

Final Report

Mushroom Crisis Management Review

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Project code:

MU16001

Project:

MU16001 Mushroom Crisis Management Review

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Funding statement:

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation, using the Mushroom research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government. Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture.

Publishing details:

ISBN 978 0 7341 4378 5

Published and distributed by: Hort Innovation

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Sydney NSW 2000

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www.horticulture.com.au

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Summary

This project is informed by the vision and mission of Hort Innovation, the rural research and development (R&D) priorities prescribed by the Commonwealth's levy process, and the Australian Mushroom Industry Strategic Plan 2011/6.

The primary objective for the project is to support the mushroom industry's growth strategy. The project specific objectives include assisting Hort Innovation and the mushroom industry to:

- Maintain the industry's crisis management plan (CMP)
- Ensure all potential risks/threats to the mushroom industry are identified
- Ensure that personnel involved in crisis management have received effective training
- Ensure that stakeholders are aware of the systems in place for managing a potential crisis

The project objectives were achieved through the conduct and outputs of the following project phases:

- **Phase one:** CMP review and gap analysis
- **Phase two:** Industry risk assessment
- **Phase three:** Crisis management training
- **Phase four:** Industry communication and awareness

The desired outcome of the project is a resilient mushroom industry, achieved through enhancing its ability to intelligently and intuitively prepare for, respond to and recover from known and perceived risks. This project will assist by:

- **Enabling an effective crisis management response** by improving the industry's understanding of crisis management principles and procedures
- **Improving coordination and industry resilience** by increasing awareness of crisis management arrangements for the mushroom industry
- **Protecting the industry's reputation** by providing an intuitive approach to identify, assess and respond to crises using effective communication strategies

Control Risks worked with the Australian Mushroom Growers' Association, comprising the role of project sponsor and industry liaison, facilitating the knowledge transfer between Control Risks and the industry. The mushroom industry's crisis management capability is designed to align with and complement AMGA's brand protection strategy and reputation risk management framework. The project established the industry's crisis management capability through development and revision of the CMP and confirming the core crisis management team (CMT). Following the completion of this project, AMGA will take ownership of the CMP and identify a central AMSafe industry single point of contact, available to levy paying growers and wider industry.

Keywords

Crisis management; incident management; mushroom industry; resilience; risk management; risk assessment; AMSafe; Australian Mushroom Growers' Association; AMGA

Introduction

This project is informed by the vision and mission of Hort Innovation, the rural research and development (R&D) priorities prescribed by the Commonwealth's levy process, and the Australian Mushroom Industry Strategic Plan 2011/6.

Control Risks has worked with Hort Innovation and serviced the horticulture industry since 2008 and was requested to submit a proposal for services that sets out our approach to meeting the objectives and achieving the desired outcomes of the project.

The primary objective for the project is to support the mushroom industry's growth strategy. The project specific objectives include assisting Hort Innovation and the mushroom industry to:

- Maintain the industry's CMP
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This report details Control Risks approach to the project, and subsequent outputs and outcomes.

Methodology

Introduction

Control Risks adopted a phased approach to the project. Each completed phase informed the development and outputs of the following phase. Project activities included:

- Consult with the Australian Mushroom Growers' Association (AMGA), the mushroom industry peak industry body
- Collaborate with Porter Novelli, engaged by AMGA to develop a reputation risk management framework as part of the industry's brand protection strategy
- Review the effectiveness mushroom industry's CMP, arrangements and strategic investment plan (2017-2021)
- Conduct workshops with key industry stakeholders to facilitate crisis management knowledge and skills transfer to the mushroom industry

These activities were conducted during the four project phases:

- **Phase one:** CMP review and gap analysis
- **Phase two:** Industry risk assessment
- **Phase three:** Crisis management training
- **Phase four:** Industry communication and awareness

Phase one: Review and gap analysis

Document review

Control Risks reviewed the mushroom industry's CMP, the 'AMSafe Plan,' to assess the following criteria:

- Fitness for purpose and usability
- Integration of relevant plans, policies and procedures
- Use of every-day, consistent language to describe emerging situations clearly, informing appropriate and effective employment of response procedures and resources
- Clear presentation of "immediate need" information, such as key contact details and considerations for initial response actions
- Clear instructions for activating appropriate resources and stakeholders, and convening crisis management meetings, including virtual meetings
- Inclusion of appropriate and succinctly prescribed procedures for escalation of response and resource deployment
- Communication arrangements (physical) and evidence of measures for redundancy thereof
- Crisis communication plans policies and procedures
- Effective knowledge management to ensure availability of and access to relevant material
- Effectiveness and efficiency of resource allocation

Gap analysis

The document review informed the gap analysis, identifying gaps based against the following criteria:

- Industry best practice, as demonstrated by Control Risks' expertise with peer industry bodies, and industries domestically and internationally
- Relevant international and Australian standards, and guidelines such as:
 - ASIS SPC.1-2009 Organisational Resilience
 - ISO 22301 Business Continuity Management Systems Requirements
 - BS 11200 Crisis Management – Guidance and Good Practice
 - ISO 31000 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines

Report

A gap analysis report was completed and provided to AMGA, identifying areas for improving the CMP. The gap analysis report recommendations informed the revision of the CMP.

CMP

Informed by the findings of the document review and gap analysis, Control Risks redesigned the CMP, which incorporated recommendations from the gap analysis and alignment opportunities with the mushroom industry's reputation risk management framework, supporting the industry's brand protection strategy.

Phase two: Risk assessment

Risk workshop

A risk workshop was facilitated with AMGA representatives and industry stakeholders at Hort Innovation's Sydney Office. The workshop was conducted using the methodology outlined in ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines, and was informed by Control Risks' experience in the horticulture industry.

The workshop ascertained the worst case and most likely scenarios the mushroom industry will face in the coming 12-24 months from the perspectives of each participant, including food safety experts, Hort Innovation representatives, AMGA and the AMSafe committee. The workshop considered the likelihood, consequences and effectiveness of existing mitigation strategies to each identified risk. The workshop also provided a forum to:

- Discuss crisis management principles, characteristics, imperatives and industry arrangements
- Investigate historical events directly and indirectly impacting the mushroom industry's reputation, operations and market
- Analyse lessons learned from previous crises or near misses experienced by peer organisations and industries
- Validate known and perceived risks to the industry by reviewing threat identification and analysis of peer industries, as experienced by Control Risks

The workshop was facilitated through face to face discussion and PowerPoint presentation, incorporating a risk matrix for all participants to compare and analyse the likelihood and impact of each risk.

Report

A risk workshop report was completed and provided to AMGA. The report captured the outputs of the workshop and included a revised industry risk register. The revised risk register was used to inform the development of a realistic and industry relevant crisis management training scenario.

Phase three: Crisis management training

Crisis management workshop

Control Risks facilitated a crisis management training workshop with AMGA representatives and the appointed core CMT at the Parkroyal Hotel, Melbourne Airport. The workshop was conducted in the following stages:

- Crisis management characteristics – Establishing the context
- CMP – Introduction and roll-out
- Desktop scenario
- Debrief and next steps

The workshop discussed crisis characteristics and management imperatives, detailing the types of scenarios to which the plan is applied. The workshop enabled a collaborative approach to determining the composition and structure of the mushroom industry's CMT and ensured all participants were familiar with the plan and its application. The effectiveness of the plan was validated through the conduct of a discussion led desktop crisis management scenario. The scenario's objective was to:

- Refresh the AMSafe committee on the application of the AMSafe program
- Practice the roles and responsibilities of the AMSafe committee
- Improve depth of capability and engagement of the alternate committee members
- Test participant decision making processes in response to a complex emerging situation
- Validate lines of communication for incident reporting and response, and stakeholder engagement

- Investigate de-escalation processes including post-incident review, communication and reporting requirements for key internal and external stakeholders

Report

A crisis management workshop report was completed and provided to AMGA. The report captured the outputs of the workshop and included recommendations designed to support the continued improvement of the mushroom industry's crisis management arrangements, providing a roadmap for continued improvement.

Phase four: Communication and awareness

In consultation with AMGA and AMSafe, Control Risks developed a double sided A5 communication poster to be distributed to all levy paying growers. The material was based on existing AMSafe communication material detailing what to do in a crisis. Additional information was provided detailing how to identify a potential industry crisis. Control Risks provided the material to AMGA for distribution.

Outputs

This section details the outputs achieved, categorised by each project phase.

Phase one outputs

- CMP gap analysis report
- CMP revised document (informed by gap analysis)

The CMP was revised in collaboration with AMGA and Porter Novelli. The CMP is designed to align with the mushroom industry's reputation risk management framework.

Phase two outputs

- Conduct industry risk workshop
- Identify risks to the mushroom industry
- Update industry risk register and risk ratings
- Risk workshop report

The risk workshop was conducted with industry key stakeholders in attendance. All participants assisted in identifying risks to the industry, their likelihood and consequences, and effectiveness of existing controls. The risk workshop informed the development of the crisis management training desktop scenario.

Phase three outputs

- Crisis management workshop, including a desktop-based crisis management scenario
- Establish the mushroom industry's core CMT, roles and responsibilities
- Introduce the revised CMP and incorporating feedback
- Validate the CMP through application to a desktop based crisis management scenario
- Provide a relevant and realistic scenario to train the CMT
- Workshop report, providing recommendations for continued improvement

The crisis management workshop was conducted with the mushroom industry's core CMT comprising the AMGA general manager and chair, and AMSafe committee members. The report contained recommendations focused on five key areas for the purpose of increasing the CMT's capacity and capability to manage crisis and emerging scenarios.

Phase four outputs

- Minor revisions to the AMSafe poster "How to proceed in a crisis"

- Inclusion of crisis incident classification: “How to identify a crisis”
- AMGA to provide an industry contact number
- Post-project industry publication detailing the project to the wider industry

The communication material will ensure the wider industry is aware AMSafe is the primary point of contact for crises, as well as providing guidance on how to identify crises – establishing the trigger point for contacting AMSafe.

Outcomes

Each project phase was conducted with the purpose of achieving the following project objectives:

- Improve the industry’s understanding of crisis management principles and procedures – Enable an effective response
- Increase awareness of crisis management arrangements for the mushroom industry – Improve coordination and industry resilience
- Provide an intuitive approach to identify, assess and respond to crises using effective communication strategies – Protect the industry’s reputation

Monitoring and evaluation

A number of recommendations were made in the crisis management workshop report designed to enhance the mushroom industry’s crisis management capacity and capability. Adherence to these recommendations will further enhance the outcomes of this project, ensuring the material developed as part of the project remains current, effective and relevant to effective crisis management.

Industry awareness and education on AMSafe’s function should be evaluated through stakeholder engagement, ensuring the information has been successfully communicated to levy paying growers and new entrants to the industry and levy.

The CMP has been developed to align with the reputation risk management framework, being developed for AMGA by Porter Novelli. The alignment of these documents is critical to ensuring a robust crisis management capability incorporating brand protection and media strategies, including the appointment and training of industry spokespersons.

Recommendations

The recommendations made in the gap analysis report have been incorporated into the CMP and industry crisis management arrangements. The recommendations detailed below are the output of the crisis management workshop and are designed to ensure the mushroom industry maintains a robust crisis management programme, conducive to continued improvement. The ultimate aim of these recommendations is to increase the resilience of the mushroom industry through effective risk identification and crisis management arrangements.

Recommendation 1: Establish effective communications

Effective communications are essential to an effective crisis management response; the CMT should ensure the following points of communications arrangements are in place:

- **Establish an industry single point of contact** and communicate the phone number to the wider industry, ensuring incidents and crises can be communicated to the IAT or members of the AMSafe committee
- **Dedicate a teleconference number** for CMT use to assist with remote convention of the CMT
- **Incorporate a mass messaging service** application into the crisis management programme, enabling quick and effective industry wide communications

Recommendation 2: Create additional CMT depth

Crisis management functions will invariably compete with day to day operations and other priorities. It is essential, where possible, that CMT roles and responsibilities are supported by alternate members, who are included in the regular crisis management programme and well-placed to support the crisis management function. This includes:

- **Identify additional industry subject matter experts**, ensuring an alternate person is available, should the primary contact be unavailable
- **Train additional core CMT members** and establish alternates for the core CMT roles, including chairperson, facilitator, communications spokesperson and log keeper

Recommendation 3: Establish administrative functions

To ensure continuity of the crisis management programme and effective knowledge management, an effective administration function should be established. The CMT chairperson should be responsible for overseeing and delegating administrative functions and custodians of crisis management material, including post-incident reviews, incident logs and reports.

- **Establish record keeping procedures** and user access management protocols, ensuring crisis management material and records are maintained and available for post-incident or legal review. Make the chairperson responsible for identifying and establishing custodians. Password protect soft copy records and physically secure hard copy records
- **Review contact lists and communications arrangements** every three months to ensure relevance and accuracy of the lists and confirm all phone lines and teleconferencing functions are operable
- **Review the CMP annually** to identify necessary updates, including risk register updates and overall review of the plan, consider updating more frequently if associated documents are amended such as the RRMF

Recommendation 4: Align with Hort Innovation

A close relationship should be maintained with Hort Innovation to ensure the appropriate ‘go-to’ people are identified and can be contacted in the event of a crisis. The following points should be considered:

- **Confirm crisis funding arrangements** by obtaining the appropriate point of contact and process required to obtain the necessary funding
- **Align communications** by maintaining relationships and establishing rapport with Hort Innovation’s communication personnel and the CMT chairperson and industry spokesperson. The purpose is to simplify communications during crises by exercising the relationships and establishing familiarity with the process, roles and responsibilities between both parties

Recommendation 5: Establish a crisis management training programme

Ongoing training is an effective means of maintaining capability and capacity to respond to crises. Relevant and realistic scenarios should be used to familiarise the CMT with exercising the first response protocol and CMP until it becomes intuitive. A regular training programme will establish a benchmark for continued improvement. This recommendation should be considered alongside the engagement of crisis management training experts. Key considerations include:

- **Conduct collaborative risk storm workshops** every 6-12 months, ensuring all industry threats and risks are captured and recorded, and relevant treatments can be prioritised. This can be conducted via face to face or teleconference, requiring only a couple of hours
- **Conduct desktop crisis management training** every six months, allowing core, supplementary and alternate members to apply the CMP in response to a realistic scenario. Contextual industry risks and relevant events should inform development of the scenarios. This should be conducted in a face to face environment and over the course of a half or full-day
- **Consider semi-live scenario training** as the CMT matures in its capacity and capability. This should be considered to build the complexity of training once the CMT comfortably demonstrates its capability during desktop scenarios. The semi-live scenario should take into consideration the CMT convention process and ability to convene remotely, managing a time-based scenario. These scenarios should be conducted over the course of a half day or full day

Refereed scientific publications

None to report.

References

Mushroom Strategic Investment Plan – 2017-2021

Intellectual property, commercialisation and confidentiality

No project IP, project outputs, commercialisation or confidentiality issues to report

Acknowledgements

Control Risks wishes to acknowledge the Australian Mushroom Growers' Association and Porter Novelli for their involvement in the project.

Appendices

Appendix A: CMP Gap analysis report

Appendix B: Risk workshop report

Appendix C: Crisis management workshop report

Appendix D: Industry communication material