

Final Report

Educating health professionals about Australian olive products (OL19001)

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Project code:

OL19001

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Educating health professionals about Australian olive products (OL19001)

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Public summary

The Olive Wellness Institute project aims to educate regarding olive-based products and is intended for health professionals and food service professionals. The primary focuses for this project have been increasing awareness of the Olive Wellness Institute, further developing the Olive Wellness Institute website, and adding additional tools and resources to engage and educate more health and food professionals. While the primary target audience remains as healthcare professionals, the audience is now expanded to focus on food service and culinary professionals, as well as always remaining relevant and useful for all olive growers and processors in Australia.

To deliver the project objective, the following activities were undertaken:

- Continued to update the olive science database of published literature every month
- Regular website articles written and released
- Released new resources, including a virtual sensory tasting guide, e-books and an oil comparison tool.
- Attended healthcare professional events (trade stands)
- Hosted webinars
- Released podcast episodes on olive science
- Developed and launched educational YouTube videos
- Released and launched an Extra Virgin Olive Oil Health & Nutrition Report
- Annual market research amongst healthcare professionals and food service professionals
- Website re-development to improve user experience and improve search engine optimisation (SEO) ranking

The key project output is building a substantial database of information and resources stored within the website and increasing awareness of the Olive Wellness Institute through events, webinars and social media activities. In addition, the market research results are a key project output, showing the changes in attitude/behaviours over the project lifecycle. Overall, there was a significant increase in awareness of the Olive Wellness Institute amongst all healthcare professionals since the previous project (OL17002). Key attitudes and likelihood to promote olive products have all remained high. Pleasingly, there was also a significant increase in healthcare professionals knowing what to look for on a bottle of extra virgin olive oil to ensure it meets Australian Standards.

100% of Hort Innovation olive levy payers who completed the 2023 survey regarding this project would like to see the Olive Wellness Institute continue and think it is a valuable resource. This helps highlight the value of this project to Australian olive growers in helping to increase consumption of Australian olive products through education and greater awareness of the health benefits of these products.

Keywords

Extra virgin olive oil; health; education; olive health; olive leaf extract; olive leaf tea; olive oil; health professionals; Australian extra virgin olive oil; olive science; olives; Mediterranean diet

Introduction

The Olive Wellness Institute (OWI) was launched in February 2018 with the aim to educate health professionals on the health benefits of olive products. Project OL19001 started in March 2020, with a focus on further developing the Olive Wellness Institute and adding additional tools and resources to engage and educate more health and food professionals. The primary objective has ultimately been to increase demand for Australian olive products within Australia and key overseas markets.

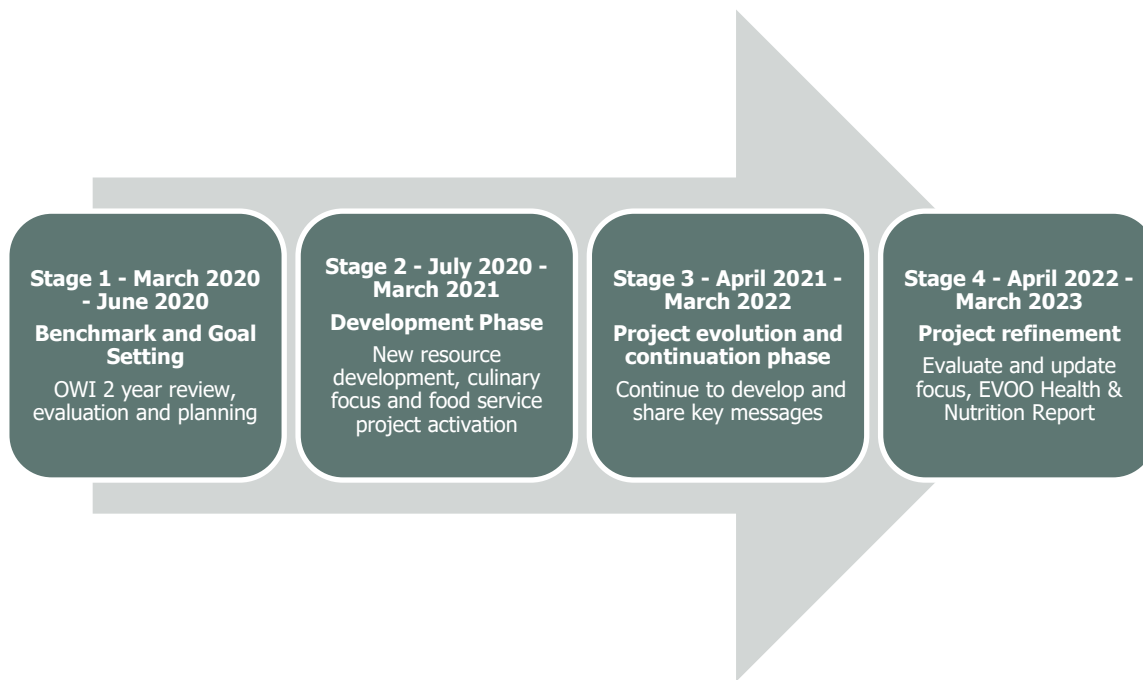
The Australian olive industry is a small but growing horticultural industry. The industry produces Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) and table olives, with 130,000 tonnes of olives produced in 2020/21 and a farmgate production value of \$161.2 million. Production is expected to continue increasing within Australia and therefore it is important to also increase demand for Australian olive products. One effective way to do this, is through education on the health benefits of extra virgin olive oil over other edible oils, and why choosing Australian extra virgin olive oil is recommended for optimal health. By educating health professionals and food service professionals through this project, they have been able to pass this knowledge on to their patients and consumers.

This project has aligned with priorities within the Hort Innovation Olive Strategic Investment Plans over the last three years. See below for more information on how OL19001 has aligned with the industry's priorities.

Strategic Investment Plan	Priority Area	Strategy
2017-2021	Increased demand for Australian olive products within Australia and in key overseas markets	Commission or support, and disseminate, research that demonstrates the health benefits of Australian olive products
		Ensure key industry marketing messages are backed by science and clearly and widely communicated to industry and pipeline customers
2022-2026	Demand creation - demand creation supports the Australian olive industry to develop existing and future domestic and international markets.	Support product positioning with consistent quality, evidence of beneficial product health attributes and responsible industry production practices
		Develop strong relationships and expand market development across the supply chain

Methodology

The below diagram details the methodology employed in this project:



Stage 1 – Benchmark and Goal Setting

- Reviewed the activities and outcomes from the previous two years of work done by the Olive Wellness Institute to determine appropriate goals and outcomes, along with overall objective and action planning.
- We also reviewed the Olive Levy Grower Survey results to determine what they would like to see occur and how we can best benefit growers.

Stage 2 – Development Phase

- Focused on building new resources and pages on the website to ensure we had the appropriate information collated in the best format for our intended audience.
- A detailed and targeted Social Media Communications strategy was implemented during this phase through our sub-contractor Opyl.
- During stage 2 of the project there was a fourth wave of HCP market research, to ascertain the change in knowledge and understanding in the specific target audience. This was conducted with a Sub-Contractor – MevCorp Research & Strategy.
- A number of events were intended to be attended, however ended up being cancelled or held virtually during this phase due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stage 3 – Project Evaluation and Continuation Phase

- This phase included a comprehensive engagement, extension and communication plan to share the website with the target audience and drive this audience to the website and associated resources. This involved communication of activities to growers, through the Australian Olive Association (AOA) and other relevant avenues.
- A detailed and targeted Social Media Communications strategy continued to be implemented during this phase through our sub-contractor Opyl.

- The OWI website itself was continually improved and updated during this phase. All related website development tasks were subcontracted to Emporium Digital.
- Based on the proposed plan, awareness events and trade events were attended where possible as a number of events were still being impacted by COVID-19 lockdowns. This was completed and managed by the OWI team.
- During stage 3 of the project there was a fifth wave of HCP market research, to ascertain the change in knowledge and understanding in the specific target audience. This was conducted with a Sub-Contractor – MevCorp Research & Strategy.

Stage 4 – Project Refinement

- During stage 4 of the project there was a sixth wave of HCP market research, to ascertain the change in knowledge and understanding in the specific target audience. This was conducted with a Sub-Contractor – MevCorp Research & Strategy.
- We identified through our evaluation of the project to date and reviewing what other horticulture groups were producing that our project should be refined to include a Health and Nutrition Report. This was observed as an effective way of compiling all relevant information into one document for our target audience to read and share with their networks.

Outputs

Table 1. Output summary

Output	Detail
Website and social media platform ongoing updates, optimisation and maintenance (inclusive of marketing campaigns to promote the site and attract / retain audience and creation of new pages and categories)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of subscribers to the website = 11,035 - Social media followers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Facebook = 7,911 likes o Instagram = 3,134 followers o Twitter = 1,339 followers o LinkedIn = 1,033 followers - Website analytics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Average users per month = 7,557 o Average bounce rate = 60% o Average page duration = 2:51 - Podcast = 30 episodes total, all with over 270 downloads - 4x short videos created & uploaded to YouTube with an average of 473 views per video
Produce relevant collateral	51 resources created in total, including recipe cards, e-books and infographics
Events attended and Symposiums conducted	11 trade show events were attended. The symposiums were replaced with a 3-part webinar series due to the COVID-19 ongoing lockdowns, along with a webinar for food service professionals in conjunction with Nutrition Australia
Market research survey	3 waves of annual market research completed during this project
Release of monthly blog articles and update of science database	New blog released every month for duration of the project, along with key new research papers added when appropriate
Release of virtual sensory kit	Successfully uploaded to the website in 2022
Release of EVOO Health & Nutrition Report	Released in March 2023 with a launch event including 30 key health professionals

Key Output Information and Analytics

Website Performance & Analytics

Table 2: Key Metrics for Website Performance per Stage

	Stage 1 (1 st March 2020 – 31 st June 2020)	Stage 2 (1 st July 2020 – 31 st March 2021)	Stage 3 (1 st April 2021 – 31 st March 2022)	Stage 4 (1 st April 2022 – 31 st March 2023)
Users	56,737	67,231	63,187	93,968
Sessions	63,617	79,707	72,576	106,523
Page Views	100,223	142,118	101,939	220,644

Google Search (Data from March 31 2022 – March 31 2023)

82.6k Clicks, 7.55 Million Impressions.

Please note, we have been unable to find data prior to December 2021 within the Google Search Console.

Website Performance - Overall (1st May 2020 – 31st March 2023)

512,286 page views

365,448 unique page views

Average time on page = 1:03

Top 5 Organic Search Countries:

USA - 100.2K users

Aus – 35.9K users

UK – 17.4K users

India – 11.3K users

Canada – 9K users

Summary of top website content & # of page views (1st May 2020 – 31st March 2023)

[11 Health Benefits of EVOO](#) 147K views (103.7K unique)

[Homepage](#) 22.4K views (15.3K unique)

[Olive leaf tea](#) 19.7K (14.4K unique)

[Olive leaf extract](#) 14.5K (11.5K unique)

[Grades of olive oil](#) 13.4K (9.7K unique)

[About hydroxytyrosol](#) 11.4K (8.8K unique)

[EVOO and men's health](#) 10.7K (7.7K unique)

[Med diet fodmaps](#) 10.5K (8.3K unique)

[EVOO vs Flaxseed oil](#) 7.8K (4.3K unique)

[Cooking with olive oil](#) 7.1K (5.6K unique)

Website performance commentary:

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw a big surge in traffic due to more people at home with time to be searching on the internet and a renewed focus on health and wellness. This then dropped off in 2021, however we managed to recover the drop off in 2022 by writing new topical content as well as upgrading the website to be more SEO compatible.

When comparing 2021 (01/4/21 - 31/3/22) to 2022 (1/4/22 – 31/3/23), we can see that the number of total website users is up 49%, pages per session is up 48%, users originating from organic search is up 55%, users originating from social media is up 49% and users originating from emails is up 161%. This demonstrates the work that was undertaken to continuously improve the OWI website.

Newsletter Subscribers

Newsletter subscribers at end of OL19001 project – 11,035 (up from 4,350 at end of OL17002 project)

- Average open rate – 27.9% (industry average is 27.3%)
- Average click rate – 4.4% (industry average is 4.0%)

Articles

Articles were updated monthly for the duration of the project. All articles can be viewed here -

<https://olivewellnessinstitute.org/articles/>

Resources

A summary of all resources developed across the project duration is below, with links to access:

- Olive Wellness Podcast – 2x seasons with 30 episodes total
 - All episodes available via podcast streaming platforms (e.g. Spotify or Apple Podcasts) or via the [Olive Wellness Institute website](#).
- 4x new YouTube videos
 - Dietitian Joel Feren – [Cooking Vegetables with EVOO](#)
 - Dietitian Joel Feren – [Differences between OO and EVOO](#)
 - Nutritionist Steph Geddes – [Safety of cooking with EVOO](#)
 - Nutritionist Steph Geddes – [Taste profile of EVOO](#)
- 3x E-books
 - [Gut Health](#)
 - [Heart Health](#)
 - [Immune Health](#)
- 3x webinars
 - [From Tree to Table: The journey of extra virgin olive oil](#)
 - [Nutrition for Women: The Med diet & extra virgin olive oil in general health, PCOS and endometriosis](#)
 - [Food & Mood: How the Mediterranean diet and extra virgin olive oil can affect mental health](#)
- [Virtual Sensory Kit released onto website](#)
- [Culinary Nutrition section completed on website](#)
- [Extra Virgin Olive Oil Health & Nutrition Report](#)

Social Media

Social media activities continue to expand and act as an important way to disseminate key education messages. A full consolidated report of activity from March 2020 to March 2023 can be seen at Appendix A. It is important to note that simply looking at ‘followers’ does not give a true indication of the impact of social media. It is now considered more important to look at monthly impressions and engagement levels. This information is accessible via the full reports (Appendix A).

Table 3: Key metrics for social media targets

Key Metric	Start of Project (March 2020)	End of Project (March 2023)
Twitter followers	715	1,339
Instagram followers	1,468	3,134
Facebook followers	5,426	7,911 (8,323 followers)
LinkedIn followers	292	1,033

Market Research

Three waves of market research were conducted over the project duration. Full reports can be accessed via Appendix B. All waves for the project period included a sample of food service professionals, along with health professionals such as general practitioners, naturopaths and dietitians/nutritionists.

Summary of Wave 1-3 versus Wave 4-6 of Market Research in Healthcare Professionals:

- Overall, there was a significant increase from waves 1-3 in OL17002 to waves 4-6 in this project, in awareness of the Olive Wellness Institute amongst all healthcare professionals. Importantly, those who have visited the OWI website and engaged with our institute has increased significantly from waves 1-3, and we continue to see those who are engaged having higher knowledge on the health benefits of extra virgin olive oil and olive leaf extract – highlighting the importance of continuing awareness activities for OWI in the future.

Table 4: Market Research Results

Area	Wave 1-3 Results	Wave 4-6 Results (HCPs only) * indicates significantly increased from waves 1-3	Wave 4-6 results (FSPs only)
Awareness of OWI	21%	31%*	17%
Visited OWI Website	5%	13%*	13%
OWI engaged (visited website or recall comms)	6%	19%*	15%
Believe that EVOO is highly beneficial for general health	78%	82%	66%
Believe that OLE is highly beneficial for general health	44%	45%	38%
Believe that EVOO is highly beneficial for improving immune system	21%	30%*	42%
Believe OLE is highly beneficial for improve immune system	46%	57%*	40%
Believe that EVOO is highly beneficial for heart health	77%	79%	55%
Believe that OLE is highly beneficial for heart health	25%	35%*	37%
Believe that EVOO is high in antioxidants	69%	76%	53%
Believe that OLE is high in antioxidants	N/A	58%	52%
Believe that EVOO is highly beneficial for brain cognition	N/A	44%	43%
Believe that EVOO is highly beneficial for gut health	N/A	36%	41%
Believe that Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) is suitable for cooking	53%	55%	56%
Those very likely (9/10) to recommend or promote EVOO	80%	82%	63%

Those very likely (9/10) to recommend or promote OLE	39%	44%	40%
Strongly Agree: There is a role for EVOO in the healthy daily diet	83%	82%	63%
Strongly Agree: OO is not the same as EVOO as it lacks certain components important for health	N/A	41%	37%
Strongly Agree: Aust grown & produced EVOO is fresher/healthier for you than imported EVOO	N/A	40%	35%
Strongly Agree: I know what to look for on a bottle of EVOO to ensure it meets the Australian Standards	18%	28%*	35%
Strongly Agree: EVOO is the only oil which stores more carbon than it releases	N/A	13%	6%

Levy Payer Survey

Olive levy payers are a key project stakeholder and have been surveyed twice throughout this project, in 2021 and in 2023. The below table shows the progress the Olive Wellness Institute has made in increasing awareness amongst growers of the institute and the website. See Appendix C for full results.

Table 5: Levy Payer Survey Results

Question	March 2021 (3 responses)	March 2023 (19 responses)
Are you aware of the Olive Wellness Institute?	Yes – 66.7%	Yes - 100%
Have you accessed the Olive Wellness Institute website?	Yes – 66.7%	Yes - 84.2%
Have you used the Olive Wellness Institute educational resources (e.g. pamphlets, infographics)?	Yes – 66.7%	Yes – 47.4%
Would you like to see the Olive Wellness Institute continue?	Yes – 100%	Yes – 100%

Written feedback provided includes:

- “You're doing amazing stuff - keep going. And thank you!”
- “I find the webinars and patient and clinician handouts and resources very useful, as well as the newsletters highlighting new research in the world of olive oil”
- “Love your work”

Conferences & Events

During the project, eleven conferences and events were attended. Unfortunately, considerably more were planned for the project however a number of these did not go ahead due to COVID-19 restrictions. Some were converted to virtual events, which we were initially attending. The engagement with exhibitors for virtual events was limited however and a decision was made for 2022 not to attend virtual conferences ongoing. A number of our own planned in-person events, such as a symposium, were also converted to webinars to engage our target audience in a safe and appropriate manner.

The below events were attended during our project:

Stages 1 & 2

- Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine Annual Conference – Virtual Breakfast Symposium
 - o 137 health professionals attended. We partnered with Dineamic to send attendees a breakfast meal, along with an extra virgin olive oil sample and resources.
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Annual Conference – Virtual
 - o Engaged with over 300 attendees
- Australian Olive Association Annual Conference – Virtual
 - o Attendance numbers: 50
- Laureate Health & Wellness Week – Virtual
 - o Interacted with over 500 students

Stage 3

- Australian Olive Association Annual Conference – Virtual
 - o We presented on the work of the Olive Wellness Institute and how growers can achieve the best outcomes from our organisation
- Foodservice Australia Trade Show – Melbourne, Victoria
 - o 9,454 attendees, with 634 individuals who engaged with our stand and received a bag with resources and a bottle of Australia extra virgin olive oil
- Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine – Mental Health Reimagined Virtual Summit
 - o 28 unique visitors to our virtual stand throughout the day and 38 resource downloads from 17 individuals
- Australasian College of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine Annual Conference – Virtual
- Home Economics Australia Annual Conference – Brisbane, Queensland
 - o We were unable to attend in person due to border closures, however we still sponsored and provided bottles of Australian extra virgin olive oil and resources
- Hosted our own webinar for food service professionals titled ‘EVOO: Can you cook with that?’, run by Nutrition Australia – see Appendix D for full event report
- Hosted a webinar in conjunction with Nutrition Research Australia as part of a Hort Innovation Mushroom Fund project titled ‘The emerging dual health challenge of infectious and chronic disease: Mushrooms and extra virgin olive oil as key therapeutic foods’ – see Appendix E for a full webinar report.

Stage 4

- Australian Olive Association Annual Conference – Devonport, Tasmania
 - o We presented as part of the conference on ‘Health benefits of olive products: tips and resources for communication’
- Australian Cardiovascular Health and Rehabilitation Association (ACRA) Annual Scientific Meeting - Sydney, NSW
 - o We engaged with over 100 delegates through an exhibitor stand with resources and bottles of Australian extra virgin olive oil
- Hosted a webinar series with 3x events on the following topics:
 - o Food and Mood: how extra virgin olive oil and the Mediterranean Diet can impact mental health
 - o Nutrition for women: the role of the Mediterranean Diet and extra virgin olive oil in general health, and in conditions such as PCOS and endometriosis
 - o From Tree to Table: the journey of extra virgin olive oil
 - o See Appendix F for the full webinar report
- Hosted our own event to launch the Extra Virgin Olive Oil Health & Nutrition Report in Melbourne with 30 key health professionals - See Appendix G for a full report on the launch event

Outcomes

Table 6. Outcome summary

Outcome	Alignment to fund outcome, strategy and KPI	Description	Evidence
Increased recognition of the body of scientific evidence related to olive products	<p>Within the 2022-2026 Olive Levy Strategic Investment Plan, this aligns with Outcome 3 - Demand creation supports the Australian olive industry to develop existing and future domestic and international markets and specifically the KPI to 'use nutritional information for support consumer demand' and 'positive influence on consumer preference'.</p> <p>This outcome also further supports the Olive Levy strategy to 'Support product positioning with consistent quality, evidence of beneficial product health attributes and responsible industry production practices.'</p>	<p>The body of scientific evidence has been disseminated through OWI, and distributed in varying formats including website content, articles, infographics and videos throughout the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current number of articles on Olive Science Database: 949. • Current number of OWI blogs published: 108 	<p>Our market research results indicate our target audience are more aware about the scientific evidence regarding olive products, particularly extra virgin olive oil, along with an increased willingness to recommend and promote EVOO. The most recent wave of research indicates that amongst healthcare professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82% believe EVOO is highly beneficial for general health • 79% believe EVOO is highly beneficial for heart health • 57% believe OLE is highly beneficial for immune health • 76% believe EVOO is high in antioxidants, with 58% thinking the same regarding olive leaf extract.
Influence healthcare professionals and food service industry professionals' practice and behaviour change with relation to olive products	<p>Within the 2022-2026 Olive Levy Strategic Investment Plan, this aligns with Outcome 3 - Demand creation supports the Australian olive industry to develop existing and future domestic and international markets and specifically the KPI to 'use nutritional information to support consumer demand' and 'positive influence on consumer preference'.</p>	<p>By providing relevant resources and fact sheets for healthcare professionals and food service professionals, particularly regarding cooking with extra virgin olive oil and summarising the health benefits of olive products, we have helped to influence their behaviour and likelihood to recommend olive products to their patients/customers. This helps the Australian olive industry to continue increasing sales annually.</p>	<p>Three waves of market research conducted throughout this project have continually shown high engagement in willingness to promote extra virgin olive oil and olive leaf extract, with the most recent wave of research showing 82% of health professionals were very likely to recommend extra virgin olive oil, and 39% very likely to recommend olive leaf extract. We also saw a significant increase throughout the project in health professional and food service professionals' awareness of what to look for on a bottle of extra virgin olive oil to ensure it meets Australian standards. This number rose from 18% to 28%.</p>

<p>End of project outcome: An increase in the specific target population recommendation and promotion of olive products to Australian consumers</p>	<p>Within the 2022-2026 Olive Levy Strategic Investment Plan, this aligns with Outcome 3 - Demand creation supports the Australian olive industry to develop existing and future domestic and international markets and specifically the KPI to 'use nutritional information to support consumer demand' and 'positive influence on consumer preference'.</p>	<p>By educating our target audience on the health promoting properties of Australian olive products, their culinary use and sustainability benefits, it is plausible to suggest they are compelled by the strong evidence for health benefits to then share this knowledge with their colleagues and patients.</p>	<p>As mentioned above, we can utilise our market research to highlight increases in recommendations and promotion of olive products from health professionals to Australian consumers.</p>
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Monitoring and evaluation

Table 7. Key Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Question	Project performance	Continuous improvement opportunities
To what extent has the project achieved its expected outcomes?	Achievement of all industry adoption metrics listed in contract. See Appendix H for full metrics on activities and outputs from this project.	<p>Unfortunately, due to a number of in-person events and conferences being cancelled due to COVID-19, we found awareness of OWI dropped from 37% in market research wave 4 (2020) to 23% in wave 6 (2022). This highlights the importance going forward of trade shows and in person events to increase brand recognition and education opportunities.</p> <p>A number of targets for social media followers were also not reached, due to the changing nature of social media platforms. It is no longer best practice to aim for high follower numbers, as this does not guarantee they are seeing the content you share. It is for that reason that during the contract, our social media agency moved to aim for higher impressions and engagements, rather than follower numbers alone. Going forward, this is the metrics we will aim to grow long term as having people see our content is more important than just follower number alone.</p>
How relevant was the project to the needs of the intended beneficiaries?	Satisfaction levels of levy payers with project outputs	Our levy payer survey indicates high satisfaction with our project and the work we have done in educating health professionals and food service professionals on olive products. We are proud that 100% of those surveyed in our most recent survey indicated they would like to see the Olive Wellness Institute continue however there is room for improvement in producing resources olive growers want to utilise and share with their customers, as only 47.4% indicated they have used one of our resources. We will endeavour to increase the dialogue with levy payers, through the Australian Olive Association, to ensure we produce relevant and useful resources.

Recommendations

This project has provided many opportunities to share olive health and wellness science messages to the specific target audience. In addition, the project staff have worked closely with members of the Australian olive industry, to ensure that all project outputs have been available to them. This project has involved significant expansion of the information and resources available regarding the health benefits of Australian olive products. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns and lack of events impacted a number of targets set for this project, as events has been one of the best places to reach health professionals and make them aware of the Olive Wellness Institute. The way people interact with digital platforms, including social media, has also changed, leading to variations from the initial plan on how many people can be reached within the budget allocated. There is still work to be done on increasing awareness of the resources available through the Olive Wellness Institute and as new research emerges, it is important there is a reputable, independent institute available that people can rely on for accurate information. This is why a further 3 year project is recommended to reach new audiences and continue to expand the knowledge amongst health professionals on the health benefits of olive products.

Intellectual property

The current IP register has been provided with this report submission.