LEGENDS AND LEGACIES
The new UDIA NSW Legends and Legacy Program seeks to identify the industry’s next generation of leaders, harness the power of diversity within the industry, and provide unprecedented access to some of the industry’s greats.

Legend, Tony Perich AM, is as wildly successful as he is humble. He and his family have grown a portfolio of diversified business interests, including Leppington Pastoral dairy farming, Greenfields property development, and a majority shareholding in Freedom Foods.

A man with a very busy diary but an easy smile and self-effacing nature, Perich was initially reluctant with being identified as a legend because of his dislike for the limelight. But when he was asked to help the next generation through UDIA’s Legends and Legacy, he embraced the program with his trademark passion.

“I’m not a developer. I’m still a farmer. But I’m a leader in business. I can turn my hand to anything physically or mentally. If you can pass that on to the younger generation, you can inspire them to do more than they would normally do. That’s the secret,” says Perich.

Creating the Program

UDIA NSW Councillor and CEO of Diversified Property Group Vanessa Pearson, remembers what it was like at the beginning of her career, walking into a room full of strangers who were already established in their careers and that all seemed to know each other.

“It was hard to break in and establish myself as someone to know in the room,” she recalls.

Pearson was fortunate enough to meet people like UDIA NSW past Presidents Ross Blancato, Ralph Bruce (Life Member), Judy McKittrick (Life Member), as well as Life Members Tony Perich AM and Kevin Alker, who saw her potential and took time out in her early career to chat with and encourage her.

“It was these interactions which inspired me to create this program,” she said. “Looking back, I was very fortunate to have met the right people who took the time to show me the ropes at the beginning of my career.”

LESSONS FROM THE LEGENDS

Written by Holly Reynolds and Michelle Bowers, Left Field Communications

Cover Image: UDIA NSW and OptiComm Young Leaders Award for Excellence 2019 winner Priscilla Tran and founder of Greenfields Development Company Tony Perich. Photography: Murray Harris Studios
people to nurture my career. I had gained so much from a series of five minute conversations over a number of years. There is something very powerful that happens when industry legends give their time in this way.

“I wanted to supercharge this networking and nurturing experience for our next generations of leaders. I wanted to remove the element of chance and support and fast-track the next generation of leaders to create connections which meant they were no longer strangers in the room.”

Over the years the kernel of an idea to create a unique, part-mentoring, part-networking, part-leadership program to nurture the best young talent in the development industry began to grow.

As a result, Legends and Legacy was born as a key pillar of the UDIA’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee’s 2019-20 Strategic Plan. Its purpose? To identify and foster the next generation of industry leaders and harness the power of the diversity within the industry by uniting those who have invaluable knowledge through experience with those who hold the development industry’s future in their hands.

Launched earlier this year with 11 of our industry’s ‘Legends’ and 14 ‘Aspiring Leaders’ – proved hugely popular. Not only for the relationship that has developed between the Aspiring Leader group. An unexpected by-product which she says has “helped fast track good quality relationships that will hopefully last for the rest of our careers”.

The program almost didn’t happen at all for Tran, who moved to Sydney from Brisbane last year. She felt that she didn’t have enough time in the game, or the State, to deserve a seat at the Legends and Legacy table.

“I felt like I needed to establish myself more in Sydney… that I needed permission. One of the ways I’ve found this program so valuable is realising that if I don’t fight for myself, who will? I needed to give myself permission to succeed,” she said.

With direct access to some of the industry’s biggest hitters, Tran says she discovered that no matter the success they’ve had, they’re just like everyone else, albeit with more years of experience.

“It made me realise that if they’re like me then I could be like them one day. I still need to apply myself, work hard and develop good relationships. All those things I hold on to but now I can see the potential I have which is greater than I thought. I’m honestly thinking and dreaming bigger.”

Tran’s reaction is exactly what Perich hoped for in return when he signed up as a 2019 legend. “It made me realise that if they’re like me then I could be like them one day. I still need to apply myself, work hard and develop good relationships. All those things I hold on to but now I can see the potential I have which is greater than I thought. I’m honestly thinking and dreaming bigger.”

Tran says many conversations between legends and aspiring leaders during the program may seem insignificant to the legends but can have a lasting effect on an aspiring leader.

“I had the privilege of participating in the interviewing and selection of the applicants for the L&L Program. The diverse range of people and talent was a real eye opener. If the young leaders selected in this program are the future of our industry, we are in very safe hands… Anyone who knows anything about this program has got to rate it a bloody roaring success.”

- Kevin Alker, Legend and program champion.

“I have been humbled by how well this program has been received by not only the legends and aspiring leaders but also the UDIA membership. The feedback has been very positive especially on how well the program went in its inaugural year. This of course speaks to the quality of our aspiring leaders and the excellent contribution of our legends.”

- Vanessa Pearson, UDIA NSW Councillor.
Bringing the vision to life

Although opinions about diversity and how it should be embraced differ across the generations, the program has already shown what can happen when you bring those differences together.

For Perich, it’s simple.

“I hope I can help change people’s minds. Maybe change their direction. Make them realise you can’t do it on your own and understand the importance of respect and relationships. Just respect one another then you won’t have any problems.”

“I didn’t really know what to expect, but I found the experience to be very enjoyable and stimulating. It was very interesting talking to, and hopefully helping, the exceptional young talent coming through.”

- Julie Bindon

“A highlight of the program for me is meeting young future leaders, hearing their ideas and being an inspiration.”

- Laurie Kresner

“I came to the program with an open mind and no expectations. The experience was a novel approach to the transfer of knowledge. I am of the belief it is a successful model.”

- Sylvia Hrovatin

“I enjoyed the selection process and the interviews. This gave me a real insight into who our aspiring leaders really are.”

- Kevin Alker

“The highlight for me was the calibre of the participants. I found their intelligence and enthusiasm to be inspiring and I felt that the future industry was in good hands.”

- Sean O’Toole

“The main takeaway I learned from a number of Legend’s was the power of vision and persistence. Have a dream or vision, inspire people with that vision, stay true to your purposes and just keep going for it!”

- Joss Engebretsen

“The fireside chats were amazing. They were extremely interesting and provided a comprehensive q & a that allowed us to learn from the legends life experiences.”

- Jacqueline Bowie

“I had many stand-out moments, particularly the countless one-on-one conversations with many of the legends, where we shared our different perspectives about industry topics and most-importantly about life.”

- Bernardo Reiter

“I was proud as punch to represent one of Tony Perich’s property development businesses at Tony’s fireside chat with Stephen Alban and Sean O’Toole.”

- Vanessa Morschel

“Tony Perich was charismatic and really enjoyable to listen to. He reinforced his point that success requires hard work and reinvesting profits back into the business with the words ‘Don’t blow all the money on boats!’”

- Sarah Thompson

“In all likelihood, the present isn’t unique and the Legends will have seen your scenario or something similar before and being able to take on their insights to give a greater understanding to the present and future is an amazing opportunity.”

- Samantha Miller

“This program has opened doors in 2019 for me like nothing else has before. The access to the legends in this industry is one thing but the network and friendships we have formed have been the icing on the cake.”

- Marcus Skeggs

“Speaking to the legends, the view I have of my role, in my current business, has changed, and given me a greater appreciation of how my day to day activities help shape the outcomes the business delivers, and how we shape the environments we’re in.”

- Adam Voloder

Special thanks from UDIA NSW Diversity and Inclusion Committee

This program would not have been possible without the contribution of Legend and Legacy program champions Kevin Alker and Nathan Croft and seamless delivery by Kylie Prince and the UDIA staff. We would like to thank our President Michael Sheargold, CEO Steve Mann and the UDIA NSW Council for their ongoing support of this program. Most of all, we would like to thank our Legends who volunteered their time to make an impact and to be a part of this program.

Honour Roll of 2019

Congratulations and sincere thanks to our inaugural community of Legends and Legacy participants:

Legends:
- Kevin Alker
- Julie Bindon
- Ralph Bruce
- Sylvia Hrovatin
- Abdul Khan
- Laurie Kresner
- Judy McKittrick
- Carmen Osborne
- Sean O’Toole

Fireside Legends:
- Tony Perich
- Iwan Sunito

Legacy:
- Kellie Adamson
- Dayne Bennett
- Jacqueline Bowie
- Joss Engebretsen
- Emily McLaughlin
- Samantha Miller
- Vanessa Morschel
- Bernado Reiter
- Marcus Skeggs
- Sarah Thompson
- Priscilla Tran
- Adrian Voloder
- Richard Williams
- Ledlum Yugure