

## THE HYDROPONIC FARMERS FEDERATION CONFERENCE



Presented by the Hydroponic Farmers Federation Inc.  
4 - 6 May 2026  
Pullman Melbourne Albert Park, VIC



### DRAFT PROGRAM

*Presenters, timings and session allocations are subject to change*

MONDAY, 4 MAY 2026		
Time	Topic	Location
4.00pm – 5.30pm	Registration Desk Open	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby
4.00pm – 7.00pm	Trade Exhibition Open	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby
4.30pm – 5.00pm	Guest Speaker <i>TBC</i>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
5.00pm – 7.00pm	<b>WELCOME FUNCTION</b> Canapes and drinks provided  Sponsored by:   <b>VAN DER HOEVEN</b> Horticultural projects  <i>Sponsor Address by Van der Hoeven Horticultural Projects</i>	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby

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TUESDAY, 5 MAY 2026		
Time	Topic	Location
8.00am – 3.30pm	Registration Desk Open	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby
8.00am – 5.00pm	Trade Exhibition Open	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby
8.30am – 8.50am	<b>Official Opening and Welcome</b>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
8.50am – 9.20am	<b>SESSION 1</b> <i>Speaker TBC</i>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
9.20am – 9.50am	<b>SESSION 2</b> <i>Regional Development, Aus Veg. Strategy for Future Incursions</i> <b>Daniel Bosveld</b> Regional Development Officer, AusvegVic	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
9.50am – 10.20am	<b>SESSION 3</b> <i>Seeding, Scaling &amp; Sustaining Talent in Controlled Environment Ag</i> <b>Kelli McDougall</b> Managing Director, Agri Talent and Global People Solutions	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
10.20am – 11.00am	<b>MORNING TEA</b>	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby

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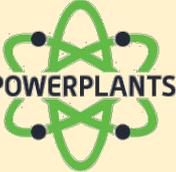


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11.00am – 11.30am	<p><b>SESSION 4</b> <i>Innovation From EU. Does it work in Australia? Investing in High Tech</i></p> <p><b>Timo Kleijwegt</b> Sales &amp; Product Manager, Certhon</p> <p><b>Alastair Delooze</b> Oceania Regional BDM, DENSO Automotive Systems Australia</p>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
11.30am – 12.00pm	<p><b>SESSION 5</b> <i>R&amp;D Grants Explained. How to get some \$\$\$</i></p> <p><b>Jonathan Zime</b> Senior Director – R&amp;D, Alvarez &amp; Marsal Australia</p>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
12:00pm – 12.10pm	Sponsor Address by Powerplants	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
12.10pm – 1.30pm	<p><b>LUNCH</b></p> <p>Sponsored by:</p> 	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby
1.30pm - 2.00pm	<p><b>SESSION 6</b> <i>Calcium Absorption Under Stress Conditions: Mechanisms, Limitations and Practical Solutions</i></p> <p><b>Zenon (Zen) Kynigos</b> Crop Science Technologist, Prodoz International Pty Ltd</p>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2

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2.00pm – 2.30pm	<b>SESSION 7</b> <i>Sundrop Grower Story</i> <b>Steve Marafiotte</b> Chief Executive Officer, Sundrop Farms (TBC)	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
2.30pm – 3.00pm	<b>SESSION 8</b> <i>Beyond the Scissor Lift: Automating the Future of Pollination</i> <b>James Currie</b> Co-founder, FTEK	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
3.00pm – 3.30pm	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby
3.30pm – 5.00pm	<b>SESSION 9</b> <i>Aspects of Protecting Your Crops Grower Panel</i> Hosted by <b>Chris Millis</b> Chief Operating Officer, Flavorite Group  <i>Panellists TBC</i>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
6.00pm – 6.30pm	Conference Dinner Pre Dinner Drinks	Grand Ballroom Lobby
6.30pm – 9.30pm	<b>CONFERENCE DINNER</b> <i>To be entertained by special guest Brian Nankervis from Rockwiz</i>  Sponsored by:   <i>Sponsor Address by A&amp;D Weighing</i>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2

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<p>From 9.30pm</p>	<p><b>AFTER PARTY CELEBRATIONS...</b> <i>"Hoe Down Throw Down"</i></p> <p>Sponsored by:</p> <div data-bbox="488 835 663 1010"></div> <p><i>Sponsor Address by Enza Zaden Australia Pty Ltd</i></p>	<p>Grand Ballroom Lobby</p>
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WEDNESDAY, 6 MAY 2026		
Time	Topic	Location
7.30am – 2.00pm	Registration Desk Open	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby
7.45am – 8.45am	<p><b>BREAKFAST (sit down service)</b></p> <p>Guest Speaker: <b>Michael Simonetta</b> Director, Perfection Fresh Australia</p> <p>Sponsored by:</p> 	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
8.45am – 2.00pm	Trade Exhibition Open	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby
9.00am – 9.30am	<p><b>SESSION 10</b> <i>Weather Forecasting, Growing to your Conditions</i> <i>Speaker TBC</i></p>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
9.30am – 10.00am	<p><b>SESSION 11</b> <i>Melbourne Markets Marketing and Communication</i> <i>Speaker TBC</i></p>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
10.00am – 10.30am	<p><b>SESSION 12</b> <i>Speaker TBC</i></p>	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2

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10.30am – 11.10am	<b>MORNING TEA</b>	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby
11.10am – 11.40am	<b>SESSION 13</b> <i>Labour Management and Recruitment (Palm Scheme)</i>  <b>Nicky Mann</b> Manager, Family Fresh Farms	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
11.40am – 12.40pm	<b>SESSION 14</b> <i>Seed Industry Innovation Panel</i>  Panellists: <b>Darren Wood</b> , ANZ Commercial Lead - Vegetable Division, Bayer Crop Science <b>James Bertram</b> , Account Manager, Rijk Zwaan Australia <b>Keimpe Veenstra</b> , Regional Sales Director, Enza Zaden <b>Bill Brown</b> , Mainfreight  Moderator: <b>Graeme Smith</b> , Graeme Smith Consulting	Grand Ballroom 1 / 2
12.40pm – 1.40pm	<b>LUNCH</b> <i>including Award Judging for best trade booth</i>	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby
1.40pm – 2.00pm	<b>Conference Wrap-Up</b>  Platinum Sponsor address by Rijk Zwaan  Award Announcements  Special thanks to the trade, speakers, delegates and organisers	Exhibition Area, Grand Ballroom Lobby