



Greenlife Industry Australia

# YOUR LEVY @ WORK

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Wednesday, 30 November 2022**

## **New era of biosecurity and sustainable plant production support for Australia's nursery industry**

Greenlife Industry Australia (GIA) has appointed two new Extension Officers, bringing in a new era of biosecurity, plant protection and sustainable production support for Australia's \$2.8 billion nursery industry in 2023.

Funded by Hort Innovation under the 'National biosecurity and sustainable plant production program' (NY20001), the nationally mobilised network of Extension Officers engages with production nurseries now in every Australian state or territory to improve plant protection protocols and production outcomes across the country.

Facing extreme challenges from emerging, exotic, and endemic plant pests to climate change, technology improvements and changing regulations, it's critical that production nurseries have guidance and support to stay ahead and mitigate productivity and profitability risk.

Led by John McDonald, GIA's National Biosecurity Manager, these experts in plant production and biosecurity have recently undergone a name change from Plant Protection Officers to Extension Officers, in acknowledgement of their greater remit to not only keep industry at the forefront of plant protection and biosecurity but also sustainable plant production systems and technologies.

John McDonald said the role of Extension Officers is to work alongside industry to enhance plant protection, biosecurity, and sustainable cropping systems, whilst maintaining and often enhancing productivity and profitability.

"The team provides on-site support for implementation of key plant protection, biosecurity, and production sustainability programs under the Australian Plant Production Standard (APPS), such as the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA), EcoHort and BioSecure HACCP program manuals," Mr McDonald said.

"Each grower's journey towards best management practice looks different, faced with challenges unique to their region, crops, and production type.

"Our role is to help growers get the information that they need, to effectively and sustainably enhance their plant production procedures through the implementation of best management practices, and, helping guide them through the adoption and implementation processes.

"Broadening the remit of the roles, we are glad to be bringing on new members of the team, having welcomed both Colin Hunt, who is servicing the New South Wales and northern Victoria region, and Celeste Cook, our APPS Administrator and the Extension Officer for Tasmania and South Australia, to the team over recent months."

Established in 2021, Extension Officers have helped businesses effectively respond to plant pests and diseases, wade through extensive challenges and response protocols from a changing climate, establish more sustainable operations, and mitigate productivity and profitability risks.

**Hort  
Innovation**  
Strategic levy investment

**NURSERY  
FUND**

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit [horticulture.com.au](http://horticulture.com.au)



Greenlife Industry Australia

# YOUR LEVY @ WORK

Across 2022, the team of Extension Officers completed over 1,200 grower visits across Australia, increased grower access to the Pest ID Tool by 575 users, wrote 20 technical papers offering best-practice grower advice, and delivered 232 Mini Technical Skills Courses to 1,276 participants.

“Representing the frontline of biosecurity, plant protection and sustainable plant production, there are now five Extension Officers across the country, providing on-the-ground support to industry.

“With a larger team, their work will go further in increasing the reach of best-practice innovation and adoption by growers, to ensure that industry is able to continue sustainably producing healthy stock, so communities are equipped to adapt to climate change risks, access plant-based foods and protect the livelihood of millions of Australians,” Mr McDonald said.

Any grower who is looking to improve their own plant production processes, should head to the APPS website (<https://nurseryproductionfms.com.au>) today or contact the GIA Extension Officer in your area:

- Barry Naylor (QLD/Northern NSW) [Barry.Naylor@greenlifeindustry.com.au](mailto:Barry.Naylor@greenlifeindustry.com.au)
- Colin Hunt (NSW/Northern VIC) [Colin.Hunt@greenlifeindustry.com.au](mailto:Colin.Hunt@greenlifeindustry.com.au)
- Kimberley Thomas (VIC/SA) [Kimberley.Thomas@greenlifeindustry.com.au](mailto:Kimberley.Thomas@greenlifeindustry.com.au)
- Steve Blyth (WA/NT) [Steve.Blyth@greenlifeindustry.com.au](mailto:Steve.Blyth@greenlifeindustry.com.au)
- Celeste Cook (TAS/SA) [Celeste.Cook@greenlifeindustry.com.au](mailto:Celeste.Cook@greenlifeindustry.com.au)
- John McDonald (National Biosecurity Manager) [John.Mcdonald@greenlifeindustry.com.au](mailto:John.Mcdonald@greenlifeindustry.com.au)

*The ‘National biosecurity and sustainable plant production program’ (NY20001) project is funded by Hort Innovation using nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.*

**ENDS**