

AgriFutures Australia
Diversity in decision-making
in rural industries

Ade Ariantika

Oakey Beef Exports Darling Downs QLD



Jakarta-raised mechanical engineer Ade Ariantika is known for being an enthusiastic go-getter who loves a challenge, but it was still a surprise to her family in Indonesia, and to her friends at her Brisbane-based university, when she accepted a job working at a meat processing plant in the rural Darling Downs of Queensland.

The 24-year-old said it was “the best decision she ever made” and today, she is pursuing a post graduate degree in Business Administration and working as project engineer for Oakey Beef Exports, overseeing jobs that range from \$20,000 to \$3million.

Ade says her conservative parents are strong believers in education, who encouraged Ade and her siblings to pursue their passions. They impressed upon her the importance of hard work at an early age. As a result, she was just seven years old when she knew she wanted to follow in her father’s footsteps to become a mechanical engineer.

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A go-getter who loves a challenge

In 2012, she moved to Australia to finish her degree at the Queensland University of Technology, and when she saw an advertisement for a company-based project at Oakey Beef's rendering plant, she seized the opportunity to undertake work experience on a feasibility study.

"When the company offered me a position, I took it and I have not looked back," Ade said.

Making a contribution

Ade's role now includes conducting feasibility studies; developing business cases, and managing and leading project installation across various departments, as well as the management of sub-contractors.

"The most satisfying part of my work is to see the project or installation that I created come alive and work as expected, especially to be able to achieve this within the limitations that were given," Ade said.

The red meat processing industry plays a vital role in Australian trade, and in rural and regional Australia. It contributes \$23 billion to Australia's GDP per year, and the supply chain connects cattle farmers, retailers, logistics providers, the public sector, the construction sector and more.

Ade believes the contribution she makes to her team at Oakey Beef Exports, and the red meat

processing industry more generally, is significant, and attributes some of this success to the diversity of her background and the way it has shaped her approach to decision-making.

Different perspectives

"My different perspective towards problem solving allows me to make a strong contribution to my team," Ade said.

"We collaborate to produce the best outcome, taking into account the given constraints along the way. It is all about team integration."

"Sometimes we are successful at tackling challenges, and at other times it provides learning curves that is also beneficial for everyone," Ade said.

The *Diversity in decision-making in rural industries* report suggests that increasingly diverse workforces are the reality of Australian businesses, and they have the potential to deliver enhanced business benefits.

Business benefits linked to the diversity of the workforce include increased profitability, productivity and innovation.

The study also suggests that while traditionally the concept of innovation is linked to smarter people and better ideas, diversity is actually a more significant driving force. Organisations that proactively foster gender, racial and ethnic diversity are likely to outperform their competitors.

Fostering diversity

"Our General Manager encourages us to work hard, take risks and prove that we can lead. His attitude obviously plays a big role in creating a healthy working environment and encouraging diversity in decision-making.

"This is most definitely a long-term position for me. My role is always evolving as my career is progressing. At first it was technical; now it involves understanding people's behaviour and managing the team's key performance indicators. I enjoy the challenge of understanding people and igniting their inner drive to perform and achieve work goals.

"I believe that there is always room for improvement, and streams of knowledge that everyone can gain, as well as opportunities to contribute back to business and community. I am proud to be part of a strategic industry, which continuously develops itself through research and innovation."

"I'm inspired to prove that jobs in rural industries aren't just for a specific group. They can also be for a young female who is committed to doing something she is passionate about," Ade said.

