



Final Report

NY08009

Industry & Stakeholder Marketing

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Know-how for Horticulture™



Industry & Stakeholder Marketing

Final Report

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The key objective of this project is the increase the level of engagement with all sectors of industry resulting in participation in National Industry projects and activities.

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Table of Contents

SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	4
METHODS & ACTIVITIES	5
EVALUATION	6-11
IMPLICATIONS FOR INDUSTRY	12-14
FINANCIAL REVIEW	15
APPENDICES	16

Summary

The Nursery and Garden Industry has developed three key programs addressing Industry Best Practice, Business Improvement and Individual Skills Recognition.

The programs are:

- Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme (AGCAS) – providing quality improvement and business practice accreditation for retailers
- Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) — providing quality improvement and business practice accreditation for nurseries
- Certified Nursery Professional (CNP) – providing industry recognition of qualifications, professionalism and experience

These programs are available to all levy payers and businesses engaged with the industry. These programs require marketing to stakeholders to secure engagement and growth. This is conducted utilising a range of promotional devices and events.

This project aimed to build on the investment made over the past two years and detailed in projects NY06015 and NY07501.

As a result of the activities undertaken within each of these programs, we have seen the following:

- An 109% increase in the number of industry personnel who have CNP qualifications within the duration of the project – 114 (07/08) versus 239 (08/09)
- A 6% increase in the number of NIASA certified businesses – as at March 2009
- A 24% increase in businesses with EcoHort certification - as at March 2009

NIASA certification is important to Industry due to Bio-Security issues and the changing quarantine laws being implemented in selected states. It is envisaged these new quarantine measures being introduced in South Australia and rumoured to be on the agenda for other states could become a strong market driver for the program.

Though the percentage of Industry personnel who have CNP is small, the growth over the past two years has been steady and consistent. Industry will not be investing in the program over the next 12 months however it is believed the momentum and existing NGIA communication vehicles will be able to support the continued growth of the program. If the increase in 09/10 is a greater percentage than 08/09 the program will be presented to industry again in the New Year.

Despite a re-launch in the first half of 2008 AGCAS, the accreditation program for retailers has not been widely accepted due to their desire for it to be a marketing program to attract customers rather than a business improvement program. Consequently this program will not be funded in 2009/10.

Introduction

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

This project aimed to build on the investment made over the past two years and detailed in projects NY06015 and NY07501.

These programs relate to the extension and communication of the industry's business improvement programs including:

- Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme (AGCAS)
- Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA)
- EcoHort
- BioSecure HACCP
- Certified Nursery Professional program (CNP)

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 association or organisation.

These tools are administered and managed nationally 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 a 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 and gardens are valued and the sale of quality greenlife is encouraged.

The outcomes of these programs have been detailed and supplied in the milestone and final reports already submitted for these projects.

The key objective of this project was to increase the level of engagement with all sectors of industry resulting in:

- Accreditation programs that develop best practice and business improvement
- Acceptance of Environmental Management Principles to ensure the NGI activities are not harming the environment
- Increased recognition and professionalism of industry participants through the Certified Nursery Professional program
- A unified approach to key issues which affect all sectors of the NGI such as biosecurity
- Growth in the sale of green-life
- Increased attractiveness of the Industry as a career path

Method & Activities

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

Industry Accreditation & Recognition Programs

Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme

Examples of program materials were supplied in the Milestone Report 102 for NY08009 – Industry and Stakeholder Marketing.

- To provide AGCAS retailers with greater benefits for their involvement with the program an October long weekend campaign, Sizzling Spice Pots, was developed to encourage consumers to get into their garden centre and undertake “long weekend project”. Recipe cards, marketing tips, a media release and water-proof posters were distributed to all AGCAS retailers to assist them with marketing the activity.
- A review of the AGCAS sales materials was undertaken as it was believed the existing materials did not sell the program adequately. Input was sort from the BSDO’s and more benefit-oriented copy was developed supported by a professionally designed sight –seller. The project is on hold pending a review of AGCAS’ moving forward strategy as 2008/9 second and third quarter reporting indicated the program was not going to continue as a levy funded project.

Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia

Examples of program materials were supplied in the Milestone Report 102 for NY08009 – Industry and Stakeholder Marketing.

- A review of the marketing materials for NIASA has indicated the need for a rewrite with greater focus on the benefits of NIASA accreditation. The current marketing approach does not have the support of the IDO network and therefore is not achieving the necessary results.
- A review of the promotional tools and vehicles currently being used available is underway with input being sought from the IDO network. A NIASA committee meeting scheduled for June 24/25 2009 will address the issues of marketing NIASA and provide the insight needed to develop a strategic marketing plan for the program.
- In March 2009 the PIA Conference and Awards program was sponsored to build the awareness of the considering the role and position of greenlife at the planning phase and the services of the Nursery & Garden Industry to assist. While the event did raise awareness of NGIA and the role we play in urban planning it was identified we would achieve greater success amongst the target audience by speaking at the event. All submission will be assessed when the Call for Papers is distributed later in the year.
- An updated listing of accredited NIASA businesses was produced and distributed at the PIA conference with supplies made available to the IDO network.
- The 2009/2010 trade register includes advertising for the nursery and garden industry accreditation programs.
- NIASA Advertisement in Outdoor Design Source magazine and distribution to NIASA members.
- The newly launched 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.

Certified Nursery Practitioner Recognition Program

Examples of program materials were supplied in the Milestone Report 102 for NY08009 – Industry and Stakeholder Marketing.

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

- The free CNP (subject qualifications) to AGCAS businesses promotion ends June 30th. This promotion has yielded xx new CNP's to the program.
- A new CNP advert was developed and placed on Outdoor Design Source Annual Directory encouraging other sectors to utilise the services of a CNP.
- CNP held a breakfast function at the 2009 National Conference on the opening morning. The function ran for an hour the event before conference opened with breakfast supplied. About 50 people attended the event and many taking the opportunity to network.
- Existing CNP are listed in the 2009/10 Trade Register due for distribution late August 2009.
- The IAC has reviewed the CNP program and decided not to support the program with levy funds at the end of this project. Ideas and methods for the continuation of this program without levy funding are currently being addressed.

Event Organisation

- The 2009 Nursery & Garden Industry National Conference and Exhibition were held in Canberra February 19-20th 2009. The Conference included a Levy payers meeting on the afternoon of February 19th attended by approximately 30 people.
- Special Interest Groups held their meetings in accordance with the guidelines.
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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 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