

FEBRUARY 2022

Custard apple

Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021

PERFORMANCE REPORT



Custard apple SIP performance report

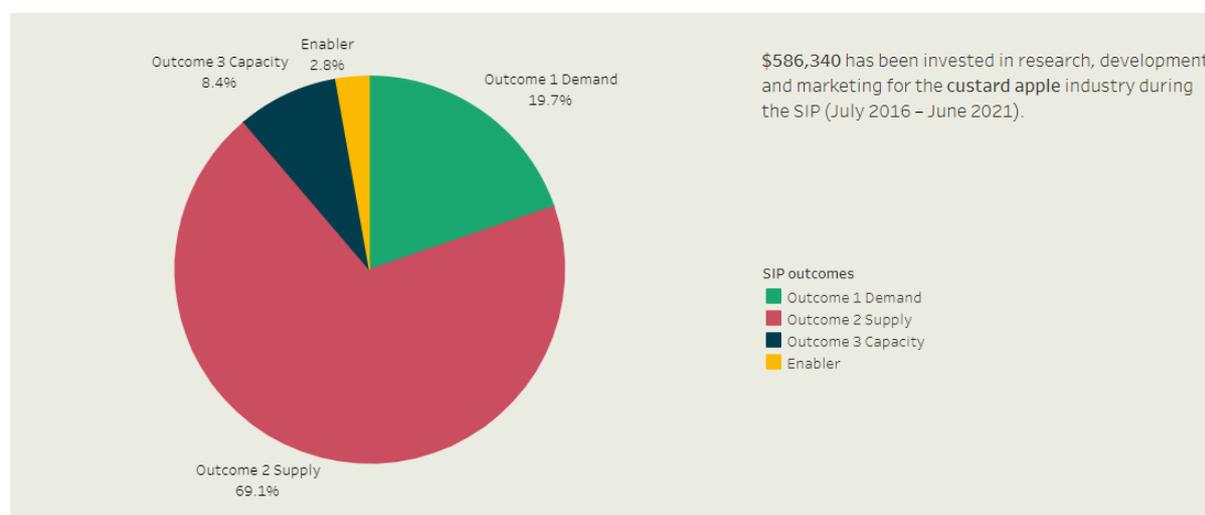
This performance report reviews the performance of levy investments delivered against the custard apple Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), which was active for the 5-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The SIP was developed to strategically guide research and development (R&D) and marketing levy investment in accordance with core industry priorities. The SIP featured three outcome areas, 10 strategies and 16 key performance indicators (KPIs), summarised in Table 1. A total of \$0.6 million was invested into the Custard Apple Fund over the 5-year period of the SIP. The total investment expenditure allocated against each outcome is provided in Figure 1.

Table 1 — Custard apple SIP outcomes

Outcome	Description	Expenditure allocation*
1. Demand	Measurable growth achieved in domestic consumption and improved consumer satisfaction	19.7%
2. Supply	Measurable growth in production volumes, improved production efficiency, and product consistency leading to increased grower profitability	69.1%
3. Capacity	Informed business decision making through access to baseline data and extension material	8.4%

*Total investment \$0.6 million as of June 2021. Balance of expenditure comprises of enabler investments, which includes expenditure to support the delivery of the SIP including advisory meeting and publication costs.

Figure 1 — Custard apple SIP investment expenditure analysis



SIP performance analysis

This performance report reviews the investment achievements delivered within each outcome area that have generated impact for growers. The overall status of each strategic area, informed through an assessment of KPI performance, is also provided. The evaluation status and criteria were:

Strategic area status	Criteria
Achieved	KPIs for this strategic area were met
In progress	Investment delivery remains ongoing
Not achieved	Investment was not prioritised in this strategic area

The results have been informed from evidence compiled through reviewing investment documentation and engagement with project managers. Outcomes generated through the investments are documented and brief case studies of flagship performance and impact for each outcome area are also provided.

Outcome 1: Demand – Measurable growth achieved in domestic consumption and improved consumer satisfaction

The custard apple SIP 2017-2021 noted that awareness and knowledge of custard apple was low in many parts of Australia. A quarter of people outside Queensland did not recognise the fruit and 37.5% had never tasted it.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support custard apple demand are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Develop promotion and consumer education programs in target markets to increase awareness and demand for Australian custard apples	In progress
Increase knowledge and skills through all sectors of the supply chain to deliver custard apples with improved product quality and consistency	Achieved
Educate retailers on best-practice in-store handling for optimum penetration to consumers	Not achieved

KPI callouts:

- The *Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook* (HA18002) reported that household penetration remained flat at 6% between 2017 and 2021, below the target of 10% identified in the SIP. Weight per purchase decreased from 0.30/kg to 0.25/kg over the same period.
- Through *Custard Apple Communication and Extension Program* (CU16001), supply chain management was a key topic for road shows conducted in North Queensland, Bundaberg/Wide Bay, South East Queensland, and Northern New South Wales in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Growers were encouraged to explore cool chain management, trial work and the development of a best practice manual in the discussion.

Outcome 2: Supply – Measurable growth in production volumes and improved production efficiency and product consistency leading to increased grower profitability

The custard apple SIP 2017-2021 recognised that the industry needed to ensure industry-wide consistent supply chain practices including through rootstock management, and on-farm and postharvest practices. A growth target to around 1,800 tonnes in five years' time was seen as achievable, from a 4-year average of 1,464 tonnes prior to development of the SIP.

By improving the consistency of harvested product, outcome 2 was also seen as contributing to improved consumer satisfaction and demand in outcome 1.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support custard apple supply are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Development of rootstocks and varieties that produce consistent crops of high-quality fruit by 2018 and subsequently undertake commercial evaluation	In progress
Improve irrigation, nutritional and environmental management for production efficiency gains and consistent, higher yields	In progress
Increase knowledge and adoption of best practice postharvest management on farm to maintain product quality and consistency	In progress

KPI callouts:

- The *Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook* (HA18002) reported that custard apple production reached 1,836 tonnes in 2020/21, achieving the SIP goal of 1,800 tonnes; over the 5-year period of the SIP production averaged 1,710 tonnes.
- Between 2016 and 2019 the investment *Custard Apple Communication and Extension Program* (CU16001) extended information to growers on best practice postharvest systems and practices, thereby supporting growers to improve production efficiency and consistency of supply.

Case study: New custard apple varieties and enhanced industry productivity (CU16002)

Ongoing at the end of the SIP, the project *New custard apple varieties and enhanced industry productivity* (CU16002) aims to accelerate the development of the Australian custard apple industry through:

- The development and evaluation of new, high-yielding green and red skin custard apple varieties
- Evaluating the performance of clonal and seedling rootstock selections
- Delivering information and skills relating to crop management and production issues to Australia's custard apple growers.

The project has carried on the work conducted in the completed project *Accelerating development of the Australian custard apple industry, new variety development and commercialisation phase 2* (CU13001).

Key results to date include:

- Germinating and potting 1,000 hybrid seedlings from cross-pollinations between elite red skin parents for planting in late spring
- Assessing all plants generated by project CU13001 for leaf type, crop load and susceptibility to disease, with fruit from 16 individual progeny families assessed for fruit quality
- Assessing elite red and green skin selections for vigour, yield and fruit quality
- Ongoing evaluation of a series of rootstock and variety trials established in the previous phase of the project. Investigations included a long-term root stock performance, cuttings versus grafting, variety performance on clonal versus seedling rootstocks, and regional variety testing
- Grafting new elite selections for on-farm testing, to be distributed to grower sites for planting in spring.

Outcome 3: Capacity – Informed business decision making through access to baseline data and extension material

The custard apple SIP 2017-2021 recognised that targeted information products would assist in improving knowledge amongst growers on farm best practice. This would provide growers with information to assist their business decision-making in terms of production practices and postharvest management. In addition, it was noted that enhanced industry data was needed to fully understand the industry and assist in on-farm and industry planning.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support custard apple capacity are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Encourage collaboration with similar industries	Not achieved
Deliver extension activities	Achieved
Industry data	In progress

KPI callouts:

- The investment *Custard apple communication and extension program* (CU16001) supported custard apple industry awareness and uptake of R&D outcomes through field days/road shows in each of Australia's growing regions. The project also facilitated other regular communication channels to Australia's custard apple industry, which included *The Custard Apple* quarterly newsletter, and the industry website.
- The investment *Custard apple dispatch system 2* (CU15000) supported the industry to maintain perspective on product volumes being dispatched through seasons and payback prices. Total volume registered in the system increased by 38% from 2016 to 2018 reaching 538,365 kg, approximately 30% of total production volume.