Building for the future
How Woollam Constructions is improving its performance by developing its leaders.

When Woollam Construction’s Managing Director, Craig Percival, arrived for the first day of the Australian Owner Manager Program, he recalls telling a colleague, “I don’t even know what I am doing here”.

Eighteen months later, Craig not only credits the program with reshaping his approach to the business, he has insisted that Woollam’s senior management team have the opportunity to develop their skills in the same way.

The award-winning company commissioned UQ Business School Executive Education to design a fully-customised leadership program that would help the company build its internal capabilities, establish a culture of mentoring, and develop clear succession plans.

On his vision for the program, Craig said that he wanted to give his staff a professional advantage. “Our people are already some of the best building and construction talent in the country - their industry and technical knowledge is second to none. This program is our commitment to building a culture of personal development and mentoring that will spread throughout all of our regions and sites.”

Craig acknowledges that shifting from training that is primarily technical and compliance-based to personal development is relatively unheard of in the construction industry. “I don’t expect everyone will remember every part of the course; but there will be moments when a participant hears something that will be particularly important to them, and that small change to their approach will make a big difference to their results.”

“These days it isn’t enough for companies to be the technical expert in their field. In order for businesses to truly thrive, they must build the right culture of leadership, personal development, support and mentoring in their people. The Woollam Constructions Leadership Program is a fantastic example of an organisation taking the leap from being the technical expert to actively building their organisation’s future leaders.”