



Training For the Protected Cropping Industry

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When the opportunity to develop and deliver a targeted education pathway for the protected cropping industry arose in 2017, the **Western Sydney University, NSW DPI's Tocal College** and **Tertiary & Further Education (TAFE) NSW** jumped at the chance to work with industry to create the skilled workforce they need.

The shortage of skilled workers, junior growers, middle-level greenhouse managers and senior growers is a constant frustration for the protected cropping industry and can be a barrier for future expansion for some growers. The training pathway currently under development aims to meet that demand with an innovative model that supports selected workers from a diploma to undergraduate degree with greenhouse specific units of study.

At the heart of the training model is an industry skill set composed of a masterclass program of units that will teach the high – tech skills needed for greenhouse horticulture. For example units of study will be in solution chemistry for hydroponics, plant physiology, postharvest/food tech, on-farm research skills, greenhouse environmental control systems and

greenhouse engineering.

Diploma level learners coming to the masterclass will be trained at the University of Western Sydney's state of the art greenhouse facility, giving them exposure to both a high tech training environment and to life at a university campus.

The training model allows for multiple entry and exit points. Students can commence the pathway at the Diploma level and will be supported to continue to the Protected Cropping Skill set gaining advanced standing towards a degree. The model also provides an opportunity for degree students to upskill in industry identified units of study.

The success of the education pathway lies with the protected cropping industry in supporting targeted workers to undertake the training. At this stage of the project development input from industry is particularly required to ensure that the training developed will provide the skills required to meet industry need now.

For further information and to register your interest please contact Michelle Sr michelle.sr@nsw.gov.au







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