AUSVEG

20 November 2026

Storey Hall, RMIT University - Melbourne City Campus
Building 16, 336/348 Swanston St, Melbourne VIC 3000

Hort Business Summit

Addressing the complex operating environment for horticultural businesses

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An initiative of:

AUSVEG

Event Partner:

achmea Farm Insurance

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NEXTGEN Group

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Speaker Sessions

Welcome: Bill Bulmer, Chair, AUSVEG

Opening Address: Julie Bird, Chair, Hort Innovation

The Economics of Farming & Business Strategy

The New Normal of Vegetable Growing: What will it take to remain profitable?: Thea Walker, Farm Business Consultant, Planfarm; and James Beveridge, Senior Consultant, RMCG

From Washington to Werribee: How Global Events Are Reshaping Australian Horticulture: Michael Whitehead, Executive Director of Food, Beverage and Agribusiness Industry Insights, ANZ

Ag Tech Alchemy: the Science, the Mystery and the ROI: Tim Carnell, Co-founder/Director, AgSixty

Agribusiness, Mergers & Acquisitions: Cameron Bacon, Partner & National Head of Corporate Finance, Grant Thornton

Panel Discussion

PANEL DISCUSSION: The Future for Energy Pricing in Australia, and What Will the Energy Market Look Like in 2036?

Emmett Williams, Head of Commercial Solutions, Flow Power; Tony Wood, Energy and Climate Change Senior Fellow, Grattan Institute

Practical AI for the Horticulture Sector: Phillip Guthrie, 3EC

PANEL DISCUSSION: Securing a Reliable Workforce for Regional Australia

Michael Rogers, CEO, Agri Labour Australia; Lisa Chesters MP, Member for Bendigo; Pennie Patane, Director, Patane Produce; Brent Ferguson, Head of National Workplace Relations Policy, Australian Industry Group

Future of Farm Insurance in Horticulture: Emma Thomas, CEO, Achmea Farm Insurance

PANEL DISCUSSION: What does a National Food Security Strategy mean for the vegetable industry?

Patrick McClelland, Director, MGR&Co; Ed Fagan, Owner, Mulyan Pty Ltd; Emma Thomas, CEO, Achmea Farm Insurance

Industry Sustainability

Growing Forward - Succession for Family Businesses: Catherine Sayer, CEO, Family Business Association

From Checkout to Farm Gate: Using Retail Data to Support Better Decisions: Wendy Hubbard, Consumer Insights Manager, Hort Innovation

Rectifying the Retailer-Supplier Imbalance: Neil Rechlin, Founding Partner, NextGen Group

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