



# The Queensland NRM Sector Mentoring Program

Mentoring is a powerful tool for professional growth, leadership development, and industry collaboration. However, in many sectors, including natural resource management, structured mentoring programs have been rare.

Recognising the need for stronger career development pathways and knowledge sharing, NRM Regions Queensland, through its Leadership Working Group, took a bold step in creating the first dedicated mentoring program in the NRM sector that aimed to lift leadership capability, at all locations, at all levels and at all times.

By encouraging collaboration and equipping professionals with the skills to advance in their careers, we have successfully established a transformative mentoring initiative.

## The challenge

Before this program, no formal mentoring initiative existed in the NRM sector, leaving many professionals without structured guidance for career growth and leadership development. There was also a degree of scepticism—some individuals questioned the value of mentorship or doubted whether it would provide tangible benefits.

Additionally, while industry collaboration was essential, professionals often worked in silos, limiting opportunities for cross-organisational learning. We needed a program that would break these barriers, turn non-believers into believers, and create a network of professionals dedicated to supporting one another. With multiple organisations involved, securing CEO and executive leadership support was also critical for success.

## The goals

To ensure the program was impactful, we set clear objectives to support individual careers and the broader NRM sector:

### Effective mentor-mentee matching:

Using a science-based approach to create meaningful connections.

### Leadership and coaching development:

Providing mentors with the skills to guide and inspire others.

### Increased networking and collaboration:

Encouraging professionals to share knowledge across organisations.

### Career progression support:

Helping mentees gain confidence, skills, and opportunities for growth.



## The solution: Designing the program

To bring this vision to life, we partnered with Brancher, a specialist in mentoring program design. Working together, we developed a business case that received endorsement from the CEOs of Queensland's regional NRM organisations. Brancher then worked with the NRMRQ Leadership Working Group to develop a tailored six-month mentoring initiative, carefully mapped to our leadership competencies, industry needs, and organisational structures.

The program was designed to provide structured support and guidance to both mentors and mentees. Participants were matched using a science-based approach to ensure alignment of goals and expertise.

The program included launch webinars and workshops to set expectations, mid-point and end-point workshops to track progress and support participants, and bite-sized training sessions to develop key skills. Regular check-ins, admin support, and ongoing program management ensured that participants remained engaged throughout the process.

### The results

#### High satisfaction and engagement

- 97%** mentor-mentee matching satisfaction
- 90%** of participants met regularly, ensuring consistent progress
- 99%** completion of mentor and mentee profiles, highlighting strong engagement

#### Professional and leadership growth

- 80%** of mentors enhanced their coaching and mentoring skills
- 67%** of mentors developed stronger leadership capabilities
- 57%** of participants reported improved networking, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing
- 80%** of mentees felt better equipped to pursue career opportunities, pay raises, or promotions

#### Long-term impact and advocacy

- 88%** of participants recommended online training
- 87%** mentor and 100% mentee satisfaction with the structured workshops
- 67%** of mentors and 80% of mentees wished to continue their mentoring relationship

## Key takeaways

**Customisation is key:** A tailored approach ensures mentoring programs meet specific needs.

**Structured support enhances outcomes:** Webinars, workshops, and training modules create a strong framework for success.

**Networking fosters collaboration:** Mentoring strengthens the entire NRM sector by connecting professionals across organisations.

**Investing in mentoring transforms careers:** Both mentors and mentees benefit from skill-building, confidence, and long-term relationships.

*"I gained another layer of perspective on how to approach work situations and relationships."*

*"I loved supporting my mentee and watching them grow in confidence."*

*"It was great to have someone outside my organisation provide an unbiased perspective on my career."*

*"The mentoring program has been an outstanding success for what is now over 20% of our statewide workforce that has actively participated in it. The feedback has exceeded our expectations and the reputation of the NRM sector in Queensland has without doubt been enhanced by this initiative. The partnership with Brancher has allowed us to run two very effective and efficient programs that have contributed to building our leadership capacity at all locations, at all levels and at all times."*

— **Chris Norman**, CEO, NRM Regions Queensland

## Looking ahead

Building on this success, the NRMRQ Leadership Working Group aims to expand and refine the initiative, ensuring mentorship becomes a lasting part of our culture. A second program, involving 23 mentoring pairs, is taking place during 2025.

By promoting a culture of mentorship, we are helping to build a stronger, more connected, and future-ready NRM sector.



The mentoring program forms a key component of the **Leadership Framework** for Queensland's NRM sector.

**Scan the QR code to learn more.**