

# ALISTER HODGMAN



## FINDING THE RIGHT CAREER. PROFILE No 1

Course: **Certificate III in Horticulture**  
GTO: **Work and Training, TAS**  
Host Employer: **Charlie's Tree Service**



### **Alistair, how long is it since you left school and had to make a career choice?**

I started working in 2000 and from there I took three years to actually find what I really wanted to do after trying many different things. The thing is you leave school and then its, what now? You've just got to keep in the system and just keep pushing yourself to actually find something that is your niche.

### **What did you do when you first left school?**

I got into fisheries and did abalone processing for a bit. Then got into construction on commercial greenhouses and started working in the greenhouses. That got the ball rolling as far as the horticultural field goes. Then a job was advertised in the paper through a Group Training Organisation, Work and Training.

### **So what took you into your chosen career?**

I started to get a few full time jobs in the gardening maintenance side of things. Then landing an apprenticeship at the Botanical Gardens gave me an opportunity to value trees as a whole.

### **Yours is obviously a hands on job but there must be a lot of theory as well. How important is that balance to you?**

The theory behind it is the underpinning knowledge to everything that we do horticulturally. I mean you take climbing for an example, you've first got to be able to assess a tree, if it's safe to actually climb and get up in there to start with. So theory is one hundred percent the key and then there's the practical side, sure it's a great skill but it comes down to, if you know your stuff then you need to know your theory.

### **Alistair, you're working full time, you didn't go to university, you don't have a HECS debt. How important is a work and lifestyle balance for you?**

I was enrolled to go to Uni and at the last minute bailed out and decided that wasn't what I wanted to do. I don't have that lingering HECS debt over my head. I'm in a position now where I'm in a niche industry in Tasmania so job security's fine down here. I've got more than enough opportunities coming my way. In a trade industry you can set your lifestyle up around it, so you're not constantly tied to your job.

### **What career opportunities do you think the trade will give you long term?**

I'm undertaking my Certificate IV now, which is something you can't tackle straight off the bat without a trade. So that's opening me up to tree management and canopy management. In Tasmania we've got an old canopy of trees which was planted back in the 1850s that hasn't been touched since and there's not a real continuation of planting. So for me to be able to be involved with tree management is where I really want to be.

### **Where do you see yourself in five years time?**

Definitely working in tree management. I want to be involved with decision making at a higher level than just doing the work. It would be great to influence what's around us for the next hundred and fifty years.

### **Do you think your skills will help you to travel overseas?**

Europe's agriculture is where it's at. Big dollars over there and lots of opportunity. They're screaming out for people over there, particularly on the heritage side of things. We've got bigger states and big parklands that are crying out for work as well.

**Thank you for your time today Alister. Keep saving trees.**

***Alister Hodgman was the 2006 Tasmanian Apprentice of the Year completing a Certificate II in Rural Operations and then progressing to a Certificate III in Horticulture specializing in Arboriculture. Alister has continued his study at Certificate IV level and is employed by a leading arboriculture business in Tasmania. He is a member of the Friends of Soldiers Walk and initiated the involvement of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and Friends of Soldiers Walk in working towards a partnership which will benefit the whole state.***

Proudly supported by



Australian Government  
Department of Education, Employment  
and Workplace Relations

Find much more at  
[apprenticetrainee.com.au](http://apprenticetrainee.com.au)

**GTA**  
group training australia

