



## Horticulture Industry Working Group Terms of Reference -

### *Reset and refresh: Roles, responsibilities and the advice mechanism*

#### Terms of Reference

The Horticulture Industry Working Group Terms of Reference set out the membership, responsibilities, purpose and operations of the Horticulture Industry Working Group (**Working Group**).

#### Role

The Working Group's role is to connect and engage with levy payers and industry stakeholders to shape an effective framework for discussion at industry workshops and provide input and guidance to the implementation of agreed outcomes from those workshops.

The workshops and associated next steps focus on the two key issues set out in the background paper developed by Hort Innovation in July 2021, including:

- Defining the roles and responsibilities of PIBs, Hort Innovation, government and relevant industry bodies; and
- Current and potential alternative advice mechanisms for research and development.

Please refer to the Horticulture Industry Working Group Background for further detail on the framework that was developed for discussion at the workshops.

The Working Group will perform its roles while building respectful engagement, genuine collaboration and constructive impact, to improve outcomes for all participants in the Australian Horticulture industry.

#### Membership

The Working Group is established with the support of the Board and senior management of Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (**Hort Innovation**), with secretariat support and independent facilitation provided by Seftons and Associates (**Seftons**).

The Working Group will consist of nine members, not including the independent facilitator. Industry stakeholders were asked in January 2022 to provide an expression of interest to Seftons, addressing the criteria set out below. A selection panel reviewed the expressions of interest to determine membership of the Working Group.

Membership was offered to individuals based on their relevant skills, experience and networks on the basis that they have a deep understanding of the Australian Horticulture industry or its constituencies.

The Working Group is comprised of:

- One representative from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF);
- Two representatives from Hort Innovation Board;
- Two representatives from Hort Innovation Executive; and
- Four representatives from industry.

No alternates or substitutes will be allowed for members of the Working Group. Full participation of the Working Group is paramount. Quorum is participation by a majority of representatives. If there is no quorum at a meeting, the secretariat will use best endeavours to reconvene an alternative meeting at a suitable time.

The Working Group might invite external expertise to assist from time to time at the discretion of the secretariat.

## Skills and expertise

The Working Group will collectively have the following skills, expertise and experience needed to guide the development and confirmation of the framework for discussion at the workshops, and implementation of agreed actions. Individuals providing an expression of interest in becoming a member of the Working Group were asked to outline how they address each of the points below.

Knowledge and experience in:

- A. The Australian Horticulture industry and associated organisations;
- B. Current structures and processes relevant to the expenditure of levies, and decisions guiding that expenditure, in the Australian Horticulture industry;
- C. Stakeholder engagement, particularly in relation to horticulture, rural, regional and remote communities;
- D. Public policy related to agriculture, horticulture and/or research and development;
- E. Participatory, co-design or deliberative engagement in decision-making.

Diversity is a key consideration in determining Working Group composition. This includes gender, background, experience, sector and geography (within Australia).

## Accountability

The Working Group is accountable to levy payers and industry participants for the efficient and effective performance of its responsibilities and must act in good faith with the role and operations set out in this Terms of Reference.

To foster understanding of the Working Group's activities and transparency of its actions, the Working Group will engage with industry stakeholders and levy payers after each meeting to communicate outcomes and initiatives that will be implemented.

In its operations, members of the Working Group will:

- A. Act for the benefit of levy payers and the Horticulture industry
- B. Be empowered to make decisions on behalf of levy payers in relation to framework to be discussed at the workshops, format and delivery of the workshops, implementation of actions agreed at those workshops.
- C. Work in a collaborative manner, respecting differing views.
- D. Engage proactively, positively and constructively with industry stakeholders and levy payers in relation to the Working Group's activities.
- E. Fully consider the advice and recommendations of representatives of industry, Hort Innovation, government or specialist advisors.
- F. Be informed by their backgrounds and organisations but in all communications or discussions regarding the Working Group and its recommendations, articulate the messages agreed on by the Working Group.
- G. Attend all meetings and work with the secretariat to confirm and schedule future meetings.
- H. Be understanding that support and facilitation needs to be as effective and efficient as possible, reflecting that there is concise time available for preparation, implementation and reporting of meetings.

If any members of the Working Group have concerns regarding the activities the group is undertaking, they must first raise them with the independent facilitator, who will then work closely with the Working Group member and will advise of appropriate next steps.

Please note the Working Group does not have voting rights. The Working Group is expected to operate collaboratively and to that end meetings will take a consensus-building approach with all members expected to engage respectfully and proactively.

## Responsibilities

The Working Group has the following responsibilities:

- A. Develop and agree a clear framework for consideration at industry workshops to be held in 2022, based on feedback set out in the Stakeholder Insights Report and engagement with levy payers and industry participants.
- B. Communicate the framework to workshop participants prior to the workshops, with the intention of fostering open, honest, respectful and collaborative discussion at the workshops, to confirm a way forward for industry.
- C. Provide input and guidance to Hort Innovation regarding the implementation of agreed actions at the workshops.
- D. Review relevant communications that are provided to levy payers in relation to the activities of the Working Group.
- E. Determine if any expenditure is required to carry out Working Group duties and activities.

## Meetings

The Working Group will meet once per month between March and June 2022. A further two meetings will be held between August and December 2022. Meetings will be conducted primarily virtually. Members of the Working Group will be provided at least five working days' notice of meetings.

## Remuneration and expenses

Working Group membership is a voluntary appointment. No remuneration will be provided. All appropriate out-of-pocket expenses associated with this role (such as travel and accommodation) will be reimbursed, including out-of-pocket expenses for participation at the industry workshops.

## Independent facilitator and secretariat

The role of the independent facilitator is to:

- Assist the Working Group to achieve outcomes and the activities required to fulfil its role.
- Work with the Working Group to ensure the agenda is covered.
- Provide advice or counsel where required as to the process and function of the Working Group, in an independent manner.
- Keep the details of the Working Group's activities and discussions confidential.

The role of the secretariat is to:

- Schedule and coordinate all Working Group meetings. An agenda for all Working Group meetings will be shared with members at least two working days prior to scheduled meetings.
- Minute all meetings and actions and share these with Working Group members within one week of any concluded meeting.
- Follow up Working Group members regarding action items and agreed steps.
- Draft communications to levy payers and industry stakeholders following each Working Group meeting, for the Working Group's review and approval.
- Keep the details of the Working Group's activities and discussions confidential.
- Review (if required) the membership of the Working Group due to unacceptable performance, attendance or conduct.

Background to the establishment of this Working Group is provided as **Appendix 1**.

For further information please contact Sally Schilg via email [sally.schilg@seftons.com.au](mailto:sally.schilg@seftons.com.au)

## Appendix 1. Background to the Horticulture Industry Working Group

### Industry discussion paper

In July 2021 Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (**Hort Innovation**) developed an industry discussion paper that was distributed to PIBs and other stakeholders, intended as pre-work to a series of three workshops to be held in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. That discussion paper is [available here](#). The focus of those workshops was to be ‘what does good look like?’ for the horticulture industry in Australia, how to achieve meaningful change and raise the quality of outcomes for all industry participants. Seftons and Associates (**Seftons**) was engaged by Hort Innovation to facilitate those workshops with the intention of fostering open discussion about how to move the industry forward in a constructive and positive manner.

The background paper developed by Hort Innovation identified the following key areas and principles:

- The need for clearer definitions of roles and responsibilities of Hort Innovation and commodity Peak Industry Bodies (**PIBs**), and
- A review of the current Strategic Investment Advisory Panel (**SIAP**) structure and more formal recognition of the role of PIBs in providing advice to Hort Innovation and consultation with levy payers.

### Stakeholder interviews

Due to COVID-19 lockdowns in July and August 2021, the workshops were postponed. Hort Innovation engaged Seftons to conduct up to 50 one-on-one interviews with PIBs, industry stakeholders and Hort Innovation teams. The interviews were an opportunity for stakeholders to provide their feedback and views on the key areas outlined above. In particular, stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on the draft definitions of roles and responsibilities, plus the current and alternative models for the advice mechanism, which were set out in the industry discussion paper.

The interviews were completed in August and September 2021 with PIBs; industry representative bodies; Hort Innovation teams; the Hort Innovation Board and senior management; the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (**DAWE**); and the National Farmers’ Federation (**NFF**) Hort Council. The input of all stakeholders is greatly appreciated, and their views valued. Prior to conducting interviews, stakeholders were provided with a background document setting out the questions to be asked in the discussion. Following interviews with PIBs, Seftons provided a copy of the notes taken in the discussion, for review, consideration and amendment.

### Seftons Report

In November 2021, PIBs and industry stakeholders were provided the Seftons Report (**Report**) that set out the general themes and feedback of stakeholders gathered through those interviews. That Report intended to provide an open, honest account of the discussions while not identifying organisations or individuals. The Report is [available here](#).

Included in the Report were some general themes regarding transparency, accountability, communication and what success looks like. Interviewees feedback regarding the draft definitions of roles and responsibilities was provided in the Report, plus views on current and potential alternative advice mechanisms.

### Working Group

To ensure discussion at the workshops is focused on achievable, effective, constructive actions, a clear framework or strawman needed to be developed for consideration at the workshops. One of the key themes of the feedback from the interviews was that stakeholders are wanting to work collaboratively with Hort Innovation to co-design processes and structures that ensure the views of relevant stakeholders are considered. In recognition of this feedback, and to ensure the strawman is representative of industry, Hort Innovation established a Working Group to develop and approve the development of the framework. That framework is [available here](#).