

Nursery Papers

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Part of the Plan

The Development Officer network of the nursery and garden industry is an effective tool in the implementation of the industry National Strategic Plan.

Our well qualified and experienced Development Officers work with retailers, wholesalers and growers to help build better businesses, move towards accreditation and in turn promote our industry – all major objectives of the Plan.

These development officers are employed by the state Nursery & Garden Industry associations to provide independent advice and support for a variety of state and national initiatives, including best management practices, accreditation, training and promotion.

• Your Levy at Work •

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Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia



Know-how for Horticulture™

Development Officers build better businesses

In the early 1990s the first industry Development Officers began on a part-time basis, focussing on producers and growers to promote and implement the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme, Australia (NIASA).

The network has now grown to 12 mainly full-time positions working with production nurseries, growing media suppliers and garden centres/retail nurseries. Coordinating the network is National Industry Development Manager, Warwick Scherf.

Garden Centre Development Officers (GCDOs) focus on retailers, assisting in marketing programs and implementing the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme (AGCAS).

Nursery Industry Development Officers (NIDOs) focus on growers, wholesalers and growing media producers. NIDOs drive the successful NIASA program, using it as a tool to demonstrate best management practices within the industry.

As Development Officers are employed by the state Nursery & Garden Industry associations (NGIs), they are able to focus on local or state needs and initiate projects that particularly help the industry in their state. This includes training, industry representation, working with industry groups and acting as a mentor for individual businesses.

As part of a national network, they are able to benefit from ideas and expertise from other states and participate in national initiatives which are cost effective and meet the industry's overall needs.

Some key national initiatives used and/or promoted by Development Officers include:

- Accreditation, both NIASA and AGCAS;
- Better business management programs including benchmarking, occupational health & safety, skills development and environmental best management practices;
- The 'Wise about Water' program, introduced in spring 2004 to educate consumers about responsible water use in the garden;
- Industry training events such as Integrated Pest & Disease Management (IPM);
- Market Monitor and other industry statistics and consumer behaviour studies;
- Professional recognition through the Certified Nursery Professional program (CNP).



Angela Monks, Tasmania Nursery Industry Development Officer, examines plants with Jerry Holder from Woodlea Nursery.

Garden Centre Development Officers (GCDOs)

Victoria – Alan Hollensen

(Dip art, Grad dip Ed, Grad dip Mgt, Grad Cert Prof Writ)

Following the success of 'Accreditation Avenue' at the Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show (MIFGS), Alan's most recent project has been the 'You can water your Garden' program in Victoria.

It is the biggest investment the industry has made in such a promotion in Victoria. It is receiving strong media support and having a dramatic reach out into the community.

Apart from this project, Alan provides retailers with valuable marketing and promotional information as well as implementing national initiatives.

NSW & ACT – Rudi Fabian

As the former owner/manager of Erina Gardenworld on NSW's Central Coast, Rudi has extensive experience in running a retail nursery.

Rudi has helped many businesses through the state and territory to achieve

AGCAS accreditation. He has increased public awareness of AGCAS and the industry in general through participation at several garden shows in Sydney and regional areas.

In addition, Rudi has worked closely with local government, community and environmental groups to benefit the industry.

Queensland – Sharon Ible

Sharon has more than 24 years experience in retail merchandising, marketing, performance standards and customer service.

Sharon has successfully introduced the 'Wise about Water' promotion into Queensland and achieved broad media coverage, despite regional needs varying greatly.

Western Australia – James Robilliard

In the state which pioneered waterwise practices, James has been building upon past successes and now has 19 Waterwise Garden centres providing an assessment service for home gardeners.

As part of the program, over 120 staff from the participating garden centres have been trained to assess the waterwise nature of gardens for home owners at a small fee.

In addition, James is involved in creating a positive industry profile at The Perth Flower and Garden Show. In 2005 he is coordinating show gardens from leading designers and garden centres in WA.

South Australia – Jane Dellow

Jane has 'lived her life' in the nursery business, rising to national sales and marketing manager in the former family potting mix business, prior to joining the Nursery & Garden Industry South Australia (NGISA) as GCDO.

It's her skills in marketing and sales which are benefiting Jane in her role as GCDO for South Australia, as well as her experience as a board member of NGISA.

Within six months of taking on the role of GCDO, Jane had enlisted five new nurseries into the association and has several working towards accreditation.

Tasmania – Wayne Cole

Wayne wears two hats – both GCDO and Executive Officer for Nursery & Garden Industry Tasmania (NGIT). Since his start in 2004, Wayne has brought at least five new members into the Tasmanian association and has several working towards accreditation.

Wayne has introduced 'Wise about Water' into his state and organised the first conference for NGIT with 70 people attending.

Among other initiatives, he has been active in the fast track skills development program with the Tasmanian Government which is providing around \$100,000 for nurseries in business management and training.



GCDOs from left – James Robilliard, WA; Jane Dellow, SA & NT; Rudi Fabian, NSW & ACT; Alan Hollensen, VIC; Sharon Ible, QLD and Wayne Cole, TAS.

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Nursery Industry Development Officers (NIDOs)

Queensland – John McDonald,

(Assoc. Dip PP, Adv dip Hort, Adv dip NP)

With seven years experience as a production nursery owner and over eight years as the Queensland NIDO, John is well placed to provide management and technical advice to production nurseries.

NIASA Best Management Practice is a core operational area for John who works with 79 NIASA Accredited sites spanning tropical and subtropical Queensland. Since 2003 John has also assisted the Northern Territory industry with technical support for NIASA.

John has been a driver for the establishment of an industry Environmental Management System (EMS) and the HACCP biosecurity risk management framework for NIASA. These projects are nearing completion and roll-out to industry is expected in the latter half of 2005.

Western Australia – Sandy Pate

Sandy is the longest serving NIDO and has a special interest in environmental issues. Among his achievements are the very successful Ecotopia display at Perth Flower and Garden Show which took environmental repair issues to the general public.

WA was also the first state to introduce an Environmental Best Practice booklet for nurseries. Sandy has been instrumental in converting the booklet into a practical series of reference sheets to help nurseries meet the state's new environmental compliance code.

Sandy regularly gives presentations at TAFE colleges and is constantly spreading the word about NIASA through field days, conferences and media publications.



NIDOs from left – Michael Danelon, NSW & ACT; Robert Chin, VIC; Edda Keskula, SA; Sandy Pate, WA and John McDonald, QLD & NT. Missing – Angela Monks, TAS.

South Australia – Edda Keskula

(B Sc Agr.)

Edda is highly experienced and a qualified plant pathologist. She has initiated and driven many industry development projects including the integrated pest and disease management workshops being rolled out around Australia.

Edda has provided professional advice on best management practices to several South Australian businesses, enabling them to gain NIASA accreditation status. In addition, Edda has played a critical role in helping SA Water understand the industry's water requirements.

Victoria – Robert Chin (B Appl Sc Hort)

Robert has been in the role of Victorian NIDO for more than three years. This is backed by 15 years in plant marketing, irrigation, hydroponics and greenhouses – designing, selling and installing systems mainly to commercial and agricultural clients.

Robert works with growers to help them improve their businesses as well as coordinating workshops and other learning programs. Some of the projects

he has worked on include 2004 Revealed and Frontline Management program.

NSW & ACT – Michael Danelon

(B Appl Sc Hort)

Michael has more than 12 years experience in our industry, especially in the areas of crop, fertiliser and growing media management.

He has made it his task to get out to businesses in regional NSW to discuss and advise on issues, one of the most important being water management. Michael has also taken an active role in the implementation of integrated pest management workshops.

Tasmania – Angela Monks (B Sc Hons)

Employed by the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Angela works with many other horticultural industries as well as the Nursery & Garden Industry.

Angela is a plant pathologist who can provide sound advice on production efficiencies and disease management. One of her major projects has been the introduction of wetlands to production nurseries in Tasmania, with three pilot programs now underway.

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Development Officers – what they can do for you

Development Officers can provide independent and professional advice on ways to better manage your business.

They are trained in best management practices for garden centres, production nurseries and growing media suppliers.

With access to resources and programs that demonstrate best management practices and/or marketing and promotional tools, they can provide individually tailored business development advice to help you build a better business.

Cost of services

Initial contact with a Development Officer and general advice based on levy funded industry projects is usually free.

Workshops or seminars may incur a small fee, and accreditation means an annual fee. In-depth business development advice can be provided, usually for an agreed fee.

Qualifications

Some Development Officers have formal qualifications, some have significant industry experience and some have both. Importantly all have an enthusiasm to see this industry and its members succeed.

All Development Officers are qualified accreditation assessors and are experienced and/or qualified trainers. They have considerable experience in either retail or production related fields and have direct access to national resources and key industry contacts.

How to get in touch

For more information contact your state/territory Nursery & Garden Industry (NGI) association office, call the Development Officers direct (see numbers listed left), or visit the NGI website www.ngia.com.au and check out the Development Officer network.

Funding your development officers

Nursery and garden industry Development Officers are jointly funded by the industry levy and the state Nursery & Garden Industry (NGI) associations. Their services are available to all industry participants, not just NGI members.

