

**Nursery Industry Accreditation
Scheme Australia (NIASA)
Management Committee and
Technical Officers Group
Conference**

NY541

**Ian Atkinson
Nursery Industry Association of
Australia**

NY541

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NY 541 - NIASA* Management Committee and Technical Officers Group Conference.

Industry Summary.

Day 1. The National Accreditation Committee (NAC) visited Redlands Greenhouses P/L to examine the operations of the nursery and discuss the impacts & benefits of becoming accredited. The NAC then heard a presentation on the implementation and role of the ISO9002 system at Birkdale Nurseries. The NAC also had informal discussions with the Queensland Accreditation Committee.

Day 2. Both NAC meetings were very successful and amicable. A NIASA Technical Officers Group (TOG) was formed. A proposal from the Australian Citrus Improvement Association to incorporate a specific section on Citrus Propagation into NIASA was approved. Deadlines and responsibilities for a review of the current Guidelines were set.

A facilitated session involving both NAC and TOG developed a series of "Visions for NIASA to the Year 2000 & Beyond". Impediments to these visions were identified and specific action plans recommended to tackle two key areas.

Technical Summary.

Day 3. Inaugural meeting of the NIASA Technical Officers Group including the National NIDO. TOG's role is primarily to recommend necessary changes to the NIASA Technical Guidelines and to make recommendations about the operations of Technical Officers at State level. Workplans were written to develop improvements to the NIASA Technical Guidelines in the areas of record keeping, compulsory staff training, standardisation of disinfestation procedures, media accreditation and checklist detail. Discussion on the importance of communication led to the decision to start a regular newsletter.

NIASA* ; Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme, Australia.

NIASA - National

Accreditation

Committee

Annual General

Meeting

Brisbane, 31 January 1996.

NIASA National Accreditation Committee - Brisbane Agenda

1996 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

<i>Clock time</i>	<i>Business item</i>	<i>time allocated</i>
8-10am	Welcome and Apologies	10 minutes
	Election of Chairperson	10 min.
8-30am	Motions with Notice	40 min.
	Election of Vice-Chairperson (if required)	10 min.
9-20am	Presentation of written reports from State reps (10 min. each) on the following items ;	70 min.
	a. Number and type of businesses accredited.	
	b. Number of applications in process.	
	c. State fee structure, (see Admin. Criteria 4/ A.C. 4).	
	d. Regulatory commitments to state government, (see Admin. Criteria 9 / A.C. 9).	
	e. Current State Guidelines (see A.C. 22), please bring 10 copies of your current guidelines.	
	f. Details of State Accreditation Committee membership and a list of current Technical Officers.	
10-30am	Close and Morning Tea.	30 min.
GENERAL MEETING		
11-00am	Minutes of last Meeting (Manly)	10 minutes
	Business arising	20 min.
11-30am	General Business	
	1. Citrus Propagation Accreditation Proposal	20 min.
	2. NIASA logo and Certificates (see A.C. 20 and your states correspondence on this matter)	10 min.
12 noon	3. "...maintenance of the accreditation scheme participants register." A.C. 22 by Who ? and How ?	20 min.
	4. Review of NIASA Booklet, sub-committee ?	10 min.
12-30pm	Close and Lunch.	

NIASA - National Accreditation Committee

Annual General Meeting

Brisbane, Wednesday 31 January 1996

1. PRESENT

Bob Bentley, David Matthews, Wayne Parr, David Eaton, Roger Davey, David Allan, John Moore, Russ Higginbotham (substitute for D Cliffe), Ian Atkinson, Anne Currey (minutes secretary)

2. APOLOGIES

David Cliffe

3. MEETING CHAIR

With the permission of the meeting Ian Atkinson chaired the AGM.

It was also agreed that the order of agenda would be changed to discuss notices of motion before election of officers.

4. MOTIONS

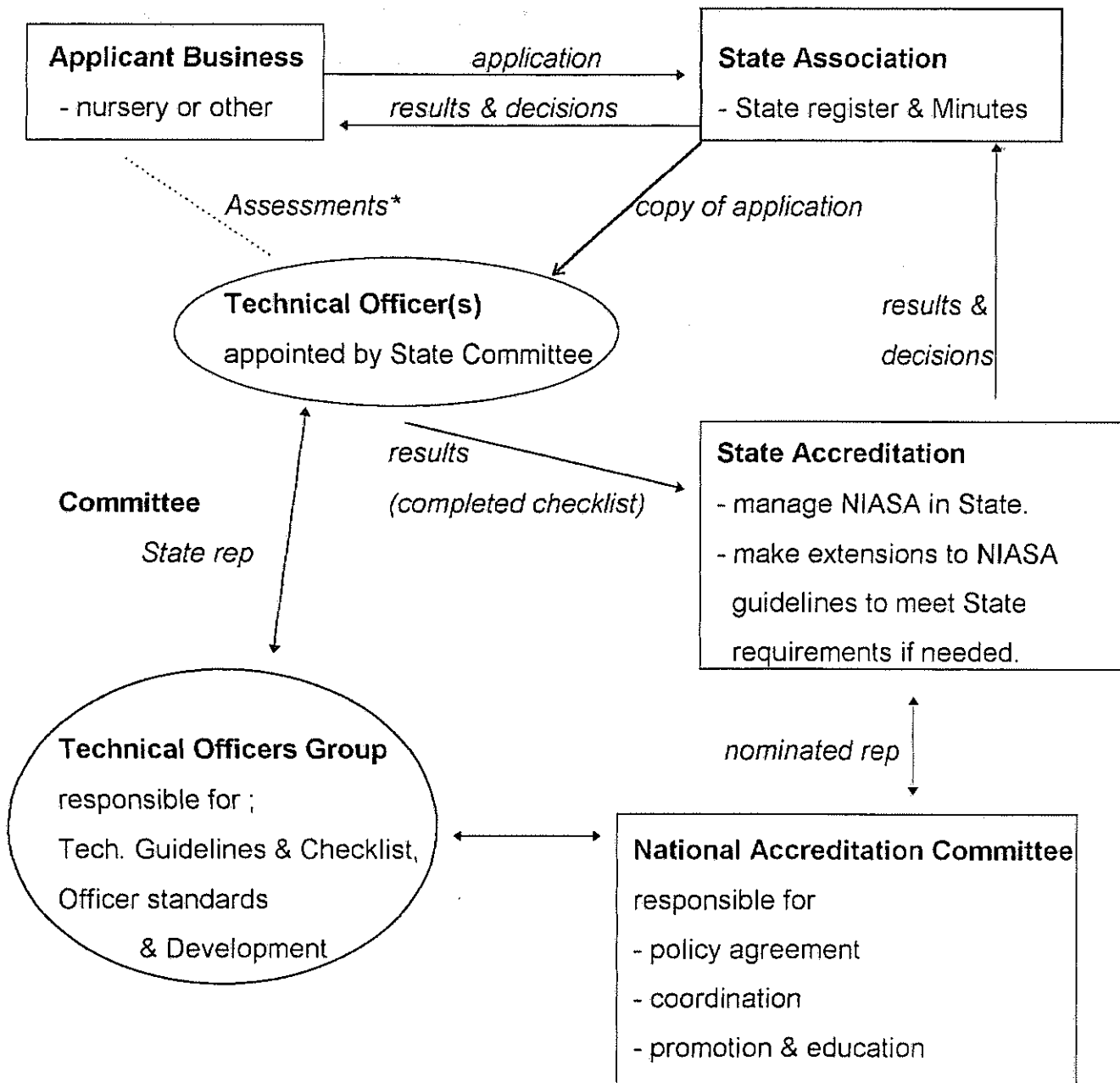
Motion 1 - That the NIASA National Accreditation Committee elect a Vice Chairperson to act in event of the Chairperson's absence or resignation.

Moved: R Davey, seconded: B Bentley. Passed unanimously

Motion 2 - That the NIASA National Accreditation Committee include a nominee of the NIAA Board, preferably a Board member, to act as liaison between NIASA and NIAA.

Moved: D Eaton, seconded: D Matthews. Passed unanimously

“Schematic of NIASA Operations”



Motion 3 - That a NIASA Technical Officers' Group consisting of one Technical Officer from each state and the National NIDO (or equivalent) be formed to make recommendations on the Technical Guidelines and other matters relating to their role and functions.

Moved: J Moore, seconded: B Bentley. Passed unanimously.

Motion 4 - That changes to the NIASA "Technical Guidelines" and the relevant appendixes should be recommended by the NIASA Technical Officers' Group and passed on to the National Accreditation Committee for approval at a meeting or teleconference.

Moved: R David, seconded: J Moore. Passed unanimously.

Motion 5 - That the "Schematic of NIASA Operations" form part of the "Administrative Criteria for NIASA"

Moved: D Matthews, seconded: B Bentley. Passed unanimously.

Motion 6 - That changes to the:

*"Administrative Criteria for NIASA",
"Codes of Conduct of Accreditation Committees",
"Guidelines for the Functions and Selection of Technical Officers",
"Disputes", and
"Procedures for Suspending, Terminating and Restoring
Accreditation"*

sections can only be made by the following process:

- a. Motions with notice supported by three committee members, with reasons for the change, are received by all committee members (and a copy to NIAA Head Office) at least 21 days before a meeting.*

b. A meeting of committee members is conducted either face to face or by teleconference to debate the motion(s) and can only be voted in with the support of at least 85% of all members (for example 7 out of 8).

Moved: R Davey, seconded: W Parr. Passed unanimously.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Chairperson: Nominee D. Cliffe proposed by R. Davey, seconded R. Higginbotham.

Elected unopposed.

Vice Chairperson: Nominee D Matthews proposed by R Higginbotham, seconded B Bentley. Elected unopposed.

6. WRITTEN REPORTS

6.1 Northern Territory - Roger Davey. While the Northern Territory Clean Scheme was an initiative of the NIA of the Northern Territory, its development, promotion and launch in 1988 was totally funded by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, NT. However, because of departmental requirements for the scheme to be self monitoring and self funded, it foundered as a consensus could not be achieved.

On 1 January 1996 the NT Government adopted a Contractor Accreditation Scheme (all contracts over \$10,000) and whilst restricted to experience, technical and financial resources, its scope will broaden over time making now an ideal opportunity to revitalise our accreditation scheme.

Our Clean Scheme had eight Darwin and two Katherine nurseries, and John estimates that with slight upgrading we could have ten Darwin, two Katherine and one Alice Springs nurseries (together with some flower growers) accredited under the National Scheme.

The only fee structure was for sample analyses which could not be done in the NT and were sent interstate.

For regulatory requirements, see attached PAWA letter.

We will use the National Guidelines with the inclusion of a non applicable box in the checklist.

The Executive of NIAANT will undertake the establishment of the National Scheme (in consultation with our technical officer, John Duff).

6.2 Victoria - David Matthews. Number of accredited nurseries circulated (see list distributed at meeting). There are no applications in progress.

Fees are \$1000 a year with a member's discount fee of \$300 a year.

There are no regulatory commitments.

Current State guidelines have been circulated.

Membership of the Technical and Accreditation Committee:

David Matthews - Chairman

Leo Koelwyn - Vice Chairman

Robert Harrison

Robin Lang

Michael Linton

Wayne Tregae - IHD Knoxfield

Han Kosmer - Industry Development Officer

Stuart Holland - Executive Director

Additional information

Evaluation. The scheme is currently working well and is seen by most in the industry as successful. The success has been in improving members' businesses and the image of the industry.

Retail. A committee of retailers has been established to implement a Retail Improvement Scheme which may be a forerunner to adoption of a modified Retail Accreditation Scheme after review of the national guidelines.

Contact: Executive Director
NIAV
PO Box 431
Caulfield East 3145
Tel: 03 9576 0599
Fax: 03 9576 0431

6.3 Queensland - Wayne Parr (attached)

6.4 New South Wales - John Moore. At present the scheme is up and running with a total of five nurseries having been accredited (one application is pending).

Problems. Communication in relation to State/national logos on accreditation certification. More information is required about EPA guidelines.

Funding. For future inspections statewide; introduction to technical officers; and \$350 application fee.

Members of committee. John Moore (Chairman), Mal Morgan, Tony Scott, Arthur Matt.

6.5 South Australia - David Eaton (circulated at meeting)

6.6 Western Australia - Bob Bentley There have been eleven applications and eight nurseries accredited (four government departments and 1 mining company). No applications are in progress.

Birnam Nurseries (wholesale) - azalea grower

Cladalan Nurseries (wholesale) - seedlings and shrubs

Sunnyvale Plants (wholesale) - seedlings

Five Acre Nursery (non member)

Apace Aid - wetlands regeneration

Kings Park Botanical (government) - wildflowers

CALM Nursery (government) - wildflower regeneration

Alcoa Nursery (mining) - wildflower regeneration

Three applications have not been successful.

The accreditation committee consists of:

R Bentley (Chairman)

D Zito

T Hurle

G Cay (advisor capacity)

D Baldock

R Middleton (resigned)

P Wood (Dept of Agriculture)

Phil Wood (Technical Officer)

J. Bishop (Secretary)

State guidelines. Some variation from original NIASA forms (copies distributed at meeting).

Fee structure. 1st inspection \$375

annual inspection	\$300
soil test	\$ 75

Country members charge mileage but are grouped together to save costs.

6.7 Tasmania - David Allan. No nursery in Tasmania is accredited.

Meeting closed 9.50 am

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NIASA - National
Accreditation
Committee

General Meeting

Brisbane, 31 January 1996.

NIASA - National Accreditation Committee

General Meeting

Brisbane, Wednesday 31 January 1996

1. PRESENT

Bob Bentley, David Matthews, Wayne Parr, David Eaton, Roger Davey, David Allan, John Moore, Russ Higginbotham (stand in for D Cliffe), Ian Atkinson, Anne Currey (minutes secretary).

2. APOLOGIES

David Cliffe

3. MEETING CHAIR

David Matthews

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The following changes were agreed to: Change to P. 7 from "application form" to "checklist. And "John Moore with help from Tony Scott to redraft the application form".

Moved that minutes are a reasonable and accurate record of previous meeting.

Moved: B Bentley, seconded: J Moore. Passed unanimously.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

5.1 State Contacts

To improve flow of communication suggested that key contacts be nominated. These are as follows:

Executive officer of each State association

NIAA office - Gary Gibson

Agreed that all information for NIASA to be exchanged through channel.

5.2 Record Keeping

Referred to TOG that recommendations be made for standard record keeping needs in regard to accreditation, being mindful of any packages or information already developed.

Moved: D Allan, seconded: W Parr. Passed unanimously.

5.3 Involvement of NIDO with Committee

National NIDO involvement with the committee is as a link on technical matters between accreditation committee and TOG.

Moved: R Higginbotham, seconded: W Parr. Passed

5.4 Funding of Scheme

Discussion of accreditation scheme. NIAA is seen as peak body ensuring overall management of scheme. No policy at present on how scheme is funded, however, HRDC will probably not continue to fund the committee out of pot levies.

MOTION: That the National NIDO prepare an application for funding of the committee and TOG for annual meetings for a period of three years.

Moved: J Moore, seconded: W Parr. Passed unanimously.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 Citrus Propagation Proposal

See attached draft guidelines.

MOTION: That the draft citrus guidelines be accepted as an addendum to NIASA Scheme.

Moved: R Higginbotham, seconded: W Parr. Passed.

MOTION: That States consider charging an additional fee for additional costs for inspection for citrus accreditation.

Moved: J Moore, seconded: D Allan. Passed.

MOTION: Changes to citrus addendum be based on the recommendation of the Australian Citrus Improvement Association (ACIA).

Moved: R Higginbotham, seconded: W Parr. Passed.

6.2 NIASA logos and certificates

Discussion on what each State is doing with certificates and logos and options for logos and certification design. Agreed that the following process be followed:

1. Development of logo options (brief AHC - D Cliffe)
2. To NAC mid March

3. Review/decision by National Accreditation Committee 30 April (all)
4. Final approval by NAC by 31 May - teleconference (all)
5. Production of bromides etc by June 30 1996 (NIAA office)
6. Launch of new logo at 1997 National Conference

Logo to be based on "Accredited nursery - setting the standards" and present shape with NIASA logo to be placed in middle of circle.

Moved: J Moore, seconded: Bob Bentley. Passed unanimously.

Certificate design and production will be left to each State's discretion.

At the next meeting an item to be included on the agenda for discussion is whether there should be a national certificate as well as State certificate?

6.3 Maintenance of Accreditation Scheme Participants Register

MOTION: That the participants' register be maintained by NIAA office.

Moved: D Eaton, seconded: B Bentley. Passed.

It was agreed that NIAA office send updated list of accredited nurseries monthly, and that, in the first instance, NIAA office establish a procedure and contact State bodies for list of accredited nurseries.

6.4 NIASA Booklet

Procedure for reviewing the accreditation booklet was agreed to. The following will be examined by 31 October 1996, so any changes can be circulated before next meeting:

Administrative criteria - everyone

Appendix 2 - Ian Atkinson

Appendix 4 - David Eaton

Appendix 5 - David Matthews

7. NEXT MEETING

Melbourne, 7 and 8 December 1996.

MEETING CLOSED 12.45pm

Attach:

AGM

Reports:

- 6.1. QLD
- 6.2. NSW
- 6.3. SA
- 6.4. TAS
- 6.6 application re regulatory requirements

general mtg

- 6.1 citrus propagation proposal - draft guidelines

TO ; Adrian Salter Phil Wood
 Hans Kosmer Keith Bodman
 Anne Frodsham Peter Jolly
 Barry Conde

*AGENDA FOR INAUGURAL NIASA TECHNICAL OFFICERS GROUP
 MEETING IN BRISBANE ON THURSDAY 1st FEBRUARY 1996.*

8am WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
 2 MINUTE REPORTS FROM EACH REP ON 'NIASA IN MY STATE'

8-30am OPERATION OF NIASA ISSUES.

1. Report on National Accreditation Committee Meeting and
 Role of TOG and National NIDO. Ian
2. Role of preliminary assessments. Keith
3. Reporting procedures between TO's and State Committee's. Keith
4. Professional Indemnity Insurance for TO's. Ian
5. Technical qualifications and Experience requirements for TO's. Ian

9-30am NIASA TECHNICAL GUIDELINES ISSUES

1. Compulsory testing and record keeping for ;
 - a. Water (pH, Nitrates, residual Chlorine, EC, volume of waste & reuse water). Hans
 - b. Media (pH, Temperature, EC). Hans
 - c. Disinfestation Procedures. Keith
 - d. Pest & Disease control (spray records). Keith
 - e. Injuries & other O.H. & S. issues. Phil
2. Compulsory Training (Certification) of staff in ;
 - a. National Farm Chemical Users Course (at least one staff member). Ian
 - b. Pest & Disease ID, Plant nutrition, IPM (at least one staff member). Hans
 - c. NIASA requirements (all staff). Phil

3. Standardisation of treatment recommendations / sterilisation procedures for ;
- a. Footbaths, Tools, Transport & Handling equipment etc. Phil
 - b. Used containers, root bags, seedling trays etc. Phil
 - c. Removal and Disposal of suspect or diseased plants and media.
4. Potting Media.
- a. Sterilisation or Pasteurisation of all media. Phil
 - b. Accreditation of media suppliers. Hans

11-30am NIASA CHECKLIST ISSUES ;

- 1. Procedure for review and ratification of checklist. Ian
- 2. Review of current Checklist. Keith
- 3. Increased guidance for nursery operator. Phil
- 4. More emphasis on record keeping. Phil
- 5. Signs re Accreditation, Sanitation and Restricted access. Phil
- 6. Date of Inspection. Phil
- 7. Prevention of surface water ingress. Phil
- 8. Perimeter fencing and security. Phil

12noon RETAIL NURSERIES ISSUES

- 1. The Victorian Scheme. Hans
- 2. The NSW Scheme. Adrian
- 3. What to call accredited retail nurseries ? Phil
- 4. What % of stock should come from Accredited growers ? Phil

12-30pm close and lunch.

Ian Atkinson, National NIDO. 25/1/96

NIASA Technical Officers Group (TOG)

Inaugural Meeting

1 February 1996,

Brisbane

Present:

Ian Atkinson	-	Chairman, National NIDO
Keith Bodman	-	Secretary, Technical Officer, Queensland
Barry Conde	-	for Technical Officer, Northern Territory
Anne Frodsham	-	Technical Officer, South Australia
Peter Jolly	-	Technical Officer, Tasmania
Hans Kosmer	-	Technical Officer, Victoria
Adrian Salter	-	Technical Officer, New South Wales
Phil Wood	-	Technical Officer, Western Australia

Apologies: John Duff (Technical Officer, Northern Territory)

1. *Report on NIASA National Accreditation Committee Meeting and the role of the Technical Officers Group and the National NIDO.*

In opening, Mr Atkinson welcomed all present and advised that this was the inaugural meeting of the Technical Officers Group of the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme, Australia (NIASA) and that the Group had been commissioned by the NIASA National Accreditation Committee, on 31 January 1996.

The NIASA Technical Officers Group will consist of one technical officer from each state plus the national NIDO (or equivalent) as chairman, and will make recommendations on the Technical Guidelines and other matters relating to their role and function. Mr Atkinson suggested that Technical Officers also refer to Item 6, 'Schematic of NIASA Operations', and to the Notices of Motion proposed and ratified at the NIASA National Accreditation Committee Meeting Brisbane 31 January 1996, for further role clarification. A charter for the Group will be developed and included in the soon to be updated NIASA Guidelines.

The NIAA has obtained 3 years funding to employ Mr Atkinson, partly to act as the NIASA coordinator.

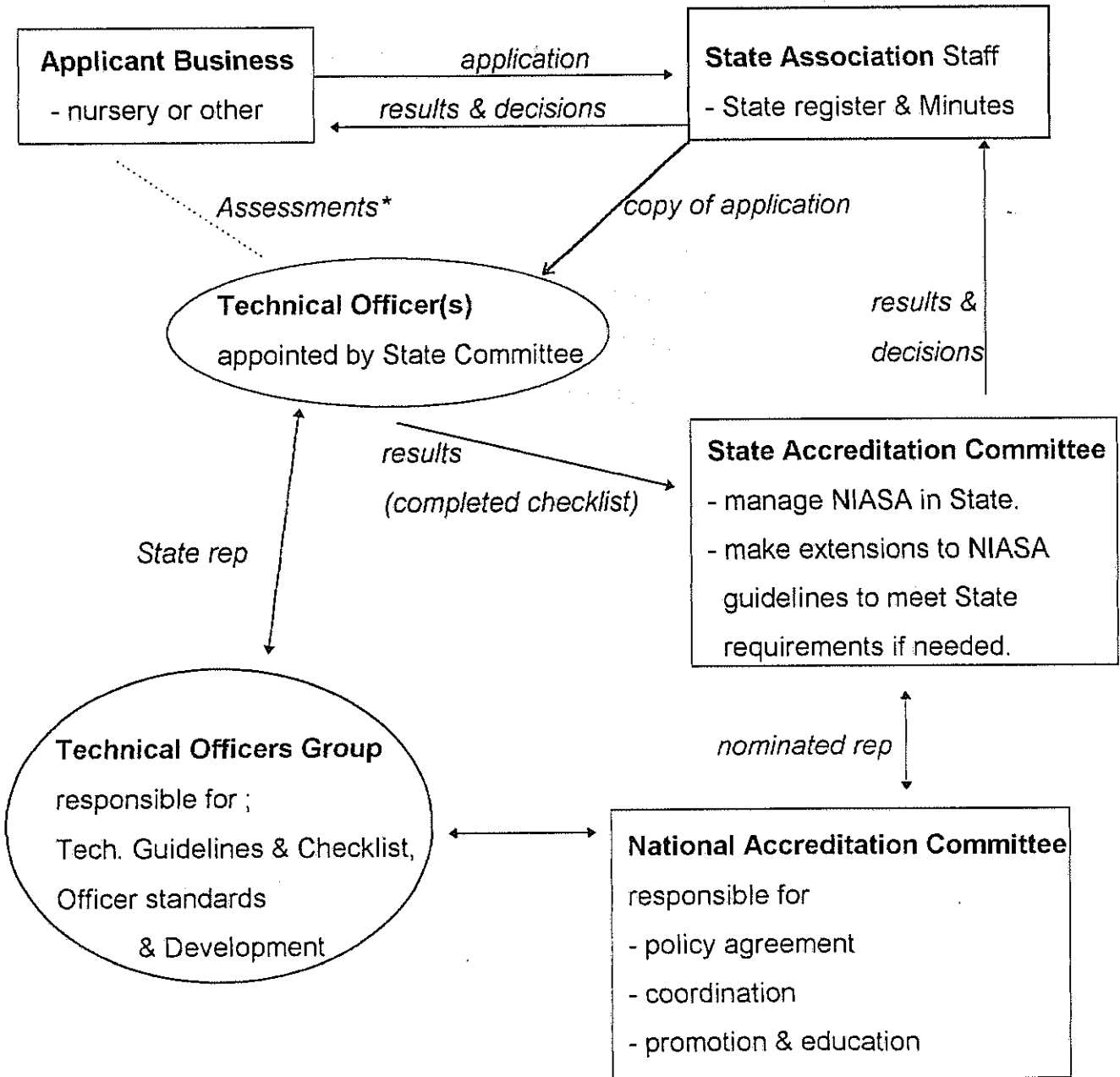
A unique NIASA logo is being developed and will be launched in December, 1997. Until then the State Associations may use the State logo within the current generic logo.

A major function of the Technical Officers group will also be to ensure the uniformity of NIASA assessment procedures.

Good communication between Technical Officers is essential and formal as well as informal methods of information transfer would be encouraged. All members were

invited to provide Mr Atkinson with news items and short articles related to their commission.

“Schematic of NIASA Operations”



Specifically accredited citrus nurseries within NIASA

Mr Atkinson also advised that the NIASA National Accreditation Committee had approved the inclusion of specifically accredited citrus nurseries within NIASA and that a further

responsibility of the Technical Officers will be to assess these, using both NIASA selection criteria and criteria more specific to citrus propagation. A draft copy of 'Australian Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme - Citrus Propagation' was provided to each Group member for comment.

Action:

- * Mr Atkinson to distribute NIASA National Accreditation Committee Meeting 31 January 1996 Minutes to Group members.
- * Members to comment on Draft 'Australian Nursery Accreditation Scheme - Citrus Propagation' document and return to Mr Bodman by 12 February 1996.
- * Mr Bodman to collate above responses to draft guidelines and refer to Mr Wayne Parr, (Australian Citrus Improvement Assoc, ACIA) and Mr Atkinson.
- * Ms Frodsham to act on ratified changes to Citrus Propagation nursery guidelines and make changes to NIASA Accreditation Checklist in consultation with Mr W Parr and Mr G Isles. Associated costs to be sought from ACIA.
- * Mr Atkinson to provide Group Members with ratified changes to NIASA Guidelines and Checklist.
- * ACIA committee, through Mr Atkinson, to provide Technical Officers with information package on topics specifically related to citrus propagation and this package should include approved testing laboratories and sources of approved rootstocks and budwood.
- * Mr Atkinson to seek resources from HRDC to hold annual Technical Officers Group meetings, for the next three years.
- * All members encouraged to apply for matching HRDC funds for State industry contributions, to observe NIASA assessment activities in other States.

2. *Role of preliminary assessments and reporting procedures between Technical Officers and State Committees.*

Mr Bodman outlined the preliminary assessment system used in Queensland. Applicants were entitled to an on-site visit, where the current checklist was utilised to determine the chances of success in becoming accredited and to outline what improvements, if any, were necessary. The fee was \$50 per visit and no sampling was carried out. If the operator then proceeded to accreditation within 12 months, this fee was absorbed into the annual accreditation subscription. Many operators not interested in immediate accreditation used the information in long term investment planning.

As most nurseries did not immediately comply with the guidelines, Mr Bodman considered the preliminary assessment system at a lower cost to be a good incentive, educational and promotional procedure. It allowed non-complying applicants to be let down gently in a more positive and constructive atmosphere. The checklist completed for the preliminary accreditation is not made available to the QNVAS Committee as it is not used in deciding whether or not the business is to be accredited. It is only used to inform the applicant of where improvements need to be made. Mr Bodman indicated that the preliminary assessment procedure was currently subsidised by his government grant and that he may have to ask for a fee increase. Ms Frodsham commented that the South Australian accreditation committee required the results of the preliminary inspection.

Mr Kosmer said that the Victorian accreditation committee did not need to sight the completed checklist for adjudication. Mr Salter said that the NSW accreditation committee only considers the recommendation of the Technical Officer. Mr Bodman said that the Queensland accreditation committee received a completed but identity coded copy of the checklist for perusal prior to making any decisions but that this was a development that had only occurred in the last 12 months.

The discussion revealed differences in the accrediting committees' expectations of the Technical Officer, with respect to who made the final decision. This was further complicated where Technical Officers were utilised by two or more state accreditation committees.

Mr Atkinson proposed that standardised methods of reporting to accreditation committees should be considered.

Action:

- * Standardised Technical Officer to Accreditation Committee reporting should be included as an agenda item and resolved at the next National Accreditation Committee meeting.

3. *Professional indemnity insurance for Technical Officers.*

Mr Atkinson distributed information on insurance sources available through the Agricultural Technologists of Australasia [Fax (063) 311513] and Australian Accredited Agricultural Consultants [Fax (03) 96622727].

Mr Salter uses GIO as an insurer and considers that the premiums are very competitive.

Mr Atkinson commented that premiums are generally lower where employees rather than employers seek indemnifying insurance. Insurers generally require or give premium reductions to members of relevant professional associations.

Action:

- * That Technical Officers seek professional indemnity insurance.

4. *Technical qualifications and experience requirements for Technical Officers.*

Mr Atkinson indicated that Technical Officers may be required in the future to be members of relevant professional associations. He said that the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and a number of other professional associations have or are developing certification for professionals and this could become a criterion for selection of Technical Officers, in the future.

5. *NIASA Technical Guidelines issues.*

5.1 Compulsory testing and standardised record keeping.

Mr Kosmer outlined procedures used in Victoria for on-site media testing, water testing and documentation and circulated the document 'Growing Media Manufacturers Guidelines for Accreditation' for comment.

Mr Bodman summarised agrichemical use recording requirements in Queensland and northern NSW and commented that these could be improved further.

Mr Wood questioned if record keeping for occupational health and safety claims and issues should be part of the Guidelines and Checklist.

Mr Salter said that this was a universal requirement for all businesses and as such it should not be included in NIASA. There was a general agreement that it should not be part of NIASA and that Technical Officers were not trained or empowered to act in this area. The Committee agreed that applicant self-certification however should be part of the Checklist.

Mr Jolly proposed that the Technical Officer be provided with analytical results carried out by laboratories and where relevant by the operators, and if these were insufficient that the Technical Officer carry out random checks.

Mr Salter commented that information was needed as interpretive standards and for disinfestation procedures required as part of NIASA certification and that this should be a good argument for HRDC funding of related projects.

The Group agreed that the standard of record keeping in nurseries is currently deficient for NIASA assessment purposes. It also agreed that a uniform system of recording should be developed by its Members and that it should propose that this be ratified by the National Accreditation Committee.

Action:

- * Mr Kosmer to draft format for media and water (including wastewater) sampling and recording of analyses and to circulate these to all members by 1 July 1996. Members to respond to Mr Kosmer by 1 August 1996. Mr Kosmer to have final draft to Mr Atkinson by 1 October 1996.
- * Mr Bodman to carry out similar exercise with disinfestation procedures and agrichemical use records.
- * Mr Salter to draft Guidelines and Checklist statements for applicant self certification of observance of occupational health and safety standards.
- * Mr Atkinson to provide final draft documents to National Accreditation Committee to ratify pertinent changes to Guidelines and Checklist.

5.2 Compulsory training (certification) of applicant and staff as an accreditation requirement.

5.2.1 National Farm Chemical Users Course.

The Group agreed that at least one staff member of the applicant nursery should be certified.

5.2.2 NIASA (proposed) course on crop protection.

Mr Kosmer indicated a need for greater expertise, hence training, in nursery crop protection for operators and employees of nursery businesses.

Mr Salter proposed that at least one staff member should have up to date qualifications and/or experience in nursery crop protection.

Members agreed with Mr Salter and Mr Kosmer and proposed that it be put to the Accreditation Committee.

5.2.3 Nursery staff recognition of NIASA

Mr Wood proposed that the Checklist should include a section on evaluation of nursery staff knowledge of processes related to accreditation. Members agreed, providing that training methods or events were available for this.

Action:

- * Mr Kosmer to discuss with the Institute for Horticultural Development a nationally delivered certified course in nursery crop protection for operators and employees of nursery businesses.

- * Mr Atkinson to draw up proposal for Accreditation Committee ratification that pesticide application courses be compulsory for one or more employees of each accredited nursery and that this be included in the Guidelines.
- * Mr Atkinson to seek Accreditation Committee approval and ratification on compulsory training of at least one staff member in each nursery in principles of crop protection, and that this appears in the Guidelines.
- * Mr Atkinson and Mr Jolly to source and agree on training kit system suitable as a vehicle for informing nursery staff of accreditation obligations of nursery.
- * Mr Atkinson to seek approval of this by Accreditation Committee. There was no agreement on which member(s) if any should provide the content.

6. *Standardisation of nursery disinfestation procedures.*

Mr Wood indicated a need for agreement on types of disinfestation procedures and details on their application. Specifically this should relate to footbaths, tools, transport and handling equipment, used containers, and the removal and disposal of suspect or diseased plants and growing media. All members agreed, however it was noted that clear guidelines could not be developed as the current recommendations were based on anecdotal and field evidence in the absence of scientifically documented methods suitable for use in nurseries.

Mr Bodman informed the Group that Martin Mebolds from the Institute for Horticultural Development was generating a HRDC funded proposal on pertinent research, that this would be of a national nature and several Members were named as cooperators on that proposed project.

Mr Salter proposed that NIAA and NIASA support this project.

Action:

- * Mr Atkinson to seek NIAA and NIASA support for Mr Mebolds' proposed HRDC project.

7. *Growing Media*

Mr Wood informed the Group that all tubestock media and media used in the production of plants for wildflower production were sanitised in Western Australia accredited nurseries.

Mr Kosmer referred to the document he previously circulated, 'Growing Media manufacturers - Guidelines for Accreditation'. He asked Members to review the document as an addition to Appendix 5 of the Guidelines. Members agreed to this proposal.

Action:

- * Members to have comments on draft document 'Growing Media Manufacturers - Guidelines to Accreditation' back to Mr Kosmer by 15 March 1996.
- * Mr Kosmer to recirculate reviewed document to Members for approval by end of July 1996. Mr Kosmer to provide final draft to Mr Atkinson by 1 October 1996.
- * Mr Atkinson to seek Committee approval of final document as an addition to Appendix 5 'Growing Media and Growing Media Ingredient Suppliers'.

8. *NIASA Checklist Issues*

Mr Atkinson informed the Group that all Checklist reviews and changes would pass to the Group for comment prior to ratification by the Committee. Mr Conde requested on behalf of Mr Duff that some consideration be given to redrafting the Guidelines to

include a 5th ranking column or sections designated as 'not applicable'. Members generally agreed. Mr Atkinson called for Members to provide suggested Checklist changes directly to him.

Mr Bodman asked for the Checklist to be included as an additional appendix to the Guidelines. Members generally agreed.

Action:

- * Members to provide suggested changes to Checklist to Mr Atkinson by 1 July 1996.
- * Mr Bodman to redraft Checklist to signify sections 'not applicable' to all categories of accredited nurseries.
- * Mr Atkinson to seek approval from National Accreditation Committee to include the Checklist as an appendix to the Guidelines.

9. *Retail Nursery Issues.*

Written information on the Victorian Retail Nursery Improvement Scheme was circulated by Mr Kosmer, who welcomed comment.

Mr Salter circulated information on the NIAN Retail Approved Scheme in NSW. Mr Salter informed Members that the NSW Accreditation Committee is not associated with the Retail Approved Scheme and rather that it was initiated by the NIAN State Board. The reason for its introduction was as an incentive for retail nursery membership of NIAN. It currently has 65 members, is restricted to NIAN membership and costs \$85 per nursery per annum. Mr Salter stressed that it was a retail nursery promotional scheme rather than a certification scheme.

Mr Atkinson said that the Committee would designate accredited retail nurseries as 'Accredited Retail Nurseries'.

Mr Jolly and Mr Salter suggested that their client nursery industries did not wish to include stipulated accredited wholesale produce percentages as assessment criteria in retail nursery accreditation.

Mr Bodman informed members that QNIA as yet did not have a retail accreditation scheme but 2 retail sites attached to accredited wholesale sites and selling almost 100% accredited product were allowed to display the QNVAS logo.

10. *Other Business*

The Group recognised the need for improved communication between Members, between state accreditation committees and between state and national accreditation committees. It supported the production of a quarterly newsletter to which all Members would contribute. Contributions are to be kept to a $\frac{1}{2}$ A4 page. Members also unanimously supported annual meetings, and commented on the success of this one.

Several members expressed concern over practices which allowed disease spread with municipal green-waste and from nurseries and that this should be brought to the attention of state nursery associations.

Mr Atkinson indicated that a national register of accredited nurseries would be maintained by NIAA and that this would have public accessibility.

Action:

- * Mr Atkinson to be responsible for production of a NIASA newsletter and to call for articles for this and for contributions to this and other periodicals with nursery and allied industry audiences.

- * Mr Wood and Ms Frodsham to draft letter expressing disease spread concern to be circulated on behalf of Technical Officers Group to State Nursery Industry Associations.

- * Mr Atkinson to seek Accreditation Committee approval of inclusion of condition - 'Accredited nurseries should not have disposal practices which allow the spread of plant diseases to other sites', in the Guidelines.

Next Meeting:

This is to be held in Melbourne on 7-8 December 1996. No agenda changes would be made after 1 October 1996.

Closure:

Members congratulated Mr Atkinson on the organisation of the Meeting.

NIASA
WORKSHOP
“Developing a Vision
for NIASA to the
Year 2000.”

A joint NIASA National
Committee and TOG
Workshop - February 1996

facilitation by Anne Currey (NSW Agriculture)

NIASA - WORKSHOP
FUTURE DIRECTIONS
(February 1996)

This workshop was held to help establish future directions for NIASA and to identify major issues that need to be dealt with. Participating in the workshop were members of the National Accreditation Committee and the Technical Officers' Group.

The format of the workshop was that it was run over four sessions.

Session 1

The workshop commenced with a reflection on the history of accreditation schemes in the States by drawing up a timeline. This history, as determined by the group, is as follows:

Timeline

prior 1977	endemic pc in SA
1977-78	SA Clean Scheme
1983	NT Clean Scheme ANVAS started
1984	SA Clean Scheme dies
1985	Nursery Improvement Program Victoria accreditation commences
1986	NT Clean Scheme Victorian TO appointed
1987	Nursery inspection by Ag Dept. WA PC in WA Qld Green Paper
1988	First Victorian accredited nursery WA accreditation Scheme

- 1988 - 91 Too busy
- 1990 Tasmanian Accreditation Committee (later dissolved)
- 1991 Proposal for National Scheme
 Qld pilot schemes
- 1992 First Qld nursery accredited
- 1993 First media supply accredited
- 1994 NIASA Guidelines published
 SA committee set up
 NIASA TO meeting, Melbourne
- 1995 Official launch
 Appointment of NIDOs
 First NSW, SA nursery accredited
 Vine accreditation
- 1996 Citrus guidelines

Session 2

In the next phase of the workshop participants were asked to envisage what the accreditation committee should have achieved for the industry by the Year 2000, i.e. their vision for the committee. This was done in four groups of 3 to 4 people. The results of this session are as follows:

Group 1

The economic production of higher quality plants - consumer confidence

High level of scheme recognition by:

- industry
- gardening public
- regulations
- funding bodies

No phytophthora - prevent diseases

Viable retail "accreditation" system

40% of plant nursery product from accredited sites.

Group 2

All nursery industry customers are aware of and appreciate the benefits of accreditation.

All media suppliers and at least 75% of wholesale nurseries are accredited.

Group 3

Accreditation has led to the acceptance of principles and practices which have given the economical and sustainable production of higher quality plants which has instilled greater industry and consumer confidence

Group 4

Majority of industry is accredited or is working towards accreditation and all of the nursery industry is aware of the scheme.

Industry buyers of plants, councils, landscapers, chain stores etc. actively seek accredited nursery suppliers.

The scheme is widely adopted as the industry benchmark.

There was not the time to amalgamate these four statements into one to become the vision for the group. However, the sentiments underlying each seem to be similar, with the difference being in the way they are expressed. It would be a good idea for these statements to be compressed into one in a way that the group can identify with.

Session 3

The group then examined the major impediments to the vision being achieved. These impediments were as follows:

Lack of technical resources - including money

Lack of R&D to support guidelines

Lack of money from HRDC/AHC

Lack of depth in current assessment procedures - more detail needed

Need for uniform application between States

Poor communication and promotion

Lack of promotion

Poor accreditation logo for resale/media supplies - wholesalers

Publicity to achieve widespread awareness

Lack of education and awareness

Communication between members and committees

Poor communication material

Poor business practices and skills

Small business regularly go broke

Lack of marketing experience in industry

Lack of education and training in best practice

Lack of systematic management

Assessment standards imperfect

Criteria can be too "hard"

No grading in NIASA - levels 1, 2, 3 etc

Industry attitudes

Perceptions about time required to do things the NIASA way

Creating attitude change amongst industry members

Attitude change amongst nursery staff to act on NIASA

Industry apathy

Resistance to change

Old nursery operators attitudes

Imperfect structure

Lack of effort by State Association

Industry politics

Accreditation Committee comprises volunteers

Economics

Accreditation fee
 Changes to meet NIASA - cost
 Economic outlook
 Site obsolescence - old nurseries

Lack of incentives

No imperative to accredit
 Perceived lack of benefits to nursery operator
 Too easy to sell lousy plants
 Lack of involvement from entire nursery industry

Bureaucracy

Government regulations and red tape

Availability of suitable materials

Lack of accredited raw materials
 Lack of clean potting media and stock

These items were then classified as to whether the group had control or influence or could only be concerned about their impact on achieving the vision.

Control

Poor communication and promotion
 Assessment standards imperfect

Influence

Lack of technical resources
 Poor business practices and skills
 Industry attitudes
 Imperfect structure
 Lack of incentives

Concern

Economics
 Bureaucracy
 Availability of suitable materials

Session 4

In this session the group developed general strategies for tackling some of the issues they had identified as impediments to achieving the vision.

□

Poor communication and promotion

External communication

Develop strategy by:

developing a brief to go to NIAA to communicate vision of NIASA to industry
approaching NIAA to develop options for promotion/communication.

Elements of this strategy will be to communicate to:

wholesale, retail and allied industry members and non members

Other targets including government, TAFE, unis, supermarkets, garden writers.

Its messages will encompass the following:

What is accreditation (to correct misconception/s)

Why buy from an accredited supplier?

Why become accredited (what's in it for me?)

Aims of scheme

National scheme

How to become accredited

A variety of methods will be used to communicate these messages, e.g. resource kit;
accreditation newsletter/column; cost benefit analysis; news releases/articles.

Costs will need to be identified.

Who. TOG

When. For 1997 Conference

Implementation. Funding sources to be approached.

Internal communication

Formal communication pathway to be established by NIAA , State committees, NIASA and TOG.

Who. Ian Atkinson and David Cliffe

When. By next quarterly meeting of NIAA.

