

What happened in the Turf Fund last year?

Annual Report 2021/22



About Hort Innovation and the Turf Fund

Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australia's horticulture sector. We work closely with industry to invest the turf R&D and marketing levies, together with Australian Government contributions, into key initiatives for growers, through the Turf Fund. We're proud of the work we do to help drive productivity, profitability, and demand for turf growers and the horticulture sector.

Read on for an overview of what Hort Innovation delivered in the Turf Fund during the year.

We also encourage you to download a copy of the overarching Hort Innovation Annual Report 2021/22 at www.horticulture.com.au/annual-report-portal to see how Hort Innovation worked to benefit the horticulture sector during the year.

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\$671,908

invested in R&D



\$101,143

invested in marketing



\$534,618

in levies collected

by the Government and passed on to Hort Innovation for investment

Industry facts



\$308M

Turf production value grew by ten per cent from 2019/20 to 2020/21, reaching \$308 million



3

Couch, buffalo and kikuyu are the three main varieties of turf produced in Australia, making up 31 per cent, 31 per cent and 21 per cent of volume respectively



39%

Queensland is the largest turf-producing state (39 per cent) by volume, followed by New South Wales (34 per cent), Victoria (13 per cent), Western Australia (seven per cent) and South Australia (seven per cent)

These facts and more can be found in the Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook, which is delivered by Hort Innovation each year. The handbook is packed with horticulture statistical information and analysis for some 75 categories. See www.horticulture.com.au/horticulture-statistics-handbook.

Just some of the things delivered for you during the year



A new industry development and extension program to assist growers in developing their skills, knowledge and businesses through various extension activities – see hortinn.com/tu21001



The industry communications program, delivering the *Turf Australia* magazine, *Turf Australia E-News* newsletters, the industry website (www.turfaustralia.com.au) and more



Participation in a Lean Leaders program for turf levy payers to develop their skills in leading their workplace – see hortinn.com/tu21002 for more details and how to apply



Access to accurate and reliable turf industry data including value, volume and other benchmarking statistics to assist turf growers in their decision-making – see hortinn.com/tu21000



A domestic marketing campaign to promote the benefits of living turf – read more on [p10](#)



Investments in the Hort Frontiers strategic partnership initiative to address longer-term and often complex issues and opportunities critical to the future of Australian horticulture – see www.horticulture.com.au/hort-frontiers*



Projects supported by grants secured by Hort Innovation, ranging from cross-sector Rural R&D for Profit initiatives to horticulture-specific work to aid in access to crop protection products – see the Hort Innovation Annual Report 2021/22 for more details*

You can visit www.horticulture.com.au/turf at any time to access information on new, ongoing and completed projects, and to download resources produced by your levy investments.

*These initiatives were delivered outside of the Hort Innovation Turf Fund and, in most instances, did not involve the industry levy

Here's how your R&D levy was invested over the year



The turf Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) guides investments specific to the Hort Innovation Turf Fund. The SIP features priority outcome areas identified and agreed upon by the industry. Hort Innovation works to invest in R&D and marketing initiatives aligned to these.

The above chart shows how project expenditure in the Turf Fund during 2021/22 was aligned to the SIP. We have allocated each project to a SIP outcome based on its primary objective.

Which projects were in each of the SIP outcome areas?

Outcome 1: Demand creation

Demand creation supports the Australian turf industry to expand into existing and future domestic markets.

Marketing activities during 2021/22 contributed towards the demand creation outcome. You can read more about this year's turf marketing campaign on p10.

Outcome 2: Industry supply, productivity and sustainability

The Australian turf industry has increased profitability, efficiency and sustainability through innovative R&D and sustainable BMPs.

Project title and code	2021/22 investment	Status	More information
Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative – Phase 2 (HA19007)	\$665	Ongoing	
Regulatory support and coordination (pesticides) (MT20007)	\$2,672	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt20007
Strategic Agrichemical Review Process (SARP) – Updates (MT19005)	\$5,250	Ongoing	hortinn.com/mt21005





Outcome 3: Extension and capability

Improved capability and an innovative culture in the Australian turf industry maximises investments in productivity and demand.

Project title and code	2021/22 investment	Status	More information
National market development program for the Australian turf industry (TU16002)	\$242,768	Completed	hortinn.com/tu16002
Australian turf industry communications program (TU16004)	\$164,792	Ongoing	hortinn.com/tu16004
Turf NextGen program (TU19002)	\$21,600	Ongoing	hortinn.com/tu19002
Turf industry development and extension project (TU21001)	\$91,438	Ongoing	hortinn.com/tu21001
Lean leaders program (TU21002)	\$12,000	Ongoing	hortinn.com/tu21002

Outcome 4: Business insights

The Australian turf industry is more profitable through informed decision-making using consumer knowledge and tracking, production statistics and forecasting, and independent reviews.

Project title and code	2021/22 investment	Status	More information
Turf industry statistics 2020-21 to 2024-25 (TU21000)	\$91,375	Ongoing	hortinn.com/tu21000

Financial operating statement

Turf Fund Financial operating statement 2021/22

	R&D (\$)	Marketing (\$)	Total (\$)
	2021/22 July – June	2021/22 July – June	2021/22 July – June
OPENING BALANCE	360,023	42,047	402,071
Levies from growers	427,694	106,924	534,618
Australian Government money	399,506	–	399,506
Other income*	803	59	862
TOTAL INCOME	828,003	106,983	934,986
Project funding	671,908	101,143	773,051
Consultation with and advice from growers	8,511	740	9,251
Service delivery	118,593	22,410	141,003
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	799,011	124,293	923,304
CLOSING BALANCE	345,015	13,737	358,752
Levy collection costs	44,000	11,000	55,000

* Interest, royalties

Levy collection costs – These are the costs associated with the collection of levies from industry charged by Levy Revenue Services (LRS)

Service delivery – Also known as Corporate Cost Recovery (CCR), this is the total cost of managing the investment portfolio charged by Hort Innovation

Making sure that levy investment decisions align with industry priorities

What will be the Turf Fund's focus over the next five years?



Hort Innovation developed the turf Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) in 2021 to reflect current priorities for the turf industry, involving extensive consultation with turf growers and industry stakeholders, including Turf Australia. The SIP is the roadmap that helps guide Hort Innovation's oversight and management of individual levy industry investment programs.

The turf SIP lays the foundation for decision-making in levy investments and represents the balanced interests of the turf industry. The most important function of the SIP is to make sure that levy investment decisions align with industry priorities.

The turf SIP identifies four outcome areas that will contribute to the productivity and profitability of the sector. They are:

- Industry supply, productivity and sustainability
- Demand creation
- Extension and capability
- Business insights.

What projects will the Fund be investing in next year?

The turf Annual Investment Plan (AIP) 2022/23 details how Hort Innovation spends levy funds over 12 months. The turf industry SIP guides investment decisions, and our consultation process prioritises investments based on potential impact and levy fund availability.

Hort Innovation publishes Annual Investment Plans each year over the lifespan of the SIP and advises industry stakeholders via various communication channels.

Hort Innovation will continue to report on fund performance regularly, focusing on outcomes and the impact of investments.



Visit www.horticulture.com.au/turf-fund-management to view both documents and better understand how Hort Innovation invests your levy.

Benchmarking resource for the turf industry

The turf industry is benefitting from access to accurate and reliable data through a levy-funded statistics and benchmarking program.

The investment *Turf industry statistics 2020/21 to 2024/25 (TU21000)* is tasked with providing accurate and reliable data for the turf industry. This information – including value, volume and other benchmarking statistics – is intended to allow turf growers and the broader industry to make timely and effective decisions in planning and resource prioritisation, as well as track market trends and industry performance.

Data is collected through annual production surveys coordinated by the Turf Australia team and state-based turf bodies. Growers who have participated in the surveys will be able to compare their performance over the five-year

period to both industry benchmarks and historical data through an online benchmarking platform.

In April 2022, the first year of data was collected. Overall results for 2020/21 showed that reduced production and value were recorded for 2020/21 when compared to the previous year (2019/20). A reduction of 2.6 per cent for production and 3.8 per cent for sales were recorded.

An annual industry snapshot is available on the Turf Australia website (www.turfaustralia.com.au). The project team noted that the challenges of significant floods in early 2021 and COVID lockdown through this period likely have some impact on the recorded figures.

Meet Renee Davidson, turf grower from Jimboomba Turf in South-East Queensland

Jimboomba Turf was established in 1973 and Renee's family have owned and run the business since 1981. They are a founding member of the industry organisation Lawn Solutions Australia, and they grow premium varieties in South-East Queensland including TifTuf Bermuda, Sir Grange Zoysia, Sir Walter DNA certified and winter green varieties.



Renee and Lynn Davidson, Jimboomba Turf.

What challenges and opportunities are you facing?

"We're currently experiencing the challenge of rising production costs such as fuel and fertiliser, as well as labour shortages that are being felt across south-east Queensland and the rest of the country. However, south-east Queensland is in the middle of a building boom and with new houses comes the planting of turf. We're expecting strong sales in spring this year if the rain stays away. The recent floods and consistent wet weather has impacted turf production, as well as the quality of people's backyard lawns."



How has the statistics program helped you in your business?

“The turf statistics snapshot report is a great resource for our business and a good place to start when thinking about how our business is performing. It is valuable to be able to compare our production and practices against our local competitors and other state’s production systems. It is enlightening to see average prices as well as turf farm staffing levels.

Are there any insights that you found particularly useful for your business?

“Jimboomba Turf are leveraging the information provided to identify which market segments we should be targeting with our supply of premium turf. We are currently shifting a portion of our business to focus on targeting the retail segment and moving away from high volume but low margin segments. This report shows we’re on the right path – in the 2020/21 snapshot report it showed that in Queensland and Northern Territory, 42 per cent of growers sell direct to consumers, 36 per cent to trade (landscapers and turf installers), 11 per cent to wholesale, seven per cent to turf re-sellers, and four per cent to Government.”

Why is this project important for the turf industry?

“This program provides an important resource for the turf industry. There are some aspects that needs to be fine tuned to ensure it continues to meet growers needs and is able to provide the data needed to continuously improve the industry. The information equips Jimboomba Turf with the information needed to investigate our production efficiencies – I will most definitely be reading next year’s report for the updated insights and information.”



South-east Queensland is in the middle of a building boom and with new houses comes the planting of turf. We’re expecting strong sales in spring this year if the rain stays away.”

Renee Davidson,
south-east Queensland turf grower

Providing Aussies with Lawnspiration

Hort Innovation is responsible for investing the turf marketing levy into a range of activities to drive awareness and consideration. Here's a quick look at some of the activities and achievements in 2021/22.

The turf marketing campaign was designed to inspire and educate consumers to choose, lay and maintain the right turf for their backyards, promoting a year-round supply and driving consumers to purchase. Core activities included creating a hero video to be disseminated across Turf Australia's social media channels and updating the Lawnspiration website.

Hero video

A short video was created to drive awareness and get the target audience excited that "It's time to turf." The video played into the nostalgia and sensory experience of lawn care. It was able to effectively reach the target audience and bring new turf consumers into the market. This allowed the campaign's social media advertising to be retargeted at people who had viewed the video, increasing the likelihood of viewers becoming consumers.

The video was shared on Facebook in April 2022 and had an impressive engagement rate:

- 9,000 ThruPlays (how many times the video was played until the end or at least 15 seconds)
- Reached 34,639 people
- Achieved 41,211 impressions (number of times the content was displayed)
- Engagement rate of 11 per cent and 18,723 engagements (including video views).

Social media

The 'always-on' approach to social media was designed to inspire and educate lawn lovers, homeowners, and those interested in turf to visit the Lawnspiration website and learn more about installing natural turf in their yards.

A mix of social media content was designed to appeal to the key audiences, including:

- Tips for seasonal lawn care
- Selection tips and the benefits of installing natural turf
- Funny memes
- User-generated content supplied by Lawnspiration Facebook users.

During the campaign, 51 posts were shared on the Turf Australia Facebook page. During March, there was a hiatus from posting due to adverse weather events impacting the Eastern seaboard and, consequently, several growers. The post with the highest engagement rate was from Lawnspiration consumer Nathan Hunter,



Marketing spotlight



who captured an image of his perfectly manicured front lawn. The post went viral and achieved a reach of over 3.5 million, with over 290,000 engagements, over 56,000 comments and over 8,800 shares.

Influencers

Using the influencer platform, Vamp, three influencers were engaged to create content that was designed to appeal to their audiences and spread the “It’s time to turf” message on Instagram and TikTok. This content was shared by the influencers on their own channels throughout June.

Competition

To increase followers and engagement with the platform, a competition was run on the Lawnspiration Facebook page that encouraged audiences to submit photos of their backyard renovations and lawns to win a \$1,500 prize pack with a Toro Australia lawnmower and a Weber barbeque. The competition received 121 entries, and the post to advertise the competition generated over 3,400 likes and 167 comments.

During the campaign, from November until May, the Facebook page generated:

- Over 8 million impressions across Facebook (doubled the KPI of 4 million impressions)
- Over 500,000 engagements across Facebook, surpassing the KPI of 80,000
- An average engagement rate of four per cent on Facebook.

**The campaign wrapped on 30 June 2022. However, for this report’s purposes, the data reflects the campaign’s progress from 1 October 2021 to 31 May 2022.*

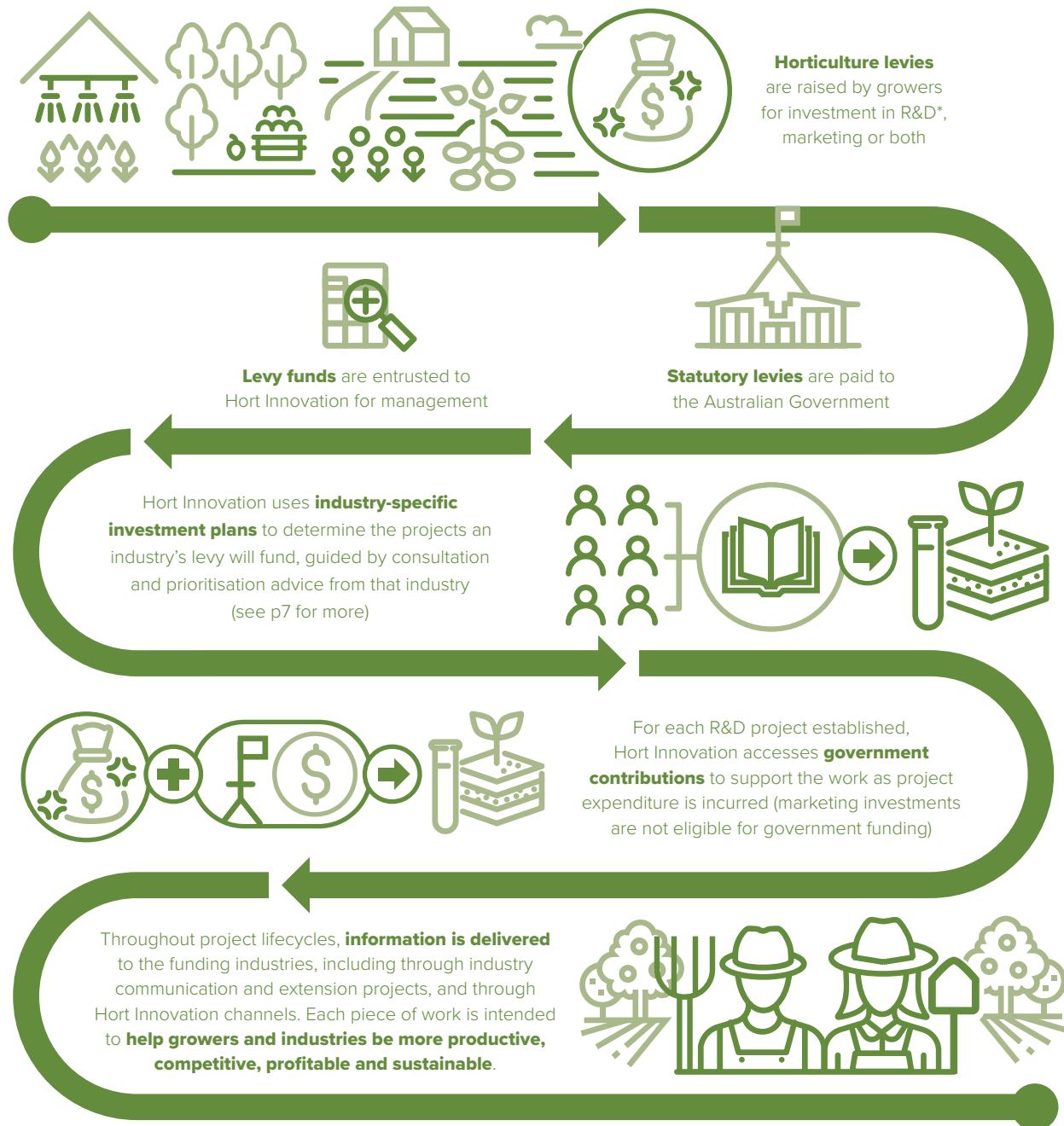
Lawnspiration website

The Lawnspiration website (lawnspiration.com.au) was refreshed with a new home page and the integration of three new tools, seasonal maintenance infographics and a turf variety finder quiz. This was created to help address installation barriers for turf and respond to popular search terms.

In 2021/22 the Hort Innovation Marketing function underwent a significant shift in their approach to investing marketing levies. You can read more about this in the 2021/22 Hort Innovation Company Annual Report at www.horticulture.com.au/annual-report-portal.

How strategic levy investments are made in the Turf Fund

The below diagram shows how Hort Innovation makes strategic levy investments on behalf of horticulture industries. The turf R&D and marketing levies were invested this way during the year, guided by the turf Strategic Investment Plan 2022-2026 and advice from the industry's investment advisory panel.



* Encapsulating extension and international trade

To learn more about funding specific to the Hort Innovation Turf Fund, visit www.horticulture.com.au/turf. During the year, other sources of funding were also used to support activities for the benefit of Australian horticulture, including grant funding secured by Hort Innovation, co-investment dollars brokered through our Hort Frontiers initiative and centralised strategic levy reserve.

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