**ASK THE TAFE TEAM**
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With Resources & Infrastructure Faculty Director, Debbie Jackson

**Question:** We’ve been on our property for many years and it is a lifestyle and passion that gets in your blood, but, the kids have grown up and we constantly hear media reports on knowledge management and succession planning. Should we be doing something about this? How do we get started?

**Answer:**

It’s never too soon to start! Knowledge management begins with your children, asking them what they want for their future. If they want a future on the property you need to share your knowledge, listen to their ideas, value each other’s opinions and work together to form a plan for the future. This is not an overnight process, it takes years.

You need to be disciplined though, as parents we often think we will get around to telling or teaching our children particular things and we don’t make the time to actually do it properly or at all. Before you know it days have become years, and you will have missed the opportunity. Treat knowledge management as a lifelong process.

Knowledge management should be the first stage of your succession plan. Establishing strong and positive communication, and listening, is critical to this. Succession planning is developing the potential in your children who wish to continue on the property. Succession needs to give opportunities to the next generation to become experienced and capable in making the leadership decisions in the primary production business. You then need to work with them on how you wish to contribute, or be involved in the future, or when you plan to exit to start on your next adventure!

Opportunities to develop your children’s knowledge early and foster strong communication with them might include employing them as a school based trainee during Year 11 and 12. Encouraging any post-school children who wish to pursue a farming career, either now or into the future, to undertake a Diploma of Agribusiness Management is also another opportunity. This could be done in conjunction with undertaking further university study or whilst undertaking a career in another field, with the plan to use all those skills on the property in the future.

We strongly recommend that when looking into succession planning, that you seek the professional advice from accountants, financial planners, agricultural consultants and lawyers.

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Disclaimer: The comments provided in this article are general in nature only and are not a substitute for professional advice. The author accepts no responsibility for any action taken by a reader in relation to this article.

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**Photo Caption:** Debbie Jackson and her family on their property.

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