

Next Level Leadership Paper No 1 - Spring 2021

A New Mindset and Skills needed
to Lead the Future of Agriculture

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Written by
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RURALSCOPE

PEOPLE | CHANGE | RESULTS

About The Next Level Leadership Papers

Our Next Level Leadership Papers are a short read. They aim to inform, challenge, empower and encourage strong transformational leaders across the Australian agricultural and rural sectors and beyond. We aim to challenge thinking and transform future leadership practises - just what industry needs to lead innovation and sustainability into the future.

A new Paper is released each season and shared widely (and freely) as a service to industry leadership and development.

The Papers are independently authored and produced by RuralScope. www.ruralscope.com.au
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Introduction

Hello there,

“There is no room in the future for leaders that are only technically proficient – effective future leaders will be those who take responsibility for finding and bringing out the potential others.

We are entering a much more collaborative leadership stage as opposed to a positional leader stage which is what agriculture is built on.

Leadership is about others, not just about yourself or the title or position you hold. It's necessary to get out of your own way as a leader and support others to come on board, together much more can be achieved than alone.

This does require a set of skills that are new to many”.

Taken from a recent article in Spotlight, the magazine of the Australian Cotton Research and Development Corporation, the article is about how the future of cotton is in its emerging leaders hands and in particular how planning for the future means giving people the skills to lead an industry.

Shortly after this article was published, I was contacted by the Chair of a national agricultural industry peak body who read this article and hence the quote above and congratulated me on it's relevance to their sector. This is the catalyst for this season's Next Level Leadership Paper.

I hope you'll read this paper with an open mind, a growth mindset and take away something that supports you to have a discussion, challenge a current practise, ask a question or guide a colleague, staff member to choose a new way and give it a go!

With regards

Jo Eady

Director, RuralScope Pty Limited



Driving Change

It's my view that a whole new playing field exists for leaders across agricultural and rural sectors. It's about change. We can look to the internet as a key technology that's driving change. People have access to more information than ever before. They can make contact, communicate and exchange ideas, literally with anyone. Information is no longer 'locked' and available to a few, ie those who hold positions of power. Instead, those who have a particular interest in a topic can find their own groups of support and collaboration, both on and offline. By doing so, these people can use their personal power to become influencers of action and change. This is leadership.

A New Mindset

The leadership model where power and decision making rests with a few who hold titles, executive roles and positions of power is being overtaken by those with personal power, persuasion and influence. We need to take a look at our current mindsets. A mindset is a way of thinking, it's about how people see themselves and those around them. Carol Dweck, a Professor of Psychology at Stanford University identified two mindsets – the fixed mindset and the growth mindset. You can have both types. To lead yourself effectively and others, it's the growth mindset that will serve you best.

So in our agricultural and rural sectors this means we need to let go of certainty and embrace uncertainty and become comfortable to lead when the future is unknown. We need to accept that progress is more important than perfection. And that when things fail or don't go to plan, resilience is built and we need this in spades. This resilience is essential to be able to continue to lead through adversity.



Compliance to Collaboration

We need to shift our mindset, and quickly, from a world focused on compliance to that of collaboration.

Although collaboration can be seen as a little messy (people with different views) and a bit arty rather than science based, without it the technical specialist / expert will be left standing with few rather than many around them. And with great information that lacks visibility and adoption.

Collaboration is an important key that underpins courage cultures and communities. It's needed to support a shared vision and investment in action that brings about sustainable change and innovation.

Visioning

We all have the capacity to dream, to mentally create a vision of change and a better future.

Somewhere along the way, many of us have become conditioned to look back into the past, to recount and evaluate and then focus on what needs to happen in the present.

The most effective leaders create a vision and then create a shared vision. This is best done via courage communities and cultures where people buy in and support a shared vision.

This reflects a growth mindset and allows people to 'comfortably' navigate and find their place of belonging in times of uncertainty.



Vulnerability

It's time to let your walls down! Gone are the days where one President, one Chairperson, one leader is expected to know it all. You know the ones. Those who stand, deliver and 'tell' you how it is and how it's going to be.

Instead, it's about being willing to let others have their say, allowing contribution through collaboration and trusting in yourself and in others that together you can create pathways forward. And in doing this, a key outcome is the development of a whole lot of people who have ownership of the shared vision and direction. These people are keen and committed.

And will they be allies and come on board to share the message of change? You bet they will!

Courage

In a fast paced and changing world, leaders will need to let go of the 'comfort and control' mindset and adopt the 'courage to collaborate' mindset. This means leaders will no longer be silent about difficult or hard things and will invest time and energy on collaborating to create an outcome that is acceptable to industries and communities as a whole.

Dr Brene Brown, renowned social science researcher states 'you can't get to courage without rumbling with vulnerability'.

The role of a leader is to create courageous communities and courage cultures. These are places where individuals feel a strong sense of belonging and can actively contribute to change. These are places where people can ask a 'silly' question and rumble with complex issues. And in these, people, communities and industries will thrive.



The Author - Jo Eady

I founded RuralScope in 2000. I knew there were thousands of Australians working across agricultural supply chains and in rural communities that could be more effective in their roles if they had access to quality leadership and professional development. RuralScope evolved to address this need. We have now grown to become a leading provider of people development for Australia's agricultural and rural industries.

I'm known for facilitating innovative change and building and supporting leaders as individuals as well as across groups, businesses and industries.

Since 2000 I have supported over 5000 clients on their leadership journey via programs, workshops, coaching and mentoring. I have developed and delivered whole of industry and company leadership programs as well as facilitated the formation and strategic direction and plans for a range of industry bodies.

I love working with leaders to help them facilitate better in their own lives as well as their work and the lives of others. I hold qualifications in education, applied linguistics, management and coaching / counselling.

I'm equally at home in the paddock and the boardroom and was recently described as the secret ingredient for many successful agricultural leaders.

5 Ways to Lead with Heart

Visit www.ruralscope.com.au and sign up to get the latest from leadership specialist Jo Eady – fortnightly tips, tools, insights, news, announcements and more to give your leadership a next level edge!