
Final Report

NY07501

Industry & Stakeholder Marketing

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The aim of this project was to increase levels of industry participation through increased awareness, interaction and participation in national industry projects and activities.

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Summary

The aim of this project was to increase levels of industry participation through increased awareness, interaction and participation in national industry projects and activities.

The key element of this project is the industry's business improvement and recognition programs. These programs focus on improving industry businesses having regard to business practices, site management, operational considerations and risk management. The programs also incorporate marketing strategies into their guidelines for a well rounded approach to business.

The key activities of this project aim to provide tangible benefits to participants of the programs and seek to encourage support of these participants by industry and stakeholders. The ultimate benefit of this is increased participation and awareness in industry programs and stakeholders seeking to find these businesses.

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

This project is an integral part of NY07009 – Management & Administration of Awards and Accreditation which aims to make the journey to accreditation an attainable pathway of business improvement. Without the support of this project NY07501 and NY07017 it would not be possible to communicate to industry the benefits to be gained in striving to be an Accredited Business or a Certified Nursery Professional.

Introduction

This project continues the work of NY06015 to encourage increased levels of participation through increased awareness, interaction and participation in national industry projects and activities. This project works in conjunction with NY07017 Business Skills Development and NY07009 Management and Administration – Awards and Accreditation.

The projects areas that this project focuses on include:

- the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme (AGCAS)
- the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA)
- the Certified Nursery Professional program (CNP).

Where appropriate EcoHort and BioSecure HACCP, additional modules of NIASA, also receive benefit from this project.

These accreditation and recognition programs are primarily viewed as the industry's business and individual improvement tools. The schemes are marketed to the whole of industry and participation does not require membership of any other association or organisation.

These tools are administered and managed nationally by NGIA and extended by the State Associations. The programs aim to provide industry participants with a realistic and achievable journey to overall improvement. This subsequently encourages a desire to achieve the benchmark of 'industry standard' and to motivate continued development and award winning performance.

The ultimate purpose of these schemes is to increase the professionalism of the industry thereby creating an environment where plants are gardens are valued and the sale of greenlife is encouraged.

Method & Activities

The following activities have either been completed or are scheduled for completion in order to achieve the objectives of this project.

Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme

Building value for current AGCAS businesses

- Champion and Relaunch of program

Peter Whitehead, leading industry stakeholder, former accredited operator and member of NSW HMA was announced as the Champion for AGCAS. Peter spoke of the importance of being an industry accredited business at the relaunch of AGCAS at National Conference in March 2008. Robert Prince, CEO NGIA also spoke about the new benefits of becoming accredited.

- My Market – finalisation of website and reports with a free report to existing AGCAS businesses.

The My Market website has been finalised and is due to go live once finalisation of functionality and hosting fees has been determined with the provider Liquid Vision. A back office system has been set up and will be managed by NGIA with all purchasers of reports viewed as potential businesses for accreditation. These leads will be provided to the relevant BSDO. BSDO's and AGCAS Committee members have had substantial input into the website to ensure that the mapping and data is accurate and relevant. A training powerpoint has been developed for BSDO's and a selling powerpoint is currently being developed.

- New point of sale material developed and new perspex plaque

A relaunch pack was developed for currently accredited businesses to reengage their belief in retail accreditation. The relaunch pack included a letter from Greg Belbin (NGIA Director and AGCAS Chair), the new AGCAS manual, a new look perspex plaque, a set of posters, a set of shelf talkers, door decals, a large weather proof sign, an information booklet on the new benefits of retail accreditation, information on benchmarking opportunities and the offer of a complimentary CNP.

Business Skills Development Officers had the opportunity to receive the relaunch packs for their own distribution or for NGIA to arrange delivery of the packs direct to the businesses. This pack was provided at no cost to accredited businesses.

- Free CNP (subject qualifications) to AGCAS businesses & benchmarking opportunities

NGIA has made arrangements to reward accredited businesses with a single complimentary CNP. An individual from an accredited businesses can apply by to the CNP Coordinator to become recognised as a CNP. This person must be appropriately experienced or qualified before their application is approved. Benchmarking opportunities also exist through FMRC Benchmarking. AGCAS Businesses have the opportunity to receive a single benchmarking report.

- Business templates CD and logo package for BSDO's to support AGCAS businesses &

A resources package for Business Skills Development Officers has been development. This CD contains regularly used and necessary business practice templates including draft

business plans, marketing plans, OH&S etc. The CD also contains the Industry Accredited logo in a number of different formats for use with printing and office materials.

These activities have been undertaken to encourage reinvigoration and belief in the retail accreditation program and to deliver tactile benefits to accredited businesses.

Marketing AGCAS to engaged retailers

- Promotional Booklet with new features and benefits

An eight page promotional booklet featuring the new benefits of participation in retail accreditation was developed. The booklet provides covers benefits both on undertaking the journey and upon achieving accreditation.

- State Launches

It was originally planned that the booklet would be mailed in a direct mail campaign to engaged retailers. Instead, the Business Skills Development Offices have utilised this booklet in their own State Launches of AGCAS and also during their conferences and visits.

- AGCAS advertised in trade magazines

In order to working on conversion rates of all industry retailers to ultimately become accredited an advertisement has been developed and scheduled for publication in the July edition of Australian Horticulture and the August edition Greenworld magazine. Advertising of retail accreditation will continue into next year.

Marketing AGCAS to non-engaged retailers

- Distribution of old manuals to the whole of the industry.

Each State identified a number of industry retailers as targets for receiving the first version of the AGCAS manual. While the content and requirements of the program have changed with the new direction, the old manual contains valuable information on retailing in our industry. The manuals were sent to the nominated businesses under a cover letter from Greg Belbin – NGIA Director and AGCAS Chair. The aim of this activity was to raise the profile of retail accreditation and prepared to prepare non accredited businesses for the relaunch. It also allowed us to broadening the base of retail businesses engaged the industry and accreditation.

- Promotional Booklet (as described above)

As described above.

- Direct mail of promotional booklet (as above)

The promotion booklet was forwarded in a direct mail campaign to approximately 300 non-engaged, non-member businesses. It was forwarded under a covering letter from NGIA and also featured some of the other national industry programs available to them.

- Retail database.

Investigations are currently in progress and quotes are being received on the purchase of a national database detailing all garden centre and retail nursery operators nationally. This list will have under gone a filtering system so that privacy laws have been addressed and businesses are prepared to receive information.

AGCAS State extensions

- Selling presentation

Using the promotion booklet as the basis of information, a presentation has been prepared for the BSDO's providing them with the resources to promote accreditation. This will also be supported with an accompanying presentation for My Market.

- Support Kit developed containing everything about AGCAS

A policy and procedures manual has been developed incorporating all aspects of AGCAS. The purpose of this is to give BSDO's the confidence to raise the profile of the program in their States so they can facilitate their requirements under NY07510. This is a manual/document that can be modified and updated as necessary. It contains a number of procedural diagrams and over time, will become a library of information for the State Associations.

Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia

The following activities have either been completed or are scheduled for completion in order to achieve the objectives of this project for NIASA.

NIASA industry marketing

- Sponsorship of the Landscape Australia Expo – Sydney (July 07)

3656 visitors of which 81% were Owner/Managers.
129 exhibitors NIASA signage featured heavily throughout the trade exhibition, the conference, program and signage therefore increasing awareness of NIASA. *Figures attached.*

- Sponsorship of the Landscape Australia Expo – Melbourne (August 07)

3439 visitors recorded of which 76% were Owner/Managers.
148 exhibitors. Again NIASA signage featured heavily throughout the trade exhibition, the conference room, program and signage continuing to build the profile of NIASA. *Figures attached.*

- Sponsorship of the Landscape Australia Expo – Brisbane (May 08)

1646 visitors recorded of which the majority were Owner/Managers
83 Exhibitors. Again NIASA signage featured throughout the trade exhibition, the conference room, program and signage continuing to build the profile of NIASA. *Figures attached.*

- Updated NIASA listing

The National listing of NIASA businesses has been provided at every opportunity including all expos and sponsorship packages. This list has been revised twice this financial year. *Lists attached*

- Trade Registers to Landscape Industry (500)

To continue the reinforcement of NIASA to the landscape sector 500 additional Trade Registers were purchased. 200 Trade Registers were provided to businesses who attended the Sydney and Melbourne expos. *Letter attached.* 300 Trade Registers were provided for distribution to the delegates of the Landscape Expo in Queensland.

- NIASA Advertisement in Outdoor Design Source magazine and distribution to NIASA members

In order to continue to build value in NIASA accreditation for NIASA businesses advertising was placed in Outdoor Design Source (ODS) promoting the benefits of NIASA. ODS is an annual publication which features many sectors of the outdoor industry including designers, landscape and nursery. This publication is forwarded to all NIASA members.

- Sponsorship of the IPPS Conference – May 2008

NIASA sponsored the IPPS Conference Welcome Function. As part of our sponsorship we placed NIASA/EcoHort/CNP banners around the room and had the opportunity of a short sponsors address which was undertaken by Robert Chin. We had inserts in the satchel of the Way to Grow brochure targeting Production Businesses, the BioSecure HACCP Nursery Paper and some information on CNP.

- Update NGIA Website for NIASA, EcoHort and BioSecure HACCP

The NGIA Website has been updated to include information on BioSecure HACCP and EcoHort. The publications are available for purchase on line and the website details the operational aspects and importance of the programs.

- Launch of BioSecure HACCP manual

The BioSecure HACCP Manual *Guidelines for managing Biosecurity in nursery production* was finalised in February 2008. The program was launched to the industry at 2008 National Conference in conjunction with the announcement of the industry's BioSecurity Plan. The initial response has been positive with a number of States running workshops for BioSecure HACCP and certifications anticipated in the near future.

- Sponsorship of State Local Government Association conference

The decision to participate in the State Local Government Association conferences was made at the NIASA meeting in December 2007. Participation is scheduled in the following expos and conferences

- Municipal Association of Victoria – Conference 17-18 October 2008
- Local Government Association of NSW – Conference 25-29 October 2008
- Local Government Association of QLD – Conference 1-4 September 2008

- Coop funding, collateral development, Sponsorship of Building Industry Awards

Investigations into a 2 year sponsorship of the Master Builders Australia – National Awards and Conference are continuing. This is an opportunity for the bigger industry objectives in relation to the sale and promotion of greenlife and NIASA could benefit from this promotion but would not be responsible for the entire investment. Coop funding has been utilised by the State Associations. Collateral development has included addition runs of both the EcoHort and BioSecure HACCP Nursery Papers for distribution to NIASA and whole of industry. Further, signage is in development for NIASA businesses participating in trade displays. The purpose of this is to reinforce brand awareness of NIASA.

Certified Nursery Professional

The following activities have either been completed or are scheduled for completion in order to achieve the objectives of this project for CNP.

CNP industry marketing

- Advertising in Greenworld magazine September 2007 & Australian Horticulture September 2007
- Conference mail campaign re CNP function

CNP held its first member function at the 2008 National Conference. The function ran for an hour the event before conference opened. The function was held before dinner with canapés and drinks provided. NGIA CEO Robert Prince addressed the group about the benefits of being a CNP member and encouraged them to take advantage of the networking opportunity the function provided.

- Christmas card mail campaign
- Sponsorship of the 2009 Nursery & Garden Industry Awards

Due to the review of the industry sponsorship opportunities CNP has not sponsored an award category for 2009. However, an advertisement for CNP was placed into the Award Entry Kit which has been distributed to over 3000 industry operators. The advertisement features three of the 2008 Young Leaders, targeting the whole of the industry and demonstrating that individuals in the NextGen age group are also eligible.

- Advertising in Greenworld magazine April/May 2007 & Australian Horticulture May 2007
- Advertorial series in Greenworld magazine from April/May – September (4 editions)
- Trade Register advertisement – an advertisement was placed in 2008/2009 Trade Register. This is the same advertisement placed into the Awards Entry Kit
- Signage for trade events has been developed for each State Association. The signage is a modified version of the advertisement placed in the Awards Entry Kit and the Trade Register. It is large, but light and can be used at state conferences, trade days and exhibitions.

Other project activities

Other activities conducted in support of the industry's business improvement programs include advertisements into the Awards Entry Kit and Trade Register. These advertisements are attached.

Evaluation

The targets reported on in this Final Report are detailed in the proposal attachment titled *Targets for 2007 – Business Skills Development*. In some instances these targets are different to the actual targets achieved in June 2007 under the final report for NY06501. This can be attributed to the timing overlap in proposal submission for the coming year and collation of figures for the current year.

Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme

Below are the estimated outcomes that can be attributed to the activities conducted under this project and NY07009 and NY07017. Reportable figures for this project will be provided in further detail in the Final Report for NY07017 due on 30 September 2008.

- To increase AGCAS accredited businesses to 175. As reported in the Final Report for NY06510 and Milestone Report for NY07501 promotional activities for AGCAS has ceased until the relaunch of AGCAS was conducted during National Conference at the end of March 2008. For this reason, we do not anticipate reaching the target of 175. The last

reported figure was received under Milestone Report NY07017 and indicates the number of accredited retail businesses is 113.

- Milestone Report NY07017 also indicates that 27 businesses are currently engaged with AGCAS and working towards accreditation.
- The number of retail accreditation manuals (1st & 2nd editions) in circulation totals 480.

Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia

Below are the estimated outcomes for this program. These results can be attributed to the activities undertaken within this project and NY06025. The milestone report for NY06025 is due on 18 July 2008 and this will cover more comprehensively the figures for NIASA, EcoHort and BioSecure HACCP.

- To increase the number of accredited NIASA businesses to 252. This figure will be reported under NY06025.
- To increase the number of NIASA manuals sold and in the industry to 620. The number of manuals increased to 638 at the end of June 2008. Businesses continue to seek the support of the industry's nursery and growing media accreditation scheme to engage in businesses improvement practiced.
- This NIASA insert is an update of the NIASA manual with includes appendixes on inground growing and water. The number of inserts that have been distributed has increased to 431.
- Under the current structure all relevant businesses can participate in EcoHort however certificates are only awarded in the case where businesses are also NIASA accredited. Therefore it is not possible for 20% of all nurseries to be EcoHort certified. However, EcoHort can report certification of 70 NIASA Businesses and manual distribution of 358 indicating that businesses are implementing EcoHort principles in their businesses despite not being certified.
- The BioSecure HACCP manual was finalised in February 2008 and launched to the industry during the National Conference at the end of March 2008. At this point there has not been a BioSecure HACCP certification but indications are that a number of businesses have participated in workshop and are engaged in the process.

Certified Nursery Professional

The results can be attributed to the activities undertaken within this project and NY07017.

- To increase CNP membership to 222. CNP participation has steadily increased participation with the following results reported for the calendar years of 2006: increase of 71%, 2007: increase of 49%. So far in 2008 we can report at 31% with a total of 173 members as at 30 June 2008. While this target has not been met, we believe these increases to be a positive indication of the industry's response to the program.

Other project activities

Other measure of this projects outcome of industry businesses being better informed and aware of business development opportunities include measurement:

- Participation in industry training courses– 503 workshop attendees (as reported in Milestone Report NY07017)

- Entries in the awards – an overall increase in entries of 17% in 2008 with 715 industry operators reported as participating in State Awards nights (as reported in Milestone Report NY07017)
- Take up of consumer programs – World Environment Day 2008 participation of 346 and Grow Me Instead participation 400
- Attendance at NGIA National Conference – an increase in delegates from 285 in 2007 to 317 in 2008.

These figures relate to a number of other industry projects and will be reported on in due course.

Implications

Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme

Investment in the industry's retail accreditation program is under review by the industry. Originally positioned as a marketing advantage for retail operators this program has been repositioned as a business improvement program which views business practices and greenlife as essential elements to a successful and sustainable NGI business. The targets set for this program for 07/08 have in fact, only had three months to be delivered. That is, most activities have been conducted from the end of March 2008.

Initial feedback since the launch indicates that businesses are more interested in ways to be successful in the current business climate, fighting for the disposable dollar while addressing the hangovers of water use. This program now offers benefits to businesses they view as vital. With proper planning and extension of activities via the State Associations this program has great potential.

Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia

With the implementation of the additional modules for NIASA of EcoHort and BioSecure HACCP it will become necessary for NGIA in conjunction with the National NIASA Advisory Committee review the communication of all the projects in relation to their target markets. For the most part, industry has responded well to the new modules. 08/09 should focus on activities that promote the suite of business improvement programs rather than individually targeted activities.

Certified Nursery Professional

CNP has identified the following barriers to participation:

- While production nursery and growing media businesses have increased their membership, there is still a feeling that individual recognition programs benefit retail operators more than other sectors.
- Other barriers including determination of value and benefits for the fee and ability to accrue points is noted as a challenge to some small business owners,

These challenges need to be taken into consideration in communication of messages for CNP for 08/09 activities. Despite these challenges CNP has seen substantial and steady growth since its commencement in 2005.

Other project activities

Misconceptions on which programs are levy funded are being addressed by NGIA. This is evidenced through the figures detailed in 'Other Project Activities'. Adherence to the new guidelines as indicated by HAL for branding of levy funding projects, will rectify this in 08/09 along with contracting of States and more structured reporting processes in 08/09.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the future of the industry's business improvement programs have been made in the proposal for NY08009. The annual operating plan for this proposal is attached here.

Appendices

AGCAS

- Point of Sale material
 - A4 Posters
 - Shelf Talkers
 - Perspex sign
- AGCAS/CNP Application Form
- FRMC Benchmarking Form
- Promotional Booklet
- Policy and Procedures manual

NIASA

- Statistics for Landscape Australia Expo, Sydney
- Statistics for Landscape Australia Expo, Melbourne
- Statistics for Landscape Australia Expo, Brisbane
- NIASA Listing – July 07 and May 2008
- Letter to Landscapers - January 2007
- Advertisement in Outdoor Design Source
- BioSecure HACCP Manual

CNP

- CNP Advertisement – Australian Horticulture – September 2007
- CNP Advertisement – Greenworld – September 2007
- CNP Advertisement – Australian Horticulture – March 2007
- CNP Advertisement – Greenworld – March 2007
- Advertorials x 3
- Advertisement – Awards Entry Kit, Trade Register and Posters.

Other

- Business Improvement Program Advertisement
- Training workshop availability Advertisement