

Nursery program tackles industry challenges

The nursery program, funded through Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL), continues to strive to meet the ever present challenges faced by the broader industry through a much improved approach with more focus on responsive and pro-active program delivery.

The core program areas including the National Training and Recognition, Industry Development, National Environmental Policy Program and the *Life is a Garden* Consumer Marketing and Public Relations Program are ongoing and remain with a great deal of 'continuous improvement' already worked into their activity over the past 12 months. This improvement ensures effective programs that are relevant to the needs of industry as well as those needs as outlined by the Government and public at large.



Much attention is currently aimed squarely at the topical area of climate change and the environment. In practical terms, this change of national public focus brings both challenges and opportunities for what should be renowned as the greenest of all industry sectors, that is, the 'green life' sector.

The Nursery and Garden Industry Association (NGIA) with support from the nursery levy program has initiated a series of innovative programs including the current 'Urban Greenspaces Symposium 2009'. A host of international and local experts covering a diverse range of topics will be presenting the latest trends and future directions in environmental areas such as:

Dr Greg McPherson, USDAF – *'Overall Research USA – Urban Forests and Impacts on Carbon, Water and Heat Island'*.

Dr Stephen Livesley – University of Melbourne – *'Urban Greenspaces and Green House Gases – Can plants have an impact?'*

Prof Tony Hall – Griffith University – *'Australian Backyards – Urban Greenspaces is being limited by building regulations and developers'*.

Phillip Hewitt – Newcastle City Council – Urban Forestry NSW – *'Local Government issues and Greenspace development'*.

Adam Schwerner – City of Chicago – *'Case Study: Who has done it well? What are the key successes and benefits flowing from increased Urban GreenScapes?'*

Health and well being continue to loom large on the consumer agenda with Associate Professor, Mardie Townsend from Deakin University detailing *'How plants affect people'* at the symposium.

As always, the investment made by the nursery levy program in such areas as

the extension activities provided by the network of development officers, ensures that businesses are kept informed of issues relating to environmental management, sustainability and biosecurity, all of which are very important with the changing needs of communities and consumers.

For more information contact:

Stuart Burgess,

HAL Industry Services Manager

T 03 6231 1945

E stuart.burgess@horticulture.com.au



Climate Change is increasingly becoming a significant topic for the industry. In 2007/08 the industry began contributing to the horticulture component of phase one of the national Climate Change Research Strategy for Primary Industries (CCRSPI).

The aim of CCRSPI Phase One was to develop a comprehensive research strategy that will allow industries to be informed by good research and be prepared to respond to the opportunities and risks presented by climate change. The scope of the strategy will be broad, covering any issue that needs consideration over the short (3 years), medium (5+ years) and long term (10+ years). The research strategy and phase one final report is available from the CCRSPI website <http://lwa.gov.au/ccrspil>.

HAL is now contributing to phase two of the project in 2008/09 in collaboration with other Rural RDCs, CSIRO and Federal, State and Territory Governments. This phase aims to develop an implementation plan for the research strategy for 2009/10 onwards.

Accreditation assists landscape industry

A project to develop a more 'user friendly' accreditation and certification process for the landscape industry in Queensland is underway.

To assist in maintaining the high standards expected in leading business it is necessary for the existing accreditation and certification process to become more approachable and applicable to the end user.

This is being achieved with consultative input from key stakeholders in both major sectors of the landscape industry in Queensland – contractors and suppliers. The content of the existing program is being modified to incorporate regulatory changes, particularly those relating to Occupational Health and Safety, Environmental and Water Management with additional supportive documentation

also being developed.

The Landscape Certification program is also being evaluated and modifications made to the program to improve uptake of the program by landscape contractors in both the construction and horticultural sectors of the industry.

The Landscape Accreditation Scheme will continue to be promoted through Landscape Queensland Industries newsletter *Landscape Lifestyle*, the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture (ACLH) *ACLH Communiqué* newsletter and through the recently launched email bulletin *Land e-Scapes*. Information relevant to the program, including updates of the project's progress will also be disseminated via these communication channels. Meetings will continue to be held with company representatives to promote the LAS and assist landscape businesses in

becoming accredited under the scheme.

After the program has been tested and a level of uptake achieved in Queensland it will be rolled out across Australia through the state based Landscape Industry Associations. A special focus of the accreditation program will be on water use efficiency. This will definitely follow the lines of a best practice program for the landscape industry.

This project is funded by HAL using voluntary contributions from industry and matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY07001

For more information contact:
Jim Vaughan, Landscape Queensland Ind
T 07 3286 1746
E info@landscapequeensland.com.au

Managing nursery industry national training and recognition programs

This project funds the nursery industry National Training and Recognition Manager (NTRM) who plays a vital role in the up-skilling of industry. The aim is to achieve a more highly skilled industry workforce through delivery of training focused on industry needs.

Apart from managing relevant projects on behalf of industry, the NTRM ensures the industry is well represented on the committees, forums and skills councils that play a vital role in delivering training to industry. This assists in building strong relationships with training providers and government departments which are involved in the delivery of vocational training.

As input into the national training agenda and maintenance of these relationships is vital to industry, it is important that the industry owns these relationships rather than outsources them. Strong liaison with the NGI State

Associations is also an essential part of the role.

The NTRM oversees the progression of training initiatives as well as the industry's recognition program Certified Nursery Professional (CNP). The inter-relationships between training and recognition are a key element in the role of the manager as well as ensuring that training elements are considered in the development of programs for environmental and technical extension, business skills development and industry communications.

Key strategies, actions and performance criteria assessed against KPI's; were determined for each of the following areas:

Outcome 1: The National Training Plan

Outcome 2: Liaison with the Agri-Food Industry Skills Council (AFISC) and input into the AFISC activities

Outcome 3: Training, careers and related labour issues

Outcome 4: State NGI Associations annual training programs

Outcome 5: Management of the Training and Recognition Project and committee

Outcome 6: Integration with environment and accreditation industry schemes

Outcome 7: Promotion of industry training and Professional Recognition schemes

Outcome 8: Providing content for industry publications and website

Project NY07014

For more information contact:
Robert Prince, NGIA
T 02 9876 5200
E robert.prince@ngia.com.au

Industry training and recognition

Continued skill development activities to facilitate a change in business culture and improved business practice to achieve business sustainability are part of the training and recognition strategy. The project aims to ensure that industry skill development and recognition activities remain cost-effective, less resource-intensive and deliver the outcomes required by industry.

The Nursery and Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) has built on the success of the direction of a previous project NY06019 which developed the skill development framework including the motto 'Planning nationally, delivering locally' direction to ensure the best outcomes for industry.

The project focussed on:

- The development of national training workshops based on the analysis of industry skills needs.
- Supporting the VET national training package review via input, debate and creation of support material.
- Increasing the visibility and attractiveness of industry careers.
- Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of NGI training.
- Administration and growth of the Certified Nursery Professional (CNP) program.

Strengthened delivery and reporting guidelines for state training partners ensured that funding was distributed to identify training which met agreed standards. The project showed a 42 per cent increase in training workshops by the NGI network and increase of participation numbers.

A total of nine new national training packages were completed and distributed to state training partners:

- Pest and diseases in container nurseries (three workshops).
- Growing media (two workshops).
- Planting and garden design for retail garden centres (two workshops).
- Environmental management for retail garden centres.
- BioSecure HACCP.

Participating in the Agrifood Industry Skills Council (AFISC) Board and Standing Committee, as well as various other committees and project groups enabled NGIA to feed back into the education system the skill requirements for industry.

Strengthening relationships with educators was a focus which will positively affect the standard and content of industry training.

Increasing the visibility and attractiveness of industry careers via a dedicated careers project including website and promotional material has created much interest with industry stakeholders. The industry specific information contained in a one-stop-shop will benefit the whole of industry, from potential students to employers and will be launched in early 2009.

A 67 per cent increase in CNP membership demonstrated an increased awareness of the program and the importance of the recognition of skills, experience, professionalism and specialisations. This is a major strategic tool for the promotion of skills development for the industry and the promotion of the industry as a serious career option.

This project is funded by HAL using the nursery levy and voluntary contributions from industry with matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY07008

For more information contact:

Fiona Kelly, NGIA

T 02 9876 5200

E fiona.kelly@ngia.com.au



Future development of a garden industry market monitor

To improve nursery growers understanding of market trends and performance in the Australian garden industries the Garden Market Monitor has continued to develop and provide guidance to growers enabling more informed commercial decisions.

The project works by collating a diverse array of information including commercial trading data directly from garden industry participants. Participation in the project is open to all garden industry participants and those who share data earn priority access to results.

This data is processed into six monthly reviews of the market and reports are made available via the NGIA website. The reports feature market analysis that seeks to identify insights and trends of commercial relevance and profiles the implications for those operating in the Australian Garden Market.

The project also explores issues of relevance to market performance

including detailed reviews including water tank installations, regulatory policy on carbon emissions and environmental awareness impact on gardening.

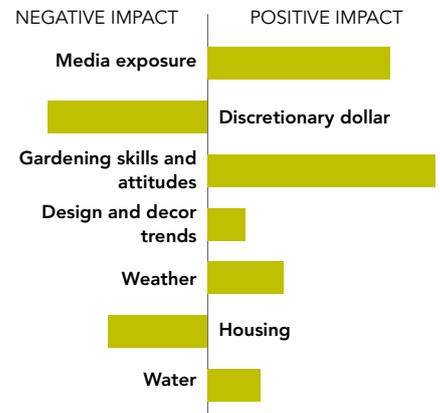
This approach has led to a series of market drivers being identified and the status of these drivers regularly tracked in each subsequent report. The current set of market drivers are media exposure, discretionary dollar trends, gardening skills and attitudes, design and decor, weather, housing and water.

The relative impact of these drivers for the year ending 30 June 2008 is reflected in the adjacent chart.

In this current year the report for the year ending 30 June 2008 has been completed and is available via the NGIA site at www.ngia.com.au/industry_structure/industry_structure.asp

The report for the six month period ending 30 Dec 2008 will be completed and available at the NGIA conference in February 2009.

Market drivers of garden market expenditure – year ending 30 June 2008



This project is funded by HAL using the nursery levy and matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY06022

For more information contact:
Martin Kneebone, FreshLogic
T 03 9818 1588
E martin@freshlogic.com.au

Development of a PDA compatible electronic pictorial pest and disease database

A popular field identification guide, has been published in a suitable format for use on Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) and smart phones.

Using HTML based technology the resource will provide current and portable pest, disease and weed information in a format that is mobile and updatable. The concept can be extended to incorporate plant pests that affect all plant industries and replace paper based guides that currently exist.

The *Pests, Diseases, Disorders and Beneficials in Ornamentals: Field Identification Guide* has been available as a hardcopy printed pocket guide for some years with the first edition published in 2000.

The information was repackaged and loaded onto the 'memory card' of some readily available handheld devices and can be accessed using the 'internet browsers' now available on most of these devices. The project further

sourced specific weed information and under approval from the relevant parties utilised the content of *Common Weeds of Container Nurseries and their Control*.

The project has successfully produced a package with over 200 separate factsheets using more than 500 images in an easily navigated web (HTML) format. Although the aim was to produce a package for PDAs using Windows Mobile the project has produced three such packages:

- Windows XP version
- Windows Mobile version
- Nokia Symbian version

The project has also conducted a training session for a member of the Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland (NGIQ) staff and a staff member from the QDPI&F GrowSearch Australia research library so that additions to this publication and subsequent publications can be undertaken at any time as the need arises.

The NGIQ has taken possession of the entire database and will undertake to continue to add relevant data on new and emerging plant pests. For example, if a new pest becomes established in Australia.

The techniques for creating, publishing and testing the package have shown that this type of application could be adapted to publish many similar identification and information packages on several operating systems. It is possible that the 'memory cards' on some of these devices could hold numerous similar information guides as well as a host of other useful information.

This project is funded by HAL using voluntary contributions from industry and matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY07022

For more information contact:
John McDonald, Nursery Industry Development Manager
T 07 3277 7900
E nido@ngiq.asn.au

Nursery accreditation and awards – management and administration

A project was established in 2007 to administer and manage the key accreditation and award schemes for the Australian nursery and garden industry. These are the Awards and Accreditation Committee, the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA), the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme (AGCAS), the Nursery & Garden Industry Awards and the Young Leaders program.

Accreditation and awards schemes are important mechanisms for rewarding and recognising industry operators who are leading the industry in terms of best practice.

This project seeks to continually improve the schemes themselves to ensure they are:

- Measuring those business practices that are relevant to business improvement as well as the buyers or customers.
- Accessible and easily understood.
- Rewarding businesses who participate in the process.
- Providing tools relevant to all businesses.
- Administratively well structured.
- Ensuring strong integrity with consistent application of standards.

The AGCAS national committee meetings were held in Melbourne in August 2007 and Sydney in February 2008 and attended by both the business skills development officers and national AGCAS chairs from each state.

A marketing plan was developed and a revised AGCAS program was launched in February including a web-based system designed to streamline the auditing process and facilitate more accurate and objective measurement of the program. The program continues to be promoted and supported as a business improvement program for the Garden Centre sector of Industry.

The first national NIASA committee meeting was held in December 2007 and a second held in June 2008. It was decided at the June meeting a web-based accreditation system – similar to AGCAS – be introduced to improve reporting and measurement of NIASA. This is currently under development. Changes were made to improve the paper on nematode recommendations.

The promotion of EcoHort and BioSecure HACCP was also discussed and the promotion of these programs will be

addressed to increase industry awareness and adoption. The group participated in a mock accreditation at Randwick Community Nursery. A case study for EcoHort Certification was held at the conclusion of the mock inspection.

The 2009 Nursery and Garden Industry Awards opened for entries on 19 May 2008 and closed on 21 July 2008. The categories for the awards are Best Small, Medium and Large Garden Centre, Best Medium and Large Production Nursery, the NGI Training, NGI Supplier, NGI Environment, NGI Export, NGI Community and Young Leader Awards. Sponsors are being secured under a newly developed sponsorship program.

Winners will be announced at the Awards Gala Dinner in February 2009.

This project is funded by HAL using the nursery levy and voluntary contributions from industry with matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY07009

For more information contact:

Jacqui Gibbs, NGIA

T 02 9876 5200

E jacqui.gibbs@ngia.com.au

Accreditation for national interior plantscapers

A project to further develop the existing Australian indoor plant hire industry accreditation scheme administered by the National Interior Plantscape Association (NIPA) is now complete, providing confidence and accountability by allowing plant hirers to demonstrate industry best practice.

The existing accreditation scheme was further developed in the following three ways:

1. A renewal of accreditation process has been developed. This will apply to businesses after their initial two years of accreditation.
2. All operatives within the Australian interior plantscape industry (including but not limited to indoor plant hire companies both contracting and maintenance as well as industry suppliers) have equal opportunity through knowledge and awareness to

participate in the scheme.

3. Public awareness and confidence was created with users of interior plantscape industry products and services supplied by accredited businesses.

Accreditation is a voluntary process by which an organisation such as NIPA grants recognition to interior plantscape operators which meet certain standards that require continuous improvements in structures, processes and outcomes.

The industry's accreditation scheme was introduced in late 2005 but by mid-2007 it was in need of further development and work was needed to generate support for national awareness and education.

Public awareness and confidence was created as the accreditation program allows the public to identify and differentiate between quality companies for design, installation and maintenance of indoor plantscapes.

Accreditation is intended to increase efficiency, reduce costs and strengthen public, commercial and government confidence in plant hirers. It will improve the management of interior plantscape services and provide education on better or best practices.

NIPA Accreditation provides a transparent process for public confidence, accountability and continuing professional development in the Indoor Plant Hire Industry. The scheme is voluntary and non-governmental.

This project is funded by HAL using the nursery levy and matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY06001

For more information contact:

National Interior Plantscape Association

T 07 3888 7300

E info@nipa.asn.au

KidsGrow development project

Two KidsGrow students
from Kurangi Public School
celebrating their produce

The NGIA KidsGrow Project was designed to provide the industry with a sustainable and long-term strategy to engage children in gardening through educational programs and activities both at school and at home.

The main component of this project was to launch a KidsGrow pilot project into 15 primary schools across NSW, Qld, Vic and SA. This information has been used to develop a schools version of the KidsGrow toolkit and a KidsGrow promotional DVD. The pilot has also resulted in 15 case study examples of how pilot schools have used the KidsGrow materials to best effect, and has helped determine effective strategies for the future delivery and implementation phase of the KidsGrow initiative.

The KidsGrow pilot has shown that school-focused garden-based learning links to a range of education sector priorities such as environmental education, improving biodiversity and school environmental management plans. It also illustrated that the KidsGrow gardening process lends itself to a range of core and cross curriculum links such as maths and technology, science, literacy, art, health and wellness, civics and citizenship and values.



Making gardening part of mainstream classroom learning rather than an add-on such as “garden club” is essential to embedding it in the school curriculum and ensuring its longevity.

The pilot study has shown that a paper-based resource alone cannot achieve the penetration needed to get teachers using the KidsGrow toolkit and get kids gardening. People-based strategies focused at a local level are essential in delivering the resources in order to build trust, ownership and to provide on-the-ground support to schools. Like-minded organisations and individuals with gardening education skills will be trained to become accredited providers in the next phase of the KidsGrow initiative. This role for KidsGrow as a strong national advocate for ALL school gardening would move the industry closer to its vision of “Every school a garden, every child a gardener, every plant a learning experience”.

The original “Industry Section” of the KidsGrow toolkit has been developed into a stand-alone industry program called KidsGrow@Home. A selection of materials have been developed and trialled at different events and the promotional booklet for retailers has been scoped ready to be designed, printed and distributed to industry. The idea of the KidsGrow@Home concept is to extend the garden learning

into the home to encourage the involvement of the whole family. The materials will continue to embrace the KidsGrow ethos of learning and comprise worksheets, activities and promotions for retailers to attract parents and children into the garden.

In KidsGrow, NGIA and HAL have invested in the development of a school gardening program that has the opportunity to be adopted by state and territories across Australia. To ensure the success and sustainability of the program it is imperative that NGIA seek and acquire investment partners for the future development and uptake of KidsGrow. A meeting request is currently sitting with the Australian Government Education & Training Minister, and a lead list is in development.

The ongoing sustainability and success of KidsGrow is now dependant on securing future long-term funding.

This project is funded by HAL using voluntary contributions from industry and matched funding from the Australian Government.

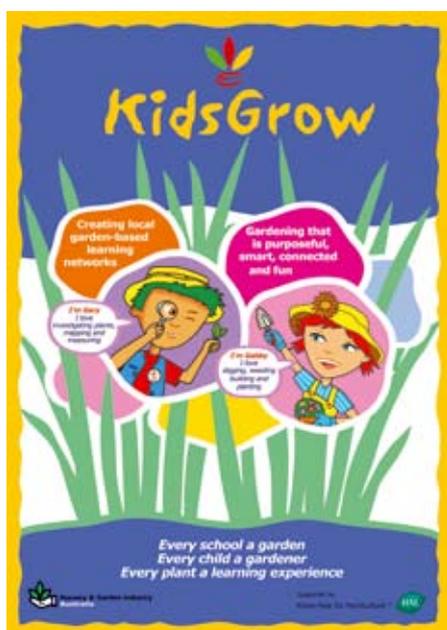
Project NY07010

For more information contact:

Tracey Wigg, NGIA

T 02 9876 5200

E tracey.wigg@ngia.com.au



Communications research and development project

The NGIA communications research and development project comprised four segments: media training, consumer research, formation of an expert garden panel and maintenance of the Marketing/Communications Committee.

Each of the activities was designed to provide the industry with on-going expertise and consultation to assist in assessing consumer needs, market trends and the direction of industry development.

The information gleaned from this project was made available to industry through publications such as *Clippings*, *e-CommPost*, *Nursery Papers* and the NGIA website. It also provided important opportunities to collaborate with industry stakeholders and experts to gather information imperative for content development for the consumer public relations campaign.

The findings of the 2007 and 2008 Newspoll Studies were used as a platform to ensure that communications, public relations and marketing were in tune with consumer sentiment and assured that the industry continued to cater to consumer wants and needs as identified in the study.

The Newspoll information was shared with industry to assist in addressing issues relevant to the future growth of the industry. The consumer attitudes that are gleaned from Newspoll research continue to provide direction to all segments of industry, as well as news-worthy statistics to roll out through the consumer media campaign. While Newspoll provides some great direction on what Australians want and need in their gardens it is only a snap-shot of 15 questions that can be cross-referenced against the Newspoll demographic data.

It is recommended that the industry commission an on-going six-monthly consumer attitude study, encompassing a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. This research project, which has been refused funding in 2007/08 and 2008/09, due to levy constraints is important in ensuring that the industry is responding to and anticipating consumer needs and trends, critical to all segments of the industry.

This project is funded by HAL using voluntary contributions from industry and matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY07011

For more information contact:

Tracey Wigg, NGIA

T 02 9876 5200

E tracey.wigg@ngia.com.au



A tale of two gardens: *Carbon offsetting vs carbon reduction*, the winner of the 2008 Fleming's Student Design Competition. This garden was designed by Yeng Ong and was displayed at the 2008 Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show.

Nursery industry environmental and technical policy and extension

The nursery industry has been successful in implementing the key objectives for the Nursery Industry Environmental and Technical Policy and Extension project (NY07006), providing effective management of environmental issues that affect the nursery industry.

Key environmental issues were identified, which have the potential to cause significant impacts on the long-term health and sustainability of the nursery and garden industry, positioning the nursery and garden industry as a leader on relevant environmental issues. The project ensured that the industry has the necessary skills and knowledge to continuously improve their environmental management practices.

The key environmental issues for the industry – water, invasive plants, biosecurity and natural resource management continued to require industry focus to ensure that the industry was not disadvantaged by decisions made by parties external to the industry. New issues to confront the industry are directly related to climate change – emissions trading, freight and fuel impacts, fertiliser and energy costs. These areas will require greater focus in the future as all of industry faces the future of a carbon constrained economy.

The aim of the project was to build on activities in previous work done in 2006/07 to achieve the following key goals:

- Ensure the adoption of industry environmental management systems and best practice management
- Raise the awareness of the environmental credentials of the industry with key decision makers and the community
- Develop and promote an industry strategy and/or Code of Practice for environmental sustainability
- Implement an industry Risk Management Plan for key environmental issues
- Prepare, measure and report on an industry scorecard on environmental sustainability

- Motivate the industry, and our customers, to be environmentally sustainable

The project has achieved the following key outcomes:

- Industry Development Officers (IDO's) have maintained their involvement with key activities affecting the industry. IDO positions have been re-established with a national responsibility as well as their state technical responsibilities. This has given the industry a greater ability to be involved with a wide range of issues. Changes in the IDO network have impacted on some areas – NRM and Quarantine.
- Development of Industry Biosecurity Plan in conjunction with Plant Health Australia.
- Launch of Biosecure HACCP program to industry which completes the modules under the NIASA, Accreditation and Certification program.
- Development of economic modelling software for evaluation of irrigation upgrades for use by IDO's and businesses use when improving irrigation efficiency.
- Undertaking research into the most effective process for hand watering in nurseries.
- Undertaking research into the benefits of plants in the urban environment from

Health, Wellbeing and Environmental aspect.

- Planning for Urban GreenScape Symposium to be held in February 2009 which will unveil the benefits of increased plants in the urban environment.
- Engagement with the Australian Government on key issues of invasive plant management, by supporting the consumer engagement with the Defeating the Weeds program.
- Achievement of key objectives within budget and excess funding being returned to HAL.

The Environment Committee has continued to provide independent direction to projects and activities as well as being a visible commitment from the NGIA Board to position the industry as the community's leader on relevant environmental issues in alignment with the Nursery and Garden Industry Strategic Plan for 2006–08.

This project is funded by HAL using the nursery levy and matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY07006

For more information contact:

Robert Prince, NGIA

T 02 9876 5200

E robert.prince@ngia.com.au





Greening the great indoors for human health and wellbeing

A project to address the benefits of indoor plants in the workplace and how they make a difference on people will provide evidence-based strategies for the use of indoor plants to promote health, reduce stress and enhance productivity in the workplace.

The project aims to provide evidence of the ability of indoor plants to:

- Improve the health, well-being and productivity of office staff.
- Determine if low numbers of plants can be beneficial to both human health and indoor air quality.
- Provide information on plant numbers, types and placement in offices for optimum health-promoting benefits.
- Obtain information on a new, previously untested interior plant variety as regards its ability to remove volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

The first round of weekly air-quality sampling for the office study has been completed, over a period of 14 weeks (to mid-June, 2008). 55 UTS individual staff offices were used

in two air-conditioned buildings with five treatments (11 replicates per treatment) being randomly assigned among them.

The results clearly indicate the potential of indoor plants to help reduce indoor CO₂ levels, if placed appropriately according to the light tolerance of the individual plant species. Investigations are needed into what constitutes higher than tolerable light intensities among indoor plant species that might cause the onset of stress respiration, which would tend to reduce the net CO₂ uptake of the plant.

During round one two sets of questionnaire surveys were administered to the

participants, one at the commencement of the round, the other in week ten (i.e. before and during plant treatments). The results of these surveys are currently being analysed.

This project is funded by HAL using the nursery levy and matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY06021

For more information contact:
Christine Johnson, University of Technology Sydney
T 07 3888 7300
E chris@containerconnection.com.au



Industry environmental and technical policy manager

This project funds the National Environmental Policy Manager (NEPM) who manages and develops the strategies behind each area of the Nursery Industry Environmental and Technical policy and extension program. This provides the nursery and garden industry with an effective mechanism to manage, monitor and remain at the forefront in dealing with environmental challenges.

The three primary focuses of the NEPM role are to:

- Develop and regularly review industry policies on relevant and emerging environmental issues and encourage the adoption of industry solutions.
- Provide support, resources and

where appropriate, leadership for the State Associations, members and industry operators in their handling of environmental issues and programs.

- Provide advice to the national and state CEO's and the NGIA Board on matters relating to environment as it impacts on the nursery and garden industry.

The Environmental Committee, established in 2007 to position the industry as the community's leader on relevant environmental issues, provides independent direction to technical and research initiatives developed as part of this project. Together, the IDO network and Environmental Committee enables Industry to position itself as the

community's leader on key environmental issues, promoted sustainable and environmentally sound business practices and enhanced industries capacity for innovation.

Moving forward, key environmental issues will continue to impact on the long term health and sustainability of Industry. The ongoing nature of this project will provide resources to monitor, coordinate and manage industry's environmental response to these impending challenges.

Project NY07013

For more information contact:
Dr Anthony Kachenko, NGIA
T 02 9876 5200
E anthony.kachenko@ngia.com.au

Improving indoor air quality with pot-plants

Indoor potted-plants improve indoor air quality, previous HAL-supported research has conclusively demonstrated in laboratory and office studies. The studies have shown that indoor potted-plants efficiently remove volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which are common air contaminants from outdoor and indoor sources.

The studies have revealed normal potting mix bacteria are the removal agents, with the role of the plant being to nourish their root-zone microorganisms. Overseas research has shown that indoor plants take up all other types of urban air pollution – nitrogen and sulfur oxides, fine particulates, PAHs and ozone.

This project is an essential next step in the promotion of indoor plants as an essential component of the indoor environment. The project is looking at two main questions:

- How pot sizes influence rates of VOC removal.
- Can plants contribute significantly to office CO₂ reduction (and conversely, O₂ output).

The VOC trials have been completed and the CO₂ experiments have commenced. Eight bench-top test chambers are used in all trials.

Three species, in four pot-sizes, have been tested for VOC removal: *Zamioculcas zamiifolia* (Zanzibar), *Sansevieria trifasciata*, *Epipremnum aureum* (Pothos) in 300, 250, 200, and 120mm pots.

Benzene (a carcinogen) was used as test VOC, since it is prevalent in urban air, and emitted from indoor sources, being a solvent in furnishings. At a dosage of 5ppm (equal to the Australian maximum-allowable 8-hour averaged occupational exposure dose), there were no differences in removal rates among pot sizes 200–300mm, in any species.

The three species were equally effective with the entire dose in all cases being eliminated in 24 hours. However, in the 120mm pots of all species, removal rates were half or less of those in the larger sizes.

The results have practical implications in terms of plant usage, and suggest a potential new use as well. Banks of pots could be installed where there are high VOC concentrations, e.g. in motor service garages, factories, etc. Indoor plants can score two credit points in the Green Star ratings of Green Building Council of Australia: one point for one 300mm pot or two 200mm pots per two work stations; or two points for this density per one work station.

The results of the current research suggest there could be more flexibility in future in the awarding of green star points.

This project is funded by HAL using voluntary contributions from industry and matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY07018

For more information contact:

Prof. Margaret Burchett, Plants and Indoor Environmental Quality Group, Faculty of Science, UTS

T 02 9514 2000

E margaret.burchett@uts.edu.au



Ensuring the industry has the resources and structures needed to implement the vision

Nursery industry development officers

The Nursery Industry Development Officer (NIDO) roles have been re-shaped by the nursery industry to enable an increased level of expertise within the NIDO network. The key purpose of the NIDO roles is to provide technical assistance to industry on the key aspects of plant production in an efficient and sustainable manner and communicate new technologies and processes to enable constant improvements for the industry.

The NIDO is part of a national network of development officers in each state and industry stakeholders have access to technical advice from qualified and experienced horticultural professionals. The NIDO arranges regular technical workshops on a variety of subjects and site reviews. Their role is to provide advice on business improvement, pest and disease management, waste water management and other technical issues. Regular articles are also contributed for distribution through various association newsletters and the NGIA website.

National responsibilities for key topics were added to the NIDO roles in 2007, enabling greater utilisation of industry skills and also giving the NIDO's a national perspective rather than state focus. With an increased focus on national issues including water efficiency and environmental management, greater demands have been put on their time to undertake the key technical support aspects of their role.

In 2008, the NIDO roles were in a period of significant transition. With a turnover in skilled staff, due to the extra pressures and responsibilities of the national roles, there were some impacts on service delivery as new staff took time to come up to speed with key issues. This issue has had the greatest impact in South Australia and Western Australia but has stabilised with the appointment of Grant Dalwood in South Australia and Gary Hatcher in Western Australia. In Victoria, Rachel Condon has been appointed to assist with Industry Audits for both NIASA and AGCAS. Robert Chin

was very involved with Invasive Plants issues having been awarded a Churchill Scholarship to visit USA and study how the US Industry is addressing this issue.

The reporting from the states shows that the NIDO network is fully engaged in training and the implementation of accreditation programs for the benefit of industry stakeholders.

There is a requirement to increase focus in the areas of climate change impacts, waste management and business efficiency in a time of rapidly increasing input costs.

This project is funded by HAL using the nursery levy and voluntary contributions from industry with matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY06025

For more information contact:
Robert Prince, NGIA
T 02 9876 5200
E robert.prince@ngia.com.au

Business skills development

This business skills development project seeks to develop industry skills in the areas of business management, HR management, marketing and retailing skills in the nursery industry.

This project runs in conjunction with the following two projects:

- Management and Administration of Awards and Accreditation (NY07009 see page 5) which aims to make the journey to accreditation an attainable pathway of business improvement.
- Industry and Stakeholder Marketing (NY07501) which aims to increase levels of industry participation through increased awareness, interaction and participation in national industry projects and activities.

The funding supported by this project is seen as essential to the communication of many national initiatives and without localised extension through each state such initiatives would not be successful.

In most cases, each state Nursery Garden Industry Association has a dedicated Business Development Officer (BDO) whose role includes the communication of the national business improvement initiatives to the industry and particularly retail. The BDO undertakes a number of activities including one on one engagement, workshop facilitation, marketing and more to deliver the national business improvement tools developed under NY07009 and NY07501.

The project has faced a number of challenges to meeting targets including strategic decisions made on timing such as the best time to relaunch the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme, however overall activities have been successful in achieving the desired outcomes.

This project is funded by HAL using the nursery levy and voluntary contributions from industry with matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY07017

For more information contact:
Robert Prince, NGIA
T 02 9876 5200
E robert.prince@ngia.com.au

Partnership agreement 2007/08

Nursery and Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) and Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) have entered into an annual partnership agreement to identify and facilitate projects which will benefit the industry.

Through the partnership agreement, HAL provides funding to NGIA to support the operations of the nursery Industry Advisory Committee (IAC), the holding of the annual levy payer meeting, consultations between NGIA and HAL including attendance at Industry Forums and general consultation on the successful development and implementation of the nursery research and development and marketing programs.

The funding in the partnership agreement also supports the development of industry communications which ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to be aware of and access outcomes from levy funded programs. This is achieved by delivery of key communication items such as *Nursery Papers*, *e-Compost* and regular updates to the industry website www.ngia.com.au.

This project is funded by HAL using the nursery levy and voluntary contributions from industry with matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY07900

For more information contact:

Robert Prince, NGIA

T 02 9876 5200

E robert.prince@ngia.com.au

Nursery state conferences and communications

The nursery industry is diverse, operates over a wide range of climatic zones and is responsible for the cultivation of a wide range of plant species. In recognition of this, regional activities such as state conferences and communications materials are funded as part of the nursery program.

State conferences provide the opportunity for staff of businesses who would not usually attend the national conference to be exposed to presentations that cover both technical and business management issues. It is very important that the outcomes of levy funded programs are communicated to all levels of industry in a manner that is relevant to the conditions or issues for the region.

During the 2007/08 period, state conferences were held in NSW, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia. All events were well attended by a good mix of production and retail businesses and the programs offered a wide variety of key speakers and topics. These covered areas including:

- Green Roofs – new technologies for our industry.
- Business lessons from an entrepreneur who built KonTiki Travel into a global travel company for under 35's.

- How a family business beat the multinationals (Coopers Brewery).
- The battle for Toowoomba to get water from recycled sewage.

Some events were held over a single day and incorporated trade displays while others provided 2–3 days visits to businesses. All state conferences provided the ideal opportunity for industry to network and receive education on key matters regarding future directions for levy investment.

Communications materials are produced by all states, totaling 16 publications across Australia. During 2009 these communication tools will be undergoing a review to ensure that they are providing the most effective and efficient communication to levy payers and delivering the outcomes the industry requires.

This project is funded by HAL using voluntary contributions from industry and matched funding from the Australian Government.

Project NY07921 and NY07902

For more information contact:

Robert Prince, NGIA

T 02 9876 5200

E robert.prince@ngia.com.au



Steve Day CNP of City of Whitehorse (Parks & Gardens)

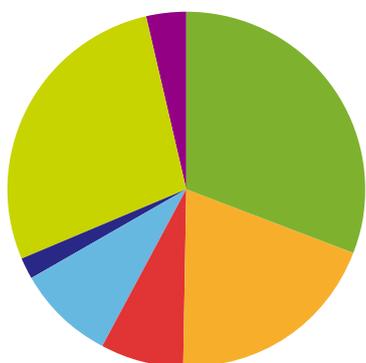
Investing in Australian horticulture

Australian Government priorities

As part of the Australian Government's commitment to rural research and development, horticulture industries can access matching Commonwealth funding through HAL for all research and development activities.

The Australian Government's Rural Research and Development Priorities aim to foster innovation and guide R&D effort in the face of continuing economic, environmental and social change. HAL's operations are closely aligned with these priorities.

This chart shows the percentage of expenditure in HAL's nursery R&D program against each of the Australian Government priorities for rural research and development. Full details of expenditure across all industries is available in HAL's annual report at www.horticulture.com.au



- Productivity and Adding Value (30.9%)
- Supply Chain and Markets (19.5%)
- Natural Resources Management (7.6%)
- Climate Variability and Climate Change (8.8%)
- Biosecurity (1.9%)
- Innovation Skills (27.9%)
- Technology (3.4%)

Productivity and Adding Value

Improve the productivity and profitability of existing industries and support the development of viable new industries.

Supply Chain and Markets

Better understand and respond to domestic and international market and consumer requirements and improve the flow of such information through the whole supply chain, including to consumers.

Natural Resource Management

Support effective management of Australia's natural resources to ensure primary industries are both economically and environmentally sustainable.

Climate Variability and Climate Change

Build resilience to climate variability and adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Biosecurity

Protect Australia's community, primary industries and environment from biosecurity threats.

Innovation Skills

Improve the skills to undertake research and apply its findings.

Technology

Promote the development of new and existing technologies.

Relationships and roles relating to HAL programs

Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) is a not-for-profit industry owned company. Its role is to manage the expenditure of funds collected by the Australian Government on behalf of horticulture industries.

HAL invests \$85 million annually in projects to benefit horticulture industries.

An Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) is established for each industry with a statutory levy and annual income exceeding \$150,000. The IAC is a subcommittee of the HAL Board. It makes recommendations to HAL on the expenditure of funds.

The Peak Industry Body (PIB) for an industry is responsible for recommending to HAL the establishment of, and any changes to, statutory levies. The PIB for an industry with a statutory levy recommends membership of the IAC to HAL and must demonstrate how the skills required on an IAC are met by the persons they recommend for appointment to the committee.

For more information please visit www.horticulture.com.au

In 2008/09 the Nursery & Garden Industry Australia acted as the service provider on 13 projects.

Full details can be found on page 15 of this report.

Consultation funding

Consultation funding is paid by HAL to cover costs for IAC meetings, annual levy payers' meetings and costs within the partnership agreement between HAL and the member industry that are specified as consultation, for example R&D program consultation. In 2007/08 \$286,000 of consultation funding was budgeted to be provided to the Nursery & Garden Industry Australia.



Across Industry Program

The nursery industry contributes funding towards an across industry program that addresses issues affecting all of horticulture. Details of the current program are listed below. A full report of the program can be found at www.horticulture.com.au/industry/acrossindustry.asp.

Project No	Title	Start Project	Project Completion	Organisation	Contact
Outcome 1 Enhance the efficiency, transparency, responsiveness and integrity of the supply chain for the total industry to provide clear market signals					
AH04007	Pesticide regulation coordinator	5-Jul-04	1-Jul-09	AKC Consulting	Kevin Bodharuk 02 9499 3833
AH07033	Incident Response Protocol - development and training for horticulture	21-Apr-08	30-Apr-09	Control Risks	Julian Heath 02 9279 0099
AH08011	A baseline survey of knowledge, attitudes, approaches and aspirations regarding contamination management	31-Jul-08	31-Jan-09	Instinct and Reason	David Donnelly 02 9283 2233
AH08012	Country of origin labelling research project	1-Oct-08	31-Oct-08	Horticulture Australia Limited	David Chenu 02 8295 2300
MT07029	Managing pesticide access in horticulture	1-Jul-07	30-Jun-10	AgAware Consulting Pty Ltd	Peter Dal Santo 03 5439 5916
Outcome 2 Maximise the benefits of horticultural products in the eyes of consumers, influencers and government					
AH07006	Promoting the health advantage of fruit and vegetable to increase their consumption	1-Jul-07	30-Jun-10	Horticulture Australia Limited	Chris Rowley 02 8901 0329
Outcome 3 Position horticulture to compete in a globalised environment					
AH07002	HAL market access coordination	1-Jul-07	1-Apr-09	Stephen Winter & Associates Pty Ltd	Stephen Winter 03 9832 0787
AH07003	Market access support program	30-Jun-08	30-Jun-09	Horticulture Australia Limited	Kim James 08 6389 1407
AH08010	Workshop on quantitative methods applied to horticultural improvement	16-Jul-08	30-Sep-08	Australia Crop Genetic Services	Craig Hardner 07 3346 9465
Outcome 4 Achieve long term viability and sustainability for Australian horticulture					
AH07031	Peri-urban horticulture and land use planning: Literature Review & 'Tool-kit'	1-Apr-08	31-Oct-08	GHD	Luke Jewell 02 9241 5655
AH08002	Horticulture Water Initiative 2008/09	1-Jul-08	30-Jun-09	Horticulture Australia Limited	Alison Turnbull 02 8295 2300
AH08003	Analysis of Horticulture's carbon footprint	15-Jan-09	31-May-09	Horticulture Australia Limited	Alison Turnbull 02 8295 2300
AH08014	Horticulture industry consultation on Award modernisation	17-Nov-08	30-Apr-09	Horticulture Australia Limited	Ravi Hegde 02 8295 2300

Nursery Program

Project No	Project Title	Levy or VC	Start Project	Project Completion	Organisation	Contact
NY06021	Greening the great indoors for human health and wellbeing	Levy	16-Feb-07	30-Jan-10	University of Technology Sydney	Christine Johnson 07 3888 7300
NY06022	Future development of a garden industry market monitor	Levy	15-Oct-06	31-May-08	Freshlogic Pty Ltd	Martin Kneebone 03 9818 1588
NY06025	Industry Development Officers	Levy and VC	15-Aug-06	01-Aug-09	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Robert Prince 02 9876 5200
NY07001	Supply and demand chain development via accreditation/certification/water use efficiency within landscape industry	VC	01-Jan-08	01-Jan-11	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Jim Vaughan 07 3286 1746
NY07006	Nursery industry environmental and technical policy and extension	Levy	15-Nov-07	27-Feb-09	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Anthony Kachenko 02 9876 5200
NY07008	Growing nursery and garden industry training and recognition 2007/2008	Levy and VC	16-Aug-07	15-Aug-08	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Fiona Kelly 02 9876 5200
NY07009	Management and administration – nursery accreditation and awards	Levy and VC	01-Sep-07	31-Aug-09	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Jacqui Gibbs 02 9876 5200
NY07010	KidsGrow development project	VC	21-Sep-07	12-Sep-08	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Tracey Wigg 02 9876 5200
NY07011	Communications research and development project	Levy	01-Aug-07	31-Jul-08	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Tracey Wigg 02 9876 5200
NY07013	Managing the nursery industry national environmental policies	Levy and VC	15-Nov-07	30-Jun-10	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Anthony Kachenko 02 9876 5200
NY07016	Increasing industry uptake of the nursery industry national business development programs	Levy	30-Apr-08	30-Apr-08	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Robert Prince 02 9876 5200
NY07017	Business skills development	Levy and VC	15-Nov-07	30-Sep-08	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Robert Prince 02 9876 5200
NY07018	Towards improving indoor air quality with pot-plants – a multifactorial investigation	VC	11-Mar-08	30-Sep-09	University of Technology Sydney	Alex Pulkownik 02 9514 4035
NY07022	Development of a PDA compatible electronic pictorial pest and disease database	VC	01-Dec-07	31-Dec-08	Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland	John McDonald 07 3277 7900
NY07900	Partnership agreement 2007/08	Levy and VC	01-Jul-07	30-Jun-08	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Robert Prince 02 9876 5200
NY07902	Nursery – state communications	VC	01-Jul-07	30-Jun-08	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Robert Prince 02 9876 5200
NY07921	Nursery – state conferences	VC	01-Jul-07	30-Jun-08	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Robert Prince 02 9876 5200

Financial Report

Nursery Investment Summary

Year ended 30 June 2008

	Marketing 2007/08	R&D 2007/08	Combined 2007/08
Funds available 1 July 2007	371,773	274,922	646,695
INCOME			
Levies Received	770,491	1,171,930	1,942,421
Commonwealth Contributions		946,099	946,099
Other Income	11,740	34,768	46,508
Total Income	782,231	2,152,797	2,935,028
Budget	837,894	2,410,609	3,248,503
<i>Variance to Budget</i>	<i>(55,663)</i>	<i>(257,812)</i>	<i>(313,475)</i>
PROGRAM INVESTMENT			
Levy Programs	836,945	1,665,375	2,502,320
Service Delivery Programs by HAL	113,992	226,824	340,816
Across Industry Funding		19,318	19,318
Levy Collection Costs	17,886	29,035	46,921
Total Investment	968,823	1,940,552	2,909,375
Budget	1,048,336	2,372,718	3,421,054
<i>Variance to Budget</i>	<i>79,513</i>	<i>432,166</i>	<i>511,679</i>
Annual Surplus/Deficit	(186,592)	212,245	25,653
Funds available 30 June 2008	185,181	487,167	672,348

Nursery Industry Advisory Committee (IAC)

Russell Higginbotham (Chair)
Josh Byrne
Bryan Hillier
John Patrick
Geoff Richards
Lionel Sach
Teena Sandford
Jason Searle
Michael Warner
Robert Prince (Ex officio)
Stuart Burgess (Ex officio)



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:



Stuart Burgess
Industry Services Manager
Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL)

262 Argyle Street
Hobart TAS 7000

T 0417 536 300
E stuart.burgess@horticulture.com.au