

Gidday!®

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As the Southern African IPPS Exchange Student, I was asked by the Southern African Region of the IPPS to speak to you about my involvement in horticulture thus far. I completed my studies in horticulture last year obtaining my bachelor of technology which is a degree in most countries terms but the equivalent of honours in our terms. I will take you briefly through some sights of Cape Town and images of my work experience to date.

I'm not sure if anyone here realises how important this opportunity is for me. As you heard last night, I have never left South African shores and to have been invited by people far away from my home, to attend a conference dealing with something I am deeply passionate about as well as being welcomed and befriended by such warm, kind people is an absolute honour! As it is, while travelling from Johannesburg to Perth, without even blinking, Australia gave me 6 h of my life that I previously never had! I understand, of course, that I have to give it back when I leave but thank you for that so long. I have been in Australia for 4 days now and every one of you has made me feel completely at home.

I recently travelled through some southern African countries, namely Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia with some friends. While we were travelling I read a book on Australia called "Down Under" by the literary master Bill Bryson to try and get some inkling of what I was in for. In the opening pages he speaks of Australia as (and I quote) "the driest, flattest, hottest, most infertile and climatically aggressive of all the inhabited continents and still it teems with life — a large portion of which is quite deadly." He goes on to say, "in fact, Australia has more things that can kill you in a very nasty way than anywhere else." What followed these opening pages was a wonderfully humorous description of the people, cuisine, culture, and history of the last 250 years of civilised development. He also speaks about the wonder of horticultural development on this continent of which most of you and, of course, a handful of generations before you are responsible for.

These opening words really struck me and through my travel, especially through the more politically war-torn countries, is how completely immersed Africa is in natural resources. We have huge horticultural potential that could really boost the economies and well being of our people but what we really require is the interest and guidance of more advanced systems and the educated support of our neighbouring countries. South Africa, I feel, has the potential and infrastructure to make huge contributions to the more northern territories but the correct guidance needs to be supported by shared knowledge. What the Australian IPPS is doing to enhance this potential for South Africa cannot be more important for us. You are creating an invaluable window for us to learn, seek, and share information in possibly the most important industry for our current times. It is my opinion that Africa will be called upon to support the world in future times and it is our duty to mankind to have valuable systems in place for the nourishment of our world.

I know that my time here is short. I will however make sure that it is well spent and I plan, in every way, to make the most of this opportunity and hopefully be able

to take back a wealth of knowledge and insights to my country. I need to thank so many people for the fact that I am standing here in front of you and I hope to do that through action rather than words in doing what the IPPS has set out to do for the past 60 years. To Seek and Share.

Thank you.