

Your Nursery Levy At Work

During 2015/16 your nursery levy helped fund an investment of almost \$2 million in nursery industry R&D and marketing projects to improve grower productivity and profitability and ensure the long-term sustainability of the industry. Projects included tree health, biosecurity and risk management, promotion of green space and mitigating heat stress in urban communities, production efficiencies and broader industry development.

WHAT IS THE NURSERY LEVY?

The nursery levy – commonly known as the pot levy – is the 5% levy you pay on the wholesale value of all containers in which plants are grown for resale or used in the production of other goods. The definition of container includes pots, plastic bags, root control bags, degradable pots and punnets.

WHO MANAGES THE NURSERY LEVY?

The levy is collected by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, and investment of these funds is managed by **Horticulture Innovation Australia** (Hort Innovation), a not-for-profit, grower-owned Research and Development Corporation (RDC) for Australia's \$9.5 billion horticulture industry.

The peak industry body, **Nursery & Garden Industry Australia**, works with industry to determine the split between marketing and R&D. Currently, the industry marketing program receives 2% and R&D receives 3% of the 5% collected. The R&D allocation attracts dollar for dollar matching contributions from the Federal Government.

HOW IS MY LEVY INVESTED?

To help ensure R&D and marketing investment decisions are balanced and prioritised by the current needs of the nursery industry, Hort Innovation has established Strategic Investment Advisory Panels (SIAPs).

The Nursery SIAP is a skills based panel including levy-paying growers, and provides transparent and robust advice on potential investment opportunities. The SIAP is guided by the priorities set out in the nursery industry Strategic Investment Plan.

Concepts for R&D and marketing are captured through the Innovation Funnel (visit horticulture.com.au/about/investing-is-our-business/innovation-concept-pipeline/) and brought to the SIAP to provide advice on behalf of industry.

Hort Innovation is currently working with an independent consultant to develop a new plan for 2017-21 through consultation with industry. The plan will guide the nursery industry SIAP in reviewing proposals for levy-funded projects and providing investment advice to Hort Innovation.

Providing feedback on the draft Strategic Investment Plan is one of the ways you can have input into setting the priorities for levy-funded investments in marketing and R&D.



A copy of the draft Strategic Investment Plan will be available and open for public comment in the very near future.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Further information regarding the SIAP and nursery research can be found at the Hort Innovation website www.horticulture.com.au/nursery.

Get more information about the Strategic Investment Plan by contacting John Vatikiotis, Hort Innovation Relationship Manager Lead – Nursery, john.vatikiotis@horticulture.com.au, 02 8295 2384, 0429 022 637.

Nursery and Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) is your peak industry body representing commercial growers, retailers and suppliers in Australia. For more information, go to www.ngia.com.au or email info@ngia.com.au or call 02 8861 5100

Nursery Levy Achievements

Over the past 20 years, levy funds have delivered great advances in Australia's nursery sector, in many cases building on previous outcomes to help set up the industry for ongoing innovation and growth.

URBAN GREENING

Initial research conducted by CSIRO identified the nursery industry's potential to provide important economic and health gains in Australia – helping to change public perception of nursery products from a nice-to-have, to an essential part of life. Subsequent investment such as Improve Your Plant Life Balance and the current 202020 Vision campaign have gained significant traction with the community when it comes to recognising the need for urban greenspace.

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

This network of regionally based technical specialists was used to great effect in R&D communication and driving the uptake and adoption of R&D outputs by industry.

NURSERY PRODUCTION FARM MANAGEMENT SCHEME

Established 20 years ago, the Nursery Production Farm Management Scheme has been the platform for industry best practice and on-farm adoption of R&D outputs. Today it incorporates the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme; the industry environmental management system EcoHort, and the industry biosecurity program BioSecure HACCP.

BIOSECURITY

The introduction, spread and establishment of exotic plant pests and diseases have the potential to cause huge production losses and trade problems. To ensure nursery production in Australia remains free of exotic pests, biosecurity programs continue to be a vital area of investment for the nursery industry.

PEST & DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Levy investments support new ways for the nursery industry to identify, manage and control pests and diseases. Key examples include minor use permits; validation of water disinfection processes; pest specific management plans; and identification tools.

THE NEXT GENERATION – STUDENT LINKAGES & YOUNG LEADERS

Developing the next generation of growers is vitally important for the industry, and many projects have been funded to support young leaders, and to encourage the take-up of training that will support the industry through R&D.

WATER

There has been a significant amount of work around the recapture, reuse and treatment of water in the production sector and extended supply chain. In particular, this work assisted industry during widespread water restriction that were implemented during the millennial droughts.

GROWING MEDIA

Another essential component of the industry, levy funded investment has explored aspects around pathogen control in growing media (for instance, *Phytophthora* and human pathogens such as Legionella), as well as technical aspects of growing media performance.

COMMUNICATIONS

The ability to inform the industry of R&D outcomes is essential to encourage uptake. Knowledge capture and sharing have been delivered through a variety of means, including written communications, conferences, workshops and study tours.

INDUSTRY NARRATIVE

Policy-development and marketing programs help tell the positive story of Australia's nursery industry to the broader value chain, which in turn leads to greater engagement with the community and increased sales of nursery stock.

