

# EMERGING LEADERS

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## Ryan Sherry Harvest the Fleurieu, South Australia



Ryan's family have been growing strawberries for 40 years, with the family first experimenting in Blewitt Springs before expanding out to Kuitpo Forest. The family now run two separate businesses – Harvest the Fleurieu at Mt Compass, and a commercial strawberry farm Kuitpo Forest Strawberries at Kuitpo.

After working at the commercial strawberry farm for 6 or 7 years, Ryan now manages Harvest the Fleurieu, while his brother Adam runs the farm at Kuitpo. Harvest the Fleurieu is a multifaceted business, comprising a berry farm, u-pick berries and a Market Hall and café showcasing local produce. At Mt Compass, Ryan grows a range of berry crops including strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, tayberries and cherries, and is trialling hydroponic production with raspberries and blueberries in coir, and strawberries in coir in a gutter system. Part of the business is pick-your-own berries, and while the majority of strawberries are grown in the ground, Ryan is planning to put in wheelchair accessible pick-your-own strawberries in gutters on tabletops. Berries grown on the farm at Mt Compass supply the farm shop, local markets and are also sent to the commercial farm at Kuitpo to be packed and sent to interstate markets. Ryan manages the operations of the farm at Mt Compass, while his wife Allis manages the café and Market Hall.

Ryan received one of the Emerging Leaders Bursaries to attend BerryQuest, and most of his family attended as well. A highlight of the Emerging Leaders Program for Ryan was the final day, where the young growers participated in a full day's workshop with Cynthia Mahoney to better understand their leadership styles, and how to communicate effectively with differing personality types in the workplace. Ryan said, "you need a healthy balance of everyone to run a business". The workshop was also an opportunity to see how the other growers work and get some different perspectives.

Ryan is now the South Australian representative on the Strawberries Australia board following this year's AGM.

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## Kon Piliouras Mt Barker Strawberries, South Australia



Kon's family have been growing strawberries in Mt Barker since 1980, when his grandparents started Mt Barker Strawberries. Since leaving school in 2018, Kon has been working in the business with his father, George. Kon says the best thing about farming is being able to work outdoors.

Mt Barker Strawberries grows around 1 million plants on 100 acres, in the Adelaide Hills. Most of the production is Cabrillo, with some Albion being grown as well.

Kon was the youngest of the Emerging Leader Bursary recipients, and says he learned a lot from attending BerryQuest in July, and is keen to attend the next BerryQuest in 2025. His favourite presentation at BerryQuest was the weather expert, Eric Snodgrass, and Kon was impressed with how accurate he was with his predictions of cool, wet weather on the east coast of Australia for the coming season.

**If you missed BerryQuest, you can read more about Eric Snodgrass and his weather forecasts on PAGE 46 or visit: [youtu.be/4MFPU3oyN80](https://youtu.be/4MFPU3oyN80) to watch Eric's presentation from BerryQuest.**

Kon said it was great to hear presentations on new chemicals, new strawberry varieties and other new technologies.

Instead of the workshop on the final day of BerryQuest, Kon joined the farm tours, and really enjoyed visiting Taste 'N' See and seeing how their hydroponic system works.