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**Monday 26 August 2018**

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**New generation of dairy professionals bring leadership to Canberra**

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**For Immediate Release**

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IN a week of intrigue that saw then-Treasurer Scott Morrison ascend to the prime ministership, young representatives from across the dairy industry supply chain stormed Canberra to witness the Australian political process in action.

Fourteen aspiring leaders – farmers, business managers and export sales representatives – networked with political decision-makers and advocated for their communities as part of the Developing Dairy Leaders Program, delivered by Marcus Oldham College and supported by Australian Dairy Farmers and Dairy Australia.

The event was the climax of a two-month journey that saw participants engage in interactive workshops and conduct a research investigation on a topic of their choosing, which ranged from mental health awareness to opportunities presented by equity partnerships.

Hunter Valley farmer Tony Burnett said the experience was eye-opening and strengthened the group's desire to promote unity in the dairy industry.

“Our core focus during the program – and particularly during the Canberra event – has been to bridge the divide of opinions in the dairy sector while also recognising the many regional challenges primary producers are currently facing,” Mr Burnett said.

Bega farmer Brodie Game used the program to investigate the challenges and opportunities facing young people wanting to break into the dairy sector.

“Dairy farming is a fantastic way for young people to grow wealth in assets very quickly but getting a start in such a large and valuable industry is what blocks most people before they even get a chance,” Ms Game said.

“I was fortunate to share my story as a DDLP participant and gain invaluable personal and leadership development opportunities in our great industry.”

ADF President Terry Richardson encouraged young farmers to participate in the program as a pathway to becoming industry advocates.

“The DDLP is an important step in teaching a new generation of industry representatives how to channel their passion for dairy into effective advocacy,” Mr Richardson said.

“Many of the participants came to the program with little or no exposure to dairy advocacy, but they have now presented and debated ideas, gained professional development and learnt how to manage personal and work priorities.”

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