



# Banana Fund

Annual Report 2018/19

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**The projects in this report have been funded by Hort Innovation using sources including the banana levy, Australian Government contributions and, in some instances, co-contributions from a variety of sources.**



## Just some of the things your fund delivered in 2018/19:

- ✓ **Industry communication and extension programs**, delivering the *Australian Bananas* magazine, e-bulletins, the [www.abgc.org.au](http://www.abgc.org.au) and [www.betterbananas.com.au](http://www.betterbananas.com.au) websites, and whole host of events (p12)
- ✓ **The banana Harvest to Home dashboard** providing regular consumer behavioural data and insight reporting, at [www.harvesttohome.net.au](http://www.harvesttohome.net.au)
- ✓ Essential plant protection work, including multiple projects related to **Fusarium wilt** (p9 and 11), plus **banana bunchy top** surveillance and education activities (p9) and the **Banana Plant Protection Program** (p11)
- ✓ A highly visible and multi-pronged **domestic marketing campaign** (p17)
- ✓ New **final research reports and grower resources**, with 40+ now available from [www.horticulture.com.au/banana](http://www.horticulture.com.au/banana)

### 2018/19 SNAPSHOT

**\$3.53**  
**MILLION**

INVESTED  
IN R&D

**\$3.69**  
**MILLION**

INVESTED IN  
MARKETING

**25+**

ACTIVE R&D  
INVESTMENTS



## Welcome

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Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation (RDC) for Australia's horticulture sector. It's our job to work with industry to invest the banana R&D and marketing levies, as well as Australian Government contributions, into key initiatives for growers.

The 2018/19 financial year was another great year of growing better, together – with strong investments, closer connections and critical collaborations being forged.

There was close to \$3.53 million invested into R&D through the Hort Innovation Banana Fund across the year, to support the industry in being as productive and profitable as possible. This included the establishment of several new investments, including work allowing the banana industry to join forces with other horticulture industries for maximum efficiency and impact across shared issues and opportunities.

Meanwhile in marketing, the Hort Innovation Banana Fund saw some \$3.69 million invested in 2018/19 into a range of activities to raise the profile and consumption of Australian bananas.

Read on to learn more about all of this work. And remember to take advantage of the Hort Innovation website at [www.horticulture.com.au/banana](http://www.horticulture.com.au/banana), where you can search and find information relating to investments, past and present, at any time. The new site and its Banana Fund section were launched in 2018/19.

Finally, during the year there were many opportunities for Hort Innovation to connect with you, the growers. A big thank you in particular to everyone who came to our early-2019 regional roadshows to feed into the development of the new Hort Innovation Strategy 2019-2023 (read more at [www.horticulture.com.au/strategy-2019-2023](http://www.horticulture.com.au/strategy-2019-2023)).

You can reach out to us at any time to learn more about our work, to submit ideas for investments, or to simply have a chat about your industry. You'll find details of specific staff at [www.horticulture.com.au/get-in-touch](http://www.horticulture.com.au/get-in-touch), or can otherwise email [communications@horticulture.com.au](mailto:communications@horticulture.com.au) or call our general line on 02 8295 2300.



## Additional value in the year

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During 2018/19, Hort Innovation was proud to deliver extra value to the banana industry, outside of levy-funded initiatives within the Banana Fund. Here's a quick look at just some examples.

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### The new Hort Innovation website, with dedicated Banana Fund section

You can now visit [www.horticulture.com.au/banana](http://www.horticulture.com.au/banana) to quickly search and find banana investment information and updates, project resources, and growing tips and advice from Hort Innovation's R&D work. You can also download full final research reports direct from the site, access key contact information, share your ideas and feedback, and so much more.

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### The Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook

Each year Hort Innovation delivers an *Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook* packed with horticulture statistical information and analysis for use by specific industries and the wider sector. The handbook combines all available data on production, international trade, processing volumes and fresh market distribution for some 75 categories. The 2017/18 edition, released in early 2019, is available from [www.horticulture.com.au/horticulture-statistics-handbook](http://www.horticulture.com.au/horticulture-statistics-handbook).

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### Hort Frontiers projects

With seven investment areas, Hort Innovation's Hort Frontiers strategic partnership initiative is about collaborative, cross-industry work to address longer-term, complex issues and opportunities identified as critical for the future of Australian horticulture. While industry levies can be invested into Hort Frontiers projects upon the advice of the relevant Strategic Investment Advisory Panels, the bulk of funding comes from broad-reaching funding relationships that are secured by Hort Innovation, plus support from the Australian Government. Learn about all of the projects and what they're delivering for you at [www.horticulture.com.au/hort-frontiers](http://www.horticulture.com.au/hort-frontiers).

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### Grant funding

In 2018/19, Hort Innovation delivered \$6.7 million worth of investments involving grant funding across the horticulture sector. To do so, we applied for and secured a range of competitive grants on behalf of industry, including through the Australian Government's Rural R&D for Profit program, Improved Access to AgVet Chemicals initiative, and Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper. With projects across everything from biosecurity to agri-technology, there's plenty in there to directly and indirectly benefit the banana industry.

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## Making investments in 2018/19

Hort Innovation is dedicated to making the right investments at the right time and in the right areas, in line with identified priorities for the industry.

### Where the funding comes from

The banana industry's grower-raised statutory R&D and marketing levies are collected by the Australian Government and entrusted to Hort Innovation as the RDC for Australian horticulture. It's then our responsibility to work with the industry to invest these levies – together with Australian Government contributions in the case of R&D – into strategic initiatives for the benefit of growers.

Additional funding streams can also come into play, such as co-investment dollars from sources including project partners, and grant funding that Hort Innovation secures on behalf of industry.

### How decisions are made

Investment decisions in the Hort Innovation Banana Fund are guided by the industry's Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). This document was developed through close consultation with growers and other industry stakeholders, and outlines specific investment priorities, strategies and themes. An at-a-glance version can be found at [www.bit.ly/banana-plan](http://www.bit.ly/banana-plan), or find the full version at [www.horticulture.com.au/banana](http://www.horticulture.com.au/banana).

The SIP is currently used like a 'roadmap' by the banana R&D and marketing Strategic Investment Advisory Panels (SIAPs) – panels made up of growers and other industry representatives tasked with providing advice to Hort Innovation on potential levy investments.

### Turning ideas into investments

Great investments start with great ideas, and Hort Innovation encourages all growers and other industry participants to share their thoughts and suggestions for the work they want to see. Ideas can be submitted any time via Hort Innovation's investment idea form at [www.bit.ly/concept-form](http://www.bit.ly/concept-form).

Ideas that are selected for investment are worked into project proposals by Hort Innovation. These are then made public for potential delivery partners to submit responses. Current opportunities are always listed at [www.horticulture.com.au/delivery-partners](http://www.horticulture.com.au/delivery-partners).

Responses are assessed, often with the assistance of industry, and the best delivery partner for the work is chosen. A contract is then issued and the work begins.

### Keeping track of investments

All investments in the Hort Innovation Banana Fund are detailed on the 'Your investments' page at [www.horticulture.com.au/banana](http://www.horticulture.com.au/banana). We also send news and alerts to Hort Innovation members and contacts – if you haven't already, you can sign up for free at [www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up](http://www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up).

Importantly, the industry's levy-funded communications program is tasked with providing growers with regular information on levy-related activity. See p12 for more.



### New investment analysis

You can now clearly see how investments in the Hort Innovation Banana Fund align to the industry's SIP, with new and interactive investment analysis information available from [www.bit.ly/banana-investment](http://www.bit.ly/banana-investment). The analysis currently shows the allocation of funding against each of the banana SIP outcomes from the start of the SIP (2016/17) to the end of 2018/19, and gives an indication of the projects that are aligned to each outcome.



## **Signing a Statement of Commitment**

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**To ensure a strong, cooperative and clear working relationship, in June 2019, Hort Innovation came together with the Australian Banana Growers' Council to sign a Statement of Commitment. The purpose of this document is to mutually define, acknowledge and cement our agreed roles, responsibilities, shared objectives and engagement expectations – all so we can work effectively in the best interests of growers and the wider industry. Learn more and see the signed document at [www.horticulture.com.au/statements-of-commitment](http://www.horticulture.com.au/statements-of-commitment).**

## R&D project list 2018/19

NEW INVESTMENTS IN 2018/19		ONGOING INVESTMENTS IN 2018/19	
BA17002	Banana industry R&D coordination	BA14014	Fusarium wilt Tropical Race 4 research program
BA17005	Management of banana pests and diseases in North Queensland	BA15001	Review of the National Biosecurity Plan for the Banana Industry
BA17006	Development of molecular markers for Fusarium wilt resistance in banana	BA15005	The Australian banana industry communications program
BA18000	Banana bunchy top virus project, phase 4 – national surveillance and education	BA16001	Improved plant protection for the banana industry
BA18002	Short-term BBTV surveillance in NSW*	BA16003	Banana industry minor use program
BA18003	Reverse trade mission activities*	BA16005	Strengthening the banana industry diagnostic capacity
MT18011	Ex-post impact assessment^	BA16007	National banana development and extension project – tropical
ST18001	Generation of data for pesticide applications in horticulture crops	BA16007	National banana development and extension project – subtropical
		BA16008	Banana strategic industry development manager
		BA17003	Banana Industry Congress 2019
		MT17015	Consumer behavioural and retail data for fresh produce
		ST16008	AgVet collaborative forum

\* These flagged projects both began and ended in 2018/19

^ This multi-industry project was a key monitoring and evaluation investment during 2018/19 – we encourage you to find the full details at [www.horticulture.com.au/mt18011](http://www.horticulture.com.au/mt18011)



### INVESTMENTS COMPLETED IN 2018/19

BA14012	Coordination of banana industry R&D (Panama TR4)
BA15003	Integrated management of yellow Sigatoka
BA15004	Horticulture Nuffield Scholarships†
BA15006	National banana bunchy top virus program – phase 3 (QLD)
BA15007	National banana bunchy top virus program – phase 3 (NSW)
BA16009	Banana enterprise performance comparison 2016/17
BA16010	Alternative quarantine treatment for bananas infested with coffee bean weevil‡
BA17001	Banana bunchy top virus control data
ST15027	Generation of residue data for pesticide minor use permit applications in horticulture crops 2015/16

† BA15004 was brought to an early close during 2018/19, as no banana industry participants were identified for a Nuffield Scholarship during its run

‡ BA16010 was terminated in 2018/19 due to changes in Biosecurity Western Australia's entry requirements for banana consignments from far north Queensland

During the 2018/19 financial year, all levy paying horticulture industries also contributed to a small selection of across-industry projects addressing issues that affect horticulture as a whole. Details of all investments that Hort Innovation manages can be found at [www.horticulture.com.au](http://www.horticulture.com.au).



**But wait, there's more. To see what Hort Innovation delivered across the entire horticulture sector in 2018/19, download the full Hort Innovation Annual Report 2018/19 from [www.horticulture.com.au/annual-report-portal](http://www.horticulture.com.au/annual-report-portal).**

## R&D report

Take a closer look at some of the key investments in the Hort Innovation Banana Fund during 2018/19. Any resources from these and other levy-funded projects – such as fact sheets, guides and more – are published on your grower page at [www.horticulture.com.au/banana](http://www.horticulture.com.au/banana) as they become available.

### **Development of molecular markers for Fusarium wilt resistance in banana (BA17006)**

NEW IN 2018/19

**Key research provider:** The University of Queensland

Fusarium wilt – particularly that caused by Tropical Race 4 (TR4) of the Fusarium pathogen – threatens the viability of commercial banana production in Australia, and worldwide. Once present in a plantation, the fungus persists in the soil or in alternative hosts and cannot be eradicated, and there are no known chemical controls. This leaves genetic resistance as the only viable option for Fusarium control.

To help in the identification of disease-resistant banana varieties, this investment began in 2019 to develop molecular markers that are associated with different sources of genetic resistance to Fusarium wilt in banana. Once available, these molecular markers will allow screening and selection of resistant germplasm for introduction into Australia.

### **Fusarium wilt Tropical Race 4 research program (BA14014)**

**Key research provider:** The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

This project seeks to provide medium- and long-term solutions for banana growers to allow continued profitable production, should Fusarium wilt become widespread in the North Queensland banana industry.

Key goals of the project are to:

- » Improve cultivar resistance, by developing and identifying TR4-resistant varieties (involving collaboration with other relevant investments)
- » Build resilient banana production systems, by developing a better understanding of the TR4 pathogen and its interactions with plants and soils
- » Improve on-farm biosecurity practices.

### **Banana bunchy top virus project, phase 4 – national surveillance and education (BA18000)**

NEW IN 2018/19

**Key research provider:** Australian Banana Growers' Council

With banana bunchy top virus the most serious viral disease of bananas, this investment plays an important role in controlling the disease in Australia. It continues the work of since-completed projects **National banana bunchy top virus program – Phase 3 – QLD (BA15006)** and **National banana bunchy top virus program – Phase 3 – NSW (BA15007)**, with a third investment, **Short-term BBTV surveillance in NSW (BA18002)**, forming as a bridging piece of work between the conclusion of the old program and the beginning of the new.

The program's activities are designed to protect uninfested areas; limit and remove infestation from farms and then protect from reinfestation; and to reduce the disease range. The ongoing strategy involves risk-based surveillance and plant rogueing, conducted by surveillance teams. The regularity of farm inspections is based on the frequency and intensity of prior infections.

Continued >>





The program also involves a suite of awareness activities, with an education program designed to enhance the involvement of growers, consultants and other relevant partners in bunchy top management.

The development of phase four of the initiative was informed by project BA17001, described below.

More levy-funded information on banana bunchy top virus and current management strategies can be found on the Australian Banana Grower's Council website, including at [www.bit.ly/abgc-bunchy-top](http://www.bit.ly/abgc-bunchy-top).

### **Banana bunchy top virus control data (BA17001)**

**NOW COMPLETE**

**Key research provider:** The University of Queensland

This project evaluated the effectiveness of existing control strategies for banana bunch top virus, and pointed towards the most economical and effective management approaches to be implemented going forward. It also estimated the risk of increased disease incidence under alternative scenarios.

The primary finding was that the disease is likely to be kept in check with a continuation of current management and surveillance activities, which are now maintained under project BA18000, described on p9. Other results included:

- » Less stringent management practices have a high risk of a delayed, rapid spike in infection
- » With current management strategies, new infections in plantations where the virus was detected in the previous year are likely to be picked up before the epidemic explodes
- » The frequency of visiting plantations has a significant effect on disease risk
- » Sweeping surrounding plantations has relatively little effect on improving overall disease management
- » Reducing the frequency and efficiency of surveillance will result in a rapid rise of infections.

Full details can be found in the project's final research report, which can be downloaded from [www.bit.ly/ba17001](http://www.bit.ly/ba17001).

### **Integrated management of Yellow Sigatoka (BA15003)**

**NOW COMPLETE**

**Key research provider:** The Australian Banana Growers' Council

Running from 2016 to 2018, this project supported the work of a Yellow Sigatoka liaison officer at the Australian Banana Growers' Council.

The liaison officer's Queensland-based role included educating growers on Yellow Sigatoka and leaf speckle ('leaf spot') symptoms and integrated control, and assisting growers to voluntarily keep levels of leaf spot disease on their plantations below prescribed levels (less than five per cent).

The officer undertook leaf spot inspections on commercial farms and in some backyards, and was responsible for alerting Biosecurity Queensland when any other suspected banana diseases were found.

A key part of the role was also sharing information with and between growers, aerial operators, chemical sellers, government and university research staff. The officer also supported north Queensland banana growers in best practice disease management, including through the distribution of the industry's *Banana best management practices on-farm biosecurity manual*, which was produced as part of earlier project **Fusarium wilt Tropical Race 4 – biosecurity and sustainable solutions (BA14013)**. The manual can still be downloaded from [www.bit.ly/banana-on-farm-biosecurity](http://www.bit.ly/banana-on-farm-biosecurity).

At the end of the project, a 97 per cent compliance rate with relevant leaf spot requirements was achieved in north Queensland – meaning greater biosecurity for the banana industry as a whole. Low disease levels also help maintain a consistent quality and supply of bananas, minimise production costs and are beneficial to the environment and workplace safety through the reduced need for chemical spraying.

Full details can be found in the project's final research report, which you can download at [www.bit.ly/ba15003](http://www.bit.ly/ba15003).



### **Improved plant protection for the banana industry (BA16001) and Strengthening the banana industry diagnostic capacity (BA16005)**

**Key research provider:** The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, in collaboration with several organisations

The investment *Improved plant protection for the banana industry* (BA16001) represents the ongoing Banana Plant Protection Program. Its work focuses on access to and evaluation of banana varieties with improved pest and disease traits; access to clean planting material that has been pathogen tested; enhancing the diagnostic capacity for endemic and exotic threats; and improving integrated pest and disease management.

It works closely with the project *Strengthening the banana industry diagnostic capacity* (BA16005), which is focused on growing the industry's ability to detect and identify emerging endemic and exotic plant pathogens. Along with diagnostic work, BA16005 is increasing knowledge of the biology and spread of key diseases, and developing and testing eradication strategies.

### **Management of banana pests and diseases in North Queensland (BA17005)**

NEW IN 2018/19

**Key research provider:** Australian Banana Growers' Council

Contracted in 2018, this investment supports an Australian Banana Growers' Council Plant Health Officer to assist North Queensland banana growers in containing and managing significant pests and diseases, and to help in the early detection of exotic pests and diseases. The role involves conducting surveillance, education, awareness and guidance activities with growers, and other biosecurity-related activities.

### **Banana industry R&D coordination (BA17002)**

NEW IN 2018/19

**Key research provider:** Australian Banana Growers' Council

Following the now-completed investment *Coordination of banana industry research and development (Panama TR4)* (BA14012), this project continues to support the role and activities of the Australian Banana Growers' Council R&D Manager, Dr Rosie Godwin.

Working to coordinate the industry's R&D efforts, this role includes facilitating beneficial collaborations between research projects, providing technical input into the development and conduct of projects, and acting as a key point of contact for industry R&D.

Dr Godwin also works with industry communication and extension initiatives to help the transfer of project findings and information to growers, and represents the industry at relevant forums, meetings and events. There is a particular focus on coordinating research efforts around Panama TR4.

Full details on completed project BA14012, including its final research report, can be found at [www.bit.ly/ba14012](http://www.bit.ly/ba14012). Among the earlier project's activities was the development of a biosecurity action plan template for banana growers that highlights risks and biosecurity measures to reduce TR4 infection and spread, which can also be accessed from this link.

Biosecurity Queensland requires owners of TR4-infested land to develop a Farm Biosecurity Management Plan, using the action plan template to document how they will meet biosecurity requirements that allow production to continue. Other growers should also complete the template since it will highlight risk pathways that can be addressed to reduce the chance of TR4 spreading to their properties, as well as allowing fast decision-making and action should the pathogen be detected on-farm.

## Review of the National Biosecurity Plan for the Banana Industry (BA15001)

**Key research provider:** Plant Health Australia

This investment is responsible for updating the industry's biosecurity plan. The plan is a top-level document that identifies high-priority endemic and exotic pests and diseases, along with the risk mitigation activities required to reduce their biosecurity threat. The current banana biosecurity plan is available from Plant Health Australia at [www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/industries/bananas](http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/industries/bananas).

## The Australian banana industry communications program (BA15005)

**Key research provider:** The Australian Banana Growers' Council

Beginning in 2016 and running throughout 2018/19, this investment was responsible for keeping Australian banana growers and other industry stakeholders informed about key industry issues and the latest R&D in a timely way. The ultimate goal was to facilitate the uptake of new information, technologies and practices – in turn helping growers forge more productive, profitable and resilient businesses.

The program produced and maintained key communication channels, including but not limited to:

- » The *Australian Bananas* magazine, available from [www.abgc.org.au/australian-bananas-magazine](http://www.abgc.org.au/australian-bananas-magazine)
- » Industry e-bulletins, sent at least twice per month but delivered more frequently as needed, with editions available at [www.abgc.org.au/grower-e-bulletins](http://www.abgc.org.au/grower-e-bulletins)
- » The Australian Banana Growers' Council website, [www.abgc.org.au](http://www.abgc.org.au)
- » The Australian Banana Growers' Council Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/AustBananaGrowers](https://www.facebook.com/AustBananaGrowers)
- » SMS notifications and phone calls to growers, used for urgent industry updates
- » Video content to help convey information to growers, available through the Australian Banana Growers' Council YouTube page, [www.bit.ly/abgc-youtube](http://www.bit.ly/abgc-youtube).

The project was also responsible for media relations services, creating and distributing media releases and fielding media enquiries on behalf of the industry.

With BA15005 drawing to a close early in the 2019/20 period, its activities are now continued by new investment *Banana industry communications program* (BA18001).

## Banana Industry Congress 2019 (BA17003)

**Key research provider:** Australian Banana Growers' Council

This investment supported the 13th Australian Banana Industry Congress, held in May 2019 on the Gold Coast. The Congress is a biennial event for the Australian banana industry and in 2019 helped to deliver research outcomes back to growers, along with insights into other latest developments and technologies, and information on current international and domestic work on TR4.

## National banana development and extension project (BA16007)

**Key research providers:** The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (for the tropical component) and NSW Department of Primary Industries (for the subtropical component)

This project has two components working closely together to form a national program: a tropical component specific to the Queensland industry, and a subtropical one for New South Wales and Western Australia production regions. Together they are tasked with helping deliver the outcomes of levy-funded and other R&D back to the banana industry, to help growers access and implement new information, technologies and approaches, and make better decisions for their businesses.

Their activities involve industry development officers – Matt Weinert for the subtropical regions ([matt.weinert@dpi.gov.au](mailto:matt.weinert@dpi.gov.au)) and Tegan Kukulies for the tropical regions ([tegan.kukulies@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:tegan.kukulies@daf.qld.gov.au)). These officers deliver:

- » The Better Bananas website, [www.betterbananas.com.au](http://www.betterbananas.com.au)
- » National banana roadshow events, held biennially
- » Field walks and industry workshops, with details circulated in industry channels as they become available
- » Industry meetings and tours, including NextGen young banana grower group activities (contact your region's officer if you're interested in taking part in NextGen activities)
- » Grower training activities
- » Resources, including fact sheets, videos and articles for *Australian Bananas* magazine
- » Direct engagement with growers and others in the banana supply chain
- » Innovative field trials and other research activities, detailed on the Better Bananas website.

## Banana strategic industry development manager (BA16008)

**Key research provider:** The Australian Banana Growers' Council

This investment supports the role and activities of industry strategy manager (ISM) Michelle McKinlay within the Australian Banana Growers' Council. The ISM role works with growers to develop, implement and respond to industry-related strategies and policies, and provides support for the adoption of new practices to align with these strategies.

The project has a particular focus on biosecurity and the environment – two priority areas identified in the banana industry's Strategic Investment Plan. This dual focus responds to the banana industry's need to both be prepared for exotic pest and disease incursions, and to adopt best management practices on-farm to improve the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef.

Two key platforms for this project are set to be the implementation of the Banana Industry Water Quality Strategy and the priorities from the Banana Industry Biosecurity Framework.

The project communicates regularly with growers, including through levy-funded channels such as the *Australian Bananas* magazine. Look out for the project's 'Under the Microscope' articles that are all about identifying high-priority pests and diseases, as well as updates on water considerations.

As a result of this project, banana growers will be informed and engaged in stakeholder discussions; be better prepared to deal with biosecurity threats; and maintain their 'social license' to farm in close proximity to the Great Barrier Reef.

## Banana enterprise performance comparison 2016/17 (BA16009)

**NOW COMPLETE**

**Key research provider:** Pinnacle Agribusiness

This investment represented the 2015/16 and 2016/17 component of the Australian banana industry's benchmarking program. It was tasked with collecting data and reporting on productivity, quality, profitability and other information from Australian banana businesses. For the first time, the program also produced information on farm biosecurity and environmental management, and any impacts on on-farm processes, practices and costs.

The investment's data was brought together with information from previous benchmarking investments to provide a comprehensive six-year picture of the industry's performance, available within the final report available from [www.bit.ly/ba16009](http://www.bit.ly/ba16009).

Participating businesses also received a series of confidential personal reports highlighting how their business was performing compared to others.

The program's information was intended to allow growers and other industry stakeholders to identify the most relevant factors currently affecting industry performance, and factors that are driving individual business performance – ultimately highlighting opportunities for improving their own businesses.

From the most recent round of reporting, the researchers noted that the top 10 most profitable businesses amongst participants continued to demonstrate consistent differences in their production economics and management practices compared to the remainder of the participants. These top 10 businesses demonstrated higher yields, marginally higher gross prices, lower operating costs and higher cash profits. Their labour productivity was also significantly higher. The researchers noted that more of these businesses irrigate more frequently, use irrigation monitoring technologies, utilise nurse suckering/crop scheduling, and use more phosphorous, more potassium and less nitrogen in their plant nutrition programs.

## Consumer behavioural and retail data for fresh produce (MT17015)

**Key research provider:** Nielsen

This multi-industry investment is tasked with providing regular consumer behaviour data and insight reporting to a range of industries, through the Harvest to Home platform ([www.harvesttohome.net.au](http://www.harvesttohome.net.au)).

The platform has a dedicated dashboard for bananas, making data and reporting easily accessible for industry participants. The information is intended to assist growers and supply chain partners in decision-making for their businesses and, for the wider industry, the data and insights are available to support strategic activities, as well as Hort Innovation Banana Fund marketing plans.



## Banana industry minor use program (BA16003)

**Key research provider:** Hort Innovation

Through this project, levy funds and Australian Government contributions are used to submit renewals and applications for minor use permits for the banana industry as required. These submissions are prepared and submitted to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

For more on minor use permits, including a list of permits, see p15.

All current minor use permits for the industry are searchable at [portal.apvma.gov.au/permits](http://portal.apvma.gov.au/permits). Permit updates are also circulated in Hort Innovation's *Growing Innovation* e-newsletter, which you can sign up for at [www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up](http://www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up).

## Data generation investments (ST15027 and ST18001)

NEW IN 2018/19 (ST18001)

NOW COMPLETE (ST15027)

**Key research providers:** Eurofins, Peracto

The generation of pesticide residue, efficacy and crop safety data is required to support label registration and minor use permit applications and renewals made to the APVMA which, when approved, provide access to safe and effective chemicals for the management of pests, weeds and diseases.

In 2019, Hort Innovation secured more than \$900,000 in assistance grants under the Australian Government's Access to Industry Uses of Agricultural and Veterinary (AgVet) Chemicals program. Under **Generation of data for pesticide applications in horticulture crops (ST18001)**, this funding is being used to generate the data required for a range of product registrations across a variety of horticulture crops. For the banana industry, it is working towards a BASF afidopyropen (Versys) label registration for the control of aphids, specifically the species *Pentalonia nigronervosa*, which is a vector for banana bunchy top virus.

Meanwhile, **Generation of residue data for pesticide minor use permit applications in horticulture crops 2015/16 (ST15027)** came to an end during the financial period, with its data having supported the renewal of PER14966 for the use of ethephon in crop timing management.



**To keep up to date with the latest information on new, ongoing and recently completed R&D investments throughout the year – and to search and find resources and reports from these investments – visit [www.horticulture.com.au/banana](http://www.horticulture.com.au/banana).**

## Minor use permits

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The Hort Innovation Banana Fund supports the submission of applications for new and renewed minor use permits for the industry, as well as data generation activities to support chemical permits and registrations, and strategic agrichemical reviews.

Together these efforts provide industry access to safe, relevant and effective chemicals for the management of pests, weeds and diseases.

For full details on these activities and links to relevant information, visit [www.bit.ly/minor-use-banana](http://www.bit.ly/minor-use-banana).

### Permits in 2018/19

During the 2018/19 financial year, a successful new permit application for PER87198 and a successful renewal for PER14850 were prepared by Hort Innovation and submitted to the APVMA, facilitated through the *Banana industry minor use program* (BA16003).

Meanwhile, successful new permit PER86485 and renewed permits PER14966, PER13158 (issued as PER87164) and PER9409 were also issued during 2018/19, with the applications submitted through the industry minor use program in the previous financial year.

Details for these and all other permits can be found in the following table.



## Current permits

Below is a list of minor use permits for the banana industry, current as of 19 September 2019.

PERMIT ID	DESCRIPTION	DATE ISSUED	EXPIRY DATE	PERMIT HOLDER
PER9409 Version 3	Sulfur dust / Banana bunches / Mites (NSW and QLD only)	01-Oct-06	30-Sep-24	Hort Innovation
PER14850 Version 4	Glyphosate, imidacloprid and paraffinic oil / Bananas / Destruction of banana plants and control of susceptible disease vectors	01-Oct-14	30-Sep-24	Hort Innovation
PER87164 Version 2	Dimethoate / Specified citrus and tropical and sub-tropical inedible peel fruit commodities – post-harvest dip or flood spray / Various fruit fly species	01-Mar-19	31-Mar-24	Hort Innovation
PER14235	Rattoff zinc phosphine bait sachet / Banana plantations / Roof or black rat and mice	01-Jul-13	30-Jun-23	Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) C/AgAware
PER14239	2,4-D (Amicide) / Cavendish bananas / Destruction of banana suckers (NSW only)	01-Jul-13	30-Jun-23	ABGC C/AgAware
PER14240 Version 2	Chlorpyrifos / Bananas / Sugarcane bud moth, banana scab moth, banana rust thrips, mealy bugs and caterpillars	28-Jun-13	30-Sep-20	ABGC
PER81199	Mancozeb (Tatodust) / Banana bunches / Banana fruit speckle disease	27-Oct-15	31-Mar-21	ABGC
PER12450 Version 6	Trichlorfon / Specified fruit crops / Fruit fly	06-Oct-11	31-Jan-21	Growcom C/Hort Innovation
PER14966 Version 3	Ethephon / Bananas / Pseudostem injection for crop timing management	23-Dec-14	31-Aug-23	ABGC C/Hort Innovation
PER14237 Version 2	Diesel Distillate / Bananas / Removal of unwanted suckers (NSW and QLD)	01-Dec-13	30-Sep-23	ABGC C/Hort Innovation
PER86485	Didecyl dimethyl ammonium chloride (Agrcrop Steri-Max Biocide) and benzalkonium chloride (Bactex CF Santiser and Agriquat Disinfectant-Santizer-Deodrant) / Bananas – sanitising and decontamination of surfaces and equipment / Panama disease ( <i>Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. Cubense Race 4</i> )	12-Jul-18	31-Jul-23	Hort Innovation
PER87198	Spinetoram (Success Neo) / Bananas / Banana rust thrips, banana flower thrips, flower eating caterpillars (sugarcane bud moth and scab moth) – bell injection	05-Feb-19	28-Feb-24	Hort Innovation

All efforts have been made to provide the most current, complete and accurate information on these permits, however you should always confirm all details on the APVMA website at [portal.apvma.gov.au/permits](http://portal.apvma.gov.au/permits). Details of the conditions of use associated with these permits can also be found on the APVMA site.

**Minor use permit updates are circulated in Hort Innovation's e-newsletter, *Growing Innovation*. Don't yet receive it? Sign up for free at [www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up](http://www.horticulture.com.au/sign-up).**

## Marketing report

Hort Innovation is responsible for investing the banana marketing levy into a range of activities to drive frequency of purchase and consumption, under the Hort Innovation Banana Fund. Read on for a snapshot of activities and results from 2018/19.

The Australian Bananas marketing program aims to increase domestic demand for Australian bananas by sustaining their position as the country's number one snack, and by growing consumption throughout morning occasions.

### Television

Television played a key role in driving mass awareness of Australian Bananas and ensuring key messages were established in both metro and regional markets. Television advertising was staggered in two bursts, totalling eight weeks from August to September 2018 and January to February 2019. Spots were secured across several key

metro and regional networks including Seven, Nine, Ten, WIN, Southern Cross Austereo (SCA) and Prime. The campaign took advantage of the strong opening programming schedule of 2019, including programs such as *My Kitchen Rules* and *Married At First Sight*. There was also a key spot in the men's tennis finals. The aim of the campaign was for at least 45 per cent of the target audience to see the ad at least two times and the campaign successfully hit every goal in market.

### Digital

Supporting the television campaign, digital activity was run from August 2018 to April 2019. The strategy consisted



of a 15-second Australian Bananas video ad being played across catch-up television services, with an audio version also used across music streaming service Spotify. Meanwhile, six-second ads were shown across YouTube.

All channels surpassed the aim of a 70 per cent completion rate (viewers watching until the end) and 70 per cent viewability (viewers who see the ad). For the second half of the year, the catch-up television strategy had an overall completion rate of 98 per cent and a viewability rate of 93 per cent while serving out over 464,726 opportunities for people to see the content. Spotify had a completion rate of 85 per cent across over 110,238 opportunities to see the content, and YouTube served over 1,420,118 opportunities with an 87 per cent completion rate.

The use of Flybuys data allowed the uplift in sales based on consumers' exposure to the digital advertising to be measured, helping test the effectiveness of the campaign. This analysis revealed 48 per cent of users exposed to the digital ads purchased bananas during the campaign period. This saw an overall strong campaign result, with a 32 per cent sales uplift when compared to a control group.



## Cinema

Cinema advertising was included to drive consideration for bananas and reinforce the creative message. It also provided incremental reach to audiences beyond that of TV alone. This activity involved a mix of 15-second Australian Bananas ads played ahead of movies ranging from *Dumbo* and *Aladdin* to *Captain Marvel* and *Avengers: End Game*, plus in-foyer advertising. More than two million people were reached through this activity.





### Out of home

To extend reach and drive frequency of key messages, from August 2018 to April 2019 ads were placed on panels in gyms, on street furniture and on shopping center digital screens. This reinforced key Australia Bananas messages in consumers' minds, helped to drive action before entering a retail store and was a critical step on the path to purchase journey.

For the gym component of the activity, consumers were targeted during their morning visit (when two thirds of gym users head to the gym). Messages were tailored to health and fitness, in line with messages of the broader Australian Bananas campaign. This activity reached some 4.6 million gym visitors over 16 weeks of advertising.

There was also an on-bus and transit campaign for the second half of the year that had a reach of 4.2 million consumers, with the audience seeing the ad 4.4 times.

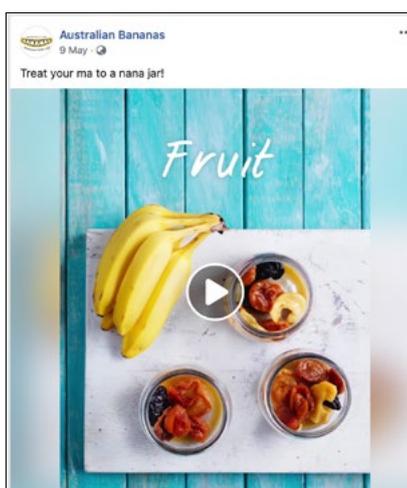
### Social media

The objective of the social media activity was to consistently remind target audiences to purchase bananas in a fun and disruptive way. The 'always on' approach ensured Australian Bananas remained top of mind for consumers.

2018/19 was a strong year for Australian Bananas on social media, delivering more than six million post engagements and 30 million impressions across Facebook and Instagram. The channels continued to see high engagement rates owing to the creative and topical strategy employed, despite the increasing challenges with the platforms' algorithms (which determine the type and frequency of content being shown to users).

TRIBE, an influencer marketing platform, was used to reach and inspire a younger audience by showcasing Australian Bananas as a feel-good





snack. The content created by a range of micro-influencers was posted on their social channels as well as the Australian Bananas own Instagram.

### Public relations (PR)

The objective of the PR campaign was to generate media coverage through the supply of recipes, facts and interviews to press. The total reach of the resulting activity combined was 19.7 million. This year, the number of brand ambassadors was increased, including Billy Slater, nutritionist Susie Burrell and *The Bachelor's* Sam Wood.

The first-ever National Banana Day was an exciting initiative of the marketing program for May 2019. It was launched through a range of events and activities that generated national press coverage and awareness of the day, the industry, and the health benefits of bananas. Working with industry and retail partners the messaging was amplified in store. The activity generated 353 pieces of coverage reaching 11.8 million people, and included an eight-minute segment on *Sunrise* live TV.

### Events

The Australian Bananas marketing program continued to support various events across the country. These events were chosen based on the target demographic for the campaign. Some events attended this year included the Weetbix TRYathlon Series, Ride2Work and the MS Moonlight Walk. Over 15 events in growing regions were also supported throughout the year with merchandise and sponsorship.

### Bounty Bags

Bounty Bags are distributed in hospitals to new mums. Some 230,000 bags were distributed across the year, including an

'Australian Bananas' branded banana case and a leaflet explaining the benefits of bananas as both a 'one handed snack' for new mums, and also as a baby's first food.

### In-store sampling and other varieties

Product sampling of Lady Finger bananas took place in 50 stores across Australia. Samples and recipe cards were handed out to provide education on the variety and to encourage consumers to trial and use in recipes. Information on other varieties was also featured in social media posts, the Australian Bananas website and recipes provided to the press.

### The Australian Bananas website

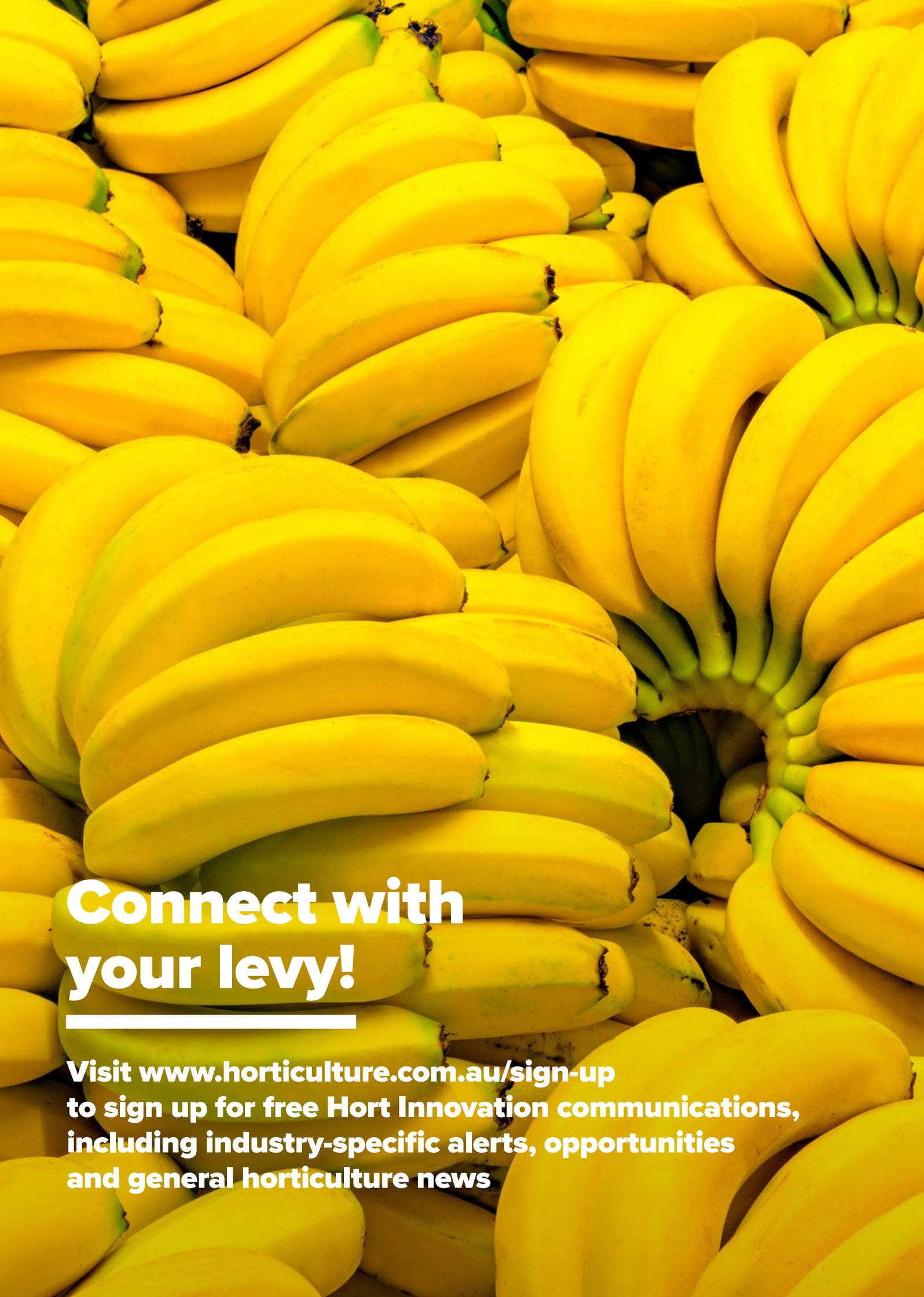
The new-look Australian Bananas website ([www.australianbananas.com.au](http://www.australianbananas.com.au)) continued to grow since its 'Peel Good, Feel Good' refresh in the previous financial year. Over 250,000 visitors viewed the website across the year, including those directed via the social media and public relations strategy.

## Financial statement

### Financial operating statement 2018/19

	R&D (\$)	MARKETING (\$)	TOTAL (\$)
	2018/19 July – June	2018/19 July – June	2018/19 July – June
<b>OPENING BALANCE</b>	<b>1,043,963</b>	<b>8,978</b>	<b>1,052,940</b>
Levies from growers (net of collection costs)	1,999,669	4,259,320	6,258,989
Australian Government money	2,064,714	–	2,064,714
Other income*	32,104	5,354	37,457
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>4,096,487</b>	<b>4,264,673</b>	<b>8,361,161</b>
Project funding	3,529,258	3,691,004	7,220,262
Consultation with and advice from growers	54,551	37,703	92,253
Service delivery – base	144,499	153,198	297,697
Service delivery – shared	240,344	253,871	494,215
Service delivery – fund specific	160,776	241,303	402,079
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>4,129,428</b>	<b>4,377,078</b>	<b>8,506,506</b>
Levy contribution to across-industry activity	94,562	–	94,562
<b>CLOSING BALANCE</b>	<b>916,460</b>	<b>-103,426</b>	<b>813,033</b>
Levy collection costs	8,148	17,103	25,251

\* Interest, royalties



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