Women in Agriculture: my journey and our future

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2019 RD Watt Memorial Lecture
Fascinated with nature and animals, even from an early age
My journey

2003: Human pharmaceuticals
2005: Australian Lot Feeders’ Association
2007: Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
  • National Landcare Program
  • Sustainable agriculture
  • Soil RD&E Strategy
  • Water Infrastructure
  • Meat Exports + Codex Alimentarius
  • Live Animal Exports
  • Cabinet support
  • Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals

2018: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Imagining the future

- Disruptive technologies have developed at an accelerated and exponential pace, and Australians are early adopters
- Workforce transitions have rapidly risen, favouring people with specialised skills

Imagining the future

- Local institutions and organisations increase in relevance as Australians lose trust in big institutions
- People are reconnecting with their local communities, buying local and relying on community services

Imagining the future

- Political destabilisation worsens, with constant changes of leadership and government, leading to people becoming frustrated with political institutions.

- Highly personalised social media ‘echo chambers’ have supplanted traditional sources of news and current affairs, resulting in polarised and partisan coverage becoming the norm.

- Australians are increasingly taking control into their own hands and directly shaping policy on the issues that matter to them most.

Imagining the future

- Political, economic, environmental and social instability accelerates.

- Trade wars and protectionism prevails, tensions remain high and multinational agreements and international organisations break down.

- Nations are turning inwards, and people expect and trust their government to advocate for their interests and keep them safe and secure.

The Australian Public Service is making progress...

**30 June 2008**

- Total: 58%
- Senior leaders: 42%

**30 June 2018**

- Total: 59%
- Senior leaders: 51%

... but the agriculture sector is not

Women make up only 18 per cent of industry representative boards

Only 15% of rural companies have formal diversity strategies
What can we do?

- Reignite the conversation
- Value flexible working
- Embed cultural change
- Encourage visible role models
- Focus on inclusion
- Create a picture of success
Thank you!