

New Floristry Design Skills and Techniques and Sustainable Industry Practice



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ISS Institute/TAFE Fellowship

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Executive Summary

The Australian Floristry Industry is facing a number of important challenges at present. The most obvious is the ongoing lack of water resources, plus the increasing transportation and fuel costs for growers of cut flowers. The most significant issue for floral designers, as employers, is a lack of design skills in employees that would allow the designer and retailer to create smarter designs, using fewer materials and utilising non-traditional horticultural materials.

Straub's Fellowship took him to Germany and the Netherlands to develop a comprehensive understanding as to why these two countries are so innovative and successful on many levels within the industry. While European designers and growers do not have the water issues that face the industry in Australia, they are nevertheless faced with very high production costs and increasing competition from all over Europe from aggressive large firms with substantial budgets.

These factors have forced the European industry to develop new design ideas that require a high level of skills. These skills are not readily available to the large retail competition, and use more unusual floral products that are more cost effective to produce. The design ideas and techniques discovered at two seminars in Germany were a total contrast to the design ideas seen in Australia. The creative vigour experienced within the German industry is not so obvious in Australia. This German creativity is motivated by a real need, yet in contrast the industry in Australia is slow to embrace new design ideas. Straub believes that this Fellowship experience will be of great assistance in changing attitudes and demonstrating that positive outcomes can be achieved in the Australian industry.

The Floral Industry in Europe is well established and has a vast number of potential clients, which is quite different to the Australian experience. Consumer attitude towards floral decoration in Australia is changing due to decreasing land holdings in the suburbs, increasing numbers of people living in high rise high density housing, greater affluence and higher lifestyle expectations.

Straub believes that the experience in Europe addressed many questions facing the Australian industry. The study tour fostered new skills that may assist the improvement and sustainability of both the Floral Design and the Cut Flower Industries. The new skills, ideas and insights gained in Europe is already being passed on to industry through classes delivered through the TAFE institute where Straub is employed and more widely through trade magazines and newspaper articles. Furthermore, large scale floral demonstrations are being planned, together with meetings with various flower growing and marketing organisations.