

Draft strategic themes

2019-2023

**Helping to guide Hort Innovation's
strategic focus for the next four years**

Introduction

The Australian horticulture industry provides a growing contribution to the national economy (\$13.2 billion) and is a significant employer, particularly in regional areas. The nutritional and wider benefits of horticulture products help to build a healthy Australia and the investment in technology and production techniques in many industries are aiming to be amongst the best in the world.

Horticulture also has its challenges. Availability and high cost of labour, climate variability and a scarcity of natural resources, market fluctuations and trade barriers, uncertainty in long term chemical use and challenges with succession in farming businesses are all front of mind for horticulture businesses in most industries and locations. As one of Australia's 15 Rural Research and Development Corporations (RDCs), Hort Innovation has a unique opportunity to invest in research and development (R&D) and marketing to drive productivity and profitability for horticulture growers. Through levy funding, Australian Government contributions and the support of co-investors, Hort Innovation invested \$110 million in 2017-2018. From fruit fly to phytophthora and from Taste Australia to the Mango Mess-tival, Hort Innovation's investments through collaboration with growers and experts are improving the future prosperity of the sector.

Hort Innovation has been through a significant evolution in the last four years. This reinvigoration was designed to build a new organisation that supports growers to capture the opportunities and respond to challenges quickly and easily. Most recently, the appointment of new CEO Matt Brand and the creation of the next company Strategic Plan marks the beginning of an exciting era for both the company and the horticulture sector as a whole.

The strategic planning and consultation process

In the period from January to May 2019, Hort Innovation has been undertaking a strategic planning and consultation process to inform the next iteration of the company's Strategic Plan.

This process has included a series of consultation workshops around Australia designed to engage with horticulture growers and other industry participants, particularly those who pay a horticulture levy. Hort Innovation's Executives, Board members and staff traveled to more than 20 regional locations in every territory and state in Australia and spoke to more than 300 industry participants who provided input into the strategic planning process. An online version of the consultation process was also available on Hort Innovation's website from January to the end of April 2019 for those who were unable to attend the consultation workshops in person. A summary of the consultation output is available on Hort Innovation's website at www.horticulture.com.au/strategic-consultation/.

These conversations with levy payers around Australia combined with strategic planning conversations with Hort Innovation's staff, Executive and Board led to the formation of this draft Strategic Themes document. This is presented as a table of activities to simplify and clearly communicate the intentions of the strategy and enable further discussion prior to the formalisation of the company's Strategic Plan.

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is for the review of Hort Innovation's draft strategic themes for 2019-2023.

The themes contained in this document are a summary only and form the final part of the consultation plan created for the strategic planning process. The information is intentionally brief to allow as much open feedback on the themes and initiative themselves rather than any broader issues.

Provide feedback on this document

If you would like to provide feedback on this document, please head to Hort Innovation's website at www.horticulture.com.au/new-strategic-plan/ where you will be able to provide feedback by answering two questions:

1. What do you like about the strategic themes and the areas that they are aiming to impact?
2. Are there any other areas not specifically covered by the strategic themes that you wish to provide feedback on?

The Strategic Plan in its full and final form will be published on Hort Innovation's website on 1 July 2019.

Inside this document

On the following pages, you will find:

- **Consultation themes:** a summary of the information gathered from a series of consultation workshops around Australia from January to April 2019. A more detailed summary of the consultation outputs can be viewed on Hort Innovation's website at www.horticulture.com.au/strategic-consultation/
- **Strategic themes:** priorities at the highest level which will guide Hort Innovation's strategic focus until 2023
- **Outcomes:** Hort Innovation's goal of achievement by focussing on the strategic themes
- **Initiatives and details:** more information on how Hort Innovation plans to achieve the outcomes under each of the strategic themes.

Consultation themes

“Communicate the outputs of projects”

Many growers commented that Hort Innovation should do more to ensure the transfer of information from projects to them so they can improve their farming practices and business.

“More and better extension, field days, IDOs and grass roots”

Growers commented that the access to extension activities had dropped off significantly and there is a need for more funding of Industry Development Officers (IDOs), grower days and meetings to share knowledge and new information.

“More direct engagement with growers”

Growers were supportive of more direct communication at conferences and other existing meetings to share relevant knowledge about current and future projects and more direct consultation.

“Hold and share knowledge better”

There were many comments in different forms around the need to have a single source of knowledge, that allowed easy access and searching and would last over time.

“Come into the regions more”

Many growers commented on the importance of Hort Innovation’s staff spending time in the regions, knowing the local groups and growers and understanding unique issues better.

“Help us become more organic, less inputs”

Across geographies and industries, within the limitations of pests, varieties and climate, there was significant and widespread interest and investment in reducing chemicals as much as possible.

“Sustainability: labour, water, energy, packaging”

A large number of comments were focused on issues of sustainability including water, energy and labour and the need to have more concrete data on these issues and a better approach to solving them.

“Grow export markets”

In all regions and almost all industries there was a strong discussion about expanding market access, growing volume in existing markets and improving supply for export.

“Help us understand and influence consumers”

In all industries, the discussion on understanding the consumer was seen as critical to future success. This applies to all domestic and export market consumers.

“Help us become more competitive”

There was a great deal of commentary on the need to improve productivity, quality and marketing to be competitive with overseas markets in exports and domestic snack foods.

“Raise the profile of horticultural products and industry”

Several issues discussed related to building the profile of horticulture including attracting labour, consumption of fresh produce by children, valuing horticulture overall and building capacity in the industry.

“More cross-sector, less silos”

A great deal of discussion from multiple industries focused on their common issues and the benefits of working together and learning from each other to efficiently solve bigger problems.

“Invest in technology across industries”

Growers across industries discussed sharing technologies that could help more Horticulture businesses in areas including robots, sprayers, probes and renewable power.

“Invest in the future of horticulture”

There was widespread discussion about a coordinated approach to the future of horticulture and how we might tackle the future issues facing the industry.

Theme one

Drive knowledge and innovation into the industries

This strategic theme directly addresses the overwhelming feedback from growers and other industry participants that Hort Innovation needs to place more focus on driving the innovation outputs (knowledge, insight, technology) and good practice out to farms and into growers' businesses.

Execution of this theme will enable us to work with numerous established networks such as the IDO network to help drive co-learning and amplify the outcomes of levy investments in marketing and R&D.

The focus is on collaborating and investing more in this area of extension and adoption through existing channels where they are working and new channels where more effort is required.



Theme one

Drive knowledge and innovation into the industries

Outcome

Realisation of the value of investments through communication and extension that impacts commercial decisions and practices on farm

Initiatives

Create a larger capability in the business to drive extension, knowledge transfer and face-to-face interactions with levy payers

Review the investment in all communications to ensure effectiveness and the support of delivery of outputs to levy payers

Consolidate industry digital assets onto a common platform to streamline content sharing and security

Pursue a register of levy payers and/or distribution network to ensure outputs are reaching maximum numbers of levy payers

Prioritise investments that drive practice change and tangible benefits to the horticulture industry

Details

Increase the company's capability and capacity to focus on driving the knowledge and practical outputs from investments into the hands of growers. This will be done by coordinating and leveraging all existing channels, IDOs, grower groups and commercial networks

Focus on targeted investments to grow and support successful mechanisms for bringing growers together and disseminating information

Increase the company's ability to manage and organise its knowledge and increase investment in digital tools to allow growers to more easily find the information they are looking for (including linking to other networks, sites and the organisation's knowledge)

Review all investments and activities in the communications and extension portfolios to ensure maximum efficiency and impact for growers including opportunities to fund initiatives for significant issues that cut across industries

Review all investments to ensure practical and tangible outputs are achievable throughout each investment and that there is capacity to extend them through improved channels

Increase transparency of Intellectual Property information to facilitate investment into commercialising research outputs

Theme two

Deliver the highest value investments across industries, now and into the future

This strategic theme addresses the significant feedback that focused on solving larger multi-industry challenges because there is more value in solving issues for more industries. This however, does not reduce the importance of issues for single industries.

An additional aspect is understanding and addressing the challenges that are coming in the future. Although they are not fully impacting now, we need to be prepared for them before they do.

Execution of this theme will be about streamlining Hort Innovation's investment processes and investing more effort into combining issues into multi-industry solutions where possible as well as investing more into understanding the future issues for the industry.



Theme two

Deliver the highest value investments across industries, now and into the future

Outcome

Driving productivity and profitability through solving bigger challenges with greater impacts to levy payers' businesses

Initiatives

Develop and optimise an annual investment planning process for industries to drive efficiencies and transparency across R&D and marketing

Sharpen focus on consumer insights and understanding of markets both domestically and internationally

Develop a sustainability framework to future proof the industry

Drive investment in Hort Frontiers funds and deliver more multi-industry collaboration across traditional and non-traditional partnerships to drive effective and efficient outcomes for levy payers and industry

Drive innovation across industries to support change and adaptation of practices to improve productivity and competitiveness

Details

Drive identification of multi-industry investment opportunities through the Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs) and industry advice and consultation mechanisms

Increase the company's capability and capacity to invest in the largest multi-industry issues by consolidating our view of multi-industry projects and look for greater investment efficiency

Develop an annual planning process that will streamline investment and advisory process to enable more capacity to drive knowledge and extension strategy

Drive innovation at the source through the SIPs and through ongoing regional consultation and build more capacity for researching and understanding the consumer

Build a sustainability framework to pro-actively manage emerging issues now and in the future and set a benchmark to show progress over time

Increase profile of "attractive" horticulture and long-term benefits/positive impact on economy, environment and labour

Invest in commercialisation capability; drive innovation with key levy payer entrepreneurs; leverage and collaborate with other RDCs and foster more connections to knowledge overseas

Theme three

Enable activities that deliver Hort Innovation's strategic themes

This strategic theme addresses the many points of consultation feedback that relate to the company's capabilities, processes and ways of working.

Execution of this theme underpins the success of the other two strategic themes. The continuous improvement of Hort Innovation as an organisation and our interactions with our partners is key to our success and will require significant and ongoing effort.



Theme three

Enable activities that deliver Hort Innovation’s strategic themes

Outcome

Improvement of the talent, culture, processes and systems that support the strategy and deliver value to growers

Initiatives

- Invest in increasing and creating new capabilities
- Streamline processes and systems to be faster, more flexible and more efficient
- Ease of access to Hort Innovation’s staff and our knowledge
- Enhance the relationships with influencer groups in horticulture
- Build an inclusive, collaborative, levy payer-first and positive workplace culture
- Review investment planning approaches to incorporate clear commercialisation (where appropriate) and adoption strategies

Details

- Invest in the simplification of Hort Innovation’s internal processes and the improvement in systems to support communication, knowledge management and efficient investment and management of projects
- Attract, develop and retain talented staff to deliver great results and retain knowledge
- Create a “who’s who” capability so that levy payers can contact the relevant staff at Hort Innovation that they need
- Continue to develop strong relationships with key stakeholders and partners through open and regular engagement
- Develop funding mechanisms that enable efficient investment in multi-industry and trade

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