



Know-how for Horticulture™



**Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia**

Final Report

HAL project: NY06019

Completion date 17 August 2007

Industry Training & Recognition

Candice McNamara
National Training & Recognition Manager
Nursery and Garden Industry Australia

Final Report

HAL project: NY06019

Completion date 17 August 2007

Author

Candice McNamara

National Training & Recognition Manager

Nursery and Garden Industry Australia

PO Box 907

EPPING NSW 1710

Ph 02 9876 5200

Fax 02 9876 6360

Candice McNamara has written this report as part of the reporting requirements of Horticultural Australia Limited (HAL). Industry funding from the Nursery Products Levy and HAL, and the time and energy provided by the members of various state and national committees, is acknowledged.

~ Disclaimer ~

Any recommendations contained in this publication do not necessarily represent current Horticulture Australia policy. No person should act on the basis of the contents of this publication, whether as to matters of fact or opinion or other content, without obtaining specific, independent professional advice in respect of the matters set out in this publication.

Contents

SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION.....	5
<i>National Training & Recognition Committee.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Ensuring the training & recognition portfolio is visible and accessible to industry.....</i>	<i>7</i>
METHOD AND ACTIVITIES	10
<i>Review of National Training Package.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>NGIA participation in the VET system.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>National Curriculum Framework</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Training Workshop Packages</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Certified Nursery Professional.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Organising and implementing state-based workshops</i>	<i>20</i>
EVALUATION	25
IMPLICATIONS	26
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE.....	27
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	29

BIBLIOGRAPHY 30

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 31

APPENDICES 32

Summary

Effective skill development in the industry requires a strong national framework based around identified industry training needs. The aim of 2006/2007 Training & Recognition strategy was to ensure that industry skill development activities remain cost-effective, less resource-intensive and deliver the learning outcomes required by industry to prosper in the current and future competitive environment.

Focus of the project has been on delivering the following outcomes:

1. Relevant and effective industry input into the national training package utilised by registered training providers such as TAFE.
2. Establishment of a national curriculum framework for industry-provided training based on the needs identified in the 2005/6 training needs study.
3. Increased participation and uptake of industry in relevant, affordable training.
4. Identification and implementation of a wide range of training activities including workshops, field days and partnership-based activities.
5. Development of an average of six new training modules per annum, including training reference materials and learner manuals based on the analysis of industry skill needs¹.
6. Continuous improvement and maintenance of an effective system for recognition of industry operators and employees, who participate in training and have expertise of relevance to the marketplace.

A primary objective of the national training and recognition portfolio is to take an increasingly national approach to training development within the industry and to recognise those who participate. This approach has followed the principle of **“Planning nationally, delivering locally”**. The NGI state associations play a key role in the promotion and delivery of skills to the nursery and garden industry.

The benefit of a national approach to network training activities is that materials and tools used for workshops can be made more readily available to all state associations. Marketing materials used in the promotion of workshops can also be reproduced and continually improved. A more standardised approach has enabled NGI to monitor the quality and effectiveness of activities. By monitoring network training activities, NGI is able to provide some measurement of effectiveness in relation to investment.

¹ NGI National Skill Study 2005/2006 by Australian Survey Research Group

We can measure the success of this project by measuring the uptake of training workshops within the industry. During the 2006/2007 financial year, over 109 industry-training workshops and field days were implemented nationally by the NGI state associations of which almost 2100 people attended. People attending workshops came from all sectors of industry including retail garden centres, big chain retailers, production nurseries, allied trades and landscape.

NGIA has continued to communicate to industry the importance of a professional recognition program. The Certified Nursery Professional (CNP) recognition program is a significant strategic tool for industry as it supports and recognised ongoing skill development of people in the industry. During this project, we have seen a significant increase in membership and interest in this recognition scheme. The program now has 120 members and is increasing every week.

The NY07008 project for the 2007/2008 will be able to build from the successes of this project and continue to provide skills development opportunities to industry and recognise operators and employees for their knowledge, experience and commitment to lifelong learning.

Introduction

In early 2006, a three-year National Training Plan for the industry was developed by NGIA. The development of the plan was aligned to the industry strategic plan and the NGIA Business plan. The National Training plan provides some guidance and strategy to resolve some of the issues surrounding skill development within the industry.

The strategies adopted in the training plan include:

1. National approach by NGI to network training activities and skill development projects
2. Promotion of skills development as an integral part of any successful business
3. Participation & representation at Skill Councils/State Training Authorities
4. Establishing and maintaining relationships with external training providers
5. Establishing and maintaining relationships with students and workshop participants
6. Investigating alternate funding opportunities
7. Setting up of a National Training & Recognition Committee

The strategies adopted in the National Training Plan were developed with the intention of providing leadership for industry employers, state associations and training vendors regarding the type of skills development activities required and the standards expected from the industry. The three-year National Training Plan was forwarded to all states in April 2006 and accepted at the CEO/Presidents meeting held in April 2006, National Conference held in Hobart.

The focus of the national training & recognition portfolio includes “internal” customers and “external” customers, being NGI state associations and employers/employees of industry, respectively. To create and maintain skilled staff within current markets, NGIA identified that employers needed to be made more aware of the benefits of professional development and upskilling of staff for long term growth of their businesses. However, to ensure a positive uptake of skill development activities, any training and recognition approaches within the nursery & garden industry needs to earn and retain the respect of the state associations and industry.

To ensure that our “plan nationally, delivery locally” principle is successful, we recognise and support the important role that the state associations play within this framework. State associations are seen as operators who “have their ear to the ground” and have a strong understanding of what industry requires for successful development.

Previously funded via the Partnership Agreement (workshops plus a part of the GCDO), it was proposed that the funding support for state training delivery should be via this project to ensure that training funds are more focused on learning needs and outcomes.

A major advantage of this new national approach is the ability to maximise the benefits of the experiences of each state, including but not limited to strategies surrounding delegate attendance, feedback via evaluations and workshop design, to name a few. The approach provides an opportunity to design and implement workshops and field days in a more structured way so as to maximise resources and avoid duplication of tasks. We are also able to gather and collate data from the state association relating to training activities and proposed training calendars for the year.

National Training & Recognition Committee

Planning and oversight of the national training portfolio, incorporating the delivery of this project's outcomes and approach is undertaken by the National Training & Recognition Committee.

The role of the Training & Recognition Committee has been defined as follows:

1. To provide advice to the NGIA Board in areas relevant to the training & recognition portfolio.
2. To consider updates provided by the National Training & Recognition manager and provide feedback and guidance on directions and actions relevant to training activities within the industry.
3. Where specifically empowered by the Board via the Chair, to make decisions relating to the training & recognition portfolio.
4. To monitor the implementation of identified strategies and outcomes in the Strategic Plan and NGIA Business Plan relating to the training & recognition portfolio.
5. To contribute ideas and suggest innovative approaches which if implemented would improve industry outcomes.
6. Feedback decisions and actions to the state associations to ensure they are aware of strategic updates or changes and have an opportunity to participate.

The committee is chaired by a member of the NGIA Board and draws on participants from around Australia and from different sectors. Members for 2006/2007 included:

Geoff Richards (WA) *Chairman*
Richgro Garden Products

Tim Pickles (NSW) Retail
Tim's Garden Centre Pty Ltd

Karen Brock (TAS) Production
Brocklands Pty Ltd

Jim Johnson (VIC) Bedding Plants
Oasis Horticulture Pty Ltd

Ian Brown (QLD) Retail/Landscape
Retail Manager

Candice McNamara (National) (NT/SA)
National Training & Recognition Manager

Over the duration of this project, the National Training & Recognition committee has met twice, once in October 2006 and then again in May 2007. The meetings covered issues arising from CNP, state workshop developments, and any updates required for the National Training Plan.



Ensuring the training & recognition portfolio is visible and accessible to industry

The National Skill Study identified in the past that state associations were implementing workshops, many employers/employees of industry were not aware of what training activities were available and when they were scheduled to run. NGIA over the last 12 months has put more effort into communicating with industry regarding new workshops being developed, existing workshops being run across the states and opportunities arising to attend partnership workshops. We believe that this effort has been one of the reasons for the increase in uptake of training across the states.

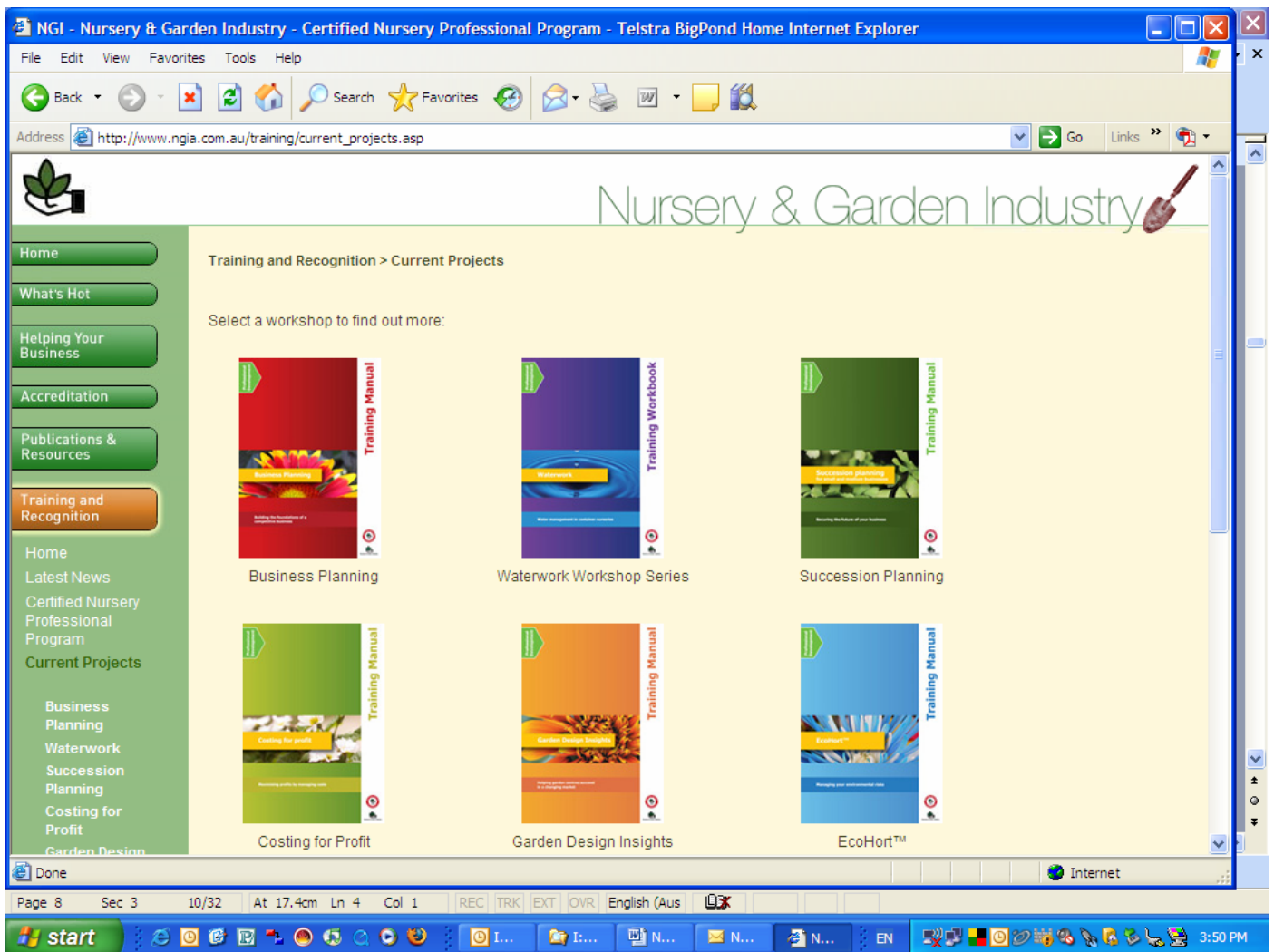
NGIA's primary methods of communicating training and development opportunities to industry are via established channels:

- NGIA Website Training Page
- CNP Forum
- NGIA Nursery Papers (sample provided in Appendix)
- NGIA Monthly Newsletter "Clippings" (sample provided in Appendix)
- NGIA ENewsletter "ECommpost". Training often rates in the top three read articles (out of 7) in ENewsletter
- State-based newsletters and website

Example of NGIA web Training Calendar displaying a QLD business-related development program

The screenshot shows the NGIA website's Training Event Calendar. The browser window title is "NGI - Nursery & Garden Industry - Calendar of Events - Telstra BigPond Home Internet Explorer". The address bar shows "http://www.ngia.com.au/training/calendar_of_events.asp". The website header includes the NGIA logo and the text "Nursery & Garden Industry". The main content area is titled "Training and Recognition > Training Event Calendar". It features a calendar for August 2007 with the 15th selected. The selected date is highlighted as "15 August 2007 (Wednesday)" for the event "NGIQ Smart Management Training". The event details include "Wide Selection of Regions - Brisbane 16-18, 24-25 January, 21-22 February, 1-3 May, 6-7 June, 12-13 J...". There are links for "training" and "more information". A yellow sticky note on the right says "Horticulture teachers Register here to keep your knowledge up-to-date." The left sidebar contains navigation links: Home, What's Hot, Helping Your Business, Accreditation, Publications & Resources, Training and Recognition (highlighted), Home, Latest News, Certified Nursery Professional Program, Current Projects, Training Event Calendar, Resources & Useful links, Subscribe, and Industry Size & Structure. The bottom of the browser window shows the Windows taskbar with the start button, system tray, and the time 3:40 PM.

Example of NGIA training webpage displaying current courses available



Method and activities

Various partnerships, strategies and communications were required to ensure the success of this project. This section covers those various activities that NGIA, the National Training & Recognition committee and state associations implemented to ensure that this project's outcomes were achieved.

Review of National Training Package

The review of the National Training Package is an important element for the skill development of our industry. The Amenity Horticulture Training Package covers all formal education offered to our industry outside the university system. The review occurs every three years and the outcomes affect all businesses and employers/employees of the industry. The management and review of the training package is done by the AgriFood Industry Skill Council. The review consists of two phases.

Phase One: The Environmental scan (completed October 2006).

NGIA on behalf of industry has ensured that the views and experiences of industry concerning the training system and registered training providers have been fed into the review of the national training package, thus influencing the review outcomes in ways that improve industry skills development. State associations and NGIA participated in the Phase 1 of the review during the first half of the financial year. Focus groups and discussions were held in VIC, NSW and QLD. Minutes have been recorded from focus groups held by NGIA in NSW and QLD. The final report² from Phase One was made available in November 2006.

The industry and state associations have been kept up-to-date regarding the progress and outcomes of the review via multiple communications channels including the NGIA website and E-Newsletters.

The recommendations of the Phase One Scoping Report do not prescribe major change but rather, reflect an opportunity to fine tune qualifications and units of competency to provide improved training for future graduates to the industry.

² Review Amenity Horticulture Training Package (RTF03)Phase 1 Scoping Report by AFISC October 2006

Recommendations have been divided into four groups:

Group 1	Involve changes to the Training Package which are common or generic across all sectors.
Group 2	Involve changes to the Qualifications Framework
Group 3	Involves changes to Units of Competency
Group 4	Summary of delivery and implementation issues referred for action

Final Scoping Report for Phase 1 is available on the NGIA website for review. This report will form the foundation of Phase Two, which is yet to progress forward.

Feasibility Study into Merging Rural Production, Conservation and Land Management & Amenity Horticulture Training Packages

All ten Skill Councils were under review late 2006, resulting in a delay in funding. The consequence of this resulting in projects such as the review of training packages, being delayed. AFISC has secured funding for 15 months; however DEST³ has prioritised the need for training packages to be rationalized to reduce duplication across the vocational training system. This reduction in the number and complexity of training packages will mean that the vocational training system is more accessible for industry and registered training providers. The rationale behind this is to provide greater consistency of industry skill specifications, better portability and recognition of skills and more consistent delivery approaches and resources used by training providers.

The Agri-Food Industry Skills Council (AFISC) established a project to rationalise the commonality between the three Training Packages – Rural Production (RTC03), Conservation and Land Management (RTD02) and Amenity Horticulture RTF03) – and to advise on the feasibility of merging the three Training Packages into one Package or Framework. Final report⁴ was made available to NGIA in February 2007.

The industry and state associations have been kept up-to-date regarding the progress and outcomes of the review via multiple communications channels including the NGIA website and E-Newsletters.

³ Dept of Education, Science and Training

NGIA participation in the VET system

NGIA, with feedback from the National Skill study has strategically position itself in the AgriFood Industry Skill Council and related Standing committees, ensuring that the skill development needs are fed back into the VET system. In the latter part of 2006, the Training & Recognition Committee Chairman, Mr Geoff Richards was voted into the AFISC Board of Directors. Currently, Mr Richards, who is now the new National president of NGIA, is the only horticultural representative on the Board. This was a significant feat for industry as we have a representative on a board that affects the strategic decision relating to the implementation and review of the Amenity Horticulture training package.

Horticulture teachers, where are you?

NGIA wants to provide every opportunity for teachers of horticulture to actively engage within the industry. We view our training providers and teachers as a very important part of the growth and future of our industry.

The industry's National Skill Study undertaken in 2005/2006 indicated that there is a perception by many employers that educators do not keep abreast with the latest industry news, strategies and techniques. The VET system is considered by many employers to be too complex, making it difficult for industry to make contact and interact with its educators.

By registering their details with Nursery & Garden Industry Australia, teachers now receive industry updates, outcomes of research and development studies, promotional information and the opportunity to input into industry's skill development.

The process of registration is simple; teachers complete either

1. a prepaid postcards; or
2. the horticulture teachers' registration form online at www.ngia.com.au/training. This was the preferred method.

The outcome from this activity was very successful. NGIA now have a database of part-time and full-time horticulture teachers. A total of 131 teachers have registered and NGIA continue to receive more registrations every week.

As the national peak body, Nursery & Garden Industry Australia is excited about the opportunity of strengthening the relationship between industry, training providers and educators.

⁴ Feasibility Study into Merging Rural Production, Conservation and Land Management & Amenity Horticulture Training Packages – Final Report by AFISC January 2007

National Curriculum Framework

To encourage a national/state approach to the development of a national framework for the delivery of workshops and related training activity a framework was developed in the latter part of 2006. NGIA with the input of the state associations and other stakeholders has developed a **National Training Matrix** covering possible topics for workshops and other training activities that could be a) developed by NGIA or stakeholders and b) implemented and promoted by state associations.

The primary objectives for developing a training matrix are to pull together:

- Outcomes from the National Skill Study
- Existing training activities available in the NGI network
- Provide some visual representation of potential new skill development activities available in the future
- Alignment with the Amenity Horticulture Training Package

The National Training Matrix divides skill sets into three levels so that workshops can be focussed to achieve effective learning outcomes, and also identifies which sectors of industry the workshops will be relevant to.

Using the Training Matrix to maximise NGI Workshop implementation & development

The training matrix has been developed in line with the needs identified by industry, particularly the National Skills Study and the feedback provided by the final scoping report for Phase 1 Review Amenity Horticulture Training Package.

A current outline of the project tasks and status as at June 2007:

- Step 1: National Skills Analysis (completed in 2006)
- Step 2: Training Matrix (Issued Mid-2006, constantly being updated through feedback)
- Step 3: Speakers Briefs (35 topics completed and linked to training matrix)
- Step 4: Branding and promotion (completed early 2007)
- Step 5: Workshop Development (ongoing process)
- Step 6: NGI Intranet (not yet implemented)

Communicating and ensuring that the training matrix available to all state associations will ensure that funds are not spent on duplicating workshops and materials. Another benefit of the training matrix is to assist state associations with developing their annual training program.

Defining the National Training Matrix

Category	<p>Defines area of skill that will be affected</p> <p>Bus Dev – Business Development and strategy</p> <p>Money Mgt – Financial Management</p> <p>People Mgt – People, staff and development management</p> <p>SMP – Sales, Marketing and Promotion</p> <p>Compliance – Occupational Health & Safety, First Aid</p> <p>Plant Health – Technical relating to plant health</p>
Skill Level	<p>Target audience that will get most benefit from development activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foundation – new to the skill 2. Intermediate – Comfortable with basic skill, but would like more advanced, specialist skill 3. Executive – skill appropriate for decision-maker
Topic	<p>Name of topic. Outline of the topic and contents is defined in Speaker's brief, prior to workshop or training activity material development. Therefore important to use together.</p>
Sector	<p>Sector audience that will get most benefit from development activity.</p> <p>Production; Retail; Allied; Landscapers</p>
Speakers Brief	<p>Specifies whether a speaker's brief has been developed.</p>
Training Materials available	<p>Specific if Provider is NGI, materials are available to state associations in the form of training packs. Developed via NGIA and available nationally.</p>
Provider	<p>External provider or via NGI network. States who have initiated the workshop or development activity, will be visible in this column</p>

A copy of the NGI National Training Matrix outlining priority training activities for the nursery and garden industry has been provided as part of the appendices

Speaker's Briefs

Where workshop details are required, the training matrix should be used in conjunction with the Speaker's Briefs. Initially NGIA have only developed a selected number of briefs. These briefs will be trialled and input provided by the state associations may require changes, before continuing to develop a complete set.

The role of the Speakers' Brief is to provide an outline and description regarding what the possible skill development activity will deliver. This will serve as a useful tool in the following situations:

- When materials are not yet developed for a particular topic, state can use the speakers' brief as a guide whether determining if a topic will be of interest in the state
- Provides an outline and expectation for facilitators who may be instructing a workshop, using their own material.
- Develops a set standard of skills, nationally as every state using the speaker's brief will be using the same workshop outline, and outcomes, even though they may be using different facilitators or materials.
- The development of popular workshop materials via NGIA will use the speaker's briefs to assist with the technical development of content and guide for instructional designers.
- Creates an expectation of outcomes and quality
- Confirms number of CNP points allocated to the development activity.

Copies of all the Speaker's Brief developed as part of this project have been provided as part of the appendices

Training Workshop Packages

The findings from industry's National Skills Study and feedback from state associations, a priority of workshop packages have been identified. In the 2006/2007 financial year a total of seven workshop training pack materials were developed. These training packs include facilitator guides, presentation materials and participant workbooks that can be used by the states associations to readily deliver structured, effective and relevant training. By providing a central repository for the development of workshops, NGIA have ensured that less duplication with development of materials.

NGIA, in partnership with technical specialists and professional instructional designers, have developed quality learner materials in the areas of Garden Design, Pest & Disease Management, Growing Media and Product costing.

The following workshop materials are available to each state association. All training activities have been mapped as part of the National Training Matrix.

<p>Garden Design Insights</p> <p>(Foundation Level)</p>	<p>This workshop explains the basic elements of garden design. Participants will be given an understanding of the key principles of garden design and different garden themes and styles. They will also learn how to develop a client brief, perform basic site analysis and design a planting plan.</p> <p>Designed to support retail garden centres in giving advice to customers, this workshop is ideal for garden centre operators and staff seeking to expand their knowledge and enter the exciting world of garden design.</p> <p>This workshop will soon be incorporated in Planting & Garden Design for Retail Garden Centres Development Series and will be one of three workshops in a retailer's journey to becoming skilled in planting and garden design.</p>
<p>Costing for Profit</p> <p>(Executive Level)</p>	<p>The workshop introduces participants to a step-by-step process for determining and managing the cost of producing and selling plants. Understanding these costs allows decision-makers to set suitable sales prices and achieve a realistic return on effort and investment. Targeted at both retailer and production nurseries.</p> <p>This is revised workshop and now replaces the outdated Plant Costing workshop.</p>
<p>EcoHort - Managing your nursery's environmental risks</p> <p>(Executive Level)</p>	<p>The activities covered in this workshop support production nurseries and growing media manufacturers to implement good practice, improve production and demonstrate sound environmental practice</p>
<p>Recognising & identifying Pests & Diseases</p> <p>Foundation: Pest & Diseases in Container Nurseries Development Series</p>	<p>The emphasis of this one day interactive workshop is to provide practical information on how to look for and recognise pests in the nursery. This session also introduces the concept of integrated pest management (IPM). This workshop is designed for people responsible for maintaining plant health, who work in the various sectors of the nursery and garden industry including production, retail, landscaping and allied trades.</p>
<p>Controlling & Managing Pests</p> <p>Intermediate: Pest & Diseases in Container Nurseries Development Series</p>	<p>This one day interactive workshop provides participants with practical guidelines on how to effectively control and manage pests in a container nursery environment, using the strategy of Integrated pest management. This workshop is designed for people responsible for controlling and managing pests and diseases in a nursery operation; people who routinely look for pests, record their presence or absence and are required to carry out control operations.</p>

<p>Pest Management Strategies</p> <p>Executive: Pest & Diseases in Container Nurseries Development Series</p>	<p>This workshop is designed to give participants a framework for making decisions about pest management strategies in their business.</p> <p>On the completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a pest management strategy for their business ■ Make clear decisions on effective management of pests using monitoring data and records developed for their business ■ Implement and review their pest management strategy <p>Replaces the previous IPM workshop</p>
<p>Growing Media Development Series</p> <p>Foundation</p> <p>The ‘Root’ to Healthy Profits</p>	<p>The knowledge being addressed in this workshop is of a general nature that all staff in the nursery & garden industry should have about potting mixes. The final outcome being to recommend to clients a potting mix for a given situation.</p>
<p>Growing Media Development Series</p> <p>Intermediate</p> <p>Growing Media for Troubleshooters</p>	<p>Understanding your potting mix is a key component to successful growing. This is a practical hands-on workshop. The workshop provides staff with the practical skills needed to measure and evaluate the physical and chemical properties of potting mixes using the Australian Standard AS3743 – 2003.</p> <p>The testing procedure is demonstrated in a video reinforced by the facilitator. The facilitator then guides the participants whilst they perform the tests on potting mixes.</p> <p>After performing the tests the participants will use basic plant diagnostic skills to identify problems that may exist in container plants in nurseries. Then through group discussion and brain-storming activities they will offer solutions to problems associated with potting mixes. All this in the context of Nursery Best Practice.</p>

The Training Pack is made up off the following:

1. Participant Workbook
2. Facilitator Guide
3. Presentation Materials
4. Support materials (Certificate of Attendance, Evaluation Forms, Materials Error Log, Speakers Notes, and Promo Material/Facts Sheet).



Alignment of industry programs/workshops with Industry Recognition Scheme – Certified Nursery Professional (CNP)

Copies off the new workshops' FACTSHEETS developed as part of this project have been provided as part of the appendices. Also included is a copy of the Pest & Diseases' workshop materials aimed at the Foundation level.

Certified Nursery Professional

The Industry Training & Recognition project continues to support the management and administration of the industry's recognition scheme. NGIA's management of CNP is ensuring that remains affordable, accessible and sustainable within the industry development structure.

As of August 2007, CNP membership has grown to 120 and continues to grow in popularity.

Marketing for the CNP to both industry and consumer is covered by projects relating to marketing.

CNP Strategic Importance and Targets

Recently, when discussing CNP with state association staff etc. it became evident that not all understand the strategic importance of this program to industry. A program such as CNP, is a mechanism and one of the tools we can implement to raise the professional image of our industry. The skill study identified the need for such a program and as an association, if we do not implement one, others may take the opportunity to do so.

We are dealing with a double-edge sword. Members find it difficult to join if clear benefits are not in place, but tangible benefits are difficult to sponsor and promote, if member numbers remain small. These CNP members are good candidates and are credible members, something to be proud of.

New CNP coordinator

In December 2006, NGIA employed a CNP Coordinator on a part-time basis (two days a week). The role is responsible for the day-to-day running of the program, including membership support and processing. Other tasks include following up applications and inquiries, ensuring that we remain focused on increasing membership targets. The CNP Coordinator provides each state with a monthly update report regarding new CNP members registered in the state and any further updates regarding changes and promotional campaigns about to be launched.

CNP Networking

One of the benefits of becoming a CNP member is the accessibility to skill development activities and networking opportunities. NGIA try to ensure that CNP's are updated about what is happening in the industry using various communication channels including CNP Newsletters and the CNP Website. The latest communication tools links CNP's to other CNPs. This is the new CNP online Forum.

1. CNP Website & Newsletters

The CNP website is the primary industry communication tool for CNP. The website details information relating to:

- What is CNP?
- Benefits of being a CNP member
- Criteria for Recognition
- Maintaining Membership
- Listing of CNP members

In April 2007, the CNP program launched its first quarterly newsletter. The aim of the newsletter is to inform all CNP's regarding updates in the program and activities relating to training & development. Industry and consumer promotions are also communicated via CNP Newsletters.

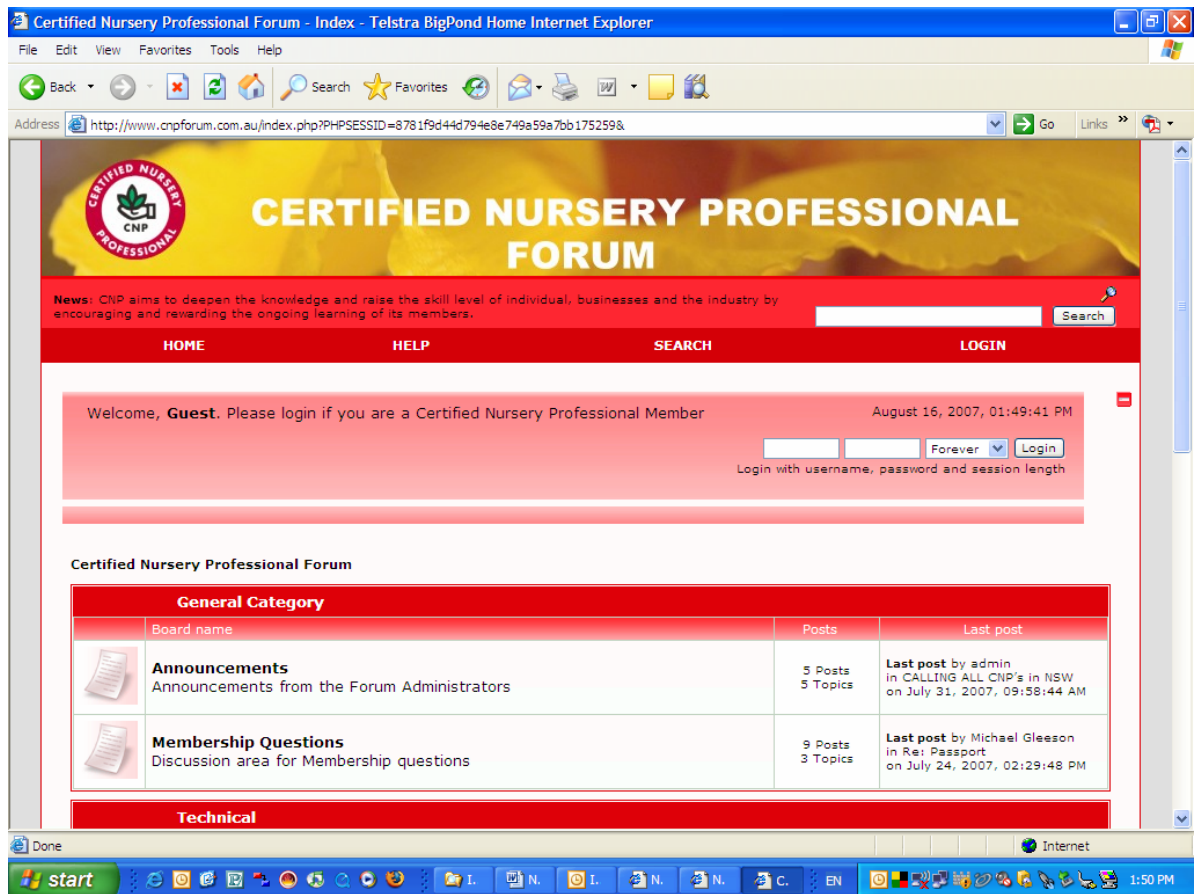
Copies of the April and July 2007 CNP Newsletter have been provided as part of the appendices of this report

2. CNP Forum

The forum is a communication tool that enables CNPs to network with each other. The forum is online and offers CNPs the opportunity to discuss topics relating to their industry. The forum is secured and requires CNPs to provide a security logon to be able to post a thread. The CNP Co-ordinator is the forums administrator, a task that requires constant monitoring of topics and discussions. The co-ordinator is also available to instruct CNP members on how to use the forum, over the phone.

The success of the forum is not yet determined, since it has only recently been established. NGIA recommend that its usage be reviewed over the next 12 months.

The CNP Forum can be viewed at the following link www.cnpforum.com.au



Organising and implementing state-based workshops

Included in this proposal is the provision of state workshops previously funded under the partnership agreement, which is a necessity for the future competitiveness of the nursery & garden industry. A major advantage of this new approach will be to maximise the benefits of the experiences of each state, including but not limited to strategies surrounding delegate attendance, feedback via evaluations and workshop design.

State Training Plans

To ensure that all states are using the current model and are planning ahead with skill development activities, the National Training & Recognition Manager encourage and assisted the state association in developing a training plan/calendar for the 2006/2007 financial year. Affecting the timetable of this task is the seasonal nature of the industry. Winter is the preferred time for activities such as training. There are clearly defined trends.

A copy of the a calendar depicting the actual workshops implemented in the states has been provided as part of the appendices of this report

Funding Guidelines for State-based training workshops

The purpose of the State Workshop Funding Guideline document is to provide parameters regarding requests to support NGI State-based training workshops and field days for 2006/2007.

This model provides an opportunity to approach the design and implementation of workshops /field days in a more structured way so as to maximise resources. The benefit of this funding model allows NGI to tackle ongoing issues relating to skill development activities, including:

- Duplication in activities, especially in the preparation of workshop materials.
- Difficulties in obtaining acceptable number of participants, which leads to cancellations.
- Inconsistent approach to the marketing of workshops and delegate fees.
- Difficulty in estimating the return on investment dollar for activities that has been and will be provided.
- Anticipating costs of providing workshops and different skill development activities, establishing value for money.

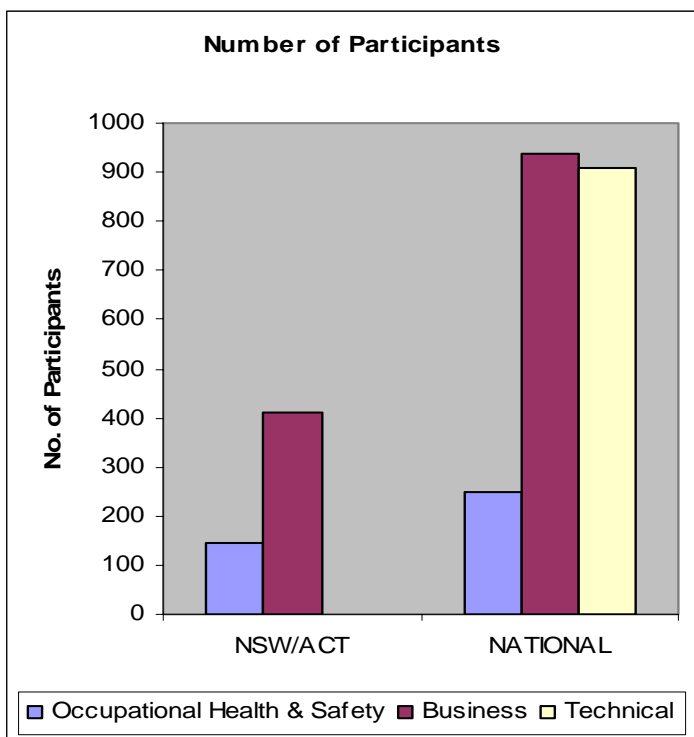
A copy of the NGI State Training Funding Guidelines has been provided as part of the appendices of this report

With the current process in place we have been able to record information regarding the number of workshops held in each state, total number of participants, average cost per workshop, average cost per participant per state.

Workshops have been well received and feedback (completed Evaluations forms) from participants overall has been very positive.

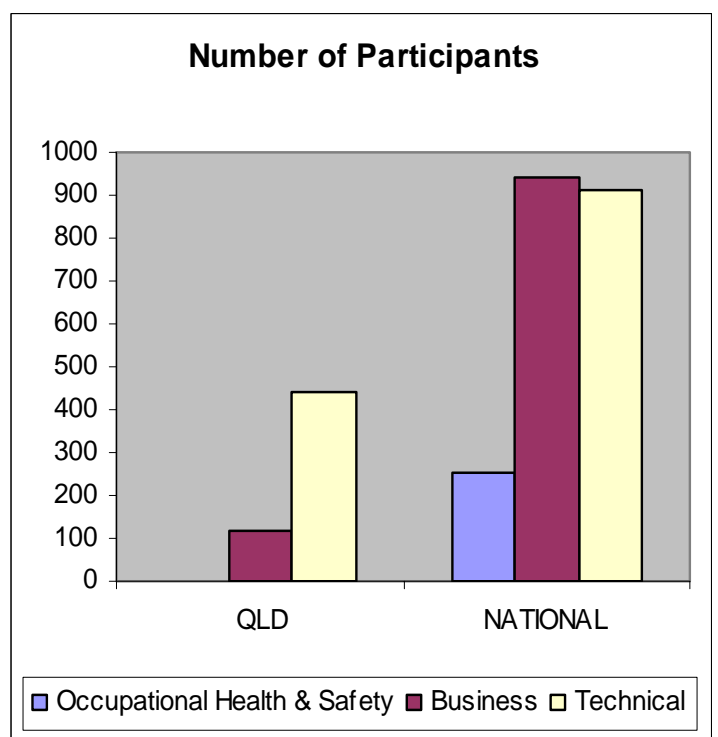
Graph representing the three broad categories of workshops run in each state vs. no of participants attending the workshops.

NSW



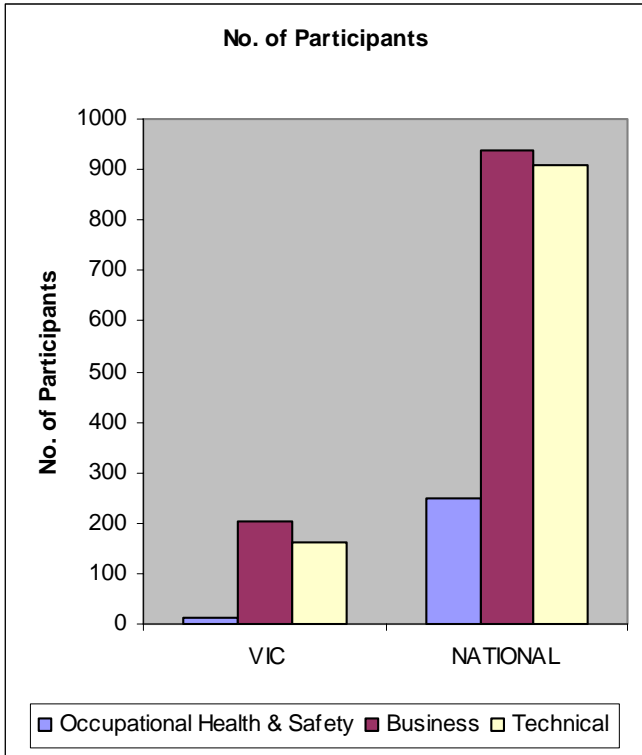
Evident that NSW will need to be encouraged to implement Technical workshops such as Pest & Disease and Waterwork in the 2007/2008 project

QLD

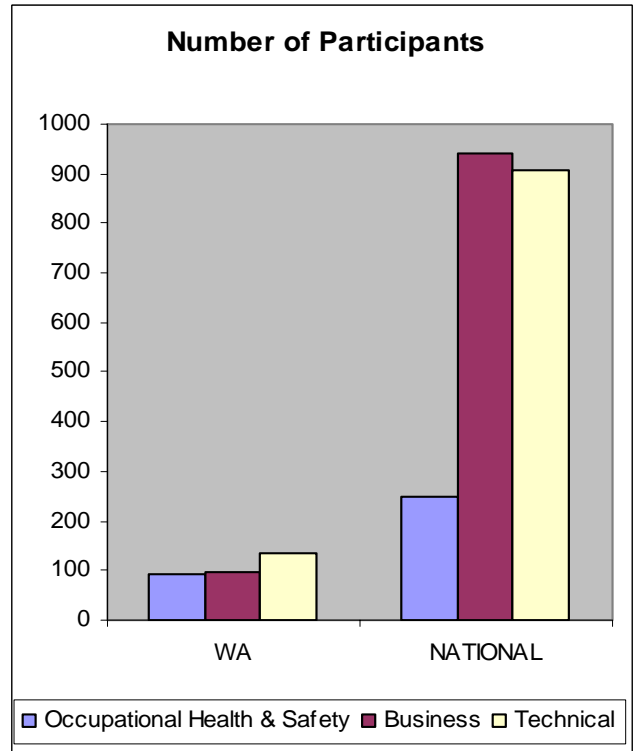


OH & S workshops were not implemented in QLD during 2006/2007. This will need to be encouraged considering OH & S was rated highly as a required skill in the National Skill Study

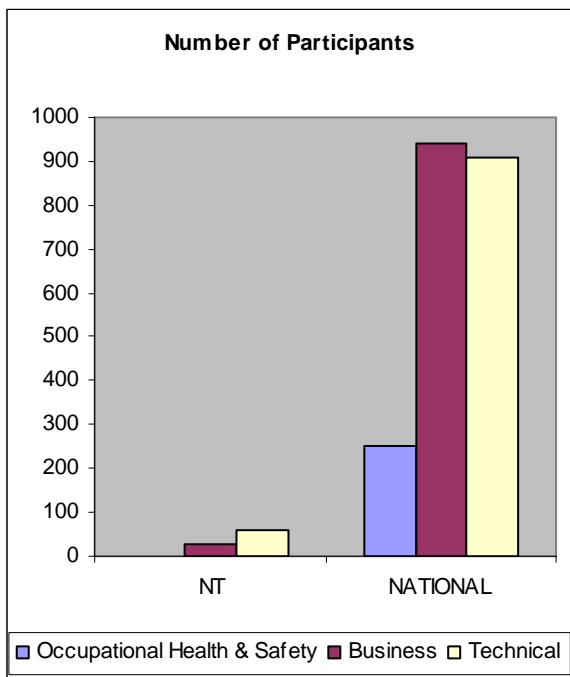
VIC



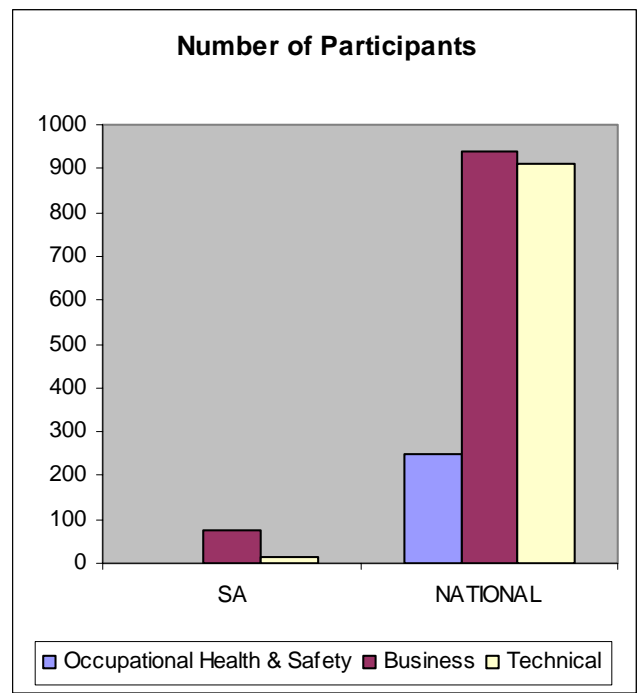
WA



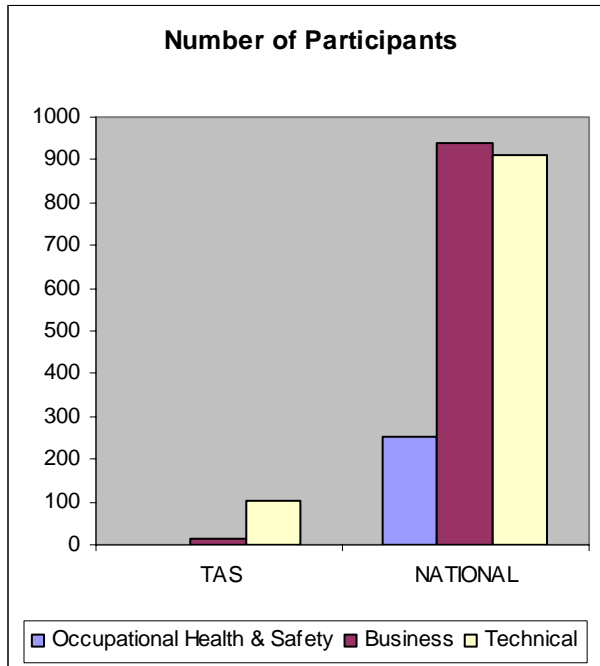
NT



SA



TAS



Nationally the NGI training network delivered 109 funded workshops and 2099 people participated. The breakdown of workshops is as follows:

NGI Network Training		
	Number of Course	Number of Participant
OH&S (incorporating First Aid)	23	251
BUSINESS	35	939
TECHNICAL	51	909
TOTAL	109	2099

Evaluation

The Training & Recognition portfolio is managed by the National Training & Recognition Manager (NTRM) and is overseen by the Training & Recognition Committee as well as the NGIA National Board. The NTRM is required to provide WIP (Work-in-Progress) reports to the NGIA Board on a regular basis – up to six reports per year - detailing the progress of various activities relating to this project. The Training & Recognition committee meet twice a year, which provides the NTRM with the opportunity to present and discuss the projects, challenges and communicate updates relating to this project.

Minutes from the October 2006 and May 2007 meetings have been included under the appendices for this document.

We can measure the success of this project by measuring the uptake of training workshops within the industry. During the 2006/2007 financial year, over 109 industry-training workshops and field days were implemented nationally by the NGI state associations of which almost 2100 people attended. People attending workshops came from all sectors of industry including retail garden centres, big chain retailers, production nurseries, allied trades and landscape. The following information was documented and collated so as to track ROI for funds invested in state-based workshops.

Average number of participants per workshop	19
Average cost of implementing a workshop	\$2 000
Average cost of organising a workshop	\$ 900
Average cost per person attending	\$105 -\$108
State with the highest average cost per workshop	TAS with \$2 621 average cost
State with the lowest average cost per workshop	SA with \$1 389 average cost
State with the highest average cost per person	WA with \$136 average cost per person
State with the lowest average cost per person	SA with \$80 average cost per person

The monitoring and analysis performed as part of this 2006/2007 financial year for State-based training activities has enabled NGIA to set a benchmark for workshop costs and future budget planning.

Copies of completed participant Evaluations from NGI Network training have been provided as part of the appendices of this report. See Item "State Workshop Guidelines"

Implications

The aim of 2006/2007 Industry Training & Recognition project was to ensure that industry skill development activities remain cost-effective, less resource-intensive and deliver the learning outcomes required by industry to prosper in the current and future competitive environment.

Participating in the AFISC standing committee has enabled NGIA to feedback into the VET system the skill requirements for people in our industry. A challenge in the future is to ensure that we stay visible and in the 'communication loop' with the stewards of the national training package and take every opportunity to input into the review process. Without which, the industry will revert back to having 'outsiders' making decisions on the appropriate learning outcomes for this industry.

A key element and strength of this project was the development of the National Training Matrix. This forms the foundation for the development of new workshop materials, and provides a central repository for all workshops available to NGI Network training. The training matrix is currently being used in a project to maximise AGCAS⁵ to deliver a development journey to Best Practice for the industry's retail garden centres.

A copy of AGCAS Journey to Best Practice has been provided as part of the appendices of this report. See Item "NGI National Training Matrix"

The challenge is to ensure this database of workshops becomes more readily accessible to state associations in an online format. With the training matrix being available online, document versions will be easier to manage and less labour intensive.

A great result of this 2006/2007 project was the design and development of seven additional workshops, which are easily accessible to the state associations for implementation to industry. These workshops deal with key issues, including Pest & Disease, Environmental responsibility and Business and Plant Health.

The increase in CNP membership demonstrates that the industry is more aware of the program and the drive to be recognised for ongoing skill development. This has great implications and is a major strategic tool for the promotion of skills development for the nursery and garden industry.

⁵ AGCAS – Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme

Summary of Expenditure

During the period of July 2006 to August 2007, NGIA received a total amount of \$352 600 to support the implementation of the Industry Training & Recognition project. On final delivery of this project a further amount of \$20,000 in VC and \$24,000 R&D was to be paid to NGIA, but NGIA has requested that the outstanding R&D amount be reinvested back into nursery industry R&D. In relation to the VC, as discussed in separate communications with HAL, we seek to pledge a higher figure for the final instalment, in order to cover two items:

- To cover expenditure on workshops delivered, which were well in advance of the forecast numbers, both in workshop numbers and delegate attendance. The table below reflects this.
- To take advantage of industry funds generated via the CNP – this year \$9800 was raised as CNP fees and the industry should seek to match it via the VC. The figures below do not reflect this as this would require a switch from R&D funding to VC and we await HAL approval.

Below is a summary of how the funds were expended.

Expense	July 2006 – August 2007	
	R & D	VC
Communications/Marketing	\$ 6 000	
Project staffing & Consultants	\$ 68 000	
Travel & Meals	\$ 10 000	
Office costs	\$ 6 000	
Functions/Meetings	\$ 1 500	
Design & Printing	\$ 8 000	
Welcome Kit expenses	\$ 1 500	
Legal	\$ 100	
Organising state workshops	\$98 000	
Cost of implementing state workshops		\$214 200
Total Expenses	\$199 100	\$214 200
CNP Membership Income	\$ 9 800	
VC Contribution paid to date	\$ 104 346	
Original final milestone VC pledge	\$ 11,594	
Revised VC contribution to cover the workshops	\$ 124,172	
Required final milestone VC pledge	\$ 19,826	

Unfortunately, the implementation of an on-line intranet training database was not initiated in the time-frame of this project. The funding for this activity remains unallocated. NGIA recommends that due to the importance of such a database, once the NGIA website and national database is established, this activity be reinstated.

Development of National online Training/Events Calendar	Intranet document management	Brief to possible Vendor 1 st Meeting to discuss Methodology timelines and intranet function Draft agreement & contract, costs Initial test site State Trial Final signoff of site Go Live Maintenance Plan	\$15,000
	Maintenance of Intranet site	Usage statistics Maintenance summary	\$5,000 (annual fee)

Recommendations

Moving into the 2007/2008 project time-frame NGIA recommend that the strategies as set out in the three-year National Training Plan continued to be actioned with particular emphasis placed on the following:

1. Developing and promoting career pathways for the nursery & garden industry
2. Online development of a Training Database available, including online registration of state-based workshops
3. Continued investment in the maintenance of existing workshops and related-material
4. Continued investment in the identification and development of new workshop topics related to the nursery & garden industry and its operating environment
5. Develop and support projects aligned with the outcomes from the Review of the Amenity Horticulture Training Package, for example developing and promoting career pathways within the nursery & garden Industry
6. Increased participation with training providers at a state level
7. Ensuring that all skill development activities are linked to the industry's recognition scheme, Certified Nursery Professional
8. Continued registration and support of the CNP program and its members

Bibliography

NGIA National Skills Study 2005/2006

Report by:
Australian Survey Research Group Pty Ltd
7 March 2006

AFISC: Review Amenity Horticulture Training Package (RTF03) Phase 1 Scoping Report

Report by Project Consultant: Don Jones
October 2006

Feasibility Study into Merging Rural Production, Conservation and Land Management and Amenity Horticulture Training Packages - Final Report

Report by:
Agri-Food Industry Skills Council Project
January 2007

Acknowledgments

This report acknowledges the work produced by the NGIA Industry Development Team, Nursery & Garden Industry State Associations, training providers, content specialists, researchers and industry members that provided input into the development of learner materials, speaker notes and the review of the Amenity Horticulture Training Package.

These include, but not limited to

The industry's Development Officers

Staff and CEO's at all the state associations

National Training & Recognition Committee

Jane Brownbill and David Greentree from Agri-Food Industry Skills Council

Simon Oaten – Learning Dynamics

Kerry Chater – Dolphin Consulting

Edda Keskula

Jenny James

Kate Heffernan – Horticulture & Landscape design consultant

Michele Adland & Rod McMillan from Adland Horticulture

Tina Gould – Communications Manager, Ernst & Young

Richard Stephens – Horticulture Australia Limited

Philip Roeth – Horticulture Australia Limited

Neil Jones – NSW TAFE Curriculum Development Centre, Primary Industries

Brian Sams – SE QLD TAFE Head Teacher Horticulture

Appendices

Item 2: NGI National Training Plan

Item 3: National Training & Recognition committee Minutes of Meetings held in October 2006 and May 2007

Item 4: Minutes relating to NGI focus Groups for the Review of Amenity Horticulture Training Package

Item 5: Sample communication activities to promote industry skill development activities

- NGIA Clippings
- NGIA Nursery Paper
- NGIA Enewsletter “ECommpost”

Item 6: NGI National Training Matrix

- AGCAS Journey to Best Practice

Item 7: NGI Speaker’s Briefs for current and possible future workshops

Item 8: Workshop FACTSHEETS

Item 9: Workshop Development

Item 10: State Workshop Guidelines

- Includes participant feedback

Item 112: CNP Administration