



Know-how for Horticulture™



**Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia**

**Final Report
HAL Project: NY06020
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NGIA Communications & Public Relations 2006/07

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Introduction

The NGIA Communications Strategy was a crucial part of implementing the 2006/07 Business Plan. Previously each individual project of the Association had a communications component that was managed by the project manager resulting in a very disjointed voice to media, government, consumers and the industry itself. The 2006/07 plan sought to provide an overall communications strategy to encompass all projects and issues to better utilise staff time, build stronger media relations and enable the association to speak to both industry and consumers with a unified voice.

The project was implemented by the National Communications & PR Manager with strategic input from the National Marketing Committee with the costs of convening this committee twice a year included in the budget. In addition to the work undertaken by the National Communications & PR Manager, the project also funded the engagement of an external consumer PR agency to promote the industry's key messages and projects.

The message underpinning the entire project was to promote gardens as "providing the space to enjoy life" under the branding *Life is a garden*, the key finding out of the Horizon Consumer Research implemented out of the *Raising the Image and Reputation of the Industry Project* (NY04508).

Tools including a film emphasising the key media messages, earlier warning via media monitors of major issues arising in the media, and a summary of relevant academic research to support health and environment claims have been developed and maintained via this project to assist in delivery of key messages.

Outcomes

- An increase in awareness of the industry and its issues amongst mainstream and industry media
- Positive messages delivered to the consumer/public by developing strong media relationships and undertaking targeted consumer PR activities.
- Continuation of media training focused on identified media spokespeople.
- Build strong relationships with key opinion leaders and interested third parties to assist in leveraging positive key messages
- Developing resources that assist in the delivery of positive and relevant media messages, including an accessible "library" of academic research to reinforce the industry's claims about the benefits of gardens and gardening.
- Preparation of updated information as part of the Industry positioning kit to be used to deliver industry position on issues to media, government and other key stakeholders

Key performance indicators:

- The results will be measure by media coverage, pick-up of key messages and spokespeople in the media monitoring report.
- The success of the overall message to buy more green-life will be reflected in the Market Monitor reports.
- Newspoll will be conducted at six monthly intervals to measure consumer attitudes to gardening.

Summary of Progress

1. Consumer public relations campaign

Pulse Communications were engaged in May 2006 through to December 2006 by NGIA to conduct a consumer public relations campaign targeting lifestyle media to reinvigorate Australians interest in gardens and reposition them as beneficial and relevant to modern lifestyles and to promote the purchase of more green-life.

At the same time Beyond the Square were engaged to manage the environmental consumer public relations campaign encompassing Wise About Water, Flora for Fauna and World Environment Day projects under the banner Our Environment, Your Backyard. In February 2007 it was agreed that Beyond the Square would manage all public relations for NGIA for a more holistic approach and to minimise budget expenditure.

Phase One Life is a garden campaign – July 2006 to December 2006

TARGET/ AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

The target was women aged 25-49 years

STRATEGY

Research— Market research was commissioned by NGIA to investigate peoples' existing perceptions of gardens and gardening which assisted in developing the campaign strategy. Extensive desk research was also conducted to help gauge what resources and information was currently available to non-green thumbs.

Insight—The strategy was based on insight that a garden is much more than an outside space. A garden gives you the space to enjoy life and is a place for a party, barbecue, reading or relaxation.

Consumer Branding—Life Is a Garden. A garden enriches life no matter how big or small, or where it is.

Strategy—To reach our target audience, we had to move the story out of the gardening pages and into mainstream lifestyle magazines, newspapers, supplements TV and radio shows. Story angles were created to:

- Dispel old stereotypes about what sort of people can and do garden
- Attract the target audience to create gardens that can enrich their lives
- Educate and build relationships with mass lifestyle media
- Position NGIA spokespeople as thought leaders endorsed by third-party experts

Key messages:

- A garden is a natural extension of your home and lifestyle
- A garden gives you the space to enjoy life, no matter how big or small it is
- A garden is Australian for "a good time"
- Go to your local garden retailer for inspiration and advice
- Log on to www.lifeisagarden.com.au for tips and advice and to locate your nearest garden retailer

CREATIVITY AND ORIGINALITY

By positioning gardens as more than just an outside space surrounding the home, highlighting the lifestyle aspect of gardens and using young third party endorsers we were able to give gardens and gardening a fresh new face. Introducing the concept of a garden to small areas such as balconies and window boxes and educating lifestyle media also helped take gardening to a new audience.

EXECUTIVE/ TACTICS

Four Stage Launch media tactics:

- Commissioned Newspoll research to uncover news angles and trends
- Created a series of 2006 Spring garden trends and launched the research findings and an educational gardening website (www.lifeisagarden.com.au) at a contemporary 'garden party' to lifestyle media
- Set up a press office to target seasonal story opportunities

The Life is a Garden campaign was launched by throwing a modern, urban garden party for lifestyle media two months before Spring. The July event held in Sydney targeted metropolitan newspapers, women's consumer, lifestyle and parenting magazines, and television and radio programs. Research findings commissioned from Newspoll—a credible source for Australian media, about our gardening trends and the new website were also launched at the event. Among the findings: the desire for a sustainable garden had overtaken even the desire for an iconic Aussie backyard barbecue area, people wanted their garden to be like an outdoor living room and gardening was growing in popularity with younger people and women.

Four mini-garden displays demonstrated the top four garden trends—romantic, sustainable, outdoor living and edible, emphasizing how easy it was to create a garden in a small urban space.

Journalists not in attendance were sent media packs (**Appendix 1**) post event. News releases were also sent out to all metro newspapers and supplements nationally, radio newsrooms, talk back radio and women's consumer magazines.

The event was very well received, for example one of the comments made by an editor of one of the women's titles was, "Thank you for inviting me to your lovely event, it was beautifully presented and very impressive. 'Thank you for the gift and we look forward to working with you on a future garden story.'"

The media launch was extremely successful in promoting the fresh face of Australian gardens and gardening which was emphasised with the choice of Brendan Moar and Meredith Kirton as key spokespeople. The main message was that gardens can be hip and trendy which helped to create a platform for the entire campaign to deliver positive media stories in general and lifestyle media about gardens and gardening and their place in Australian culture.

Among the highlights were cover stories, double and full-page spreads in metropolitan newspapers, and a score of radio interviews. The coverage moved our branded messages beyond the gardening pages into general consumer media and we forged new relationships with influential lifestyle writers and editors.

Life is a garden Press Office

The Press Office was set up to develop the relationships created over the following six months. Meredith Kirton and NGIA spokespeople continued to be positioned to educate media, especially longer lead publications.

Some of the stories set up through the Press Office include:

- Garden horoscopes
- Christmas gift ideas
- New ideas for Christmas Trees and living Christmas table decorations
- New plant releases

EVALUATION OF SUCCESS/MEASUREMENT

The July to December 2006 campaign generated 138 pieces of branded media coverage (**Appendix 2**). This created 52.6 million opportunities to see our branded key messages across print, radio and online mass media, plus an unmeasured national morning television spot. In a country with a population of only 20 million—the target audience of under-50 urban women was repeatedly exposed.

Media Coverage	pieces to see	
Print	117	49,358,529 readership
TV	1	
Radio	19	3,267,233 listenership
Online	1	400 readership
Total:	138	52,626,162

Relation to the objective to halt the decline in industry value

Reporting on the total garden market, the Australian Garden Market Monitor of 31 December 2006 noted "a 5.4 per cent increase on the 2005 spring period, which had increased 1.9 per cent on Spring 2004."

Of the public relations and print campaign, it said: "There is every indication the positive sales lift in early spring was aided by this (Life is a Garden) campaign." The public relations component of the campaign represented 80% per cent of the integrated marketing campaign. There were some print advertisements placed in select women's lifestyle magazines and supplements over a two month period.

Phase Two The *Life is a Garden* and Environmental Campaign

The campaign will also seek to inform the media about specific industry projects as appropriate to audience including Flora for Fauna, Wise About Water, NIASA, AGCAS as well as relevant issues as they arise.

2. Newspoll

The Newspoll research (**Appendix XX**) will be conducted in three sessions throughout the 06/07 year. The two primary objectives of these research questions include:

- To gather interesting and newsworthy statistics to support story angles proposed in news orientated media releases, and
- To measure consumer attitudes to gardens and gardening before and after marketing and public relations activities.

Newspoll is a quick, cost effective way to survey around 2000 consumers nationally. It incorporates strict sampling procedures and the final results are weighted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics population information to ensure they are representative of the population. The demographics are broken down into sex, age, grocery buyer, marital status, children, work status, area, socio-economic status, education and household income.

3. Industry film project

The industry film project, started in 05/06 by Anvil Productions has sought to compile a library of footage to be used as a valuable communications tool in the endeavour to build better relationships with key opinion leaders, experts, industry stakeholders and interested third parties.

The film project has interviewed experts to promote the benefits of gardening within their own area of expertise. These segments are designed to be shown individually to cater for specific audiences or to be shown together as one consumer focused industry film.

The first cut of the consumer industry film was showcased at the 2006 NGI National Conference. This was further edited and shown at the *Life is a garden* Spring Media Launch. (Appendix XX) It has been designed to be used at garden shows and other industry events throughout Australia.

The film footage at hand continues to be a valuable resource for presentations to community and government at all levels to promote the operation and needs of the nursery and garden industry.

4. Gardening Sunday promotion

The Gardening Sunday concept was developed in partnership with *Gardening Australia* magazine to promote the benefits of gardens and gardening to individuals and communities with the aim of growing more gardeners.

The original concept included an on-going segment in the magazine which featured hands-on garden ideas and projects for new gardeners and green-thumbs alike, the key message being - "What are you doing Sunday? Whether you garden for five minutes or five hours, you'll reap the rewards!"

The main objective of this initiative was to reset gardening in the Australian psyche so that new gardeners and old see it as a weekly activity, "Sunday" being a euphemism for your day off work. Gardening Sunday aimed to grow a new batch of passionate and active gardeners across all demographics.

Sponsors were approached to support the initiative without success which meant that *Gardening Australia magazine* expected NGIA to advertise on a monthly basis which was not sustainable (Appendix XX). Due to this and staff changes at *Gardening Australia magazine*, the program lost momentum and Gardening Super Sunday, a spring event planned to encourage community involvement in support of the initiative did not get off the ground.

It was not possible for NGIA to sustain continued advertising in the section of the magazine, which became an imperative outside of the original agreement.

5. Building relationships with key opinion leaders and third party stakeholders

The first phase of the original "Raising the Industry Image and Reputation NY" project identified the need for the nursery and garden industry to build its reputation and profile amongst media, industry stakeholders, key opinion leaders and government.

Updating positioning kit materials

The industry positioning kit, developed to be used by whole of industry in communications with government, media and third parties contains the following information:

- An industry presentation folder
- Nursery & Garden Industry Strategic Plan summary
- A Water Policy document
- An Invasive Plants Policy document
- Industry facts and figures
- Industry profile document

A media protocol document (**Appendix XX**) was added to the kit and it was mailed to all Horticultural Media Association members and political contacts nationally.

Fostering key opinion leaders and industry stakeholders

An integral part of the Communications and PR strategy is the identification and liaison with key opinion leaders (KOLs) and industry stakeholders to better position the NGIA as an industry leader.

With this in mind Tracey Wigg, National Communications & PR Manager continues to liaise with key stakeholder groups and industry experts such as:

Industry experts and personalities

Meredith Kirton, writer, horticulturalist and TV presenter

- Key spokesperson for the Life is a garden PR campaign
- Author of Garden Recipe Cards featured on the Life is a garden website

Brendan Moar, landscape architect, author and TV presenter

- Key spokesperson for the Life is a garden PR campaign

Graham Ross, horticulturalist, radio broadcaster, author and TV presenter

- Continue to brief Graham, as President of HMA NSW and key media player, about industry issues and direction

Linda Ross, landscape architect, author and TV presenter

- Work with Linda on PR angles

Josh Byrne, author, environmentalist and TV presenter

- Worked with Josh when he won HMA Anita Boucher Young Achiever Award and participated in the NGIA Nursery & Garden Industry Conference in 2007

Melissa King, author, horticulturalist and TV presenter

- Worked with Melissa on WED campaign

Tanya Ha, author and environmentalist

- Worked with Tanya on WED campaign

Colin Campbell

- Worked with Colin on WAW and WED campaigns

Stakeholder Associations

Keep Australia Beautiful

Horticultural Media Association NSW (Management Committee)

Horticultural Therapy Association

Farm Writers Association (Member)

Food Media Club (Member)

Judge in the Radio category of HMA Laurel Awards

Sponsorships

HMA Laurels – sponsorship of the Anita Boucher Young Achiever Award which was awarded at the NGIA Nursery & Garden Industry Awards in February 2007 when the 2006 Laurels were cancelled.

The benefits of membership and liaison with the above groups are great as it better places the industry to speak with one voice, thereby building credibility and profile. Such relationship building also helps to build industry recognition amongst media and government which can only benefit future agenda setting on issues relevant to the nursery and garden industry.

6. Issues/ media management

Issues continued to be managed by the National Communications & PR manager.

- **Media training**

A media forum was held at the December meeting of the CEOs and Presidents with assistance from Beyond the Square Communications
Media training has been scheduled for the CEO and Presidents meeting in September 2007 to address the importance of media relations and media interview techniques
(Appendix XX)

- **Media monitors**

Media monitoring has been put in place to track breaking issues of relevance to the nursery and garden industry to supplement the print media coverage supplied by HAL. This also enable NGIA to track PR campaigns.

7. Desk research project

Dangar Research was commissioned to initiate a desk research project to compile a reference file of academic research in relation to the benefits of gardens and gardening. (Appendix X) This project identified academic research projects and academics with which NGIA can align the industry, better strengthening its role as a leader. The findings of this project were used to draft a research brief to Professor Jane Tarrant from the University of Technology in Sydney.

Professor Tarrant has started the desk research project (Appendix XX) although due to time constraint is unable to finish it. We are currently looking for an academic to finalise the project. This will give NGIA the opportunity to partner credible new academic findings and deliver new and exciting news, facts and figures about gardens and gardening to consumers from a scientific perspective, which is highly regarded by media as a news story angle.

8. Marketing & Communications Committee

The Marketing & Communications Committee, chaired by Dianne Hall, was formed in March 2006 to act as an industry voice and advise the National Communications & PR Manager and the National Marketing & Business Development Manager as well as the NGIA Board on marketing and communications initiatives and needs.

Members of the committee are:

- Dianne Hall (Chair), NGIA Board Member, Director of Newman's Nursery and Topiary Café (SA)
- Mike Skegg, CEO, Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT
- John Boonzaier, CEO, Nursery & Garden Industry Western Australia
- Jenny Boyer, NGIV Board Member, Consulting Arboriculturist & Rootologist, Managing Director, Rootology Pty Ltd
- Simon Smith, President of NGINT and Director, The Plantsmith

The Marketing & Communications Committee members are representative of the diversity of the nursery & garden industry and have been chosen due to their interest and experience in marketing and communications. They met in September 2006, February 2007 and March 2007 year and play an important role in offering guidance and expertise to the NGIA staff and Board.

Outputs

- Consumer PR reports compiled by Pulse Communications (Appendix XX) and Beyond the Square (Appendices X, X & X) to deliver final results of the public relations campaign including media clippings and coverage of key messages
- A compilation of academic research (Appendix X)
- Media protocols and updated positioning kit (Appendix X)
- Consumer film – building library of footage (Appendix X)
- Newspoll results (Appendix X)

Proposed Activities

Budget

Activity Number	Activity Description	Activity Cost Justification	Total Cost of Activity (\$)	HAL Component (\$)	Capital Item (Y/N)
1	Consumer PR campaign, to be conducted by Pulse Communications over 12 months	Phase one - Media event - Managing media relations - Distribution of media releases - Drafting media materials	40,000	40,000	N
		Phase two - Drafting media releases - Managing media relations - Distribution of media materials - Liaising with suppliers	40,000	40,000	N
2	Newspoll research	Newspoll research questions have been scheduled to be conducted over the course of 06/07 to create media angles about which to generate news coverage as well as a measurement of consumer awareness of gardens	10,000	10,000	
3	Industry film project	Continuation of the film project is reliant on up to date footage to create a series of vignettes to reinforce the 6 key message targets	10,000	10,000	N
4	Gardening Sunday Promotion	An initial investment in the long-term partnership promotion between Gardening Australia magazine and NGIA to encourage more people to spend time in the garden	25,000	25,000	N
5	Building relationships	- Updating positioning kit materials and industry image collateral	20,000	20,000	
6	Issues/ media Management	Media training	25,000	25,000	N
		- Media protocols - Media monitors	15,000	15,000	N

7	Desk research project	Consulting fees for researcher managed by Dangar Research	10,000	10,000	
8	Marketing & Communications Committee Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel expenses • Meeting expenses 	15,000	15,000	N
TOTAL				210,000	

Next Steps

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Communications / Extension Activities

In the last six months, the NGIA has undertaken a number of activities to highlight work done under this project:

- Stories within Clippings and Nursery Papers which either comment on the project specifically or incorporate activity in the summary of work on the Strategic Plan.
- A detailed conference presentation in April 2006 of project outcomes and plans
- Presentations to state boards and committees.
- Written updates to state associations.

In addition, a strong view is being expressed from the industry via their state associations that the consumer marketing is the single most important national activity needed for the industry.

Appendices

To support this Milestone report detailing the outcomes of Project NY04508 Raising Industry Image, the following documents have been provided:

- 1. Inside Story Report**
- 2. Horizon Consumer Research Final Report**
- 3. Life is a Garden video – 2006 Consumer version**
- 4. Gardening Sunday Promotion Plan**