

# **Horticulture Innovation Australia**

## **Final Report**

### **Industry Communication through Living Lychee**

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## Content

Summary .....	3
Keywords.....	4
Introduction .....	5
Methodology.....	6
Outputs .....	7
Outcomes .....	8
Evaluation and discussion .....	9
Recommendations .....	10
Scientific refereed publications.....	11
Intellectual property/commercialisation .....	12
References.....	13
Acknowledgments .....	14
Appendices.....	15

## Summary

The project aims to improve industry communication between lychee growers and ALGA, and to make levy payers more aware of the industry's marketing, promotions, public relations, and research and development programs.

The project has two components:

- production of the industry journal, *Living Lychee*; and
- maintaining the industry website, [australianlychee.com.au](http://australianlychee.com.au).

### Journal

The industry journal is published in July, October and March. Each issue includes reports from the ALGA president and executive officer, and regional representatives. It also features articles from researchers and marketers to keep growers up to date with the latest findings; and articles from Hort Innovation to make growers aware of industry activities, projects and outcomes.

### Website

The industry website has a section for casual visitors and one for growers.

The visitors' pages introduce the industry, describe varieties, has recipes, and covers fruit handling and storage. A contact form is often used by visitors and stakeholders.

The website also has a 'News' section where articles of interest to growers and visitors is regularly published.

In the growers-only section, growers can log-in to download research reports, publications, documents and selected articles from *Living Lychee*.

### Key outcomes: Journal

As a result of publishing *Living Lychee*, growers are more aware/have a greater understanding of:

- The Australian lychee industry
- Industry activities and programs, including the strategic plan
- R&D projects and results
- Industry promotions and marketing programs
- How and where the lychee industry levy is being spent
- The relationship between ALGA, Hort Innovation and the Australian government

Greater awareness of industry projects has contributed to growers implementing research findings (e.g. application of auxin to reduce fruit drop) and to participating in export programs (e.g. export to the USA).

**Key outcomes: website**

- Visitors are more aware of the Australian lychee industry and of lychees, and how to store, use and buy them.
- Growers have a reference point for current information about the lychee industry
- Growers have ready and timely access to the summaries of the latest R&D and marketing information
- Growers have access (via log-in) to complete R&D and marketing reports and other relevant industry information

**Recommendations**

Positive results from a survey of the industry journal, a steady increase in the number of visitors to the website, and the surge in hits on the industry website during the industry's digital PR/marketing campaign, would suggest that the two strategies work well together and should be maintained, as they effectively fulfill the project's aims and objectives.

## Keywords

Lychee; Living Lychee; lychee journal; lychee website; Australian lychee; lychee research; lychee magazine; lychee projects

## Introduction

The lychee industry has relied on its trade journal, *Living Lychee*, to communicate with its members and levy payers.

In 2007 Fruit Tree Media was contracted to redesign, refocus and reinvigorate grower interest in the journal.

Fruit Tree Media created a new, visually appealing, modern magazine aimed at generating greater reader interest; and focused on presenting topics of (potential financial) value to growers including R&D projects and outcomes, the industry's domestic and export marketing programs (and strategic plan), and regional issues.

These core topics are complemented with articles about growers and marketers, news, and other industry-related and cross-industry related issues and research.

The industry website also needed updating to better promote the industry and lychees to the public, and to attract growers wanting to know more about the industry.

The website was updated in 2015 after a review of the old site and feedback from ALGA of what was needed in the new site.

The new site utilises the latest content management system and web technologies. It presents industry information in clear, easy to follow pages, and complements the industry's marketing and promotional program by re-purposing marketing material obtained from Hort Innovation (HAL at the time).

The website now allows ALGA the opportunity to publish relevant and timely information for growers via a new 'News' section found on the Home page. News items and any photos are sent to the editor and immediately uploaded to the site.

The website also has a grower-only section which presents relevant and timely information to ALGA members and levy payers; and where the industry journal can be downloaded as a digital file.

## Methodology

### Industry Journal

The lychee industry journal, *Living Lychee*, is published three times a year, March July and October.

It is a professionally designed, and edited to suit a grower audience. Each issue has 20 colour pages.

It is mailed to ALGA members and levy payers (about 250 – mainly in Queensland and northern NSW). The mailing list is maintained by ALGA and captures most of the commercial lychee growers in Australia.

The content for the journal is sourced by the editor primarily from researchers (for lychee and cross-industry projects), Hort Innovation (for lychee PR and marketing), lychee regional representatives, ALGA president and executive officer.

Other content sources include Biosecurity Australia, Plant Health Australia, Growcom, NSW and Qld departments of Agriculture, local and international experts.

All material is presented to the ALGA president and EO for comment/feedback and approval before publication.

The journal focuses on:

- Industry and relevant cross-industry R&D projects - objectives, updates, reports, conclusions
- Industry marketing & PR programs – objectives, updates, reports, effectiveness
- ALGA's programs - e.g. export information, market access, biosecurity issues, chemical registration, climate change
- Industry news - e.g. meetings, field days, season updates, crop forecasts, regional updates
- Grower orchard practices – via interviews with growers.

Fruit Tree Media is engaged to:

- Produce a 20 page colour journal, three times a year.
- Source all material
- Edit all material
- Design each journal (including manipulate photography, graphs, diagrams etc.)
- Prepare proofs (as PDF) for approval by ALGA president and executive officer
- Prepare print-ready PDFs



## Industry website

Fruit Tree Media was responsible for collating feedback from ALGA on what was needed for the new site, and then designing and maintaining the site.

FTM is also responsible for keeping the information up to date and relevant. This applies to the visitors' section and the growers' section.

For the visitors' section of the website Fruit Tree Media:

- Edits/updates page information (text, images, graphs, tables etc.)
- Adds new material to existing pages (e.g. new varieties)
- Creates new menu items and pages (e.g. 'News', and 'Links for growers')

For the growers' section of website, Fruit Tree Media:

- Adds News articles
- Adds research reports
- Uploads *Living Lychee* and makes issues available for download
- Updates ALGA committee members section
- Extracts practical information from past and future issues of *Living Lychee* and makes it available as PDF files for growers to download.

For the administrative end of the website, Fruit Tree Media:

- Registers site name, maintains site hosting
- Updates and maintains the content management system (Joomla)
- Updates extensions
- Maintains site security
- Backs-up and archives site
- Troubleshoots issues.

## Outputs

### **Industry journal, *Living Lychee***

Industry journal (20 colour pages each) produced and distributed in:

2014 – July and October

2015 – March, July and October

2016 – March, July and October

2017 – March (see attachment)

Each issue contained:

- ALGA presidents report
- ALGA EO report
- Regional Reports from S-E Qld, Tablelands and Nth Qld, Bundaberg and Childers area, Central Qld, Far North Qld. Northern NSW.
- Research reports as they became available including:
  - Pilot program to export Australian lychee to USA
  - Post harvest control of surface pests on lychee for export to the USA and NZ
  - Area wide management of Qfly
  - MOU Qld and Taiwan Ag Research Institute
  - Fruitspotting bug management project – results and outcomes
  - Improving fruit yields in lychee: Auxin, Ethefon, new seedlines
  - Best performing seedlines for each growing region
  - Malaysia and Indonesia seek Aussie lychees
  - Managing trees after flowering
  - Pesticide residue data for minor use permit application and registrations
  - Trap hedges a monitoring tool for fruitspotting bug management
  - Alternative Auxins

- ALGA/ Hort Innovation reports as they became available including:
  - Lychee marketing and R&D
  - Lychee industry strategic plan and priorities
  - Lychee industry promotional program
  - Lychee marketing update
  - Across industry project summaries
  - Love from lychees

**Industry website:**

See here: [australianlychee.com.au](http://australianlychee.com.au)

*For visitors*

- Newly designed, fresh and modern-looking, colourful website, incorporating the latest web technology – including scalability to suit tablets and phones.
- Attractive and informative (for visitors and growers).
- Incorporating updated information from previous website, and re-purposed lychee marketing and PR information and images from Hort Innovation (was HAL).
- Site linked to lychee Facebook ([facebook.com/AussieLychees](https://facebook.com/AussieLychees)) and Instagram pages ([instagram.com/aussielychees](https://instagram.com/aussielychees)).

*For growers (grower-only section)*

'ALGA' menu containing:

- R&D: Reports, List of chemicals from APVMA, Industry Biosecurity Plan
- SIP and Export plans
- Various Final Reports
- *Living Lychee*
- 17 articles taken from *Living Lychee* and ready for download.

## Outcomes

### Journal

A survey was conducted to evaluate the industry journal and its outcomes. There were 32 responses to the survey. According to the survey results, all intended outcomes were achieved.

Summary of survey results:

- Industry activities (e.g. trade access), R&D projects, PR and marketing programs are all covered adequately in the industry magazine.
- The magazine has made readers more aware of the industry's research finding (e.g. breeding program, auxin use), and approved chemicals and permits.
- Readers are now more aware of the industry levy fund, better management practices and exporting.
- Respondents said (via their written feedback) that they have greater awareness of, 'new varieties', of 'growing conditions in other areas' and of 'others facing similar challenges'.
- Readers are interested in reading reports from the president, secretary and regions; about industry research and marketing; and news/views.
- Readers did not want to change publication frequency or the number of pages; or want a digital-only magazine.
- Half the respondents said the magazine has helped them improve productivity/profitability. This was achieved (according to their written feedback) mainly through information published about orchard management practices (pests, chemical use, timing).

### Website

According to visitor counts to the website, and counts to specific items (grower interest), the website achieved its outcomes.

*Grower interest:*

On the 'Home' page, News updates were uploaded to the website and the number of views counted.

News was dominated by articles on a lychee industry pilot project to export lychees to the USA. Updates for this project received significant interest (average 500 - 800 hits each).

Log-in grower area: Main interest was in R&D topics, especially:

agrichemicals (114 hits)

Biosecurity (219 hits)

Reports (205 hits)

Pests (221 hits)

*Living Lychee* (404 hits).

*Visitor interest:*

Visits in 2013 averaged 1,000/month.

Visits in 2014 averaged 1,300/month.

Visits in 2015 averaged 2,000/month

Visits in 2016 averaged 2,800/month.

Visits in 2017 (probably boosted by the industry's digital PR/marketing program which referenced the website):

Jan 15,500

Feb 10,000

March 8,000

April 2,000

May 2,700

Top five articles (since 2015):

*Popular varieties* (26,000 hits)

*Helpful hints for retailers* (16,000 hits)

*Buying and storing lychees* (14,000 hits)

*Industry background* (9,000 hits)

*Preparing to eat* (8,500 hits).

## Evaluation and discussion

A survey was conducted to evaluate the project. A questionnaire was developed by the journal editor and ALGA Executive Officer, Jill Houser; and made available on the industry website in August 2016. A link to the questionnaire was emailed to all ALGA members and there were 32 responses.

The survey can be found at this link: [australianlychee.com.au/lychee-grower-survey-form](http://australianlychee.com.au/lychee-grower-survey-form)  
Questions relate only to the publication of the industry journal, *Living Lychee*. A hard copy of the survey is attached.

Evaluation of the website is done through visitor counts – see Outcomes for details.

### Summary of results

For survey summary details, see Outcomes above. For total survey responses, see Appendices.

The survey results, plus feedback for each issue of *Living Lychee* from the President and Executive Officer, indicate that through the production of the industry journal, *Living Lychee*, and by maintaining the industry website, [australianlychee.com.au](http://australianlychee.com.au), the project has achieved its intended outcomes:

“To improve industry communication between lychee growers and ALGA, and to make levy payers more aware of the industry's marketing, promotions, public relations, and research and development programs.”

The success of the project is demonstrated in the survey results for the journal, and in the visitor counts for the website.

The survey questionnaire asked respondents for their suggestions for articles, and how to improve the journal. Their suggestions should be implemented in future issues of *Living Lychee*, including:

- More information on chemical use, available options and how to maximise efficacy
- Chemical registrations
- A look at fruit quality specifications
- Quarantine protocols for importing countries
- Grower general interest and (innovative) orchard management practices
- Product reviews and availability

## Recommendations

This has been a very successful project as shown from the survey results for the journal, and the number of hits for the website.

The recommendation would be to continue the project, with these additions:

Journal – incorporate the suggestions identified in the survey.

Website – utilise the 'News' section more to keep growers up to date with developments, and promote the grower 'log-in' section more, for growers to access this resource and download reports, journals, articles etc.

## Scientific refereed publications

None to report



## Intellectual property/commercialisation

No commercial IP generated

## Appendices

Grower survey: [australianlychee.com.au\\_lychee-grower-survey-form.pdf](#)

Survey results: [Living-Lychee Survey summary.pdf](#)

*Living Lychee*: [March 2017 \(as uploaded to australianlychee website\): 2017-03\\_LL.pdf](#)