

**Milestone Report**

**Project NY000117: Nursery & Garden Industry Australia  
consultation with Horticulture Australia and involvement in the  
conduct and adoption of the nursery R&D program**

**Milestone No 2**

***Description:***

*Report on the achievements of the programmed activities, and the outputs and outcomes for the first 6 months of the project.*

***Criteria:***

*Achievement report and submission of the program for the next six months approved by Horticulture Australia*

**Introduction**

This milestone report covers the period from June 2001 to March 2002. During this time, there has been a lot of change and new initiatives within the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) This includes the first Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) meeting, the loss of the NGIA CEO and a significant change in make up of the NGIA Board, including a new President.

Despite these disruptions, NGIA has continued to regularly and professionally consult with Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) on the industry research and development (R&D) program.

**Interaction with HAL**

The NGIA CEO, board and IAC members have had extensive interaction with HAL on the R&D program. Appendix 1 contains a list of CEO interactions in chronological order from June to December 2001.

Issues have included, the IAC meeting logistics and agendas, finalisation of the industry strategic plan, preparation and planning of the national nursery industry conference, and industry publications including Australian Nursery Manager and The Nursery Papers.

Due to the resignation of the NGIA CEO, certain members of the NGIA board and other NGIA staff have significantly increased their interaction with HAL. In addition, a final briefing between the outgoing CEO and HAL was carried out to discuss a large number of issues.

Some of the issues discussed with HAL by the NGIA CEO, various Board members and the Industry Development Manager (IDM) include AusHort, Hortsafe, funding of retail based development officers, matching of AHC funds, funding mechanisms for PHA, the WinHort program, incursion management and management and funding options under the new company, HAL.

The outcome has been the ability for HAL to take the views of the nursery industry into consideration when reviewing its policies and operations

### **Program Management**

The first Nursery IAC meeting was held in October 2001, and the second in February 2002. Both of these meetings had a major focus on implementing the strategic plan especially R&D initiatives.

During this reporting period, various representatives of NGIA met with HAL representatives on several occasions and had numerous considered discussions on various industry development and R&D related issues.

In addition, two meetings were held with the NGIA board, state NGI presidents and executive officers. On both occasions, industry development and R&D related issues were deliberated on.

### **Strategic Planning**

For the first time, a strategic plan for the nursery & garden industry has been developed with the direct input from state and regional industry representatives. This has resulted in the endorsement by all state NGI's of the strategic plan.

HAL was intricately involved in the entire strategic planning process, which included an initial discussion paper, regional information gathering meetings and a final symposium with relevant industry representatives to complete the process.

This one plan covers both marketing and research and development issues in a holistic fashion.

This plan has since been published in Australian Nursery Manager, and 8500 full colour and attractive brochures have been published and are about to be widely distributed.

Some of the relevant HAL projects that enabled this successful process include:

- NY99037 Development of the Australian nursery industry into the 21st century
- NY00017 Survey of information needs in the nursery industry
- NY00038 Regional meetings for the development of an Australian nursery industry strategic plan 2001-2006

NY00037 Desk Audit to support the Australian nursery industry strategic plan 2001-2006  
NY00046 Australian nursery industry statistics collection, 2000/01

#### **Meetings with AFFA representatives**

The NGIA CEO, President and IDM met on several occasions with representatives from AFFA on a variety of issues, including the process for raising the levy, Plant Health Australia (PHA) and weed or invasive plant management.

This has resulted in the development and maintenance of professional networks and information exchange on relevant issues for the nursery and garden industry.

#### **Consideration of HAL reports to industry**

NGIA receives regular reports from the HAL Program Manager - Nursery, Libby Abraham, both on a formal and informal level. Often, the NGIA CEO, Board and IDM spend considerable time ensuring they were aware of the issues involved in the R&D program, including the accounts administered by HAL.

The outcome is that NGIA is in constant communication with HAL on relevant R&D issues. AH98000

#### **AusHort R&D program**

NGIA has been an active participant in the AusHort R&D Committee since its inception. This has involved attendance at AusHort meeting by the NGIA CEO and discussions by the NGIA Board regarding the benefits and implications of involvement in the AusHort process and individual projects. The Chair of the NGIA R&D Committee and the IDM have also been involved in a number of meetings.

The NGIA CEO has also participated in a number of steering committee meetings for the AusHort R&D committee. In addition, the IDM produced a Nursery Paper on the AusHort R&D committee, which was distributed nationally.

NGIA has disseminated information to State associations and the industry generally on both the AusHort process and projects. NGIA continues to facilitate the involvement of the IDO network in the chemical review project.

The nursery industry is participating in the AusHort R&D Committee and is currently funding a number of projects. The purpose and benefits of AusHort have been communicated to industry. NGIA has had significant input into AusHort projects, specifically the NRA related projects, and was instrumental in getting them started.

### **Liaison with research providers**

NGIA continues to initiate R&D initiatives, discuss concepts with HAL and industry sectors and liaisons with various research providers. The aim to ensure greater efficiency through a collaborative approach and through reduced wasted effort on behalf of potential R&D providers in designing proposals that are not consistent with the industry strategic plan.

### **Development officer network**

NGIA has worked closely with all States to develop and implement a national development officer network. NGIA continues to provide coordination and facilitation through the IDM and CEO to this process. Regular contact is maintained with all development officers to ensure they stay focused on the national program. The network also includes a National Training Manager (NTM).

The result is coordination of these various projects, listed below, enabling collaborative efforts for the benefit of industry.

NY98013	National Nursery Industry Development Manager
NY98001	Victorian Nursery Industry Development Officer
NY98006	South Australian Nursery Industry Development Officer
NY98007	Queensland Nursery Industry Development Officer
NY00025	Facilitating the development of the New South Wales nursery industry
NY98051	Facilitating the development of the nursery industry in Western Australia
NY99043	Facilitating the development of retail garden centres and nurseries in Qld
NY00019	Facilitating the development of retail garden centres in Victoria
NY00020	Facilitating the development of retail garden centres in Tasmania
NY00021	Facilitating the development of retail garden centres in New South Wales
NY00022	Facilitating the development of retail garden centres in Western Australia
NY00023	Facilitating the development of retail garden centres in South Australia
NY98043	National nursery industry training

### **Invasive plants**

The issue of weeds has the potential to impact dramatically on the nursery industry and gardening in general. NGIA has worked consistently to ensure the industry is taking a positive and constructive approach.

As a result of NGIA efforts, National Heritage Trust (NHT) funding was secured to fund an industry driven project on invasive garden plants. NGIA are also funding contributors to this project and are responsible for managing the project, which was carried out from March 2001 until March 2002. The aim has been to involve various government and community organisations to develop a coordinated approach on this complex issue.

In addition, NGIA has been involved in a variety of meeting involving the Weeds Science Society, Plant Health Australia, CRC for Weed Management, the NSW and Victorian Departments of Agriculture, Environment Australia, the National Weeds Strategy secretariat and numerous community groups.

### **Increased professionalism in the industry**

NGIA has a commitment to increasing professionalism within the industry, as is indicated in the industry strategic plan. The NGIA Board, CEO and IDM all spend a significant amount of time promoting professionalism and best practice, especially via the various accreditation schemes. The association has promoted accreditation with government at all levels, with the trade and the consumer.

The R&D program is underpinned by accreditation schemes at production, retail and staff levels. Accreditation is used as a vehicle for the implementation of many other HAL funded programs within the nursery industry. Some of these programs include:

- NY99001 Best practice for pesticide application in the nursery industry
- NY99006 Strategic planning, ongoing development and evaluation of Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme, Australia
- NY00027 Strategic planning, ongoing development and evaluation of Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme
- NY00028 Establishing a software and database program for the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme
- NY00029 Development of support materials for the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme
- NY00045 Industry awareness and customer evaluation of the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme

### **Industry communication**

NGIA has worked closely with HAL to ensure that all of industry is informed of the conduct and outcomes of the R&D program. The publications of the nursery papers and the inclusion of regular columns on the R&D program in Australian Nursery Manager provide information on the program to over 7,500 industry participants. The NGIA website provides comprehensive reporting on all aspects of the Horticulture Program with NGIA and this is maintained and regularly updated by NGIA.

Some of the relevant industry communication projects include:

- NY98020 Publication of "The Nursery Papers" in Australian Nursery Manager and onto NIAA Web
- HG01054 Application of knowledge and technology in the nursery and garden industry – national conference, Adelaide, February 2002

**NGIA CEO Consultative activities  
7 June 2001 to 20 December 2001**

June	6	Meeting with Paul Izbecki (HAL)
	12	Weed Project Steering Committee NGINA
	12	FFF - Epping
	13	Staff Meeting HAL - Meeting with Greg on AHT
	14	Plant Health Australia Consultation (Wentworth Hotel)
	14	Paul Izbecki
	15	CSIRO workshop on new approaches to R & D (North Ryde)
	15	FFF (NGIA)
	18	Work in Progress - Libby & Sarah
	21	Currently FFF Communication plan (Canberra with EA) Or Board Strategic planning meeting (Sydney)
	22	Board Strategic planning meeting (Sydney)
	25	IAC or Meeting in Canberra with EA/RSS
	26	Meeting with Sarah & Nick Nicholas on database/NGIA
	27	FFF (NGIA)
	29	Michael Brownlee (NGIA)
July	2	Paul Lewis on weeds/Surrey Hills
	4	David Cliffe IAC
	5	AHT/Staff in Lismore
	6	Meeting with Libby
	6	FFF (NGIA) Richard & Sarah
	25	Meeting with Martin Kneebone
	27	FFF (NGIA)
	30	Paul
August	7	Michelle Shannon Willoughby
	8	Michael & Jill (NGIA) Market Research
	10	Peter Knox (NGIA)
	14	Weeds (Ryde Council)
	15	PHA Teleconference (NGIA)
	16	FFF Launch Willoughby
	17	FFF (NGIA) ABC Radio Interview
	20	Meeting with Mark Thomas (Canberra)
	28	Hort Media Meeting (Maiden Theatre RBG)
	29	Market Intelligence Meeting (Lane Cove)
	31	AUSHA Meeting (University of Sydney)
September	3	Parks & Leisure Conference (Sydney)
	4	Parks & Leisure Conference (Sydney) or Hort. Aust. Council (Menzies Sydney)
	4	Teleconference of HAL on Accreditation
	5	HAL Industry Meeting or Parks & Leisure Conference (Sydney)
	10	Website Meeting (Lane Cove)
	11	Liquid Vision (Chatswood)
	19	HAL Board Meeting
October	2	AIPH Marketing Meeting
	3	Work in Progress with Sarah
	5	Meeting NGIA Website (HAL?)
	8	IAC (Sydney)
	9	IAC (Sydney)
	12	AusHort (Sydney)