



OneHarvest Account Manager Tayla Field.



Tayla Field (middle right) pictured with the young farming champions participating in the Art4Agriculture program.

PAVING THE WAY FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN THE HORTICULTURE FIELD

Tayla Field has been extremely busy since graduating from university, after participating in two leading professional development courses for the horticulture industry, as well as conducting a primary school program and working full-time. In this edition of *Vegetables Australia*, Tayla speaks to Michelle De'Lisle about her journey so far, and what drives her passion for horticulture.

It has been a whirlwind couple of years for OneHarvest Account Manager Tayla Field.

Currently based in Brisbane, Tayla's role at salad producer OneHarvest involves working with major retailers and business managers as well as talking to distribution centres and buyers to make sure they receive correct, on-time deliveries of fresh produce. OneHarvest has four distribution sites around Australia including Brisbane, Sydney, Bairnsdale and Perth, with its own leafy salad growing operation located in Richmond, Tasmania.

After completing her Bachelor of Agricultural Science at the University of Sydney, Tayla relocated to Tasmania to work for OneHarvest and, at the same time, participated in the 2017 *Growing Leaders* professional development program (VG15030), a strategic levy investment under the Hort Innovation Vegetable Fund. And the learning didn't stop there – the following year, Tayla received a scholarship to undertake the *Masterclass in Horticultural Business* (LP15001), a strategic partnership under the Hort Frontiers Leadership Fund. She graduated from the class in December 2018.

BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

The *Masterclass in Horticultural Business* appealed to Tayla as it filled in the business knowledge gaps to assist in her current sales role. Described as a mini-MBA for the horticulture industry, the 10-month course focuses on several topics, including learning about the global trends in agriculture and horticulture, international business, innovation, value chains, and governance and risk.

Three leading agricultural-focused universities are currently involved in the masterclass, including the Wageningen Research

Academy in the Netherlands, New Zealand's Lincoln University and the University of Tasmania.

"I thought the scholarship was a great offering as it's probably not something that I would've been able to fund myself separately," Tayla says.

During the course, three face-to-face sessions with the participants were held over 2-3 days. This provided Tayla with numerous opportunities to network with members from other horticulture industries such as nurseries, cherries and fruit.

"There was a wide range of people in the group who were able to share their experiences, and when we visited other properties that weren't in their industry, they would ask questions you wouldn't often think of. Having that opportunity to listen and learn was really great," Tayla says.

"I've also gained an understanding of the business side of things; how to write a business plan and present it. It's given me key skills on how to understand a change management process, which is something that our business is working on at the moment. I was able to apply what we were learning and the modules to our business."

LEADING THE WAY

Tayla joined the *Growing Leaders* alumni in 2017, and she describes it as the first step outside her comfort zone.

"It was during the first year of my full-time job and it was pretty challenging. But I think the key thing that links the *Masterclass* and *Growing Leaders* is the group of people that you meet and the networks that you develop. *Growing Leaders* challenges you emotionally, but you find a sense of leadership that you didn't really know you had," Tayla says.

"The *Masterclass* is more theory-based, but with *Growing Leaders* I walked away with a fresh perspective and leadership skills.

"I think, leadership-wise, it was a big step up for me to do that. I got a lot out of the networks that I developed, and the feeling that you've really achieved something and you're going to do good for your industry."

Along with the skills that she developed while undertaking *Growing Leaders*, completing the program boosted Tayla's confidence to continue on her horticultural learning path.

"I think if I didn't do the *Growing Leaders* program, I wouldn't have been ready to take on the *Masterclass*. After *Growing Leaders*, I was looking for the next step – and that fell into it."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Tayla's passion for vegetables is evident, and she is spreading the word about the industry through the Art4Agriculture program.

Art4Agriculture connects primary schools with a young farming champion from all sectors of the industry including poultry,

Marketing Association (PMA) Career Pathways Program in her final year of university, which opened Tayla's mind to the industry.

"When I graduated, I thought I was going to go straight into a role in cotton. I think the pathways program and the horticulture subject in our last year at uni really shaped what I see as a horticulture industry," she says.

While moving to Tasmania wasn't easy, Tayla's enthusiasm for fresh produce grew (pardon the pun).

"It's a bit of a tough slog down there. But I look back now in my sales role, and I'm well-equipped to understand how the farm operates and the procedures; and how difficult and challenging farming can be, especially with the weather in Tassie," Tayla explained.

"I love the horticulture industry – I love how fast-paced it is; every day is different and I don't think that you get that in other industries. The crops roll over very quickly; they're very weather-affected. It's also great to meet a network of people who are very supportive in the horticulture industry, so that keeps driving my interest.

(Through the *Masterclass*) I was able to apply what we were learning and the modules to our business.

beef, wool, horticulture, cotton and grains. The young farming champions attend workshops and learn how to develop their story, which focuses on their involvement in the agriculture industry, and key focus areas relating to the sector that they represent. Students get presented with the "Archiebull" Prize, a life-sized fibreglass bull delivered to their school which they then decorate in their theme.

"The best part is being able to go to schools and tell your story to primary school kids. Seeing the level of engagement from them is really something special," Tayla says.

"We were also able to give one of the schools the opportunity to tour OneHarvest's Sydney factory, which was great."

PATH REDIRECTION

Tayla's path into the horticulture industry appears to be well-paved; however, it wasn't always that way – she completed the Produce

"But I love fresh produce – I think it's a great industry to work in, so I really enjoy it from that point of view and I can't see myself leaving any time soon. It's got something special about it compared to other industries."

INFO ^{R&D}

More information about the *Masterclass in Horticultural Business* can be found at hortfrontiers.com.au/leadership-fund.

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