

INTRODUCTION

On February 16th 2021, APCO and GIA hosted a follow up working group meeting, to update the Sustainable Packaging in Horticulture (SPIH) Working Group members on progress with the National Polypropylene Plant Packaging Recycling Program and seek feedback on the next steps.

WORKSHOP AGENDA

The session was convened with three key objectives:

1. PoPPr Program Update
2. Stakeholder Mapping Review
3. New Working Group ideas

Workshop session slides can be [downloaded here](#)

SESSION REVIEW

1. POPPR PROGRAM UPDATE

GIA UPDATE

Peter Vaughan provided a GIA update, in the wake of the first GIA Board meeting for 2021, held in January. The GIA Board reiterated its commitment to the sustainability agenda, specifically in production, environment and demand, particularly given the increase in demand over the most recent 12-month period. The PoPPr Program underpins GIA's approach to plant packaging sustainability, waste recovery and reuse of the recovered material within the industry, with plastic usage forecast to increase in volume across the sector, reflected in the 6% annual industry growth rate, despite economic challenges in the latest financial year, equating to approximately 2.2bn plants sold and a sector value of \$2.6bn.

The GIA Board has acknowledged the need to support industry and communicate with the broader stakeholder group to drive engagement and maintain momentum in development of the PoPPr Program. The Sustainable Packaging in Horticulture Working Group meetings form an important part of a broader engagement and communications strategy and provide an on-going forum to provide input and feedback across the three stages of the project. On-going industry participation in the Working Group will enable the product stewardship expertise to coalesce industry feedback on design and management of the program to ensure the practicality, cost effectiveness and logistically efficiency required to drive a successful scheme.

INTRODUCTIONS

Following on from transfer of the PoPPr Program project to the ANZPAC Plastics Pact team, Jayne then introduced the two new team members who will be responsible for delivery of the project within APCO.

Helen Millicer – ANZPAC Plastics Pact Program Manager

Helen has worked extensively with APCO in a consultancy capacity in recent years, in addition to working in product stewardship and plastics in a range of professional contexts, bringing a rich background to APCO and the PoPPr Program.

Helen outlined the alignment of the PoPPr Program with a second Product Stewardship initiative, relating to the recovery and recycling of vehicle oil bottles, for which APCO also received funding alongside the PoPPr Program. The ANZPAC Plastics Pact, with its focus on delivering action on plastics, will be responsible for both projects, leveraging knowledge and experience to ensure a highly refined approach to project delivery and to meeting the administrative obligations set out in the Commonwealth Government Funding Agreement.

Helen reflected that due diligence on scheme design is a vital part of the process, reflecting the activities outlined in the first stage of the project plan. Helen's professional experience with horticulture provides a strong foundation for working with the industry and a comprehensive project handover will enable Helen to maintain the momentum already built.

Matilda Gable – ANZPAC Plastics Pact Program Coordinator

Having worked with sustainability focused organisations, including B-Corp Certified Good Day Girl, Matilda joined APCO in 2020 working directly with APCO members as Member Development Officer, before being moved to the new ANZPAC Plastics Pact team late last year. Matilda will be taking charge of the administrative elements of the project, and will be communicating directly with the Working Group to enable that ongoing participation and input throughout.

STAGE 1 – BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

January 2021 - Request for Proposals developed by GIA and APCO based on project plan developed by the Working Group during the funding submission process.

February 2021 – 5 consultancies targeted for submission:

- MRA Consulting
- The Activ Group
- Anne Prince Consulting
- Sustainable Resource Use
- Rawtek SA

Two proposals were received from MRA Consulting and Sustainable Resource Use and at the time of the workshop, were under review for final selection.

Next Steps, upon confirmation of consultancy:

- Inception meeting to clarify project scope, roles, stakeholders, provide and brief on background materials and work already undertaken through the Working Group during 2020.
- Desktop review to supplement research previously collated through the Working Group
- Refinement of a target stakeholder consultation list, drawing the stakeholder mapping work done by the working group members during the 2020/2021 summer.

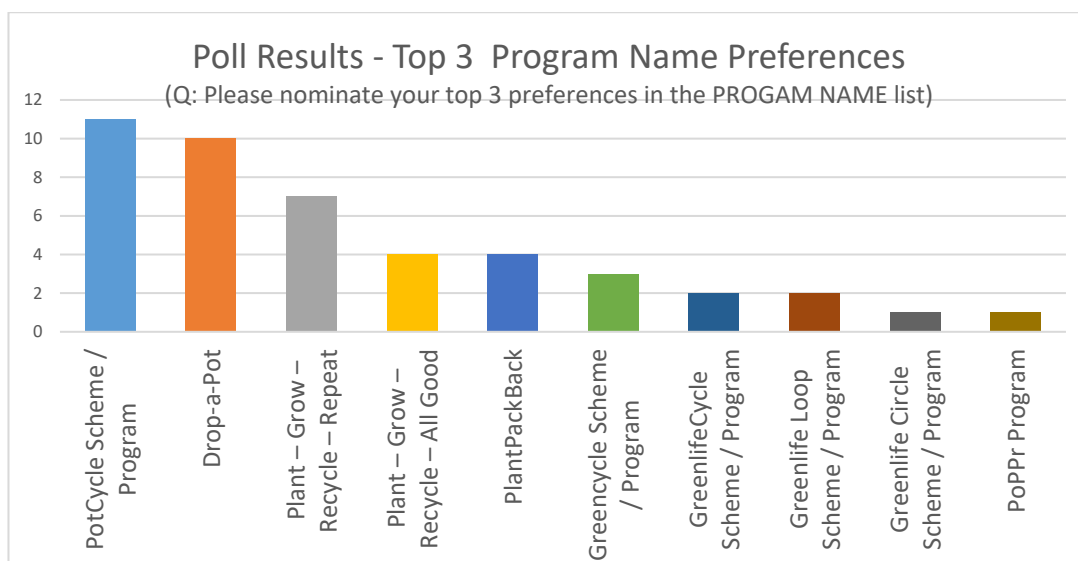
- Stakeholder engagement / interviews to support the articulation of the Business Case for the PoPPr Program
- Business Case Drafts for review / refinement / final sign off.

Upon receipt of the Business Case first draft, the project team will review and evaluate the engagement of consultancy resource to commence preparation for Stage 2 – Scheme Design, to be undertaken early in Fin Yr 2021/22, as per the Working Group’s project plan.

It was pointed out during discussion, that the selected consultancy must ensure that the local nuance of the Australian marketplace is captured and contextualised against international examples, rather than attempting to apply an external model without that consideration in mind. This was addressed through the selection of consultancies that were invited to submit proposals, all of which offer extensive local experience around the various product stewardship models currently operating in Australia. That experience affords a high degree of local understanding into which international experience can be applied and adapted, and was further supplemented by the fact that the received proposals both included project team members who have owned and operated nurseries in Australia, providing a strong industry-based knowledge to the project.

PROGRAM NAME

A number of program names were suggested at the November workshop. To gauge support for the suggested names, a poll was conducted during the session, seeking the Group’s preferences. The following highlights that ‘PotCycle Scheme / Program’, ‘Drop-a-Pot’ and ‘Plant-Grow-Recycle-Repeat’ were the top 3 preferences.



These three names will be provided to the selected consultancy for testing during the stakeholder interview process.

2. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

After a brief review of the work already undertaken around the packaging value chain mapping and stakeholder identification, the group revisited the consolidated feedback received from the summer homework exercise.

Further work was done to flesh out the full stakeholder map, reviewing and adjusting the participant list at each stage of the value chain. A rich discussion among the Working Group produced the resulting list included as Appendix A to this report. This list will be supplied to the selected consultant, for refinement in support of

stakeholder consultation activities and use as a wider engagement list for engagement, promotion and participation in the scheme design and implementation stages of the project.

A need to focus on the supply of recovered material to the horticultural sector was identified as a key primary focus of the stakeholder engagement process, with any material supplementary to industry demand playing a secondary role. It is essential that the material collected through the scheme should be first going to supply the needs of the horticultural industry to enable the industry closed loop to evolve as a key output of the scheme development.

GIA will also review distributor lists for further addition to this stakeholder map and provide relevant information to the Working Group team.

3. OTHER WORKING GROUP PROJECT IDEAS...

Some other ideas were discussed, to continue the broader agenda for the Working Group.

Soft Plastics recycling and the potential for labelling of horticultural media bags under the Australasian Recycling Label (arl.org.au) was discussed. This comes after the appearance of labelling around soft plastics recycling through the RedCycle Program by media supply brand owners.

Concerns were raised around the capacity of the Working Group to engage in further activity beyond the requirements of the PoPPr Program. It was agreed that the group would focus on the PoPPr Program and engage in incidental work complementary to that program. An example was proposed around industry engagement on single-use and problematic plant packaging materials such as Polystyrene, which is ear-marked for phase out in the coming years.

Such complementary activities support the work to drive a circular economy for Polypropylene packaging in horticulture by shifting industry towards material standardisation around Polypropylene, but also align with the National Packaging targets, in particular the phase out of problematic and unnecessary single use packaging, and the National Plastics Plan objectives to eliminate problematic materials.

NEXT STEPS:

- **PoPPR Program**
 - Project consultant to be finalised
 - Project Inception meeting – STAGE 1: Business Case Development
 - Stakeholder Consultation to commence
- **Other Working Group Project Ideas**
 - APCO / GIA to evaluate / identify potential aligned projects to support the PoPPr Program development
- **Next workshop** date to be confirmed – the ANZPAC team will be in touch soon. Should you have any questions, comments or further feedback on the session, please contact:

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