

# Nursery Papers

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Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) is commissioned by the Federal Government with the task of managing the funds collected from the nursery products levy or 'pot levy' and overseeing the matching of Commonwealth research and development funding arrangements.

To enable the nursery and garden industry to have input into this process, HAL has set up an Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) that consists of representatives nominated by Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA). This Nursery Paper explains how the Industry Advisory Committee operates and advises on the use of industry funds.

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Nursery & Garden Industry  
Australia



Know-how for Horticulture™

## Advising, Allocating and Approving – the role of the IAC

### What is an Industry Advisory Committee?

An Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) is a subcommittee of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL).

### What is the role of the IAC in the planning process?

The main role of the IAC is to provide direction and advice to HAL on the most appropriate use of funds to ensure maximum industry benefit. Specifically, the IAC should:

- Prepare a Strategic Investment Plan (five year) for submission to HAL. This establishes the strategic direction for HAL's investment of research & development (R&D) and marketing funds for the industry.
- Prepare an Annual Investment Plan (one year) for submission to HAL. This plan determines the annual expenditure required to achieve the outcomes detailed in the strategic plan.
- Preparing an Annual Report for submission to industry and HAL that details the outcomes achieved from the expenditure outlined in the annual investment plan.

These documents are produced with industry input and developed in conjunction with HAL staff.

The role of individual IAC members is to:

- Advise on the direction of industry marketing and R&D plans
- Ensure HAL programs are in line with industry priorities
- Provide a channel for industry input on the programs.

In the last financial year the committee recommended over \$1 million to marketing projects, and over \$600,000 to R&D projects. The Federal Government matched the R&D funds dollar for dollar, enabling over 68 projects to get support.

(See diagram 1 on the following page.)

### Membership of the IAC

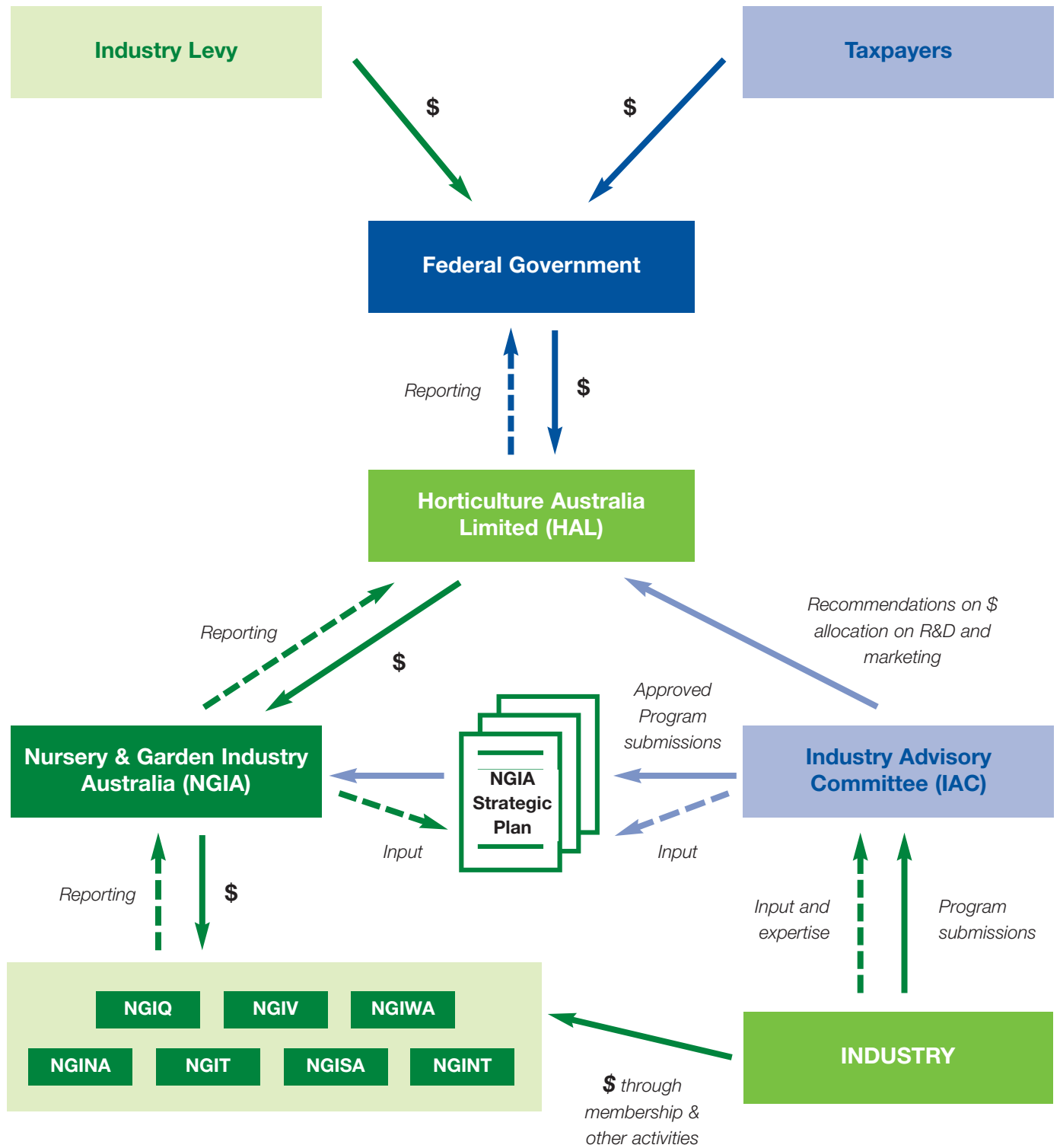
The IAC is lead by of an independent chair and members are selected to ensure representation of the growing, retailing and allied trade sectors of the industry as well as a national focus. Its membership provides a broad range of expertise encompassing marketing, research and industry development.

The nine representatives on the IAC are appointed by HAL on the recommendation of the NGIA Board. In addition there are

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DIAGRAM 1: The role of the IAC in the industry funding process



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non-voting representatives from NGIA and HAL to assist and provide further guidance.

The term of appointment for the inaugural members is one year. Thereafter the term is three years with a review of one third of the members at the end of May each year. This takes place via an open nomination process conducted by the NGIA board. Members will be able to serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

For a list of current IAC members, visit the Your Levy at Work section of the Nursery & Garden Industry website [www.ngia.com.au/your\\_levyat\\_work/your\\_levyat\\_work\\_hal.asp](http://www.ngia.com.au/your_levyat_work/your_levyat_work_hal.asp).

## The new process for funds allocation

Early in 2005, HAL introduced a new cycle for allocating R&D funds. There are now two rounds (calls) during the year when project submission can occur. The first is the **Industry Call** for projects seeking consideration as part of an industry-specific program (closes end of November). The second is the **General Call** for 'unaligned' projects (closes end of March).

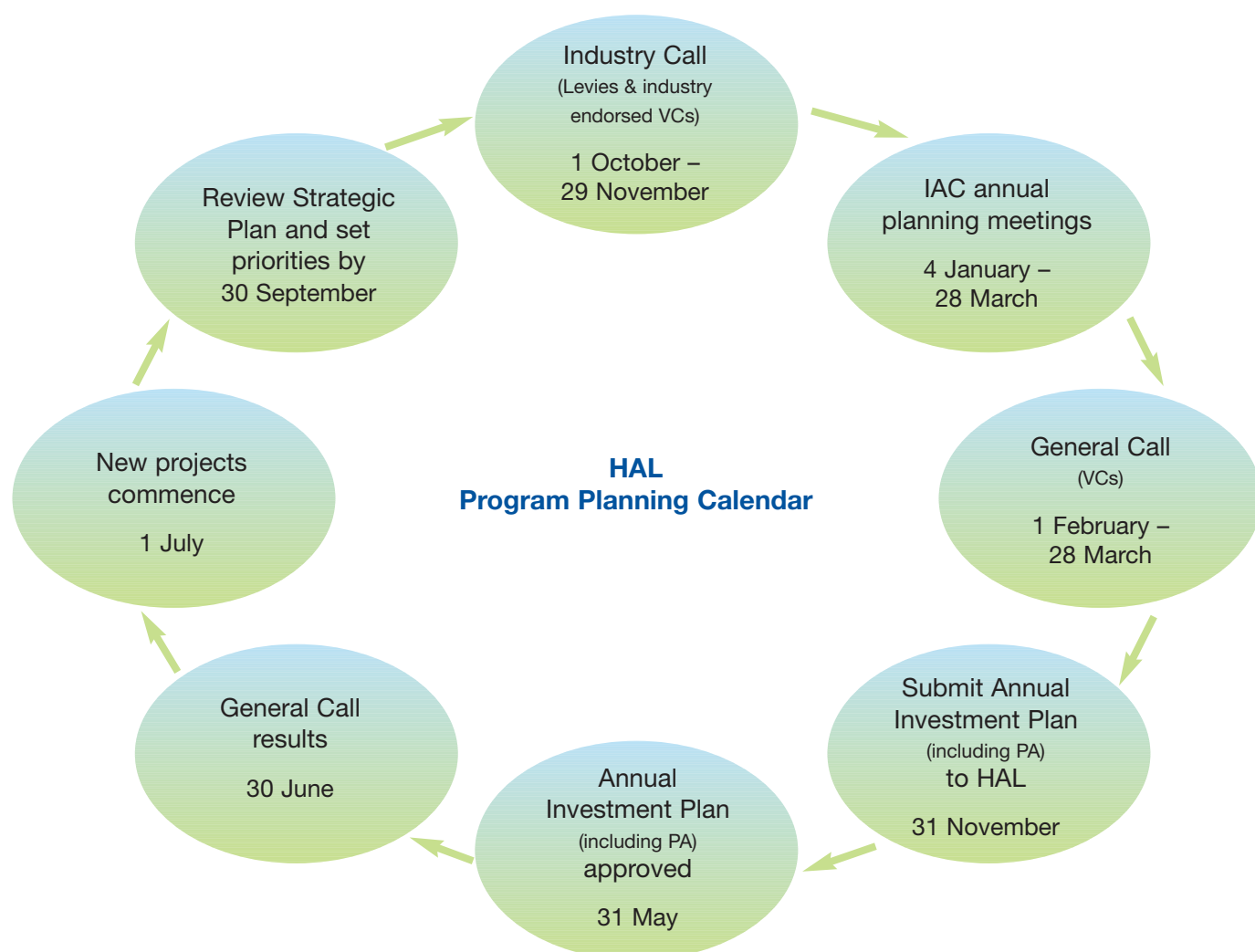
Approved project submissions commence in the following financial year, so it is in the best interests of any project to be well prepared and submitted as early as possible.

All the levy funds and 75% of the Commonwealth matching funds for Voluntary Contributions (VCs) are allocated to industry-specific programs, making the chances of success for any project in this category much greater. Voluntary contributions are the monies that the individual or the business is putting into the project, which may be seeking additional levy funds, a combination of levy and Commonwealth funds, or just Commonwealth matching funds.

Importantly all projects need to address the Industry's Strategic Plan as well as meet HAL's stringent quality criteria in order to stand any chance.

The industry annual investment plan for R&D and Marketing is submitted to HAL by the IAC at the end of March and by

**DIAGRAM 2: HAL's Program Planning Calendar**



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the end of May HAL approves – or otherwise – the overall budget for the following year. The individual projects, however, are still subject to HAL's checks and balances.

Between March and May the remaining 25% of Commonwealth matching funds for VC projects is allocated to submissions from the General Call. Projects can then be up and running from July, just before the next round begins.

## Assessing Proposals

A Proposal Assessment Tool has been developed to enable the IAC and HAL to more objectively assess proposals against specific criteria. Some of the factors considered in the assessment process are:

- **Strategic relevance:** Is the project aligned with the NGIA strategic plan?
- **Outcomes address the industry strategic issue:** Will it further the aims of a specific strategy within the NGIA strategic plan?
- **Project methodology:** How does it rate with regard to hypothesis and experimental design, the milestones and activities and appropriateness of resources?

- **Technical transfer & communication integration in proposal:** Does it take effective measures to identify and ensure the adoption of appropriate outcomes among the relevant target audiences?
- **IP capture/commercialisation:** Is there likely to be intellectual property or commercialisation elements resulting from the project and if there are, will they be appropriately managed?
- **Funding to undertake the project:** Are the costs realistic and competitive and are the budgets well defined and transparent?
- **Quality/track record of the research agency:** What is the performance of agency in areas such as quality management, delivery on milestones and collaboration with other professionals?
- **Overall impression:** What is the general impression of the project, taking into consideration all aspects of the application and the reviewers' own knowledge of the industry and specialist area?

If a project is declined by the IAC it may be because:

- The project does not address the NGIA strategic plan
- The project does not align with industry priorities
- There is a lack of funds
- There is an opportunity to combine the project with an existing/new project
- Similar/the same research already exists
- The quality of the proposal was unsatisfactory
- The funding source was not appropriate
- The project does not fit the definition of R&D
- There is a conflict of interest
- HAL support of the proposal is not appropriate.



The Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) is responsible for advising HAL on the expenditure of funds collected from the nursery products levy or 'pot levy'.

## For further information

To find out more about the Nursery Products Levy, visit the NGIA website and click on Your Levy at Work [www.ngia.com.au/your\\_levyat\\_work/your\\_levyat\\_work.asp](http://www.ngia.com.au/your_levyat_work/your_levyat_work.asp)

For more information on the link between Horticulture Australia Limited and the nursery and garden industry, visit the NGIA website and click on Your Levy at Work/HAL [www.ngia.com.au/your\\_levyat\\_work/your\\_levyat\\_work\\_hal.asp](http://www.ngia.com.au/your_levyat_work/your_levyat_work_hal.asp)

For further information on Horticulture Australia Limited visit their website at [www.horticulture.com.au](http://www.horticulture.com.au).