

NURSERY PAPERS

APRIL
2018

NGIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE: THE GROWING EDGE

Every two years, Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) holds a national conference to bring together growers, retailers, suppliers, government and stakeholders, to discover the latest research and trends advancing the green life sector.

In February 2018, more than 240 delegates attended *The Growing Edge* in Hobart, Tasmania, to hear from an exciting line up of national and international speakers.

This nursery paper shines a spotlight on the people and topics that make it the flagship event for Australia's nursery industry. More specifically, the R&D and marketing presentations and what the outcomes mean for growers.

Summary

Presentations dedicated to levy investments through the Hort Innovation Nursery Fund at the 2018 National Conference covered the following:

- The national marketing initiative, **2020 Vision**, and the newly launched consumer campaign, Plant Life Balance.
- The professional development program, **Global Masterclass in Horticultural Business** (LP15001), completed by six nursery industry



(L-R) Peter Vaughan, NGIA; 2018 NGIA Award of Honour recipient, Hamish Mitchell, Speciality Trees; Jan Paul Van Moort, ACIL Allen Consulting.

participants, with three receiving levy funded scholarships in 2017.

- The National Tree Standard research project, **Evaluation of nursery tree stock balance parameters** (NY15001).
- The **National Nursery Industry Biosecurity Program** (NY15004) and the ground-breaking work it's achieving through on-farm programs such as BioSecure HACCP.
- **Building the resilience and on-farm biosecurity capacity of the Australian production nursery industry** (NY15002).
- The results and data tool developed from the project **Nursery Industry Statistics & Research** (NY16004).
- A presentation from Hort Innovation Chair, Selwyn Snell, about the Hort Frontiers strategic partnership initiative, and the investment process.

BACKGROUND

The nursery and garden community contributes to Australia's economic, social and environmental prosperity. In 2015-16, the industry sold over \$2.29 billion of green life to Australian families, workplaces and communities.

It is made up of 19,000 hardworking and dedicated individuals, offering a green solution to our health and wellbeing, while mitigating the risks of climate change. With an increased focus on people, productivity and innovation, the industry is at the growing edge of positive change.

In addition to two days of exciting sessions and speakers, there was a pre-conference production and retail tour. This enabled delegates from around the country to see first-hand the issues faced and solved by Tasmanian businesses, the technologies being put in place, and the unique environment in which they operate.

Thanks to the expertise and generosity of local businesses, the tours provided a valuable opportunity to share knowledge and take home new or alternative practices to their business.



Pre-Conference Production Tour – Westland Nurseries, Tasmania.



FEATURED LEVY PRESENTATIONS



Ben Peacock from The Republic of Everyone presenting 2020 Vision and Plant Life Balance at the NGIA Conference.



University of Tasmania's Associate Professor Alistair Gracie.

2020 VISION AND PLANT LIFE BALANCE

The levy-funded research report, *Where Should All The Trees Go?*, was developed to feed into the 2020 Vision initiative.

Ben Peacock from the Republic of Everyone provided an overview of the results, and the follow-up roadshow, The Green Light Tour, which will bring together local councils, landscape architects, town planners and green life suppliers to help develop urban forest strategies.

Real case studies were shared from retail nurseries demonstrating a boost in sales as a result of the marketing campaign Plant Life Balance, by having marketing collateral and app details in store.

Ben encouraged everyone to get behind Plant Life Balance to boost consumer awareness around the benefits of plants and lift the sale of green life nationally. For more information, visit: www.plantlifebalance.com.au

GLOBAL MASTERCLASS IN HORTICULTURE

University of Tasmania's Associate Professor Alistair Gracie and Dr David Monckton gave delegates a run-down of what the Masterclass in Horticultural Business is all about, and how the course content is delivered.

The course was developed under the Hort Frontiers Leadership Fund – a strategic co-investment initiative by Hort Innovation – and there were six nursery industry participants in the

2017 program. According to Alistair, the participants felt that the program 'provided a wealth of benefits to their careers' and they could 'apply the business plan developed in the course to benefit their businesses'.

The course included 40 weeks of face to face and online education, as well as valuable farm and field trips to apply theoretical knowledge into a practical setting. Participants in 2017 held a range of qualifications and were between the ages of 20 – 50 years old, with NSW grower and 2017 scholarship recipient, Sonja Cameron, encouraging those with a passion for knowledge who want to progress their career, to apply in coming years. While applications for 2018 have now closed, details of future courses will be circulated via industry channels. Look out for profiles and stories on past participants, where learnings and insights will be shared.

For more information about the course, visit <https://horticulture.com.au/co-investment-project/lp15001/>



NATIONAL TREE STOCK STANDARD

Containerised trees are high-value products and proper root to shoot balance at dispatch is a key factor to ensure they are successfully planted.

Professor Mark Tjoelker from Western Sydney University's Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment updated delegates on discussions underway about reviewing the standard widely used by industry, town planners and local councils, AS2303:2015, so it is fit for purpose and takes into account the diversity of Australian nursery production.

Mark's research team visited 23 production nurseries and measured the above and below ground qualities of more than 13,000 trees, as well as their size index. The conclusion was that the standard may be too narrow for the diverse range of plants grown across Australia's different climatic regions.

To access the report findings, visit: <http://bit.ly/TreeStocks>

NATIONAL NURSERY INDUSTRY BIOSECURITY PROGRAM

NGIA National Biosecurity Manager, John McDonald spoke to delegates about the ever growing pressure on Australia's biosecurity system, particularly from plant pathogens, and the need for industry to remain agile to protect its favourable biosecurity status.

The pesticide minor use program which comes under his project is seeing the registration of about five new products every year.

He spoke about the benefits of the on-farm management system BioSecure HACCP, which is delivering productivity gains for businesses while improving biosecurity integrity and robustness. It's such a success John is collaborating with other industries, including bananas and avocados, interested in adopting the program.

To learn more about BioSecure HACCP, visit: <http://nurseryproductionfms.com.au/biosecure-haccp-certification/>



NGIA National Biosecurity Manager, John McDonald.

DIAGNOSING PLANT DISEASES

Dr Andrew Manners from the Queensland Department of Agriculture spoke about the need to correctly diagnose plant pests and diseases. Andrew reminded growers they are entitled to have 10 free samples analysed per year through Grow Help Australia if they are NIASA accredited.

Andrew's presentation touched on important pest and disease identification tips, including:

- It is vital to reduce assumptions and investigate all possibilities
- Consider the difference between what your plant needs and what it is getting
- If entire lines are affected, consider factors such as pesticide history, water quality and growing media.

He also reminded growers that there will be free pest and disease webinars and biosecurity workshops held this year, facilitated through project NY15002. For the latest nursery levy news, visit www.yourlevyatwork.com.au



Professor Mark Tjoelker from Western Sydney University's Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment presenting on the Tree Stock project.

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Featured Levy Presentations

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NURSERY RESEARCH, STATISTICS AND DATA TOOL

The industry has just completed its most comprehensive research and statistical program in recent years.

Jan Paul Van Moort from ACIL Allen Consulting said more than 200 nurseries provided their business data to deliver some ground-breaking statistics on the industry's contribution and size. These included: 19,000 full time equivalent employees and 1,777 production nursery businesses, selling 1.6 billion plants that are generating \$2.29 billion every year.

Jan Paul encouraged growers to use the data tool developed through the project, which can be accessed via Hort Innovation, to improve record keeping, benchmark their business against others, and identify productivity gains or cost savings. For more, visit www.horticulture.com.au/nursery-industry-data-tool

HORT INNOVATION UPDATE

Hort Innovation Chair, Selwyn Snell, spoke about the strategic investments underway to ensure a stronger, more sustainable nursery industry, and also about the Hort Frontiers strategic partnership initiative, which includes the Green Cities and Leadership Funds relevant to Australia's nursery industry.

He spoke about the state of play at Hort Innovation and the strength and growth



Hort Innovation's Nursery Relationship Manager John Vatikiotis and Cox Inall's Hilary Sims from the Nursery Communications Program.



NGIA Staff (L-R): Matt Carroll; Heather Henderson; Kobie Keenan and Jennifer Nesini.

of the horticulture industry as a whole. Selwyn also outlined the importance of industry organisations such as NGIA, and the role of the nursery Strategic Investment Advisory Panel in guiding developments for the industry, to boost demand for green life.

Hort Innovation R&D Lead, Anthony Kachenko, received the NGIA Award of Merit for his significant contribution to the nursery industry, which was presented on Wednesday evening at the Gala Dinner.

CONCLUSION

Under project NY17001, Hort Innovation was the principal R&D supporter of the conference, ensuring the event was a valuable platform to update industry on the R&D and marketing projects underway, including the presentation of recent findings.

The conference is the leading event for Australia's nursery industry and is an important opportunity for growers and the broader supply chain to come together, share knowledge and take learnings back to their business.

LINKS TO RESOURCES

About the Hort Frontiers Funds:
<https://horticulture.com.au/our-work/hort-frontiers/>

2020 Vision: <http://2020vision.com.au/about-the-vision/>

Plant Life Balance:
<http://www.plantlifebalance.com.au>

Global Masterclass in Horticulture:
<https://horticulture.com.au/co-investment-project/lp15001/>

National Tree Stock Standard:
<http://bit.ly/TreeStocks>

Biosecurity programs:
<http://nurseryproductionfms.com.au/>

Nursery research, statistics and data tool
<http://www.horticulture.com.au/nursery-industry-data-tool>

Your Levy @ Work website:
www.yourlevyatwork.com.au

PAST EDITIONS OF NURSERY PAPERS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE on the Nursery & Garden Industry Australia website
http://www.ngia.com.au/Section?Action=View&Section_id=46