

SEARCH CRITERIA

Model	Model B: Programmed learning Model
Industry	Community, business, primary producers
Focus/Level	Community, industry
Delivery Mode of Learning	Action learning, Adult learning
Outcomes	Business management, personal capacity building, leadership
Special Interest Groups	Other

1. PROJECT TITLE:

Building Rural Leaders Foundation Program

2. FUNDERS:

The development and presentation of this project is funded by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries. Participants pay \$440 (including GST) per module or \$2640 for the whole program. Food, travel and accommodation are on top of this. It is estimated that individual investment in the course would exceed \$3000 over the nine month period (Plowman, 1998). Primary producers and people involved in primary production are eligible for funding through Farmbis. Eligible people receive 75% subsidy to cover registration and food.

3. PROVIDERS:

The modules are presented by DPI staff and specialist guest presenters. The administrative centre of the project is in Brisbane. Staff are based in Toowoomba and Brisbane.

4. KEY CONTACTS:

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5. INDUSTRY/ISSUE/GEOGRAPHY:

In 1991, the Building Rural Leaders Foundation Program emerged because a group of central Queensland rural producers associated with the Centre for Agricultural Technology saw a potential in the regions that they felt was not being realised.

Three factors were seen as necessary to move the region forward and these were personal development of the regions people in:

- Effective leadership at all levels
- Strategic and creative thinking and
- Business management.

In 1994 the project was funded.

Up to July 2002, 40 Foundation Programs have been run throughout Queensland. Over 800 people have commenced with a completion rate (for all six modules) between 60-75%.

6. PROJECT CONTEXT:

The project is set in a context of declining economic return in the central and south west Queensland yet the region had in it rural producers who were wanting to rebuild and change the activity in the region to ones that were not just more profitable but more suited to those areas.

Since commencing as a Program focussed on primary producers, it has attracted people from small business, community sectors, state and local government. Where the majority of participants was previously primary producers, at present primary producers may make up half (or less) of the total participants.

Building Rural Leaders Foundation Program is designed for individuals who are seeking skills to enable them to work with others and advance themselves and their business, industry or community. These include those:

- ◆ currently in leadership roles and who are committed to improving their leadership capacity
- ◆ who would like to move into leadership roles
- ◆ who need leadership qualities in their business, industry and community
- ◆ who contribute towards leadership through other roles

7. PROJECT NICHE (SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES):

When the Program was first develop the objectives were:

- Effective leadership at all levels
- Strategic and creative thinking and
- Business management

At present we are reviewing objectives in line with the changing needs of our clients build skills and confidence, and the capacity to provide strategic and proactive leadership to individuals in businesses, industries and communities.

In particular, BRL focuses on:

- ◆ Leadership via strategic and lateral thinking, planning and action
- ◆ Problem solving for leadership
- ◆ Increasing customers' capacity to act by taking personal responsibility
- ◆ Promoting the use of Action Learning to enhance leadership skills

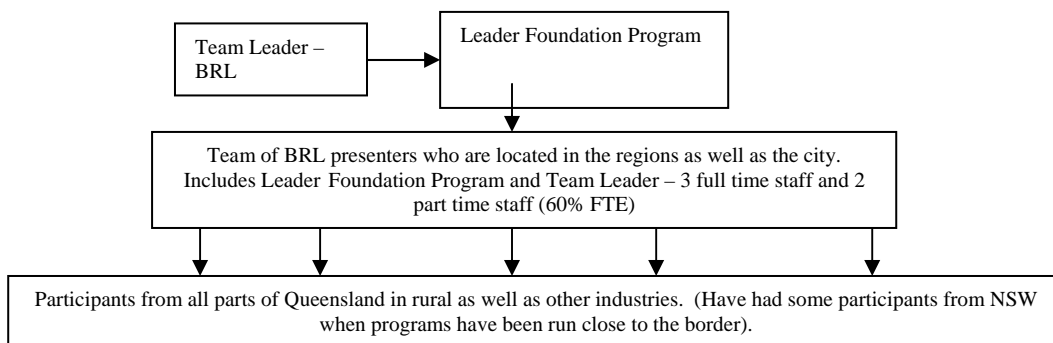
Effective leadership at all levels - strategic and operational

8. PHILOSOPHY/APPROACH:

The program is built of the principles of action learning and adult learning and Kolb's experiential learning cycle is used to structure the workshops. The point was made that "producers relate well to learning by doing".

A key principle is of "transformation not just information." Participants are encouraged and supported to apply the information and learning to their lives to bring about positive and planned change. All participants are allocated into action learning sets who meet regularly to support and challenge each other. The action learning sets are a key factor in helping people put plans into action.

9. RESOURCES, MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING STRUCTURES:



10. PROCESS/METHODS USED:

The material was delivered using a workshop approach. Six modules are presented over a 9 month period. There is a gap of six weeks between each module.

11. IMPACTS TO DATE (AND EVALUATION APPROACHES USED):

An evaluation of the project was done in 1998 and some key results with regard to impact were:

64% respondent reported and increased involvement in industry, one had created a new industry in her area by diversifying from growing lucerne to growing herbs.

57% had increased their involvement in the community. Some increased their effectiveness even if they did not increase their involvement.

There was a network and bond created among the participants at the time of the workshop.

With regard to personal development:

95% increased their self confidence

91% improved their relationships with other people.

77% increased their interest in on going learning.

12. EFFECTIVENESS:

The evaluation report and anecdotal information from participants who have completed the course is that it has been effective. The most obvious effective is the creation of new industries, the personal development of the participants that has led to their greater confidence and involvement in the community, and the networks and relationship built by attending the course.

13. PROJECT DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE:

Plowman, Ian 1998, *Building Rural Leaders: an evaluation*, QDPI.

14. ISSUES:

Funding:

As the Program attracts more community people who may not be eligible for funding such as Farmbis, funding is becoming an increasing issue. Community people who may be interested in attending have to pay full fees and out-of-pocket costs when the community may be the main beneficiary. This is a significant obstacle to attracting community leaders (not eligible for Farmbis or other funding).

Length of Program

The success of the Foundation Program comes from continued focus and support over a long period of time. Regular feedback is received to shorten the program. While this is possible, the same outcomes may not be possible. A process for designing programs tailored to needs of specific groups has commenced. The aim is to offer these programs by early 2003.

15. COMMENTS/CONCLUSIONS:

The course has changed the lives of many of the participants. They changed their enterprises, took on new and different roles or changed their mind set. It seemed to create a confidence on many participants to go out and look for opportunities or make much of those that presented themselves.

16. REVIEW METHODS:

To date there has been one external evaluation of the program. This was done in 1998 by Ian Plowman for QDPI. He used convergent interviewing to collect data. That is a method by which interviewers collect data from participants until a picture emerges. They continue to interview until no new data emerge. Case studies of a number of participants are also used as part of the evaluation.