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Who are the Australian Master TreeGrowers?

*Guidelines for the development and delivery of regional
Australian Master TreeGrower courses.*

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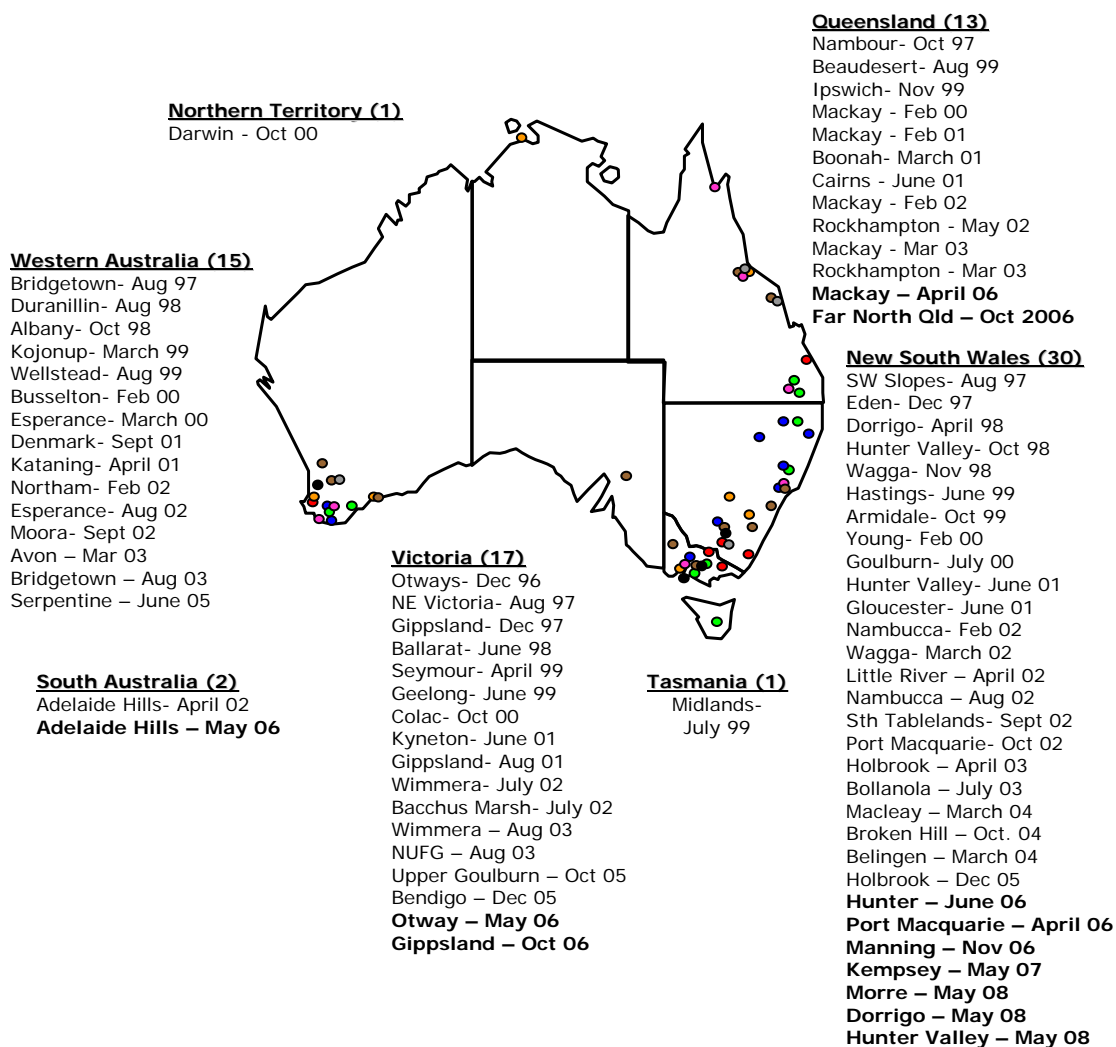
And many other organisations, agencies and individuals across Australia

Who are the Australian Master TreeGrowers?

In 1996, with support from the Myer Foundation, I ran the first Australian Master TreeGrower course in partnership with the Otway Agroforestry Network. Most of the participants were farmers but there were also nurserymen, contractors, government extension agents and Greening Australia field officers. Over the next year courses were run in Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Based on the success of this pilot program the RIRDC/LWRRDC/FWPRDC Joint Venture Agroforestry Program have been funding the program since 1998.

Seventy-nine regional courses have now been conducted around Australia involving more than 1500 participants and 30 partnering organisations. Land and Water Australia have recently come on board providing additional funding to broaden the program to involve native vegetation management more generally. We are also continuing to provide professional development, regional and national workshops, information networking and ongoing support for past participants.

Over the next few years we expect to run many more regional courses across Australia. Whilst every program is different, reflecting the different issues and opportunities in each region, there is a commonality in purpose and style. This booklet outlines the Australian Master TreeGrower course framework and philosophy and provides advice and suggestions for regional partners interested in running an MTG course in their area.



Locations of the 79 Master TreeGrower Programs conducted between 1996 and 2008

What is the MTG Program?

The Australian Master TreeGrower Program (MTG) is more than just a short course in forestry for farmers. It is a comprehensive extension package focused on ensuring that the development of forestry and native vegetation management on farms is driven by the aspirations and opportunities of Australian farmers. The program encourages farmers to truly aspire to be ‘master tree growers’ in their own right and provides some of the skills, support networks and confidence to launch them on that lifetime journey.

The aim of the MTG is not as simply as just increasing the area of farmland under trees. It certainly does not promote particular species, products or planting patterns. The MTG does seek to enhance landowner participation in the design, management and evaluation of appropriate vegetation management options for their own circumstances. If establishing and managing trees and shrubs does offer farmers real economic, environmental and social opportunities we would expect an increase in the forest cover on farms and improved forest management.

After more than ten years and seventy five regional programs the impact of the Australian Master TreeGrower Program on farm forestry in Australia is now clearly evident. Participants talk of increased confidence about their own farm forestry activities and greater awareness of opportunities. They value the knowledge, skills, networks and experience provided by the program and the recognition of their experience that being a Master TreeGrower provides. As a result of the program many more farmers are taking an active role in farm forestry development at a regional, state and national level as part of landowner groups, regional and state planning committees and private organisations.

The significance of the title 'Master' is in the acknowledgment of the knowledge and experience that the participants bring to the program and the potential they have to influence others within their region. A master in any field will concede that they can never know it all. Master TreeGrowers recognise that knowing the right question to ask (and who to ask) can be more important than knowing an answer. And, they appreciate that every farm and every farmer is different so what is right for one may not suit another.



Rowan Reid discusses silvicultural options with Master TreeGrower participants

MTG regional courses

Based on experience gained from running courses across a wide range of farming landscapes we believe we have a practical and valid framework for the design and delivery of the program. While ensuring there is consistency in the intent and content of programs the framework allows sufficient flexibility to incorporate local situations and the aspirations and needs of both the participants and regional supporters.

In practice, the MTG program is a short regionally based educational program (of approximately 50 hours), in agroforestry and vegetation design and management for farmers with the aim of:

1. Improving the design and management of agroforestry and native vegetation projects on participants' own properties.
2. Helping participants understand the interests of governments, catchment authorities, industry groups and community organisations in agroforestry and native vegetation management and encourage mutually beneficial partnerships.
3. Facilitating the involvement of participants in the development and promotion of agroforestry and native vegetation management within their region by providing a wide range of knowledge, skills, experiences and networking opportunities.
4. Assisting regionally based forestry and natural resource management professionals by providing: the opportunity to work alongside leading researchers and practitioners; links to a range of national and state information and support networks; and, the opportunity to build strong personal relationships with a group of committed local landholders.

A three-way partnership:

Melbourne University – Regional Organisations - Participants

Each regional MTG course is presented as a partnership between the University of Melbourne, the participants and one or a number of regional partner groups or organisations. The regional partners maybe landowner groups or networks, government agencies, catchment management authorities, non-government organisations (such as Greening Australia, Landcare groups and Australian Forest Grower branches) or industry bodies.

Each partner has a particular role and responsibility:

The University of Melbourne

As the national MTG Program provider the University of Melbourne is responsible for overseeing the development and delivery of all regional courses to ensure quality of content and consistency in approach. To assist in the development and delivery of regional MTG programs the university provides the following support:

- Information on the MTG program via the web (www.mtg.unimelb.edu.au), publications such as this and presentations at conferences, meeting and field days.
- Participation in regional planning meetings to help partners plan and promote MTG courses in their region.
- Attendance and presentation at least two (usually three) of the days during each course (see below)
- Provision of resources for regional partners and participants including books, measurement tapes, hats, gate signs and certificates.
- An evaluation of each regional course based on participant surveys
- Development and presentation of follow-up support including access to information networks, refresher programs and MTG events.

I usually present the following:

Day 1.

- Topics - Introduction to the Master TreeGrower Program
- Balancing conservation and profit
- Designing tree planting and forest management project

Day 3 or 4

- Topics - Tree and forest measurement (the Australian Master TreeGrower Tape)
- Tree and forest growth
- Introduction to Silviculture

Day 8

- Topic - the economics of tree growing and forest management
- presentation of MTG certificates and Signs

I am also available to provide short presentations on other topics that may be of relevance to particular groups such as: stock shade and shelter, shelterbelt design and crop responses.

The national MTG program is also able to cover the costs of specialist presenters from outside the region particularly those who have undertaken research funded by the Joint Venture Agroforestry Program or Land and Water Australia.

The Regional Partners and local course coordinator

Each region must nominate and support an appropriate regional coordinator. Coordinators have included leading landowners, agency staff and employees of regional development programs. Planning and delivering an MTG program often fits neatly into the work program of regional extension agents. If such people are not available funds must be raised to employ a suitable coordinator. In some cases sponsorship has been raised locally to fund key individuals to act as regional coordinators on a part-time basis. It is important that regions do not underestimate the amount of work involved (see budget section below).

The regional coordinator

The role of the regional coordinator is to:

- Liaise with the University of Melbourne before and during the program
- Engage with regional stakeholders and sponsors to ensure adequate funding is available
- Prepare the course program, engage appropriate presenters and organise all venues, field tours, catering, notes, transport etc (as required).
- Help promote the program and organise registration of participants.
- Take responsibility of the day-to-day running of the program and the safety of all those involved.

The job of regional coordinator can be busy task but also very rewarding. It is difficult to say how much time it will require. It is certainly easier for those who already know many of the presenters, field sites and landholders. Some of things we think help make the programs successful are:

- Avoid the temptation to fill up the program with lots of presenters. It is often best to have no more than two key presenters on any one day and to encourage them to stay with the group for the whole time and participate in discussion and debate.
- Have indoor presentations in the morning and a field trip, tour or other activity in the afternoon
- Provide a good variety of food and good coffee!
- Allow plenty of time during breaks for people to talk amongst themselves and with the presenters
- Provide clear maps for all field trips

- Be aware of the need for participants with children or other responsibilities.
- Consider having a 2-day event which includes an overnight stay. This allows the group to visit farms or other interesting sites out of their immediate region and seems to work well during the second half of the program.
- Discuss the possibility of visiting the participants own properties as part of the program. This has proved to be one of the highlights as the groups learn from each others experience.
- Try to prepare the presenters who are new to the MTG program.

The MTG program puts great emphasis on involving local ‘experts’ or ‘specialists’ so as to reinforce links between participants and those within the region who can provide ongoing support. Presenters should be made aware of their audience's experiences, interests and likely requirements and encouraged to provide practical information supported where possible with notes. Whilst many presenters are happy to provide their services freely and welcome further contact with participants we support the payment of a fee to non-participating landowners whose properties are visited during the program or others who would not necessarily gain from their involvement.

Master TreeGrower programs are conducted within regional communities rather than from educational institutions. Participants are drawn from within a geographical catchment based on climate, social networks, farming systems, markets and farm forestry opportunities. Presentations are often held at a range of venues across the region such as community halls, government officers, farm sheds and even in people’s own houses so as to allow easy access to farms, forests and businesses for field tours.

The Participants

The program aims to support those individuals, particularly farmers, who have demonstrated a commitment to the establishment and/or management of vegetation on their properties and have a desire to learn and to share their experience with others. The selection of participants can be by invitation or nomination. Promoting the program through the local press or radio is useful but may mean that the coordinate needs to spend time explaining the purpose of the program to those who respond. I like the idea of promoting the first day as a try-before-you-buy. It seems to make it easier for people to come along and learn about what is proposed.

Between 20 and 30 is considered a manageable number of participants for any one program to ensure effective group dynamics and program viability. Partners and other family members of those participating in the program are often encouraged to attend as they wish.

Participants are usually asked to pay a registration fee of about \$100. The actual fee needs to be set by the regional group at an amount they feel is acceptable, although the national coordinator must approve the final figure. This money stays with the region to help pay for facilities, morning and afternoon teas, transport, copying and other course related expenses. Coordinators should negotiate options with participants to avoid unnecessary or unexpected costs: they may, for example, prefer to use their own vehicles rather than hire a bus, or pack their own lunches to save on costs.

Participants should make every effort to attend all sessions, be willing to share their experience and ideas with the group and treat other participants and presenters with respect. The final decision on whether a participant is awarded a certificate and gate sign is up to the regional coordinator. If a participant misses a number of sessions the coordinator can take into consideration their local experience and past involvement in regional landholder groups. They may even encourage the participant to ‘make up’ the lost sessions by organising an event such as a field day on their own property (if not already visited) or preparing a report or presentation for the other participants.



Farm North Queensland Master TreeGrower inspect a tropical rainforest timber plantation

The Master TreeGrower Course Framework

In a short course it is impossible to cover all aspects of tree establishment and vegetation management. The program does however provide participants with guiding principles, locally relevant information and some of management tools to help them develop and evaluate projects for their own farm or to assist others. Because encouraging the development of a peer group of active growers with strong links with regional specialists and industry is a critical outcome it is important to allow plenty of group discussion time.

The MTG Program is not an alternative to traditional field days or skills based training courses. Neither should it be seen as an introduction for novice growers. The course has no formal accreditation although it is possible to arrange for participants to gain skills based accreditation (at an additional cost) in some areas. At the end of the program participants often identify further training needs such as chainsaw use and tree felling, whole farm planning, or business courses.

The MTG program has developed a framework for regional courses to follow. This is to ensure consistency and uniformity throughout Australia, while at the same time allowing individual regions adapt the content to suit their particular situations. How regions 'fill-in' the basic framework is flexible and will depend on regional land management constraints, the interests of regional partners and the requirements and interests of the participants. Whilst it is important to have developed a comprehensive program for the early part of the course it is also important to remain flexible so that participants are able to direct the content of the later sessions. It is not unusual to begin the course having not firmed up the dates, venues or speakers for the latter days.

It is assumed that the emphasis of most regional programs will be on the design, evaluation and management of multipurpose forests on farms that reflect in the interests and aspirations of the landholders and regional stakeholders. Depending on the market opportunities within the region participants may be interested in the production of commercial tree products or the provision of off-farm environmental services in return for financial support. Alternatively, they may simply wish to establish and manage forests to support agricultural

production, improve their property value, enhance wildlife habitats or control land degradation. We believe the program framework is flexible enough to ensure all participants find the course valuable irrespective of their interests.

Although the basic framework sets out 8 one-day sessions totalling around 50 hours, regions may wish to adapt this structure to suit their own circumstances (such as a mix of evening seminars and afternoon field trips). In order to allow for participatory learning and reflection the program should be delivered over a period of at least a month, preferably two. This also allows time for adapting the course content and for participants to build relationships within the group.

MTG Program Format

PART ONE: Mastering trees on farms

1 day

Purpose: Raise the profile of the MTG program amongst regional partners, sponsors, industry and landholders within the region and identify potential co-investors and participants. Introduce the concept of multi-purpose forest design and management and identify participant aspirations, interests and information needs.

Possible program for Session 1:

- Regional MTG coordinator introduces themselves, the local sponsors and the University of Melbourne presenter (Rowan Reid).
- Rowan presents an introduction to multipurpose farm tree design and management using case studies
- Morning tea
- Rowan invites potential participants and regional stakeholders to share their interests in trees and native vegetation management then introduces the MTG program
- Regional coordinator leads discussion about possible course content, dates, venues, costs, transport options and safety on the course.
- Lunch – Participants sign up to the program and receive a hat, books and folder of local notes, maps and contact information.
- Field trip to the properties of one or two key participants or past Master TreeGrowers in the region to inspect multipurpose management. Landholders conduct the tour with notes if possible covering their motivations, experience and plans. This provides other participants with a clear idea as to what is expected of them when they present their experience later in the program.

TIPS FOR THE 1ST SESSION: Select a venue that is comfortable, easily accessible, has adequate parking and is not closely aligned with a particular organisation (neutral territory). Weekdays are usually best starting after 9.30 to allow people to get children to school. Prepare a list of participant's names and addresses to be compiled and distributed (with their permission). Name tags are useful especially for the first few sessions. Provide good food suitable for a range of tastes: set the standard by providing lunch thereby encouraging people to stay together. Ensure plenty of time is available for introductions and sharing of experiences in a relaxed environment.

PART TWO: Farm trees for conservation and profit 3 days in total

Purpose: Introduce and review markets for wood products, non-wood products and environmental services; provide participants with skills in tree and forest measurement; and, provide theoretical and practical information on the biology and management of forests for the provision of products and services.

Session 2 Markets for tree and forest products and services

This includes visits and presentations covering local, regional and national tree and forest products and services sought by industry, government or the community. The emphasis is on off-farm consumer and stakeholder needs, product and service specifications, demand and supply trends, pricing, and trading mechanisms. Topics could include timber, non-timber products, water, carbon credits, biodiversity values and community concerns and will reflect local opportunities and the interests of participants identified on Day 1. Presenters might include regional catchment management authorities, forest product processors, water authorities or others who are potential purchasers of the products and services provided by farm trees and native vegetation.

Possible program for Session 2: Presentations by local industry, agencies and community organisations then tours of processing plants (sawmills, export facilities, water treatment plants, tourism enterprises, local craftsmen, bush food processes etc). The aim is to identify the market opportunities and trading methods for a range of possible off-farm products and services that arise from the establishment and management of trees and native vegetation on farms.

TIPS FOR THE 2ND SESSION: Many processing plants are noisy with small areas. Try to get an overview from the guide before entering the plant. An introduction to the process and techniques may be beneficial. Concentrate on industries that are realistically within the capability of the landowners involved and relevant to their interests (transport distances, scale, land quality). Don't try to cover all markets for forest products and services in a single day. It is better to use a couple of examples to illustrate the importance of market specifications then incorporate other visits and presentations into later sessions to cover other opportunities.

Session 3 Tree and forest measurement

Discussion and practical exercises in tree and forest measurement including the use of the Australian MTG diameter tape provided to each participant. Methods and techniques will reflect product and service options: Wood production, carbon accounting, biodiversity values, recharge control etc.

Possible program for Session 3:

- Rowan presents an introduction to tree and forest measurement and distributes the MTG tape to participants – emphasis will be on measuring standing biomass and competition in forest stands in relation to wood production, carbon sequestration and other product options.
- Other presenters may be asked to cover specific product (such as bushfoods, fodder, essential oils etc) or environmental service measurement (such as monitoring biodiversity, water quality or recharge control).
- Field exercise in tree and forest measurement.
- Return inside for review of data and presentation on the principles of forest growth and management (Rowan and others).

TIPS FOR THE 3RD SESSION: This session is used to introduce the tree and forest management principles and therefore the ideal field site maybe one with at least 2 areas that differ in their spacing, species, or management. Participants can then measure the various sites and use this data to illustrate silvicultural principles. Incorporate the properties of participants where possible and encourage them to complete their presentations while on site. Use the exercise to show how to set up permanent monitoring sites on farms.



John Colless (MTG) measures a Queensland Maple using the Australian Master TreeGrower diameter tape

Session 4 Tree and forest growth and management

Presentations and field trips covering tree and forest growth and management options appropriate for the products and services being considered. Topics: vegetation classification and identification, planning and legislative requirements, establishment and regeneration options, spacing and competition management, species mixtures, silvicultural treatments (thinning, pruning etc), use of fire, harvesting methods (varying with interests and vegetation types). Presenters for this day are usually regional professionals and experienced practitioners who are able to use locally available sites or participants' properties to illustrate relevant forest management options.

TIPS FOR THE 4TH SESSION: Farm, public and industrial sites can be visited, with the emphasis on illustrating how the different management options affect tree growth and the provision of products and services. Invite forest managers to explain their management regimes with regard to the products, constraints, resources and objectives of their organisation. Where possible reinforce the measurement and monitoring skills covered on Day 3.

PART THREE: INTEGRATING TREES INTO RURAL LANDSCAPES 3 days

Sessions 5, 6 and 7

Purpose: Review opportunities and approaches to integrating trees and native vegetation management into farming landscapes for both conservation and profit.

Content: During these three sessions, field tours should involve inspections of participants' own properties and key regional examples with invited specialists who are able to facilitate, contribute and encourage discussion on 'themes' (such as silviculture, salinity, marketing, biodiversity, taxation, farm planning etc) that are relevant to the participants' interests. A mix of lectures, workshops and field tours with 2 or 3 experts participating for the whole day seems to work best. As many of the participants as possible should be given the opportunity to conduct a short tour or presentation of their own properties or experiences.

TIPS FOR SESSIONS 5, 6 & 7: Leave enough time to discuss the issues at each site in detail. Four site visits is probably the most that might be covered in one day. Ask each landowner for suggestions as to who they would like to invite to their property as an 'expert' to participate in the problem solving and design. Match up sites with similar interests so that the 'expert' can assist more than one landowner. For participants without land ask them to arrange or prepare a presentation utilising other sites of interest (such as trials and demonstrations that exist in the region). Discuss only one farm forestry project per property unless the property warrants the time. Allow the invited experts the opportunity of make short presentations (inside) but try to limit these to less than 30 minutes so there is plenty of time for discussion at the field sites.



Bess Secomb leads a tour through a plantation of young Red Ironbark during the 2005 Bendigo Master TreeGrower Program

PART FOUR: SHAPING FUTURE LANDSCAPES

1 Day

Session 8

Purpose: Review the motivations and interests of participants and discuss the economic motivations and evaluation of investing in forests on farms. Finish by engaging participants (with regional catchment planners and other stakeholders) in a review of the research and development needs for agroforestry in the region.

Content: Rowan usually attends this session and presents on the economic aspects of tree growing. With a facilitator, the group then discusses the regional agroforestry and native vegetation management opportunities and needs. A short period of reflection on the course content and value (written questionnaire and discussion) is useful before closing. Finish with a celebration dinner or lunch (maybe with a guest speaker) and the presentation of the MTG certificates and gate signs (by Rowan and the coordinator) to completing participants.



David Jenkins (centre), one of the first Master TreeGrowers in Western Australia, worked for many years as helping run a number of regional courses in the state including this one in the Esperance region.

Budgets and Funding

Contribution from the University of Melbourne

As part of the national MTG program, the University of Melbourne will provide in-kind support and direct funding to all regional MTG programs. This contribution amounts to around \$10,000/course is made up of the following:

Item	Quantity	Cost/Item	Total
'Design Principles' Book	25	\$15	\$375
'The Farmer's Forest' Book	25	\$30	\$750
MTG Diameter Tape	25	\$15	\$375
MTG Hat	25	\$20	\$500
MTG Gate Sign	25	\$20	\$500
Planning and programming regional courses	2 days	\$600/day	\$1,200
University staff presentations (Sessions 1,3 & 8)	3 days	\$600/day	\$1,800
Travel costs (flights, car rental, accommodation) of University Staff	3 trips	\$800/trip	\$2,400
Contribution to the costs of national experts to attend regional courses	1/course	\$1000	\$1000
SUB TOTAL	-	-	\$8,900
GST	-	-	\$890
TOTAL CONTRIBUTION	-	-	\$9,790

Regional costs of running a MTG course

Seeking local funding and sponsorship complement the national MTG program support in the delivery of a course is the responsibility of the regional partners. Below are some guidelines as to the likely costs of running an MTG course if everything is costed. Please remember this is only an example and as all courses are organised and run differently there is no standard budget. The MTG program has been registered for FarmBis funding in a number of states but it is up to the regional groups to negotiate funding with their State based representatives.

Item	Quantity	Cost/Item	Total
MTG Regional Co-ordinators Time	24 days	\$400/day	\$9,600
Co-ordinators Accommodation	2 nights	\$80/night	\$160
Co-ordinators Travel (car)	500 km	\$0.50/km	\$250
Administration - Photocopying	-	-	\$100
Administration - Telephones/Faxes	-	-	\$250
Paid Presenters	2	\$300 - 500/presentation	\$1000
Venue Hire	8 days	\$50/day	\$400
Equipment Hire	-	-	\$200
Catering	8 days x 20 people	-	\$1,600
Bus Hire	4 days	\$200/day	\$800
SUB TOTAL	-	-	\$14,360
GST	-	-	\$1436
TOTAL COST	-	-	\$15796

While the majority of presenters offer their time and services for free, some will charge at a standard consulting rate. Co-ordinators, in trying to minimise program costs and ultimately costs to the participants should consider

that the exposure some consultants may gain from presenting at an MTG program to a targeted audience could offset the consultancy fee that they ask for.

The MTG Program is time consuming for the regional co-ordinator and this should not be under estimated. We estimate that to run a regional course takes around 24 days of full time work by a locally supported regional coordinator. This commitment occurs over a space of 3 or 4 months.

Participant registration fees

All participants are expected to pay a program fee. The exact cost to each participant is set regionally depending on the cost structure of the MTG program. This fee remains with the regional co-ordinating body to help offset some of the program costs. As a general guide a fee of \$100 per participant seems both appropriate and extremely good value. (Some programs have charged as much as \$350 per participant which has included all meals and one night’s accommodation with dinner). This would raise more than \$2000 that can go towards the costs of providing food, venues, travel or even paying special guest presenters.



Adelaide Hills Master TreeGrowers debate land management options

Safety

Safety throughout the Program is an important issue that needs to be considered by all participants, presenters and co-ordinators, particularly during field trips to industrial sites, isolated farms and commercial forests.

Insurance (public liability, accident and possibly professional indemnity) for local activities and presenters may be the responsibility of the co-ordinating group(s), presenters, landholders, site managers or owners. It should not be assumed that the involvement of the University of Melbourne provides cover for the program or participants.

Program co-ordinators must be sure that they, their organisation and the participants are properly informed about their responsibilities and that appropriate risk assessments and strategies are followed. Participants who host farm visits should have public liability insurance and are advised to contact their insurance company and inform them they are conducting a farm forestry related tour.

The MTG Program requires that:

1. All those participants with current first aid certificates to level 1 be identified during Session One and made known to the whole group.
2. All relevant emergency contacts to be listed and distributed to the group during Session One. This should include all emergency agencies and the closest hospital indicating locations.
3. A clear map provided of each location visited.
4. An itinerary for each session (trip) to be left with an appropriate person within the co-ordinating group(s) home office.
5. The responsible person (owner or manager) or authority (public land) must be notified if field tours include inspections or activities on private land or in public forests.
6. All members of the group must wear appropriate clothing and footwear, and respect all appropriate safety procedures (such as hard hats, smoking bans, vests etc), when visiting industrial sites (mills, harvesting operations etc) and public forests.
7. A mobile phone to be available at all locations for emergency situations.
8. A well equipped first aid kit to be available at all sessions and everyone to be made aware of its location.
9. All identifiable hazards should be assessed for all activities and appropriate action taken to eliminate or reduce the potential risk. All identifiable hazards for each session should be communicated to all participants.

Please, at the start of each activity or site visit, encourage the group to repeatedly identify and discuss possible health and safety risks during the program. Where possible eliminate or avoid high risk activities entirely even if this means cancelling planned activities such as in response to severe weather conditions. For activities of low or medium risk, ensure that participants and presenters are aware of appropriate safety procedures, equipment and responses. In some cases personal protective equipment, such as heavy footware, earplugs, high visibility vests and hardhats may be considered essential and should be used by all involved.



Dorrigo Master TreeGrowers – one of the first courses in New South Wales

What makes a great MTG course?

The following points come out of an ongoing review of more than 75 regional courses run over more than 10 years. Not all will be relevant to every region but there are worth considering:

1. Recognise the experience and expertise of the participants, allow them to lead discussion and present their ideas – don't treat them like school children.
2. An overnight stay early in the program provides an excellent opportunity to build relationships within the group. For example: link Day 3 and Day 4 making a 2-day session with an overnight stay.
3. Visit as many of the participant's properties as possible being careful not to take too long at any one site and to avoid long travel times.
4. Provide maps for every field visit – Never say 'you can't miss it' or expect everyone to follow each other.
5. Avoid focusing heavily on any particular species, issue or product option.
6. Coordinators should attend all sessions, ensure presenters are well advised as to their role and thanked for their contribution.
7. Provide opportunities for hands-on activities such as tree marking, measurement, pruning, thinning, chainsaw safety, tree planting etc.
8. Provide plenty of good food and drinks (an good coffee) and ensure time for discussion and debate during the breaks.
9. Use a portable PA system in the field so that everyone can hear.
10. Use the program to support regional landholder groups and networks.
11. Use small buses for field tours if possible to keep the group together and encourage interaction. Avoid long bus trips if possible.
12. Provide a folder for each participant and copies of notes as available so they can develop up a set of course material.
13. Consider the needs of all participants particularly the elderly, disabled and women.
14. Leave time at the end of each session for an informal review and discussion.
15. Don't fill up the course with lectures: adults like to have time for discussion and debate so as to test their ideas and experiences.

Getting a program started in your region

If you interested in exploring the idea of running an Australian Master TreeGrower Program in your region simply contact us and we'll see how we can help plan and promote the course with you.

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Further reading on the Australian Master TreeGrower Program.

Available at <http://www.mtg.unimelb.edu.au/publications.htm>