

# National Farmers Federation Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program 2021

Angela Atkinson, Berry Industry Development Officer - Vic & SA

The Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program (DiALP) is a mentoring opportunity designed for aspiring female leaders, 25 and over, with a passion for agriculture, and has been running since 2018.

The program matches successful applicants with a mentor who they work with from May to October. With their mentor, each mentee establishes their leadership goals, outlines steps to achieving these goals, and puts in place steps to measure progress towards these goals.

The program is supported by leading agriculture-focussed organisations who have joined with the National Farmers Federation (NFF) in committing to make meaningful change towards gender diversity within the leadership ranks of their industry.

A cohort of 12 skilled, talented and ambitious women, professionals in areas as diverse as station management, animal science and international trade were selected from over 100 applicants, to make up this year's NFF DiALP. These women have embarked on an intensive one-on-one mentoring program, to help them set their leadership goals and identify the role they want to play in the future of Australian agriculture.



Miffy Gilbert, one of berries' own representatives, and CEO at AusBerry Farmers in the Yarra Valley, is among those selected in the 2021 group. Miffy sits on the industry-based boards of the Victorian Strawberry Growers Association and Strawberries Australia Inc.

**Miffy Gilbert.**

Photo credit: Denise Wisken Photography

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**I am so thrilled to be selected to be part of this program. Every participant is already so impressive in their own right and the alumni of the DiALP program are also amazing in what they have gone on to achieve. My leadership journey began in the nursery and garden industry, moved to FMCG, and now I feel like I am really thriving amongst a great group of strawberry growers who appreciate what I add to the conversation.**

According to NFF President Fiona Simson, the Program is making a difference, creating the pathways and networks needed to ensure gender parity in the roles that would shape the agriculture of tomorrow. DiALP graduates have gone on to hold industry board positions and to be changemakers within their sectors and communities.

The 2021 Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program cohort were welcomed to Canberra in June for an introductory retreat, where they met each other and their mentors, and heard from inspiring speakers.

“Like in previous years, the Program attracted a high volume of very high calibre applicants, and I am left in no doubt that the future of our sector's leadership is bright, if as an industry we continue to foster the development of our people,” Ms Simson said. “I congratulate this year's group and I look forward to getting to know these 12 outstanding women and supporting them on their leadership journey.”

Miffy said, “Having commenced the mentoring component of the program, I would highly commend the program to aspiring women leaders and those trying to consolidate some early runs on the board.” The Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program is a flagship initiative of the NFF, supporting the NFF's goal to double the number of women in agriculture leadership by 2030, based on a 2018 benchmark.