

FEBRUARY 2022

Passionfruit

Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021

PERFORMANCE REPORT



Passionfruit SIP performance report

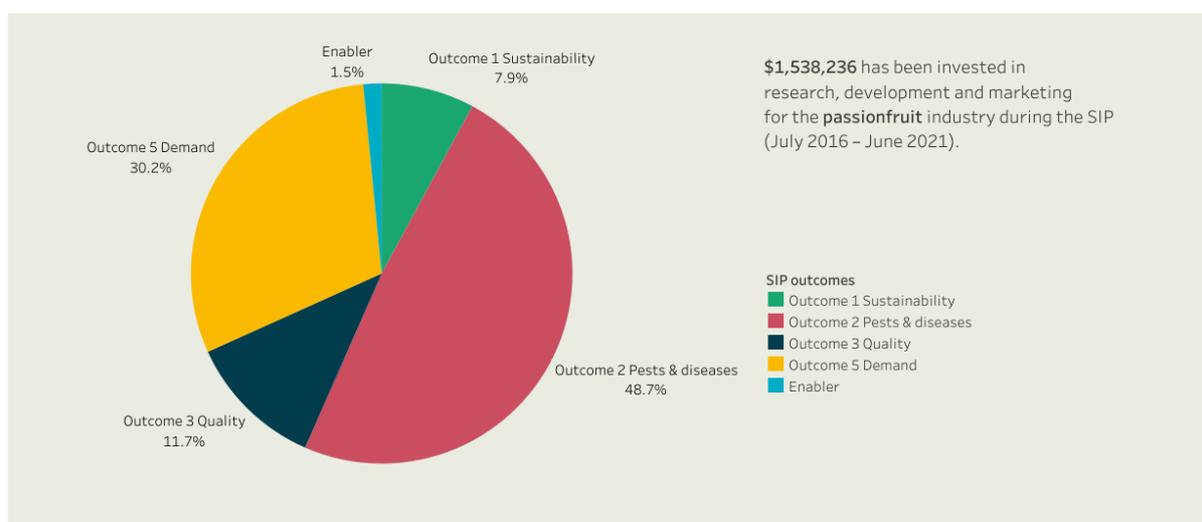
This performance report reviews the performance of levy investments delivered against the passionfruit Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), which was active for the 5-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The SIP was developed to strategically guide research and development (R&D) and marketing levy investment in accordance with core industry priorities. The SIP featured five outcome areas, 13 strategies and 18 key performance indicators (KPIs), summarised in Table 1. A total of \$1.54 million was invested into the Passionfruit Fund over the 5-year period of the SIP. The total investment expenditure allocated against each outcome is provided in Figure 1.

Table 1: Passionfruit SIP outcomes

Outcome	Description	Expenditure allocation*
1. Sustainability	Improved farm and industry sustainability from identifying and adopting best practices	7.9%
2. Pest and diseases	Improved pest and disease management and the development of new varieties that increases grower productivity and profitability	48.7%
3. Quality	Improved retail quality of passionfruit that matches consumer expectations	11.7%
4. Industry data	Access to relevant and timely data that improves industry-wide decision making	0.0%
5. Demand	Increased domestic demand and export opportunities that maintain price stability	30.2%

*Total investment \$1.54 million as of July 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: Passionfruit 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: Sustainability – Improved farm and industry sustainability from identifying and adopting best practices

The passionfruit SIP 2017-2021 noted that the identification and adoption of global best practice by growers in terms of management and industry leadership was key to the future sustainability and stewardship of the industry.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

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

Strategic area	Status
Identify and develop future leaders of the industry through training and engagement	Not achieved
Research high performing industries and growers and develop pathways for the passionfruit industry to embrace similar approaches	In progress
Ensure that systems are established to assist and monitor the adoption of R&D, innovation and best practice	In progress

KPI callouts:

- The quarterly *The Passion Vine* magazine, the Passionfruit Australia website and other activities to keep growers and stakeholders informed on the latest R&D, marketing, chemical updates, markets, and more which was facilitated through *Communications program for the passionfruit industry* (PF13004), and continued under *Passionfruit industry communication program* (PF16003). (See case study below.)
- The *Australian Passionfruit Postharvest Best Practice Guide* was developed and published under the project *Passionfruit postharvest best practice review* (PF18002). (Refer to outcome 3 case study.)

Case study: Australian passionfruit industry communications program (PF16003)

The industry's communications program is responsible for keeping Australian passionfruit growers and other industry stakeholders across the supply chain informed about the latest R&D and marketing activities, essential best practice information, and other key industry news, information and resources.

The project's key activities include:

- Production of *The Passion Vine* magazine, which is delivered to industry quarterly (the magazine also includes fact sheets on pests and diseases)
- *Passiflora News* monthly e-newsletters
- Updating and maintenance of the www.passionfruitaustralia.org.au website, which has been redeveloped under the project
- Delivery of a series of pull-out pest and disease shed posters via quarterly *The Passion Vine* journals
- Delivery of regional field days and research forums, to communicate current and past research, showcase new innovations, and facilitate the sharing of resources and knowledge across the industry. Field days are typically held between March and October each year, with details circulated in industry channels as they become available.

Over the four years of the project, 16 editions of the *The Passion Vine* were published and distributed in printed form to all known levy-paying growers, supply chain stakeholders, researchers and published digitally via the industry website. Articles on best practice advice from industry agronomists and experts were included, as well as other research findings, events and industry news.

Regional field days were a popular element of the project, with 12 face-to-face events being held across Queensland and New South Wales. In an evaluation of the program 85% of respondents indicated that the information they had learnt through the programme had supported change their farming practices. 97% indicated that the regional field days were useful and provided new information to them.

Outcome 2: Pests and Diseases – Improved pest and disease management and the development of new varieties that increases grower productivity and profitability

Pests, diseases and the loss of vigour in varieties overtime were identified in the SIP as issues requiring research investment. With consumers growing more conscious about the provenance of their food and the impact food production has on the environment, the development and adoption of IPM and more environmentally sustainable pest and disease management processes would also contribute to industry strength.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

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

Strategic area	Status
Develop and commercialise new varieties that increase production and also meet consumer expectations	In progress
Continue research to improve the management of pests and disease	Achieved

KPI callouts:

- Investment in developing new scion varieties of passionfruit to ensure sustainability of the industry was undertaken in the project *National passionfruit breeding program* (PF15000) (see case study below) and the ongoing *National passionfruit breeding and evaluation program* (PF19000).
- The investment *Biosecurity plan for the lychee, papaya and passionfruit industries* (MT18006) facilitated a review of the biosecurity plan for the passionfruit industry. This provides a strategic framework for industry and government to work together to improve preparedness for and response to potential threats.
- The investment *Strategic Agrichemical Review Process (SARP) – Updates* (MT19008) provided the passionfruit industry with sound pesticide usage for the future that the industry can pursue for registration with the manufacturer, or minor use permits with the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

Case study: National passionfruit breeding program (PF15000)

The *National passionfruit breeding program* (PF15000) supported developing and selecting new scion varieties of passionfruit for release as new commercial varieties. The project was also responsible for selecting and trialling rootstock and Panama varieties, as well as establishing an industry seed bank to conserve and enhance current passionfruit genetic material in Australia.

PF15000 ran for four years from mid 2016 to mid 2020 and was a major investment for the passionfruit fund, representing over a third of the fund's expenditure over the 5-year period of the SIP.

Key achievements included:

Scion seedlings (crosses and selfs) trialled for new scion selections: More than 2,200 first stage vines were planted, with 1,750 being fully assessed up to mid-2020. 59 of these were taken on to second stage trialling. Only 14 vines made it through from first stage planting in 2016, to the third stage assessment in 2019, where around 760 grafted copies were made of these vines for trialling across nine grower sites.

Partial inbred lines produced from scion varieties: Eighty-eight selfed Misty Gem seedlings were grafted and sent to North Queensland in 2018. Three selections were made by grower, cloned and located in multiple copies at Alstonville in 2019. One of these has produced selfed seed (second generation of inbreeding). Vines and seeds from first generation of inbreeding from the variety Lacey, from four first generation inbreds. Three second generation inbreds have been selected from Burringbar in 2019 and cloned and transferred to Alstonville.

Rootstock and Panama trial: Two of five trials in this evaluation provided useful data. These were the Bundaberg trial, which was large enough to produce useful results as well as the second Clothiers Creek trial site. Fruit yield counts were performed at both sites.

PF15000 made progress towards new varieties and the research into new scion varieties continues in the ongoing project *National passionfruit breeding and evaluation program* (PF19000), which began in 2020.

Outcome 3: Quality – Improved retail quality of passionfruit that matches consumer expectations

The passionfruit SIP 2017-2021 noted that the quality of fruit being displayed at retailers can vary widely due to inconsistent and less than ideal distribution and storage management throughout the supply chain and at retailers. This outcome focused on improving the quality of fruit reaching retailers to ensure customer expectations are realised.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

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

Strategic area	Status
Increase grower focus on delivering quality	In progress
Engage with supply chain and retailer stakeholders to help ensure that high quality fruit is consistently displayed	Achieved
Research and adopt improved postharvest packing, storage and distribution processes to maintain quality and increase shelf life	Achieved

KPI callouts:

- Communication of research outcomes to growers, including articles promoting the *Australian Passionfruit Postharvest Best Practice Guide* were published through *The Passion Vine* magazine, facilitated through *Passionfruit Industry Communication Program* (PF16003).
- Retailer engagement and support regarding storage and distribution of passionfruit to ensure high quality fruit is displayed was the focus of multiple projects including *Passionfruit Retailer Support* (PF18501), *Passionfruit in-store demonstration* (PF17507), *Retailer Engagement*, (PF16504), and *In store Merchandising, Sampling and Education* (PF16501).
- The *Australian Passionfruit Postharvest Best Practice Guide* was developed and published under the project *Passionfruit postharvest best practice review* (PF18002). (See case study below.)

Case study: Passionfruit postharvest best practice review (PF18002)

Maintaining quality of passionfruit after harvest is challenging. Despite their sturdy appearance, passionfruit are fragile fruits that easily lose moisture, are susceptible to disease and rapidly deteriorate after harvest. Managing harvest and extending storage life could increase both marketing flexibility and returns for growers.

The passionfruit SIP 2017-2021 saw opportunity for increased value of passionfruit production through improved distribution and storage management of the fruit throughout the supply chain. *Passionfruit postharvest best practice review* (PF18002) sought to address through a review of information on postharvest management of passionfruit and the publication of the *Australian Passionfruit Postharvest Best Practice Guide*.

The best practice guide features information on optimising postharvest quality through pre-harvest management, harvest practices, postharvest handling, treatments, packing and storage of passionfruit. When applied by growers, packers and wholesalers, it supports the industry to extend the storage life of fruit and shrink fluctuations in the quality of fruit supply, which can impact on grower returns and consumer demand.

The best practice guide was made available as an electronic document with limited numbers of hard copies provided to key industry members. The guide was also promoted to industry members through several articles in *The Passion Vine* magazine as well promoted at industry field days.

As a result of this project, members of the passionfruit industry are better informed about key factors affecting passionfruit quality and actions they can take to adopt or approach postharvest best practice.

Outcome 4: Industry Data – Access to relevant and timely data that improves industry-wide decision-making

The passionfruit SIP 2017-2021 noted that timely and reliable information regarding consumer preferences, regional production, and retail and wholesale data including quality, pricing and volumes could be beneficial for industry wide decision-making.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support access to industry data for passionfruit are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Develop systems and processes that enable relevant industry data to be captured regularly	Not achieved
Ensure that data is made available in a format that facilitates decision making amongst industry stakeholders	Not achieved

Investment expenditure under this outcome was not prioritised during the 5-year period of the SIP.

Outcome 5: Demand – Increased domestic demand and export opportunities that maintain price stability

The passionfruit SIP 2017-2021 noted grower profitability could be improved through expanding exports, developing value-add products and through boosting domestic consumption through targeted marketing initiatives that increase consumer awareness of the availability, versatility, taste and health benefits of passionfruit.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

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

Strategic area	Status
Drive growth in the domestic market through targeted marketing initiatives	Achieved
Drive domestic growth through targeted marketing initiatives and increase market diversification by establishing and maintaining access to new export markets	In progress
Develop value-add products to increase consumer access to, and consumption of, passionfruit	Not achieved

KPI callouts:

- Consumer marketing focused on leveraging the seasonal peaks using public relations, recipe promotion, social media, influencers and in-store activity to drive timely awareness and consumption.
- Almost 200 in-store demonstrations and sampling of fresh passionfruit were carried out over 2017 to 2019 in Coles, Woolworths and independent grocery stores across Australia. Fresh passionfruit was sampled, and recipe brochures handed out. Consumers were also educated around seasonality, storage, and handling.
- The investment *Tropical fruit export strategy* (MT17002) developed individual export strategies for a range of tropical commodities including passionfruit, feeding into an overarching export strategy for Australian tropical fruit. *Passionfruit Industry Export Market Development Strategy* was released in May 2018 identifying opportunities and constraints for increased exports of Australian passionfruit.
- The *Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook* (HA18002) showed that over the 5-year term of the SIP an average farmgate price of \$4.27/kg, an increase of 26% from an average price of \$3.39/kg prior to development of the SIP. Total production value of passionfruit has also grown, averaging \$20 million over the period of the SIP, 25% higher than the average of \$15 million prior to development of the SIP.