct the team, it is imperative that you adapt and change at the same rate, continue to search out new ideas and experiment with the support of your team. Don't be scared to be first at something.

Empowering your group can give time to move on personally. A natural progression – you can't empower and keep control. So recognise the time to move on, or stand aside, and keep the doors open for that next opportunity for empowerment. A lesson we all learnt at Merribrook and continue to practise today.

In Israel, we witnessed marvellous entrepreneurial risk-taking attitudes. The social structure creates advantages in collaboration at both a community and primary producer level. They exhibit a strong drive to solve their unique problems, and they solve these problems in a system of co-operation.

One of the flower growers we met had initially given over 5% of his land to a neighbour's idea, an idea which eventually led to a very profitable outcome for both growing Gypsophila. A far cry from the "keep it close to the chest" attitude often experienced in our own primary industry sector.

In Israel, new and feasible ideas with industrial and employment potential are fostered at a regional incubator level. Of 400 projects that have graduated from the incubators, 51% continue as independent companies, which compares with a 10% success rate in the U.S.

Total sales of these independent companies amounts to some $40 million. Of the projects that have come through the system, 40% have obtained commercial investments, amounting to a total of some $150 million. The annual budget of the incubators is $35 million.

At the Technion University in Haifa our group learned of professors and undergraduates joint venturing in commercial undertakings funded through a university development fund. Professors must undertake to repay 50% of their
personal profit to the university. This fosters that focus of R & D for commercial profit, not R & D just for more research funds.

Presently in Australia we commercialise approximately 9% of our Research and Development, compared to approximately 40% in Israel.

If we are to stimulate growth in our primary sector, then we have to bring the people, especially the young people back to the regions. This will not be achieved unless we can offer vibrant, viable communities.

By specifically directing research efforts toward required local outcomes, we could empower the people of the regions to:

- identify relevant research that would improve employment opportunities;
- attract investment to the region;
- cooperate to receive tax advantages on R & D;
- add value through targeted R & D; and
- put R & D commercialisation back to those who will get most out of it.

Keep the doors open for that next opportunity for empowerment, for therein lies the future of our regions. Celebrate your success and let your success attract attention, and through that, commercial success.

“Find a group to grow with, a mind to share even at midnight.”
Benny Vidal, Tour Guide and Kibbutznik.
Linking People for Power in W.A. – Tony Seymour

Strong networks and committed groups combine to provide a solid foundation to foster leadership. This empowers people to build teams of people so that they can be more effective in achieving their visions and goals.

Future Leaders, the Human Web or Rural Western Australia’s Future

Future Leaders Course Three continues the expansion of a group of people in Western Australia that are networking the nation and the world. This drive to network comes from people that are committed to inspire other people to do exceptional things for the benefit of rural Western Australia.

With a dynamic and rapidly expanding network of contacts and resources the Future Leaders Program (FLP) continues to be a unique experience. Both the people who contribute their leadership knowledge and time to helping the program and the participants in the program share in this experience.

FLP-Internal Linkages

Cross industry linkages have been created by the group since its formation. This has resulted in closer cooperation of industry sectors and has enabled group members to use networks to target specific issues effectively. The Fishing and Aquaculture Industry has gained a talented group of leaders that are committed to creating a viable sustainable future for their industry. Linkages have also been formed with previous course participants through Agriculture Western Australia and Fisheries Western Australia and other industry groups.

FLP-State Linkages

The diverse geographic spread of course participants has ensured that the course operates and represents a state perspective. The variety of backgrounds of the participants adds a dynamic and powerful blend of knowledge and experiences to add to the geographic diversity. The increase in activity of the Tropical Aquaculture Association is a result of these linkages.

FLP-National Linkages

Course participants sought industry leaders from around Australia to broaden the scope of understanding of the issues they were dealing with. Some have been able to attend national industry conferences during the course. This has continued to build networks that other people within the course have been able to benefit from. These national conferences have also exposed them to an international perspective. In some cases they were able to further develop these contacts during the international study tour component of the course to create new networks.

FLP-International Linkages

Building international linkages has to be the most exciting and rewarding part of the Future Leaders Course Three. The people the course participants were exposed to in Israel were outstanding and inspirational. This study tour component of the course introduced the group to the full potential of what is achievable with Leadership.
The lessons learned about vision, commitment, drive and teamwork will be the foundation of what future leaders will achieve for Western Australia. Linkages have already been created in the aquaculture, live export, clothing manufacturing and crop production technology industries. Potential exists to develop linkages in the community development, tourism and technology transfer system industries. Over time more opportunities will develop as the Future Leader network expands.

The Power of Group Linkages

The Kibbutzim Association is a good example of group linkages. The Kibbutzim is a social based community enterprise that originally started as an agricultural based enterprise. As community needs have changed the modern Kibbutzim have evolved into a dynamic industrial enterprise based community. The need for this change had been identified in the late 1970's as the Kibbutzim became aware that their communities could no longer be sustained by agriculture alone. Now many have large industries that dominate business in the Kibbutzim.

The best examples that we saw were Netafim® and Kafrit®. Netafim® manufactures drip irrigation systems and has factories on most continents. Kafrit® manufactures master batches and compounds for the plastics industry and supplies local and international customers. The success and failures of the Kibbutzim are shared through the Kibbutzim Association for the benefit of each other and some projects involve more than one Kibbutzim.

The success rate of technology transfer from technology incubators to industry is extremely high. This is due to the financial support projects receive and the relationship that industry has fostered to support technology development. An example of this is Technion Research and Development Foundation (TRDF) at the Technion University of Technology. This innovative manner of marrying university R&D with commercial success has already been described.

Israel's acceptance of Russian immigrants has accelerated technology and infrastructure development. The impact these people are having will drive Israel to the leading edge of technology development in the Middle-East and the world.

During Future Leaders Course Three, participants have made valuable state, national and international linkages and witnessed the commercial benefits of such linkages. It takes every link in the chain to make a vision come true, and we stand or fall by the weakest not the strongest link.

Our challenge is to form a strong, enduring network across WA to take Rural Australia forward into a thriving 21st century.
Mustering People for Action in the Kimberley – Bill Rucks

I have a dream

I have been personally involved with aquaculture in the Kimberley for some years. I have a dream to unite and propel the aquaculture industry within WA to a sustainable level of production. Before starting this course I had the passion and the commitment but I did not feel I had the confidence or the skills to make this dream a reality. I now know I have, and my only limitation is my own self-doubt.

But it's not only my dream.

Meeting the other members of the program in the same industry and seeing some of the obstacles I had come across were common to us all was very empowering. This gave me an insight into the links between us and I could see that if we worked together, we had a greater chance of finding solutions to these obstacles. I believe I am an important player in this process of facilitating these changes. Meetings and discussion of issues with prominent heads of government departments and industry leaders gave me more insight into the industry. The combination of my newly acquired skills and abilities, and the opportunity to meet with such people gave me confidence in my ability to put my point of view across.

Being “Out There”

Merribrook gave me the confidence to step outside the circle, and allowed me to do things I would not have done before. It enabled me to knock on the doors of key stakeholders. It has been empowering to have those doors opened and find that the people inside were accepting of my ideas.

Personally, the visit to Technion in Israel was a major milestone in the whole course. The reception and the openness of the staff were remarkable and for me to be accepted as a valued person in the industry was a very unique and invigorating experience. Seeing the potential links between the ideas and the commercial reality was inspiring.

Case studies on primary industry in Albany and Israel provided a big variety of styles of leadership. These case studies were essential to being able to get the full picture the impact of leadership upon the primary industries.

Given this new confidence I am taking the opportunities provided. The fact that I am putting myself in the position to be able to facilitate change is a very big part of my personal growth. To take the risk and step out on a limb and say “Here I am - use me.” Is a major step in the right direction.

So what has this meant in reality?

In May I contributed to the WA Conference on Tropical Aquaculture in the Kimberley, held in Broome. Speakers came from all over Australia and around one hundred people from the Kimberley attended. I presented a paper on my dream, which was well received. At this forum a number of us demanded to play a role in our industry.

I believe that part of addressing the problem within the industry is improving communication between the government and the man on the land. At present there is a huge gap and a poor understanding of the benefits of aquaculture to the community in general.
I am designing a flow chart which will help to bridge this gap between the bureaucrats and the people on the ground. This together with plenty of liaison with the public is required to elevate the perception of aquaculture in the community. It needs to be understood by the man in the street that aquaculture is not detrimental to the environment and that it can play a critical role in the development of regional areas in an environmentally sustainable way.

There have been other ramifications. Recently I was approached by the CEO of the Shire to utilise my leadership skills to help the community deal with a local issue. In return he offered his staff and facilities to aid me. He saw me as a catalyst for change, with the ability to get the community working together to bury their differences and work on a common goal.

Now it's up to me to exercise my newly found skills, and to promote growth within the primary industry sector of Aquaculture. To do this I will have to maintain focus and dedication towards my objectives. One of my objectives is to continue networking with our group and other future leader groups. I will be actively promoting interest in the Future Leaders Course in my own community, and supporting individuals interested in applying for this course.

We are the future of the primary industry and the primary industry is our future. Let's not be the wave but be the wave maker.
I have to question if any of the participants in this course really understood just what kind of self-development learning curve they were embarking on when they accepted the challenge to join Future Leaders III. Nineteen strong minded people from all walks of life, a myriad of vocations, with varying degrees of professional development under their belts, getting together to become a team!

In hindsight we can sit back and smile. However, throughout our leadership development there were many times when we wondered why we had subjected ourselves to this indepth journey of growth and self evaluation.

We all attended the modules leaving behind heavy work schedules and families that had to spare us. We gathered each month wondering what we were going to learn, and left each time with our heads spinning with new ideas and a lot of self discovery. Slotting back into a regular routine was difficult for most of us and more so for our partners who often found it hard to understand why we were so tired, drained or confused. Without their patience and support we would not have been able to complete the requirements to achieve the objectives set for us.

**Personal Growth -- Team synergy**

Throughout the difficult times we were spurred on by the desire to keep growing at a personal level and "not to let the team down". Our initial time together was spent analysing ourselves, getting to know the other group members, accepting others opinions and most importantly learning to work effectively together.

It's not a problem if you make a mistake. It's a problem if you don't learn from it!

To work cohesively together took a lot of trust, in others and in yourself. We had to learn new skills and practice these in front of each other without fear of ridicule. As our time together moved along our confidence in each other and ourselves grew. Seemingly impossible tasks, physical and mental, became attainable with the input of this diverse range of people. It was inspiring to listen to ideas bouncing from one person to another about how to tackle a problem. We always managed to find a solution when we shared ideas.

**Where to from here?**

"Make difficult decisions, venture into unknown territory, learn new skills and become a different operator. Embrace change."

*Margaret Porritt, Feathers, Melbourne*

I believe that I can speak for most of us when I say that the personal growth we have experienced has liberated our mindset. Some are already changing direction in their careers, others are still filtering the new information they have gained and are refocussing on their future. All have developed a stronger commitment to be part of the change and the challenges that face their industries, their towns, and their state.
"A change in focus is the catalyst for change."

We have changed and we are ready. Ready at many different levels to apply the skills we have developed. Ready to seek out and accept the challenges that need to be overcome to effect change.

Ready to make the difference.
The Beginning

This may be the conclusion to this report, but in reality it is the beginning. Why? Because after I read the accompanying text, it reinforced in me, that through our thoughts we have the ability to change the world. Eighteen people have completed the Future Leaders Course III, and all have the ability to create and lead positive change, both collectively and as individuals.

Leadership has come to mean so many different things over recent years – being the best, excellence, being decisive, seeing the big picture, having the best tactics to name only a few. It is a quality we are all constantly looking for but is becoming increasingly difficult to find. Is there a danger of not finding the true meaning of leadership at all? To answer that question we need to understand the nature of leadership. Every person called upon to lead has to develop their own way of understanding and practising it, according to their own style and the demands of their profession or community. I say this because leadership is not an event it is a process, one by which leaders influence others towards the realisation of a shared purpose or vision. This course has delivered to us the positive energy, opportunities and experiences to stimulate that endeavour.

I feel that in the past, we sometimes failed to grasp the essence of leadership that is relevant to our modern and dynamic society. Most of what is written or taught about leadership tends to focus on the behaviours, styles and traits, which are all very thought provoking, but all somewhat peripheral to the key factor – which is understanding what it is to lead. This course has focused on us gaining that understanding.

Leadership is about knowing; Knowing why we are doing what we are doing, knowing where we are going and knowing who we are. It is all about meaning and identity. It is about making the collaboration of individuals significant, meaningful and purposeful. Once this is understood, we then need to involve a great many skills that will connect the past, present and future and guide and explain the activities that will shape the way towards the shared purpose or vision.

The Future Leaders course jolted us into remembering who we are, what we believe in and why it matters. It opened up our inner thoughts and rekindled the desire to improve ourselves and the state, industry and the community we are part of.

So if the course provides this structure, then what of the people who are the participants? I have worked over the last six months with seventeen others whom I didn’t know previously. They have all inspired me, motivated me, but above all regarded me as part of their team. We did not require a “boss” nor did we want one - rather we found that for each specific task a leader would emerge usually because of the enthusiasm displayed. Other times a collaborative decision was reached; through every one recognising the value of their own contribution.

The individual reports as supplied by the participants, in this, our documented record of the last six months has outlined all of the key elements, supported by anecdotes, analogies and experiences that form this process we call leadership. The rural
sector of Western Australia is facing some ominous challenges. These are issues that can only be addressed by those that recognise the real picture and know what it is we are looking for. The participants of this course are ready for this challenge and are developing their strategies to deal with these issues.

We are people that are committed to improvement, have a high level of self-awareness and base our decisions on fundamental values. We are comfortable with uncertainty, we like to encourage debate on issues, but are not afraid of facing necessary conflict. We all understand the importance of communication and enjoy listening to others. Each of us strives to embody the qualities of courage, compassion, integrity, wisdom and discipline.

Leadership is about, formulating a vision for an industry, community or cause, and inspiring others to share and implement that vision; helping people link common values to achieve common objectives; demonstrating an attitude of “can do it” and being enthusiastic to the extent of being infectious. If this is the case, we are the people Western Australia needs to be watching in the future in order to achieve that underpinning objective of ensuring sustainable growth in our rural sector.

Collectively we are diverse both in profession and geographic distribution, so the impact and power of our group is immense. The challenges facing rural WA may be ominous but they can be addressed through innovation and courage.

We are eighteen people who aim to be at the forefront of stimulating change, taking on the challenges and supplying the energy to motivate others on both our professional and personal levels.

We will be the people that will make the difference.

Tony Hiscock
Stuart Adams

Stuart Adams has a Bach. Of Business (Agriculture) and is the managing director of iZWool International Pty Ltd.

He was raised on a wool growing property in Kojonup, attended Scotch College and then Muresk Institute of Agriculture. After completing his degree he returned to the family farm for four years, travelling Australia and parts of the world between the peak periods on the farm.

Whilst working on the farm, watching the situation in the wool industry worsen, he decided to pursue an idea of manufacturing pure wool thermal underwear suitable for the outdoor market. The wool used in the underwear was selected specifically off farm. He created his own company in 1997, iZWool International Pty Ltd. Stuart is using the company to illustrate to the wool industry the potential of vertical integration and the improvements in fabric quality possible from the concept.

The garments have slowly but successfully gained acceptance of wool into the outdoor market, Australia and worldwide. In 1997 there were only two companies manufacturing wool thermal underwear in Australia, now there are five, the Outdoor industry offers a large new world wide market for Australian wool.

Comfortable with being “Out There” Stuart’s interests include most outdoor pursuits with which he tries to trial and evaluate his new wool garments.

“I have gained a stronger understanding of my personal attributes and how to maximise them in group situations, I hope to use these skills to influence the Australian wool industry to respond to change quickly and constructively. “

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Jennifer Crisp

Jennifer is the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) Landcare Training Coordinator for WA based with Agriculture Western Australia in South Perth. This role supports NHT funded landcare workers in their jobs by coordinating and providing training in areas like group development, adult learning, and evaluation as well as for technical topics like catchment planning, hydrology and revegetation. Jenny has 10 years experience with Agriculture Western Australia as a general adviser (Manjimup), a chemical safety adviser (Perth), and more recently as a landcare development officer (Narrogin).

“What I hoped to, and indeed have gained from the Future Leaders Course are:
- improved personal leadership skills
- increased knowledge and understanding of leadership theory and principles
- practical tools/ tips for training courses
- a broader perspective of rural WA through the range of participants, case study development and the overseas trip to Israel
- and lots of new experiences and fun!

The ongoing challenge now is to seek out opportunities to put these new skills into action.”

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Trevor Dennis

Trevor is the Area Manager for CSPB, Wesfarmers Narrogin. Originally from Melbourne he has lived in Narrogin with his wife, Megan and child, Maddaleine Bently for the past four years. During his time in Narrogin he has become involved in the local community becoming the youngest president of Rotary in the State.

Trevor likes people and describes his job as having to drink a succession of coffees and eat beautiful home made scones while fertiliser is discussed. He attests to the hospitality of the farmers in this area. A hardened Melbournian, despite the inclement weather, he goes swimming every day even in winter! He loves the outdoors and is involved in SCUBA diving, camping, 4Wdriving, fishing, shooting and deer stalking.

"When I applied for the leadership course I had clearly defined goals, to gain new skills and meet new people. As the program progressed however I began to realise that it had a lot more to offer me. The exposure to people from different backgrounds and professions has expanded my horizon and given me new insights on myself and how I interact with other people.

With these new skills I hope to realise my potential to make a difference and act as a catalyst for positive proactive change in my community and my industry."

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Stephanie Fletcher

Stephanie is the Executive Officer at the Goldfields Esperance Development Commission. She lives with her three children Luke (12), Jamie (10) and Ben (7). Born and bred in Kalgoorlie she has a personal love, history and commitment to the Goldfields Region and the lifestyle it offers. Stephanie is passionate about life, determined to grow and prepared to take the risks required to do so.

“I applied for the program to gain further knowledge and experience to participate in all areas, including industry and community development. I also want to obtain skills and confidence that are required to participate in decision-making at all levels. I have gained much more than this.

If I had to describe the program in one word it would be AMAZING. Participation has taken away so many barriers for me, even though most of these were self-imposed. It has made me try things I thought were impossible or out of my reach. The training provided by the skills sessions, case studies, insight by guest speakers and experience of other participants covered a vast range of topics, too many to list.

It has allowed me to meet and become friends with wonderful individuals. I now accept different personalities, and have gained an understanding and acceptance that different people process information and decisions in a different way. Leaders come in all shapes, forms, and abilities. The methods applied are as varied as the individuals. Initially I truly doubted that I had leadership traits compared with the other participants. The recognition that we all are capable of leading increased my confidence immensely.

A naturally quiet individual, when roused I have been described by Trevor as 'The mouse who roars'. The treasured memory that I will take from here is of the friendship, respect and support that were shared throughout. I am truly sad to see it end, we may all be isolated from each other by geography but in this communication age this barrier is one made easy. I look forward to many reunions.

At this stage I can honestly say - I've got no idea where to next. The information and confidence provided to me since March is still filtering through. The changes that occurred to me, prior to starting the course, are those that they tell you not to do after coming home from Merribrook. So in some aspects I may already be ahead of some. No matter where I decide to go from here the confidence and skills provided will be with me. I look forward to my future in the unknown, secure in the knowledge that after participating in the Future Leaders Course - The world is our oyster and we all have the potential to find a pearl - or was that to become one?”

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WA Rural Leadership Program - Future Leaders Course 3
Marisa Gilles

Marisa lives in Carnarvon with her husband Mark and dog Ella. She is an import from Malta via the United Kingdom where she studied medicine. She is addicted to adventure and new opportunities coming to Australia in 1987 to do a Masters in Public Health in Queensland with fieldwork in the Solomon Islands, graduating in Malaysia of all places!

She ended up in Alice Springs because the plane stopped there. She came for three months and stayed for three years, fell in love with Australia and her husband and has never looked back.

She is passionate about living in rural Australia and feels very fortunate to be in her present job as Director of Public Health. The job is varied and her responsibility includes such things as, outbreak control, suicide intervention and sexually transmitted diseases. It also includes the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

"Carnarvon is a well kept secret, it has the best climate in the world, fantastic proximity to world class nature and a vibrant and enthusiastic community.

I am a gypsy with a love of adventure and since an early age I have loved to travel and experience new cultures and challenges. I have lived in small remote towns for many years and love rural Australia. I want to see it thrive. I believe that this initiative of Monty House shows vision and courage. This program has given me a better understanding of myself and what drives me as well as a comprehension of others and what drives them. I have never lacked passion or ideas but on occasions I have lacked the ability to communicate my vision effectively. This program has given me the permission to be me, whilst opening up a whole world of other ways of dealing with people so that I can unlock their creative energy.

My vision is to "Make a difference"; to enrich people's lives, to give people a chance, to leave behind a legacy of power to anyone I work with, to inspire people to achieve their vision, to work towards a freer, fairer, gentler world.

My present catch phrase is "Be reasonable, Demand the impossible."

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Scott Goodson

Scott is a Hydrographic Technician with the Water and Rivers Commission in Kununurra. He has lived in Kununurra for 10 years with his wife and two children. In this time he has been actively involved on a number of community groups including:

Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee, Kununurra and Perth.
The Lower Ord Community Advisory Committee
Voluntary Fisheries Liaison Officer.

It’s obvious where his passion lies, “fishing”.

This passion is often a function of leadership. He believes it is extremely important that community plays an active role in the future management of fish stocks in the Kimberley. Through his experience with the Water and Rivers Commission he has gained an excellent knowledge and understanding of the values of water resource management and the importance of protecting our waterways in the Kimberley.

“The Kimberley has been often referred to as God’s country; the people in the Kimberley see it as more than that and are keen to see the progression and growth of the area without compromising its important environmental and social, values.

I saw the leadership program as a unique opportunity to obtain the necessary skills in helping me work closer with the community in creating a better future for future generations. I have learnt much about myself and the people around me, which has helped me, build on my Kimberley vision.

The Kimberley is where it’s going to happen in the future simply because of the dedication and determination of Kimberley people.”

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Leigh Hardingham
Leigh is the Coordinator of the WA Rural Leadership Program. She lives in Corrigin and with her husband Kevin also runs a 26000ha farm. She is very active in community organisations and has a passionate interest in improving the quality of life in all rural communities. Leigh has considerable experience in the retail industry gained from starting her own office supplies and computer store in 1992 and adding a Retravision franchise in 1995. The sale of this business in 1999 allowed her to devote more time to projects that endorse her belief that we can maintain our population in rural communities.

Leigh was named the 1998 Corrigin Citizen of the Year in recognition of her community work as the inaugural chairperson of four community project groups and active working member of four others.

With three teenage children, Leigh is keen to ensure that rural Western Australia can offer a stimulating and socially acceptable future for the next generation.

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Tony Hiscock

Tony Hiscock, as Alcoa Farmlands Manager, is responsible for the major rural landholdings in WA for Alcoa of Australia. These total 17,000 hectares running 12,000 cattle, 7500 sheep and around 400 hectares for course grains. Tony has 27 years experience in agriculture and has covered many of its facets, both as producer and through his involvement in agribusiness. His mainstream expertise is in corporate property management, livestock breeding programs and agricultural project development at international and domestic levels.

Over recent years Tony has also developed a fervid interest in sustainable agricultural systems and his current role enables him to contribute to and demonstrate those practices to the wider community.

His position has given him the opportunity to contribute to a wide variety of local and state industry and community organisations and committees. Tony is committed to effective direction setting that will ensure strong and sustainable growth in regional Western Australia. Additionally, he is passionate about the future of the Western Australian red meat industry, in particular beef, and has at every opportunity tried to assist in ensuring its future prosperity.

“I have always aspired to be like those that have chosen to serve an industry, community, state or country. These are people that don’t seek recognition for their own self-satisfaction, but to assist them in their quest to serve. Quite often these are people who have dedicated their life to creating positive change or having an influence on its outcome. It is these people that understand the real picture and will in the longer term make the difference. These are true visionaries that want to communicate their ideas with others to form a shared vision, thus ensuring that the ideas are not lost. It is from this stage on that the challenges are met and the innovations flow.

This course has inspired me, given me confidence, and motivation. It has better equipped me with the necessary tools, where I now feel that I have the capacity to reflect the images of those that I aspire to. I feel I can now more confidently contribute towards “making the difference” that will ensure sustainable benefits to both the Peel region and red meat industry of Western Australia.”

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Wayne Hosking
Wayne lives in Geraldton with Ros and their 3 young girls. He studied aquaculture as a mature age student at Curtin University and the University of Tasmania, achieving the highest aggregate in each undergraduate year.

Wayne works as research officer for the Geraldton Fishermen’s Cooperative, exporters of live and processed western rock lobster, on matters of quality, health, survival and efficiency, from capture through to point of sale in South-east Asia, as well as extension of information and research results to fishermen, staff and customers. He works closely with Fisheries Research and Development Corporation researchers on the Rock Lobster Post-Harvest sub-program to address research needs of the lobster industry Australia wide, and serves on the Rock Lobster Enhancement and Aquaculture scientific committee as the independent scientist.

Wayne is a member of the Midwest College of TAFE Marine Industry Advisory Committee, working toward the establishment of an aquaculture and marine studies facility in Geraldton, and of a local environment group working on tree planting, recycling, and bush rehabilitation projects.

"Through the Future Leaders course, I have gained an insight into how to build consensus for positive change, an essential part of practical industry research and community work."

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Andrew Kikeros

Andrew is the Principal of Fish Unlimited an aquaculture consulting firm that has been actively involved in the development of the industry over the last decade.

"The greatest challenge I face is being a city boy bred and a country boy at heart. This is best reflected in the places I have lived and where my wife Jane and I aspire to be. Our inner city home is a self renovated 1910 weatherboard workers cottage which would better suit a rural setting not one with glimpses of city skyscrapers.

The majority of my professional work history has revolved around the theme of lifestyle through mediums such as youth training, community development, recreation and now aquaculture.

I have been actively involved with developing work skills and highly innovative training programs for the past ten years in youth affairs, tourism, landcare and heritage, recreation and aquaculture in urban, rural and remote communities. This work has been dedicated to encouraging rural communities and individuals in pursuing their goals in developing lifestyle industries.

Like most Western Australian's I have a love affair with the ocean and I sincerely hope that my work can result in young people being able to live and prosper in rural coastal communities."

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Susan Pitman

Susan is the Finance Manager for Exmouth Tourist Bureau. She lives in Exmouth with her husband Steven and three children Alyse 12, Sahra 10, Julia 8.

Over the last eighteen years she has watched Exmouth grow from a small country town with an American Naval Base and a prawn factory as its only major local industry to a town with aquaculture, world class tourism and increased sales to every business.

She is currently working on a project which will create a walk trail, which will be wheelchair accessible, from Exmouth to the town beach. This walk trail will meet up with a whale watch lookout and continue back in a full circle. The walk trail will be fully educational for local townspeople and tourists.

"To be a part of that change has been quite an experience. I believe that not only our town but our region is about to embark on bigger changes in the future and I would like to be prepared to "lead the way".

I believe that Monty House and his initiative in training "local people" to recognise opportunities within their communities is a giant step forward for our country into the new millennium."

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Bill owns and runs a reticulation business called Just Add Water Landscaping Service and has had ten years in the professional fishing industry and five years in industry-based work, including study at TAFE in Queensland.

Bill lives in Derby with wife Kath where they intend to build a large total recirculation system for growing Barramundi, Cheribin and Tropical Abalone. Connected to the system will be a large hydroponics system. Bill is also the newly appointed chairperson of the Tropical Aquaculture Association.

“One of my objectives is to continue networking with our group and other future leader groups. I will be actively promoting interest in the Future Leaders Course in my own community, and supporting interested individuals to go on this course.”

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Richard Sellers

Richard is the Program Manager for Commercial Fisheries, with Fisheries WA. Richard has a love of the aquatic environment and people and working within Fisheries WA lets him build on both these passions. Richard represents Fisheries WA on various committees ranging from the Western Australian Research and Development Committee to the committee investigating the proposed Jurien Bay Marine Reserve. Richard also supervises the management of all commercial fishing activities within Western Australia. Richard’s qualifications include a Bachelor of Applied Science (Biology) and a Graduate Diploma in Education.

“The Rural Leadership Program presented a challenging way to gain a different perspective into other industries within Western Australia and develop a network of like minded people. The most rewarding aspect was the opportunity presented on the course to reflect on the issues and interactions within other industries and to then use some of the ideas to solve long running issues within my own industry.”

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Anthony Seymour

Anthony is a management consultant and principal of Seymour Rural Management & Research, a rural management and agronomic consulting service currently servicing the south-west agricultural area.

Tony is currently involved with; WA Nuffield Farming Scholars Association, Secretary, Narembeen LCD Committee, Weeds in No Till Farming Advisory Panel, Narembeen St Johns Ambulance, Ambulance & Maintenance Officer.

His personal interests are flying, water skiing & golf. Tony also holds the following qualifications; Bachelor of Management, Orange Agricultural College, The University of Sydney, Nuffield Farming Scholar, The Worshipful Company of Farmers, 46th Advanced Agricultural Business Management Course, Wye College, The University of London & Associate Diploma in Farm Management, Orange Agricultural College.

"I have travelled extensively visiting Europe, the Middle East, North America, South America and Africa. I have also travelled widely in Australia and New Zealand. The majority of this travel has been done through Scholarships and Exchange Programs which has enabled me to develop a clear understanding of the issues of these countries and cultures.

I applied for the Future Leaders Course as I am committed to taking every opportunity that I can to develop myself, and through this be able to extend myself to create possibilities and make a difference in my personal life that will then be reflected back into my public life. Rural Australia needs to develop people with the skills to enable it to sustain it in a rapidly changing global environment and I make a commitment to be one of those people.

I have gained from the course the ability to work effectively with groups of people in leadership roles. I have become part of a network of people who are willing and able to lead change for the future of Rural Australia and I have further developed the ability to help lead Rural Australia into the future.

I want to apply the knowledge and skills gained from the future leaders program to make a positive contribution towards unleashing the potential of Rural Australia enabling it to develop new opportunities.

We have the People, we have the Environment, we have the Resources and we have the Desire, all we need to be is committed to just DOING IT."

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Fiona Shallcross

Fiona Shallcross is the Regional Coordinator for Doing More With Agriculture in the Kimberley and Southern Rangelands.

After completing an honours degree in Agricultural science at UWA, Fiona went on to become a Development Officer in Katanning which was followed by a move to Carnarvon to take up the position she is now coordinating. Fiona's background also lies within the region with her family's station 300kms north of Carnarvon.

"Before I started this course I did not see myself as a stereotypical leader. To me a leader was the person who was always up front putting their vision across and was generally the loudest. Now I know that this is not so. Every person has the capacity to lead. It is in all of us but we will show it under different circumstances and not at the same time. I found out that my capacity to lead lies in being a catalyst and taking a pragmatic and unobtrusive role in leading alongside those who are part of the team.

The Future Leaders Course was a fantastic learning experience as well as the opportunity to form networks around the world and within our own state. In the future I can only gain from the skills I have picked up from others and within this course. I see the knowledge that I have collected over the last 6 months as being integral to my job as a coordinator for Doing More With Agriculture and my vision to making a difference in the Rangelands and Kimberley."

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Kath is the co-manager of the Central Nucleus for the Australian Merino Society. Kath lives in Shackleton with her husband Vincent and family, and serves the following groups: Quality Assurance Inspector; Australian Merino Society, Committee Member; Australian Merino Society: Represent Central Nucleus, Committee Member; Australian Society of Animal Production, W.A. branch, 1994 – 1998, Chairperson; Education Committee, "Quairading- Our Town, Our Future", Committee Member; Sports and Rec, "Quairading – OTOF".

Kath has been involved in organising "Grazing Systems" seminars at Dandaragan and Kojonup. During her time with ASAP, she was also a Review Committee Member for the R.J. Moir Medal in 1996 & 1997. This award is presented annually to people (under 35) in recognition of the contribution they have made to the Animal Production Industry within Western Australia. She has also helped organise fundraising projects for the local Preschool at Quairading, and the Yoting/Pantapin Branch of the Australian Red Cross.

Kath has been involved with agriculture in one way or another all her life. From growing up on a farm, studying Agricultural Science in New Zealand, to working for the Ag Department in Katanning. Following that she was involved in a joint research project between CSIRO and UWA in Perth before her then fiancé and herself decided to return to the rural life.

Kath and Vincent along with her family, now manage the top tier of the Australian Merino Society – a co-operative of farmers with 750 000 breeding ewes, aiming for "superfine wool on a large-framed easy-care sheep."

"Having a reality check of three boys aged 3, 2, and 1, I find my time "torn" between becoming highly involved in our local community with pre-school and 'Quairading- Our Town Our Future' issues, the sheep and wool industry, and everyday farming. I applied to the Future Leaders Course for purely selfish reasons – I enjoy being around motivated people, and wanted to learn as much as I could from my group as well as State and International Leaders, and, in doing so, to become more effective in my own community. If I can motivate others to help themselves, then I believe I can contribute back what I have been given."

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Terry Thiemt

Terry Thiemt lives in Carnarvon with her husband Chris and their three children, Danika (11), Alexander (9) and Romney (8). Originally from Queensland, a working holiday brought her to Kununurra in 1979 where she married, and ten years on she moved to Carnarvon. In 1994 Terry and Chris opened a small business and have been operating Capricorn Business Services for the past 5 years.

A commitment to the future of the region has seen her involved in numerous committees including Chamber of Commerce, Mainstreet, Gascoyne Women, Lions, St Mary’s School Board, Yrs 11 & 12 Feasibility Study, Positive Carnarvon, Gascoyne Business Expo and the RRR Network. Last year she registered as an emergency foster carer.

"My parents were always involved in our community so I suppose I had my training there. I started on sporting club committees and progressed through kindy, school committees etc until I became involved with my present interests.

The future of any community relies on its members. If we sit back and let others make the decisions, then we have no right to complain about the results. I want a future for my children, the peace and security of growing up in the country but equal opportunity to the things that matter, education, health, lifestyle. Living in the country gives you a greater knowledge of what is going on, and access to the people who are making the decisions. I have always considered myself a bit of a worker, willing to do my share to get the job done but letting others steer the way. This course has changed that and I am now ready to take that next step and become the instigator of change.

While the change and personal growth of the entire group was amazing, the most important thing I have seen develop over the six months is the network. We all have very different backgrounds and interests and it has strengthened each of us to have close personal friends statewide to help in areas where we might be lacking. I applaud Monty House’s initiative and eagerly look forward to meeting graduates of the next two courses and developing the same rapport with them.

I would particularly like to thank my husband Chris. He is an incredible support to me always, but particularly during this course. He has managed to juggle both the business and the kids, leaving me free to give my undivided attention to the course.

If you need a contact in the Gascoyne, please give me a call."

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Kim Whitehall-Holla
Kim is a Table Grape Producer and Education Assistant in Carnarvon.

Originally from Perth, Kim moved to Carnarvon 18 years ago, and somehow this small rural community with its beautiful weather managed to capture her heart. Subsequently she met and married her husband who was raised in Carnarvon on the family banana plantation.

Their 20 acre property supports three families and it became apparent about 9 years ago that they had to diversify in order to survive. Previously like most properties in the district they produced bananas, mangoes, ruby grapefruit and a selection of vegetables to supply the domestic market. Producing so many crops proved labour intensive with an ever shrinking profit margin. Taking the bull by the horns, they launched themselves against the odds into producing the region's first commercially viable table grape venture and now have the satisfaction of being regarded by peers as consistent, quality producers of four grape varieties.

"Like a lot of women on the land I work part time off the property for the Education Department in a local primary school. I am passionate about the rights of my children and our community to have access to the education available to people in the city and larger country towns.

My community involvement is presently directed in this area due to the amount of people that leave here to seek the education they require for themselves or family members. The loss of these families has an enormous effect on the fabric of our community. I believe the solution, lies with younger community members like myself who are willing to take up the challenge to make a difference.

Participation in this course has enabled me to refocus and channel my energies into my community once again. I feel more equipped to identify and accept the challenges and opportunities presented to me and believe the skills I have developed and recognised will be called upon throughout my life."

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Acknowledgments

The group would like to express their sincere thanks to Kim, Marisa, Fiona and in particular Terry, whom as our dedicated team of editors, worked tirelessly in compiling this document, and to all the others who generously put in that extra time and effort to value add to this report. Additionally special mention to Andrew and Kath for their efforts in generating the audio visuals and organisation for the presentation evening.

Appreciation and thanks also needs to be extended to the family, friends and employers of us all for their support, encouragement and tolerance.

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Leanne Preston
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Margaret River

Jenny Jones and Gary Bevan
Bevans WA Pty Ltd and
Allerton Seafood Supplies
Albany

George Burcher
Country Leather Australia
Albany
Perry Spanbroek  
Farm Fresh Wholesalers & Retailers  
Albany

Margaret Porritt  
Feathers Boutiques  
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Steve Lodge  
Shark Bay Mullet  
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Steve Parsons  
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Midwest Seafoods  
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Darrell & Bruce Munro  
Munro's Banana Plantation  
Carnarvon

Trevor Flugge, AO, Chairman, AWB Ltd
It is found
in
a
Person