

NURSERY

INDUSTRY REPORT 06 | 07

TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE

Throughout 2006 the nursery program has seen new initiatives undertaken to address many of the challenges being experienced by the industry. Broad industry statistics suggest a positive outlook for 2007 and opportunities for further development of the industry are being tackled by the program.

The spring marketing campaign took centre stage in 2006. It was the culmination of long hours committed to developing a campaign that met the pressures and challenges facing the industry head on.

The national print campaign targeted women aged 25 to 49, particularly

home buyers. It was designed to attract women into investing more into their garden with benefits aimed to flow into all sectors of the industry.

Key R&D initiatives included EcoHort™, the new and improved WaterWork course and the release of the Industry Environment Policy.

The World Environment Day used the theme 'Our environment, your backyard' to focus on 10 easy steps to enhancing the environment in backyards or gardens.

Training also took some large leaps into the 21st century with the campaign 'Why



gamble with your future – Get educated, it's a sure thing' and the 'Certified Nursery Professional' recognition scheme.

Given the success of these initiatives and the strategic investment platform set down for future investment in Research & Development and Marketing programs, there is a strong sense of purpose that the industry can further build on the work of 2006.

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ACCREDITATION AND SCHEMES PROMOTED NATIONALLY

In 2006, the NGIA has encouraged increased awareness, interaction and uptake of national industry projects and activities, particularly accreditation and recognition schemes, including the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme (AGCAS), Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) and Certified Nursery Professional (CNP).

Schemes promoting the benefits of gardens and gardening such as Wise About Water, Flora for Fauna, Kids Grow and World Environment Day have been provided with strong retail support.

The industry has been informed about and encouraged to participate in projects aimed at improving business practice and promoting industry image and products.

Key achievements targeted in 2006 included:

- Making the AGCAS manual more accessible.
- Ongoing communication.
- Launching the consumer website – www.lifeisagarden.com.au.
- Co-funding state AGCAS promotions.
- Starting a major re-branding and consumer awareness campaign for AGCAS.
- Promoting the benefits of NIASA accreditation.
- Developing a plan to sell the environmental credentials of purchases from NIASA accredited nurseries by promoting the voluntary EcoHort™ module.

- Developing generic web pages for NIASA businesses.
- Targeting specific brochures, point-of-sale and trade collateral.
- Major mailings to landscapers and builders and local governments.

The industry recognition program, CNP, sits comfortably with the two accreditation schemes. States have promotional material and achievable CNP target numbers that complement national campaigns to consumers and industry.

Project NY06015
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These projects have been facilitated by HAL in partnership with Nursery and Garden Industry Australia. Projects have been funded by the nursery levy and voluntary contributions from industry. The Australian Government provides matched funding for all HAL's R&D activities.

HIP AND TRENDY ADVERTISING HITS THE MARK

The first phase of the consumer marketing campaign, 'Life is a garden', was launched in August 2006. The campaign is designed to arrest the decline in the garden sector, particularly retail, by encouraging consumers to purchase plants and participate in gardening.

Consumer and trigger research strongly showed that greenlife, gardens and gardening are important in creating the space to enjoy life through their flexibility, openness, beauty and colour, and the opportunity to design, create and nurture.

The consumer advertising direction had to be new and exuberant in tone; hip, trendy and inspiring; stylish with a range of 'looks'; young in association; and involve new ideas, plants and colours.

'Life is a garden' was the brand developed to be used across a wide range of media, particularly lifestyle and non-traditional media.

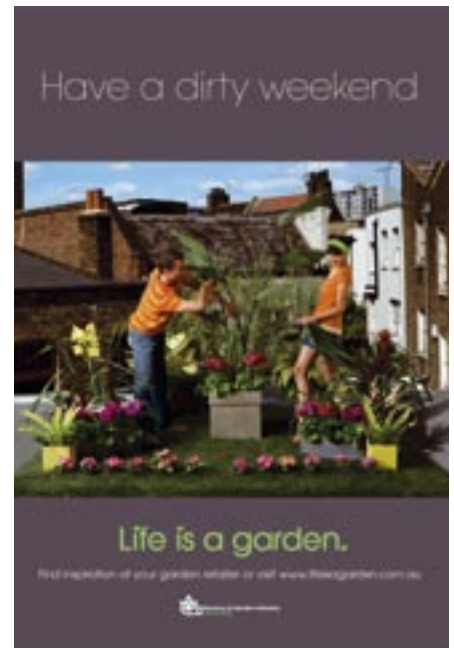
The primary target market of the initial campaign was women aged between 29 and 49. A national magazine campaign

was undertaken. It was cost effective for reaching the desired target market, could maximise the best reach frequency, and could accommodate a range of creative executions.

The 'Life is a garden' magazine campaign ran between August and November 2006 using six creative executions. Magazines used included *The Womens Weekly*, *Womens Day*, *Good Weekend*, *Sunday Magazine*, *New Idea* and *Take 5*. It was well supported by the nursery and garden industry who were offered access to all the print creative, a 15- and 30-second television commercial and a series of radio advertisements.

Industry initiatives ranged from competitions such as 'Win a Dirty Weekend' to giant roadside posters, catalogue covers, truck sides and in-store point-of-sale.

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'Life is a garden' advertising campaign

PR CAMPAIGN TARGETS LIFESTYLE MESSAGE

In 2006, lifestyle and general media were used to get positive garden messages to potential new gardeners, while also speaking to existing 'Green Thumbs'.

The aim of the consumer public relations (PR) campaign was to re-engage the lifestyle media in writing about the benefits of gardens and their importance in the Australian lifestyle. The campaign was launched in July in plenty of time for spring stories and to coincide with the launch of the 'Life is a garden' website at www.lifeisagarden.com.au

The strategy included working with garden experts such as Meredith Kirton and Brendan Moar as spokespeople to position gardens as funky and desirable to a younger audience.

Newspoll research was commissioned to illustrate the important role gardens play in the Australian lifestyle.

Some of the findings included:

- 89 per cent of all men and women said it was important to them to have garden

and plants at home and 65 per cent said this was very important.

- 48 per cent of all men and women said they want to spend much more time in the garden.
- Gardens are no longer the domain of the middle aged – 25 per cent of 25 to 34 year olds and almost a third of 35 to 49 year olds said they want to spend much more time in the garden.

Working with PR agency, Pulse Communications, the 'Life is a garden' campaign has reached an audience of 26.2 million through print and 3.2 million through broadcast.

The campaign also aims to build recognition of and to continue to grow the credibility of the industry and the association.

Project NY06020
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Australian Government Priorities for Rural Research and Development

As part of the Australian Government's commitment to rural research and development, horticulture industries can access matching Commonwealth funding through HAL for all research and development activities.

All R&D programs managed through HAL are driven by the strategic direction of horticulture industries and address the Australian Government's Priorities for Rural Research and Development. These Government priorities and a breakdown of the number of projects and the value of projects that address each priority are available in HAL's annual report. This can be accessed at www.horticulture.com.au.

WATER EFFICIENT: BUT SCOPE FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

The nursery and garden industry, like other horticulture industries, requires access to adequate, reliable and secure water supplies. With increasing competition among water users and the influence of dry climatic conditions, it is important the industry is promoted as a responsible and efficient water user.

The *National Water Program 1 – Industry water use and performance benchmarking* project included a 'nursery water audit', to provide information to demonstrate the industry's efficient water use and management practices.

The study provides a benchmark against which businesses can measure their water use and encourages implementing new or improved water management practices.

Information and data has been collected and analysed from a range of sources including Water Authority Data.

A national survey of businesses was conducted with 245 production nurseries and 82 retail nurseries participating. A total of 76 surveys or 24 per cent of the sample were completed online, the majority were returned by mail.



Flood floor irrigation system – Egan Plant Production WA



Trough irrigation system

It is important to also identify more qualitative messages behind the quantitative data and the case studies provide an on-site audit and in-depth analysis of the issues behind actions and decisions taken by nursery businesses.

Key findings of the survey show:

- Median annual water use for production nurseries is about 7.7ML/ha, while for retail nurseries the figure is higher at 13.1ML/ha.
- Under watering can be costly relative to over watering – for retail nurseries production losses may be 30 times greater than the relative cost of water, and six times greater than water costs for production nurseries.
- More than half of production nurseries and 17 per cent of retail nurseries already recycle water, with a third planning to implement or upgrade recycling systems.
- Most nurseries view water management as a medium to high priority. 94 per cent of production and 90 per cent of retail nurseries have already used a range of initiatives to improve water use efficiency.

The audit provides information to demonstrate that water efficient technology and practices have been widely adopted across the nursery industry. There remains considerable scope for improved water use efficiency (and water management) and the industry is committed to, and will continue to address the issue.

Project NY05513

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PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE WATER USE

The aim of the Water Program 2 is to achieve ongoing improvements in industry best practice water use and management. It is also hoped it will improve the awareness and understanding of responsible water use practices by industry, consumers, governments and the wider community.

The current national focus on water means as an industry, there is a high focus on the problems water shortages represent to all horticultural sectors.



John Marshall at irrigation best practice day

The key components of the *Water Program 2 – Developing and promoting industry best practice water use for production and retail nurseries* project include the need to demonstrate a capacity for achieving improvements in water use efficiency and environmental performance across all sectors.

The nursery and garden industry must be proactive in promoting responsible water use practices in gardens to consumers and to contribute positive water conservation messages to the community.

This project aims to ensure that the nursery and garden industry is recognised as a responsible water manager and to enhance existing industry programs to facilitate the adoption of best practice water use and management.

A National Water Policy has been developed and embraced by the nursery and garden industry.

The 'Wise About Water' and other programs all focus on reinforcing the industry position as outlined in the policy paper.

Project NY05503

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KIDSGROW: MAKING THE GRADE

The concern about a trend away from gardening and the need to ensure the future of the gardening industry has led to the development of the KidsGrow initiative.

It encourages schools to get kids gardening and having positive experiences with plants in order to build lifelong gardening habits.

The key outcome of the KidsGrow Initiative for 2005/06 was the development of schools-focused resources to complete the KidsGrow tool kit, which will help create beneficial interaction between schools and local garden centres/retail nurseries.

This, as well as the initial phase of distribution to 165 self-selected garden retailers, has been successfully completed.

Linking gardening with a national action plan in schools – the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative – legitimises gardening within the school curriculum. Schools are developing plans to maintain and develop their grounds through the curriculum and environmental management plans.

The KidsGrow school resources provide practical learning tools to make gardening an ongoing learning activity in primary schools. The KidsGrow approach encourages local partnerships between

garden and horticultural experts (retailers and TAFE's) and local schools.

The tool kit gives retailers a wealth of resources for schools such as practical themed garden plans, learning opportunities and tips and suggestions as well as ideas on building business opportunities and goodwill in the local community.

The tool kit provides businesses with ways to develop a potential new customer base, resources to encourage schools to get kids gardening and answers to gardening enquiries from schools.

It also provides ideas for marketing products and services to schools, opportunities to raise business profile and the means to promote themselves as garden experts.

A KidsGrow garden skills workshop will be finalised in 2007. It will be offered to TAFE's enabling them to provide school teachers with the practical garden know-how to make the KidsGrow themed gardens a reality in their school grounds.

Feedback from the schools sector and garden industry suggests strong support for the KidsGrow initiative, but more support is needed to ensure its uptake and use by retailers and schools.



A student demonstrates 'potting up' at her local nursery in Batemans Bay, NSW

Project NY05502

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INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND ACCREDITATION MOVES FORWARD

The industry's accreditation and award schemes are important mechanisms for rewarding and recognising operators who are leading the industry in terms of best business practices.

The two accreditation schemes administered by the NGIA are the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme (AGCAS) and the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme (NIASA).

Some of the major outcomes for AGCAS include the revision of the AGCAS manual, the drafting of voluntary environmental modules to be included in the manual and its promotion as an important tool regardless of commitment to accreditation.

There was also a review of the AGCAS criteria to refocus on business outcomes relevant to consumers. The project included the on-going process of

repositioning AGCAS to provide a marketing advantage for accredited garden centres.

A major outcome for NIASA was the production of the voluntary module EcoHort™ (Environmental Management Systems in production nurseries).

Other outcomes include the instigation of research to indicate NIASA market share and the management of co-operative funding applications to support state 'coal face' initiatives.

An industry-wide review of the Nursery and Garden Industry Awards also provided a strategic link between the outcomes of accreditation and industry awards.

Project NY06018

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2006 Conference – Retail Tour Newtown Station Nursery Tasmania – AGC sign

INDUSTRY TAKES LEAD ON ENVIRONMENT

The aim of the *environmental & technical policy and extension* project is to develop policies and strategies to position the industry as the community's leader on relevant environmental issues.

The inclusion of this aim as an objective in the Industry Strategic Plan 2006/08 reflects how important environmental issues have become for the industry.

Significantly, the strategy emphasises the need to play a leadership role on relevant environmental issues, not only by becoming proactive, but actually setting the agenda.

As environmental issues have emerged as major threats, and at times opportunities to the industry, the annual investment plan has created positions and projects dealing with each issue in turn.

Environmental issues are always interconnected and the NGIA recognises the need to be more holistic in the way it manages issues and leads the debate. This is being achieved in a number of ways.

An Environmental Policy Manager was appointed in 2006, not only to develop policy but to also build relationships across the environmental community. This will enable an early alert of emerging issues and ensure the industry remains proactive with issues management.

An Industry Environmental Committee

is also being appointed to ensure focus has been established on the key issues impacting on the sustainability of the industry.

For environmental management systems (EMS), the structured EMS (EcoHort™) is being incorporated into the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) criteria.

For retailers there will be a less structured, but effective approach that links in a modular way the management of water, weeds and Flora for Fauna into the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme (AGCAS) system.

To ensure greater market acceptance and involvement with issues under this project, the Industry Development Officers (IDOs) have been assigned 'project leader' status for key issues such as Invasive Plants, EcoHort™, Bio-security and HACCP, Quarantine, Water and Pesticides. This will ensure a national focus and that the industry's technical credibility is enhanced.

An Environmental Policy and Crisis Management Plan relevant to the various industry sectors is also being developed.

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REPACKAGED IPM WORKSHOPS TO MEET NEED

The National Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Workshops are undergoing review in 2007.

The review, which is the result of feedback from participants and facilitators of the workshops, will mean they will be 'repackaged' to meet the varying skill levels within industry.

The plan is to have numerous modules catering for the various levels of people who are involved in ongoing pest and disease management within the industry from 'New Entrants' and 'Experienced' to 'Decision Makers'.

These modules will build on each other and

will ensure the program is relevant to the development of other industry programs.

In the recently completed Nursery Industry Skills Study, topics related to pest and disease management were identified within the 'Top Five' skill priorities now and in the future.

The current repackaging exercise will be completed by March 2007, with new courses available shortly afterwards.

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TAKING A NATIONAL APPROACH TO TRAINING & RECOGNITION

The 2006/07 training and recognition strategy aims to ensure future activities remain cost-effective, less resource-intensive and deliver the learning outcomes required by industry to prosper in a competitive environment.

The project takes a national approach to training and development. Effective skill development requires a strong framework, based around identified industry training needs.

The Certified Nursery Professional (CNP) program is a significant strategic tool for industry providing a mechanism which focuses on professionalism, skill, ability and credibility.

CNP acknowledges members' commitment to improving their skills and enriching professional lives. It also helps to better serve and meet the needs of customers and provides the public with assurance that staff have the knowledge and skills to perform the services they promote.

This project focused on delivering the following outcomes:

- Relevant and effective industry input into the national training package used by registered training providers such as TAFE.
- Establishment of a national curriculum framework providing training based on the 2005/06 training needs study.
- Increased participation of industry in relevant, affordable training.
- Identification and implementation of a range of training activities including workshops, field days, self-paced learning packages and on-line learning strategies.
- Development of six new training modules a year including training reference materials and learner manuals.
- Continuous improvement of an effective system for recognition of industry operators and employees.

Project NY06019
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ACROSS INDUSTRY PROGRAM 2006/07

Project No	Title	Project Start	Project Completion	Organisation	Contact
Outcome 1: Enhance the efficiency, transparency, responsiveness and integrity of the supply chain for the total industry to provide clear market signals					
AH04006	Horticulture gene technology communication	2004/05	2006/07	Agrifood Awareness Australia Limited	Paula Fitzgerald 02 6273 9535
AH04007	Pesticide regulation coordinator	2004/05	2009/10	AKC Consulting Pty Ltd	Kevin Bodnaruk 02 9688 0444
AH04009	Coordination of minor use permits for horticulture	2004/05	2007/08	AgAware Consulting Pty Ltd	Peter Dal Santo 03 5439 5916
AH04035	Minor use coordination HAL management costs	2004/05	2009/10	Horticulture Australia Limited	Brad Wells 02 8295 2300
AH05018	Review of successful consumer satisfaction projects	2005/06	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Sarah Pennell 02 8295 2300
AH06004	Horticulture Code of Conduct – industry support package	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Council	Kris Newton 02 6273 9600
AH06007	Primary production and processing standards	2006/07	2007/08	Horticulture Australia Limited	Richard Bennett 03 5825 3753
AH06012	Evaluation strategies for varieties derived from Australian breeding projects or imported varieties	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Marian Sheehan 02 8295 2300
AH06013	Horticulture for the consumer CRC – Business Plan	2006/07	2006/07	Australian Institute for Commercialisation Ltd	John Kapeleris 1300 364 739
Outcome 2: Maximise the health benefits of horticultural products in the eyes of consumers, influencers and government					
AH06008	Human nutrition needs for horticultural industries allocation	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Sarah Pennell 02 8295 2300
AH06010	Promoting the health advantages of fruit and vegetables to increase their consumption – Phase 2	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Chris Rowley 02 8901 0329
Outcome 3: Position horticulture to compete in a globalised environment					
AH05003	Coordination of market access for horticulture products	2005/06	2006/07	Stephen Winter & Associates Pty Ltd	Stephen Winter 03 9832 0787
AH05024	Fruit fly workshop	2005/06	2005/06	Horticulture Australia Limited	Brad Wells 02 8295 2300
AH05034	Market access support program	2005/06	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Kim James 08 6389 1407
AH06006	Establishment of a pesticide residue task force	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Brad Wells 02 8295 2300
AH06014	Codex attendance 06/07	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Richard Bennett 03 5825 3753
Outcome 4: Achieve long-term viability and sustainability for Australian horticulture					
AH06003	Horticulture for Tomorrow – Phase II	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Alison Turnbull 02 8295 2300
AH06002	IMC HISP Allocation	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	John Webster 02 8295 2300
AH06009	Horticulture Water Initiative – Phase 3	2006/07	2006/07	RMCG	Anne-Maree Boland 1300 306 043
AH06011	Implementing a needs based industry development program	2006/07	2006/07	Richard de Vos	Richard de Vos 02 9973 4507
AH06015	Cooperative venture for capacity building (CVCB) membership fees	2006/07	2007/08	Horticulture Australia Limited	Richard Stephens 02 8295 2300
AH06016	Human capability – building strategy bench-marking horticulture's labour and skills needs	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Council	Kris Newton 02 6273 9600
AH06019	Australian horticulture's response to climate change and climate variability	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Alison Turnbull 02 8295 2300
AH06100	Horticulture data audit	2006/07	2006/07	AEC Group Limited	Ashley Page 07 3831 0577
AH06101	Horticulture data audit associated costs	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Andrew Collins 02 8295 2300
AH06102	Horticulture data audit data collection	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Andrew Collins 02 8295 2300

ACROSS INDUSTRY PROGRAM 2006/07

Project No	Title	Project Start	Project Completion	Organisation	Contact
AUSHORT					
AH01015	Key genes for horticultural markets	2001/02	2006/07	CSIRO Plant Industry	Steve Swain 03 5051 3159
AH03002	Area wide management of fruit fly – Central Burnett	2003/04	2006/07	QLD Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries	Annicc Lloyd 07 3896 9366
OTHER					
AH06017	Across industry administration costs	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	John Tyas 07 3394 8220
AH06018	Across industry communications plan	2006/07	2006/07	Horticulture Australia Limited	John Tyas 07 3394 8220

NURSERY PROGRAM 2006/07

Project No	Title	Project Start	Project Completion	Organisation	Contact	Email
HG03070	Development and implementation of industry biosecurity plans	03-Sept-04	30-June-07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Kim James 02 8295 2300	kim.james@horticulture.com.au
NY06021	Greening the great indoors for human health and well-being	01-Jul-06	24-Oct-09	National Interior Plantscape Association	Christine Johnson 07 3888 7300	chris@containerconnection.com.au
NY06501	Consumer marketing program	01-Aug-06	01-Feb-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Jenny Lambert 02 9876 5200	jenny.lambert@ngia.com.au
NY06502	Industry marketing/extension projects	01-Jul-06	01-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Alison Morris 02 9876 5200	alison.morris@ngia.com.au
NY06503	KidsGrow	01-Jan-07	01-Aug-07	Woodrow Consulting	Shelley Woodrow 03 9636 0337	shelley.woodrow@ngia.com.au
NY06013	Minor chemicals use	01-Oct-06	01-Aug-07	Horticulture Australia Limited	Brad Wells 02 8295 2300	brad.wells@horticulture.com.au
NY06001	Accreditation for national interior plantscapers	01-Oct-06	01-Aug-07	Queensland Association of Landscape Industries	Jim Vaughn 07 3286 1746	info@qwali.asn.au
NY06018	Industry development & accreditation	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Alison Morris 02 9876 5200	alison.morris@ngia.com.au
NY06019	Training & recognition	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Candice McNamara 02 9876 5200	candice.mcnamara@ngia.com.au
NY06019	Training & recognition – state based workshops	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Candice McNamara 02 9876 5200	candice.mcnamara@ngia.com.au
NY06009	Consumer market research	01-Aug-06	01-Feb-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Jenny Lambert 02 9876 5200	jenny.lambert@ngia.com.au
NY06015	Industry marketing state extension project	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Alison Morris 02 9876 5200	alison.morris@ngia.com.au
NY06014	Environmental policy	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Robert Prince 02 9876 5200	robert.prince@ngia.com.au
NY06020	Communication & PR	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Tracey Wigg 02 9876 5200	tracey.wigg@ngia.com.au
NY06022	Market monitor	01-Oct-06	30-Nov-07	RetailWorks	Martin Kneebone 03 9852 8733	mkneebone@retailworks.com.au
NY06025	Industry development officers	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-09	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Jenny Lambert 02 9876 5200	jenny.lambert@ngia.com.au
NY069PA	National Skills Development Management	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Candice McNamara 02 9876 5200	candice.mcnamara@ngia.com.au
NY069PA	National Environmental Management	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Robert Prince 02 9876 5200	robert.prince@ngia.com.au
NY069PA	National Business Development and Marketing Manager	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Alison Morris 02 9876 5200	alison.morris@ngia.com.au
NY069PA	National Communications and PR Management	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Tracey Wigg 02 9876 5200	tracey.wigg@ngia.com.au
NY69PA	DO professional development & conference travel	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Jenny Lambert 02 9876 5200	jenny.lambert@ngia.com.au
NY069PA	Board training & state strategic planning	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Jenny Lambert 02 9876 5200	jenny.lambert@ngia.com.au
NY069PA	Levy basis structure & review & strategic planning	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Jenny Lambert 02 9876 5200	jenny.lambert@ngia.com.au
NY069PA	NGI communications	01-Jul-06	30-Aug-07	Nursery & Garden Industry Australia	Tracey Wigg 02 9876 5200	tracey.wigg@ngia.com.au

BUILDING AWARENESS AND USE OF B2B E-COMMERCE

Phase one of the *Business to business (B2B)* e-commerce project, the information gathering and strategy development phase, has been completed. B2B e-commerce relates to the electronic exchange of documents, such as purchase orders and invoices, between businesses.

The aim of phase one was to provide stakeholders with accurate industry information on awareness and implementation of electronic trading.

This project is based on a supply chain which includes propagators, growers/producers/wholesalers/production nurseries and retailers (including independent garden centres, corporate hardware stores, corporate retailers and franchise businesses).

An industry survey containing 31 questions

was conducted in August/September 2006. It was distributed by email/post to 1407 organisations nationwide with 212 responses (15.1 per cent) received.

Key findings from the survey include:

- 99 per cent of businesses have at least one computer, 58 per cent have networked computers. 95 per cent have internet access and 82 per cent are running Windows XP.
- Computers are used mostly for email, office accounting (46 per cent use MYOB) and internet banking.
- Most maintain price/product information (81 per cent) and inventory/availability information (63 per cent) on the computer.
- There is low use of electronic standards for identifying products (i.e. bar code

numbers) in purchase orders/invoices with most using plant names/descriptions and low use of bar codes on products, and/or scanning.

- Most do not have in-house information technology (IT) support and outsource IT functions as required (e.g. computer maintenance).
- 68 per cent of respondents said they would be upgrading their computer systems within the next year.
- 58 per cent of respondents said that lack of knowledge/understanding was a barrier to them implementing e-trading.
- 53 per cent recognised they needed training in the basics of B2B e-commerce, with interest in the areas of product identification, bar coding and EDI.

These results will be used in phase two of the project, which is to develop an awareness program developed specifically for the industry to be delivered in March/April 2007.

Project NY05025

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WEB-BASED MARKETING TOOL NOW AVAILABLE

Nursery owners can now access an exciting new website that will equip them with successful marketing strategies for their businesses.

The website features promotional tools, such as frequent flyer schemes, that nursery owners can adapt to appeal to their own customers.

Details on the different market segments from 'Green Thumbs' through to 'Bargain Hunters' are available on the website. It provides an understanding of consumer gardening habits including how much they spend, the sorts of products they like and which proportion of the community falls into which category.

The 'My Market' section also provides demographic information, complementary marketing strategies and contact details for the network of nursery and garden industry business development officers.

The 'Frequently Asked Questions' page provides users with quick, simple advice and answers to common questions.

This initiative, previously known as Market Intelligence Reports, will strengthen the industry by facilitating change in business culture and improving current business practice.



'My Market' – a new web-based marketing tool

Individual customised market information reports allow owners and managers to tailor their marketing efforts.

While the past year has been challenging, initiatives such as 'My Market' will help the nursery and garden industry to focus on the future.

'My Market' is available at www.mymarket.com.au.

Project NY05509

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