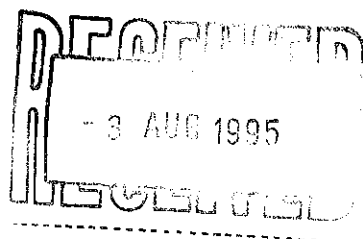


NURSERY INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF N.S.W. LIMITED



REPORT

'JOIN THE SEARCH' CONFERENCE'

**WOLLONGONG, N.S.W.
17-19 JUNE, 1993**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The following is a report on the Nursery Industry Association of N.S.W. Limited, State Convention 1993. With the Theme: "Join the Search", the conference was held on 17th-19th June, 1993 at the City Pacific Hotel, Wollongong.

The 3 day conference was organised by the Illawarra State Convention Committee consisting of:

Ms. Pat Tart, Conference Co-ordinator
Mr. Lance Carr, Mountain Range Nursery
540 Princes Highway,
WOONONA, N.S.W. 2517

Ms. Robyn Skene, Bettergrow,
5 Windsor Rd.,
VINEYARD, N.S.W. 2765

Miss Wendy Pitches Hazelbrook Wholesale Nursery,
18 William St.,
OAKS ESTATE, N.S.W. 2620

Mr. Bob Turner, Yard 'n' Garden,
78-80 Princes Highway,
SOUTH NOWRA, N.S.W. 2541

Mr. Gordon Koppman, Jervis Bay Wholesale Nursery,
P.O. Box 70,
HUSKISSON, N.S.W. 2540

Mrs. Jacki Koppman, AS ABOVE

The Conference was attended by approximately 100 delegates from the nursery industry and allied trades.

2.0 CONFERENCE AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aim of the conference was to address the issues summarised at the conclusion of the 1992 Conference at Valla Beach, Coffs Harbour.

3.0 CONFERENCE DETAILS

001 The Presenters

The Facilitator co-ordinating the program during the three days was Mr. David Kerr from Business Management Training Service Pty. Ltd, Coffs Harbour, with the following involved in presentations throughout the three days.

- * Mr. Steve Popple, Curator, Royal Botanic Gardens, Wollongong.
- * Mr. Kevin Parker, Parkers Camellias
- * Mr. Ross Bond, Bonds Nursery
- * Ms. Judy McMaugh, TAFE
- * Mr. Jolyon Burnett, Project Manager, H.R.D.C.
- * Mr. Geoff Lomman, N.S.W. AG.
- * Mr. Igor Loutkovsky Accountant, Richfields P/L Parramatta.
- * Mr. Neil Robertson, Australian Open Garden Scheme
- * D.D.B. Needham, A.H.C. Promotions Company
- * Mr. Ian Atkinson, N.S.W. AG
- * Mr. Lyall Howard, A.H.C.
- * Mr. Graham Ross, Horticultural Consultant.

002 THE PROGRAM

Working with the theme "Join the Search", day 1 encompassed:

1. Establishing the nursery industry's position in its ability to set standards and trends for the future.
2. A workshop addressing QUALITY SERVICE, with examination of all facets of service, including parking, layout, stock, merchandising and customer relations.
3. A workshop addressing customer service.
4. A Presentation on the concept of a 5 Star Rating System for Retail Nurseries.
5. The re-launch of Retail Training Scheme.

NIAN and TAFE had previously run a training scheme for retail nursery staff. This scheme aimed to enhance the skills of individual nursery staff. The scheme was re-launched to continue addressing the needs of the retail sector.

Day 2 examined the existing services available to the nursery industry so that they may be viewed more as assets that industry players can use to enhance their performance.

1. Allied Trades section provided a stimulating presentation on showcasing innovative products and services. This was followed by a workshop which explored the needs of the nursery proprietors in attendance, by brainstorming the potential for new products which can improve the industry's profitability.
2. The H.R.D.C. and N.S.W. AG representatives presented an informative precise of the collaborative work in research that has culminated as a result of the close working relationship between the two organisations.
3. The presentation by a prominent business consultant gave the delegates 'seven simple steps' which can be used to improve a business's profitability. The opportunity was made available by the consultant, to the delegates, to take advantage of his expertise in business management.
4. The promotion: "The Blooming Ideas" campaign, which was being established for the Nursery Industry via A.H.C., was presented by D.D.B. Needham. This promotion aims to increase the public's awareness of the advantages in discussing their gardening needs with the experts, i.e. nursery operators.

The outcome: We are "selling our expertise". This presentation ensured that delegates were familiar with the advantages of working with this concept.

5. A problem solving session led by the Facilitator, discussed methods by which the various industry sectors (allied trades, growers & retailers) can work together for the benefit of the industry as a whole.

Day 3

Two specific issues, i.e. water management and quality control were addressed.

1. N.S.W. AG have developed in association with the Nursery Industry, new techniques and technology which can provide reductions in water usage, nutrient run-off and overall production efficiency in approaches to water management practises.

These investigations have culminated into the production of a manual which specifically addresses irrigation and drainage needs of production nurseries.

2. The A.H.C. have initiated a program of quality control for the horticulture industry. A well presented video clarified the Corporation's involvement to date and gave promise of the nursery industry's future in this internationally renowned objective.

3. The quality control session was supplemented by the presentation and launch of the Nursery Industry Assoc. of N.S.W. (NIAN) new "Nursery Accreditation Scheme". The objective of this scheme is to set 'standards' in nursery production.

4.0 CONFERENCE SUMMARY

The conference Facilitator summarised the activities by clarifying

1. Where the industry is now.
2. The facilities/services available for potential improvement.
3. The direction for the future.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In 1992 the Conference in Valla Beach, Coffs Harbour, addressed the needs of the North Coast nursery industry.

The outcomes and direction provided the starting point for the issues and challenges to be addressed at the 1993 State "Join the Search" Conference. The outcomes from this conference would provide the catalyst to realise the necessity for establishing future directions for the nursery industry in N.S.W.

It was clearly evident from the outcomes of the 1993 conference that NIAN would need to initiate strategic plans to achieve the objectives of the nursery industry being the leader in the horticulture industry of the future.