



TRAINING A NEW GENERATION OF HORTICULTURE SPECIALISTS

ECG McMillan is providing a new model of training for the horticulture sector where businesses can, for the first time, access specialised training developed just for them.

Operating campuses at Warragul and Leongatha, ECG offers certificate to diploma level training in horticulture, arboriculture, rural business management, and conservation and land management.

It has developed several course-firsts with industry, including a nationally accredited Production Horticulture (Hydroponics) training course, and a Diploma in Horticulture specialising in Potato Production.

Head of Rural Studies Babis Lagos said ECG had taken the step to break away from the 'one course fits all' approach and is working with specific industries to develop niche or specialised programs one by one.

"Another development to our horticulture program is taking training for supervisors and managers into their workplaces so they learn management skills on the job rather than having to leave their workplace for training.

"The program has attracted participants from across Victoria who are employed in parks and gardens, golf clubs, landscaping businesses, nurseries and more.

"The beauty of this training model is that ECG trainers work with staff on site in their workplace and receive training that directly relates to their work role."

The Plant Management Company (PMC), which provides landscape management services to large scale projects has 15 staff currently undertaking Certificate III and IV level training with ECG under this model

PMC's Byron De Kock said the training was beneficial in building a skilled workforce and retaining workers by providing career advancement.

"Many of our staff began at the entry level and through on-the-job training have advanced into supervisor or management roles. Good training also helps us to market our business because companies that use our services know our staff are qualified and have expertise."

Mr Lagos said ECG's on-the-job training model for trainees and apprentices has had great success.

22 year old Tamara Duncan from Paradisia Nursery in Officer is passionate about developing her skills and expertise in the specialised field of growing exotics and carnivorous plants.

She is receiving on-the-job training, through ECG, for a certificate 3 qualification with ECG trainer Kerry Jolly visiting her regularly to put theory into practice.

"Through this training, I am broadening my knowledge and understanding of horticulture and applying that to my day-to-day work which is really beneficial. I am learning so much at Paradisia

that I would not have learned at a regular nursery, such as working with plants under quarantine, plants in the laboratory, carnivorous plants such as nepenthes and pitcher plants, as well as orchids and bromeliads.”

Paradisía is a recognised leader in the industry with nurseries in Officer, Narre Warren, and Garden World at Keysborough, and has established national and international markets.

Paradisía Company Director Jenó Kapitány said Tamara had shown a real commitment to learning the business.

“To have ECG trainers come to us is an added bonus because it means Tamara’s work is not interrupted and the training relates directly to the work she is doing. “

Mr Lagos said ECG courses focus on developing very clear career pathways so that people can move from certificate to diploma or advanced diploma level courses and advance their careers into management or senior level roles. ECG’s diploma courses also open the door for graduates to gain credits to 2nd year university courses if they choose.”

“ECG Courses are tailored to all levels to assist new entrants, those working in industry, and managers seeking to take their skills to the next level, as well as tree changers and hobby farmers wishing to learn skills applicable to their farms.”

For more information on courses at ECG McMillan visit www.ecg.vic.edu.au or phone 03 5622 6000.



ECG Horticulture trainer Kerry Jolly assists Tamara Duncan in the bromeliad nursery at Paradisia with supervisor Lyda Ryal.