

Nursery Strategic Investment Advisory Panel meeting summary

Meeting Title:	Nursery Strategic Investment Advisory Panel		
Meeting Date:	26-27 February 2019 (12:30pm – 5:00pm (day 1) 8:30am-5:00pm (day 2))		
Meeting Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Nursery R&D and Marketing Program 2. General updates from previous SIAP meeting held 9 October 2018 		
Name	Role	Name	Role
Michael Worthington	Chair	Dr Kristen Stirling	Guest, Organisation (Day 1)
Karen Brock	Panellist	Chris O'Connor	Guest, Organisation (Day 2)
Peter Vaughan	Panellist	Clinton Muller	Guest, Organisation (Day 2)
Sonja Cameron	Panellist	John Vatikiotis	Relationship Manager
Hamish Mitchell	Panellist	Byron de Kock	R&D Manager
John Bunker	Panellist	David Weisz	Marketing Manager
Carole Fudge	Panellist	Neil Burgess	Fund Manager
Anthony Tesselaar	Panellist	David Moore	General Manager, Research and Innovation
		Jenny Van de Meeberg	Trade Manager
		Louis Williams	Fund Analyst
		Alison Saunders	Minute Taker

Location: Hort Innovation Sydney

Next Meeting: 21 and 22 May

Overview

The SIAP meeting was held on the 26 and 27 February 2019. The meeting focused on R&D and Marketing updates along with investment advice.

1. Financial Update

The Nursery Fund Manager, Neil Burgess provided the Financial Update for the Nursery Strategic Levy Fund as provided in the meeting papers A document was also tabled at the meeting to provide the panel with a historic record of cost recovery fees for the marketing levy over past years to assist in understanding the current position.

Key messages:

- In addressing the Panel's understanding of marketing levy cost recovery, the Fund Manager explained that previously a flat percentage was charged across all industries and in the interest of fairness that this should change so that the fee reflected the real cost of delivering the marketing program to each specific industry. The panel noted that the nursery industry has significantly more projects and often quite complex projects to deliver and this may contribute to the delivery costs.
- The SIAP confirmed that overall sales had been good, that nurseries are looking to expand, and confidence is increasing.
- The Fund Manager noted that there are healthy closing balances in both the R&D and Marketing Funds, despite a period of strong investment.

2. Gap Analysis Update

Hort Innovation's Fund Analyst, Louis Williams provided a comprehensive Gap Analysis Update for the Nursery R&D and Marketing Program as provided in the meeting papers.

The purpose of the analysis is to increase the visibility of expenditure on each SIP outcome and strategy, highlight investment gaps and support informed decision making regarding strategic investment priorities.

The means by which and by whom the data was gathered and the process of allocating projects to outcomes and strategies (sometimes delivering against multiple outcomes/strategies) was explained.

The SIAP were impressed with the level of analysis and the way in which it was presented. The Panel could see great value in having up to date analyses provided prior to each of their meetings to guide their discussion. The SIAP could also see that this type of analysis might be useful as a "Report Card" that could be used to explain the value and alignment of investments to all levy payers. There was also some commentary to suggest that common gaps across industries may be useful in identifying opportunities for collaboration.

3. Nursery Export Strategy

As agreed in the SIAP meeting held in August 2018, Hort Innovation's Trade Manager, Jenny Van de Meeberg provided an update on trade investments currently underway in the Asian Markets Frontiers Fund and gave a presentation to explain how Hort Innovation provides support for industries interested in export. The Trade Manager also presented Concept 2881 – A Nursery Production Export Scoping Study.

4. Global Review and Gap Analysis

Kristen Stirling and Hugh Wardle, RMCG reported the results and findings of NY17006: Global Review and Gap Analysis of R&D for the Australian Nursery Industry, requested feedback from the SIAP and conducted a workshop to consider the next steps for the industry.

The SIAP identified that the key things they wanted from the report, were to identify:

- Opportunities to collaborate internationally to address productivity outcomes
- R&D gaps
- R&D capacity to address gaps within Australia and overseas

Most importantly the SIAP wanted to ensure that R&D investments were innovative and not reinventing/duplicating existing work elsewhere.

The report did identify key researchers in Australia (leaders in important fields e.g. NGS, urban greening, robotics, protected cropping) and internationally (Germany, Holland, UK and USA)

In summary the report clarified:

- There are some challenges in making connections and delivering extension across a range of appetites for adoption
- There is good R&D capacity in Australia
- There are opportunities internationally but there is a need to connect to collaborate

5. R&D Concepts for Review

Following is a sample of concepts discussed on the day. Further updates to take place once the procurement process is formalised.

7.2 Concept 2880 – Irrigation water disinfection (Outcome 4: Improve productivity)

7.3 Concept 2875 – NGIA National Conference 2020

8. Improving Pest Management for Nursery Industry: Project Update

Chris O'Connor, NGIA provided a project update for NY17009: Improving Pest Management for the Nursery Industry.

The project has two parts:

Desktop Review of Neonicotinoids and Associated Minor Use Permits

Peter Del Santo provided the final report on this aspect of the work last Friday so will be made available to the SIAP once the report is finalised and the milestone has been approved.

In summary, the EU has banned the use of three neonicotinoids until 2023, the USA EPA is reviewing neonicotinoids with a report due early this year, Canada banned neonicotinoids in 2015 and Australia currently has no ban in place.

The key driver for bans is because of Bee Colony Collapse Disorder (which has no single factor/cause). There is no evidence of CCD in Australia. There are lethal and non-lethal impacts of neonicotinoids to consider. The nursery industries currently has neonicotinoid alternatives registered/available.

Four Minor Use Permits for alternatives are likely to become available this year.

Economic Assessment of IPM

The data metrics for the project have been identified. Seven businesses have been selected for the project to identify cost/benefit of a robust crop monitoring program based on set criteria (NIASA accreditation, geographic spread (important for field days), cropping types, crop monitors available nearby, growers amenable to monitoring but weren't doing it yet and for the next 12 months).

Data will be captured using six different google forms, available across different platforms and devices, and downloadable as a spreadsheet.

A communications program is in place across a matrix (facebook, conferences, field days, courses).

The SIAP were interested in developing a network of IPM practitioners/businesses willing to share experiences. They are also interested in considering benefits other than financial.

9. NY17008: Nursery Industry Statistics 2016-17 to 2019-20: Project Update

Peter Vaughan, NGIA provided a verbal update on NY17008 - Nursery Industry Statistics 2016-17 to 2019-20.

The focus of the project is to test and build on the renewed methodology for industry statistics collection from the previous project NY1616004, that was based on engaging a representative sample of nursery production business to deliver accurate, timely and longitudinal nursery industry data. Independence and confidentiality continue to be key elements in establishing trust in the data collection process.

The first year's data has been delivered with production data being validated against retail and landscape figures. More surveys have been collected with less empty cells so the data is getting richer. Number of production businesses has declined but mainly in the smaller sized businesses. 1.9 billion plants were sold representing 2.4 billion in value. Sales in retail made up 470 million and for landscapers 375 million. Again sentiment was strong and it is predicted that demand for plants will continue to be grow.

10. Review of Nursery Industry Career Pathways: Project Update

Clinton Muller and Hugh Wardle, RMCG presented an update on NY17002

Key Messages:

- Attracting, retaining and developing a skilled workforce in the nursery business is a major focus.
- There are decreasing opportunities to gain agricultural/horticultural qualifications in the tertiary sector and in the VET sector, with opportunities in amenity rather than production nursery disciplines.
- There is not a lot of interest from unskilled labour either.
- Nursery requires both skilled and unskilled workers (deciders and doers)
- Strategies to attract staff include school-based programs, workplace programs, passive marketing of an industry involved in global solutions for the environment and future.
- The report provided insights into why nursery doesn't get the applicants they are looking for, and clarifies what nursery is looking for in its applicants
- In retaining staff it is important to deliver, job satisfaction, wages, good conditions and opportunities for growth
- In developing staff, it is important to provide opportunities to grow through networking, national/international experiences, inhouse training and promotion.

11. Hort Frontiers – Leadership and Green Cities Update

Jane Wightman joined the meeting by teleconference to introduce herself as the new Business Development Manager for the Leadership Fund and provide an update on the program

Key Messages:

- The Nursery Industry have been looking at understanding its leadership needs
- The Industry have supported the Masterclass program previously and currently has 7 participants in the new program.
- The Strategic Intent of the Leadership program focuses on retaining existing employees, promoting careers in horticulture and driving research innovation. The Expert Advisory Panel for the Leadership Fund recently met to review the strategy and some new programs will be introduced as a result of that discussion.
- Feedback on the program is largely positive but there is an issue with enrolments so more will be done to communicate the benefits of the program.
- More needs to be done to demonstrate career pathways in horticulture.
- Leadership programs are being strategically targeted at all levels and this is the area where there will be some new programs introduced in the near future.
- Jane Wightman provided a rundown on the current Masterclass Program.

Byron de Kock, Business Development Manager for the Green Cities Fund provided an update on the program

Key Messages:

- \$15 million is currently invested in the green cities fund across the four themes (climatic and environmental, metrics and measurements, culture and community and knowledge and information).
- The Strategic Intent Review is underway.
- An update was provided for the key projects: Which Plant Where, Healthier Lives, Demonstration Green Roofs (refer to presentation).
- The Expert Advisory Panel (Warwick Savvas - Aspect Landscape Architect, David Mathews – Proteaflora Grower, Dr Mark Gibbs -Climate Scientist, and Julie Francis – Local Government) are looking to expand and refresh membership of its Panel.
- The Panel are keen for the Green Cities, Nursery and Turf Fund to establish stronger linkages and suggest meeting together for a day prior to their respective panel meetings.

12. Nursery Communication Program (NY18001): Project Update

Sophie Keatinge from Cox Inall provided a verbal update on the communications project which has just commenced and will run for three years. She outlined the aim, target audiences (levy payers, industry stakeholders and supply chain) and key deliverables (nursery papers monthly, monthly e-newsletters, NGIA website, NGIA social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn), written and video grower case studies, podcasts(new), facts at a glance digests (new) and media releases).

13. Marketing Update

David Weisz, Marketing Manager for the Nursery Program outlined the Marketing Program for the Agenda, starting with the results from the first year of the domestic market development program (NY17519), followed by an opportunity for the SIAP to provide feedback in developing the strategy for the second year, then a session to consider options for renewing the 202020 Vision name and brand and finally considering the expressions of interest from NGIA State Associations to hold PLB partnership events.

Ben Peacock (Republic of Everyone) provided an update on the 202020 Vision and Plant Life Balance Programs which effectively started in September 2018 and to provide an opportunity for the SIAP to provide feedback on the first 7 months of the project. Key Messages:

- In terms of commitment to plants as critical infrastructure, Western Australia is doing really well with both funding and legislation, followed by Victoria, while there is a need to start again with a new planning minister in NSW, Queensland is interesting with Local and State Government are working collaboratively, there are challenges between distinguishing urban and ordinary forestry in Tasmania (green places see less need for urban greening)
- The approach to business includes putting the green into green star, partnering with GBCA (Green Building Council of Australia) (very significant outcome), GBCA member survey, need to prove the value of green, communications audit (to see what's working when talking about green, ecology and biodiversity doesn't resonate; urban greening, green space, liveability and walkability, living infrastructure, health and wellbeing, cooler cities, air quality, social cohesion, safety does), provide proof and case studies for development leaders, continue to engage and advocate.
- The approach to reaching the consumer community occurs through Plant Life Balance, where well-being is the main driver.
- Industry engagement is essential.

14. Recommendation Regarding Proposed New Names for the 202020 Brand

A new name is required for the 20:20:20 Vision. Ben Peacock presented a range of options. The top three choices will now be tested with stakeholders and feedback provided to the SIAP for advice.

Contact

John Vatikiotis

0429 022 637

john.vatikiotis@horticulture.com.au