



The nursery and garden industry has a new Strategic Plan following extensive consultation with all sectors of the industry.

A two-day national summit was held in November last year and brought together national and state presidents and directors, executive officers, members of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) and the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC).

The new vision and plan has been adopted by the national and all state associations as the blueprint for future objectives and strategies. While the primary aim is to achieve a united and sustainable nursery and garden industry, the plan also seeks to lift the profile of the industry among consumers, the media and government.

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Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia



Know-how for Horticulture™

Nursery and Garden Industry Strategic Plan 2006–08

The new Nursery and Garden Industry Strategic Plan is now in place and has been adopted by the whole of industry to guide its activities and development over the next three years.

“Our previous plan was focused on building better businesses; the new plan is more all-encompassing,” said Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) President, Stuart Swaddling. “While assisting industry businesses is still our number one priority, we have also chosen to emphasise a range of new goals that will really make a difference.”

The primary objective of the plan is to achieve a united and sustainable industry. This can be achieved by:

- Developing better business skills
- Promoting and marketing our industry to Australian consumers, the government and media
- Fostering closer ties between industry groups to enable the industry to work more closely together
- Influencing government and key stakeholders
- Addressing environmental issues, and
- Amending the structure and resource allocation of the industry.



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Our Industry Vision

A united and sustainable industry providing plants, gardens and landscapes that are highly valued by Australian households and communities.

Objective 1

To achieve business sustainability by facilitating a change in business culture and improved business practice

This objective recognises the need for continuous business improvement. It also acknowledges the feeling of the national summit that this will be best achieved by a change in business culture within the nursery and garden industry.

NGIA will play an integral role in helping the industry to achieve this objective. Several mechanisms to facilitate this shift include:

- Guiding the industry to understand and work with the federal workplace relations reforms and to manage and recruit the best labour force.
- Enhancing the effectiveness and profile of the industry's accreditation



Objective 2

To promote plants, gardens and landscapes to consumers

Promotion is a key focus of the new plan. It is vital that the industry prioritise a united approach to formulating and promoting common messages about plants, gardens and landscapes.

This objective also recognises that we need to look for new market opportunities such as in areas where plants are not being used and the education of a growing breed of non-gardeners.

This will be addressed through a range of initiatives including:

- Conducting consumer research on how the industry should best promote and sell more plants

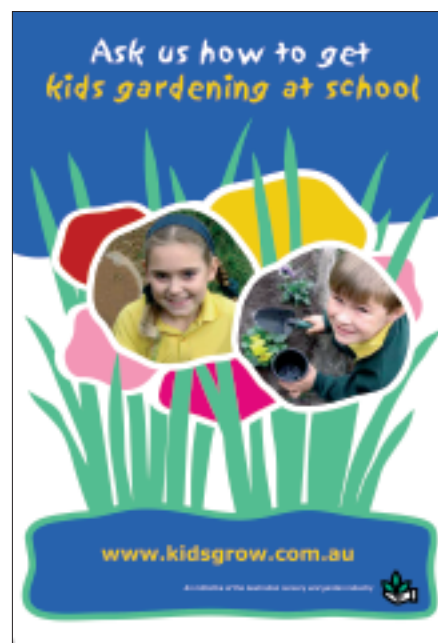
Increasing the effectiveness of industry accreditation programs is one of the ways in which Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) will facilitate continuous business development.

programs, Accredited Garden Centre Australia Scheme (AGCAS) and Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) as well as increasing the industry's participation rate in these programs.

- Focusing in more depth on the industry's skills needs, for example, what they are, how they can be addressed, which workshops should be run and how, and influencing organisations like TAFE to give more consideration to our industry's needs.
- Conducting further research into issues such as water use, pests and plant care.



The coming three years will see an increased focus upon industry skills development and training.



Cultivating a love of gardening in primary school-aged children through the KidsGrow initiative is one of the key elements of the new national promotions strategy.

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- Launching the *KidsGrow* initiative to schools and retail garden centres and nurseries to cultivate a love of gardening in primary school-aged children
- Developing our human resources – appointing a Communications & PR Manager and Marketing & Business Development Manager at the national office to direct and offer expert input into the promotion of industry programs.

Objective 3

To have a strong unified industry with one voice and identity

A survey commissioned by HAL in 2005 showed that our industry sectors and associations have at times failed to work together on important industry issues. This objective is aimed at combating this weakness and achieving greater unity.

The very fact that all industry sectors, State associations and leading bodies were involved in the development of the Plan is indicative of the industry's willingness to working more closely together.



Promoting the nursery and garden industry to both existing customers and a growing breed of non-gardeners is a key objective of the new Strategic Plan.

NGIA is collaborating with the State associations, NGIA Board and the IAC to look at the structure of committees and special interest groups such as Tree and Shrub Growers, Allied Traders and Bedding Plants Australia (BPA) to allow

for better communication in both directions. This will assist our industry to speak with a united voice.

Objective 4

To influence the opinion and policies of governments and key external bodies for the benefit of our industry

Having the 'ear of government' is critical to the recognition of our industry when it comes to legislation, policy formulation and specific issues that directly or indirectly affect the nursery and garden industry.

NGIA will assist nursery and garden industry members and representative bodies to develop and strengthen relationships with both the media and various key organisations in fields such as the environment and water.

Defining and presenting the industry's position to the wider Australian community in economic, environmental and employment terms is a task already underway.



From left: Simon and Anna Ainsworth of Eden Gardens & Garden Centre, NSW, Senator Richard Colbeck and NGIA President Stuart Swaddling. Increasing the lobbying power of the industry and strengthening ties with the government is another priority for 2006-08.

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Objective 5

To position our industry as the community's leader on relevant environmental issues

The nursery and garden industry should be seen as leaders not only in debates, but also actions carried out to address environmental issues such as invasive plants, water and pest management.

This is a significant development upon the previous strategic plan which positioned the industry as reactive to such issues.

It is widely agreed within the industry that we no longer wish to be perceived in this way. We must lead the community in environmental issues that are relevant to us by means of the strategies outlined under this objective.

Creating the role of National Environmental Policy Manager at NGIA reflects the need for a more holistic approach to dealing with environmental issues and will help position the industry as a community leader in this area.



Objective Six of the new Strategic Plan prioritises the efficient use of existing resources in light of declining revenue from the nursery 'pot' levy.



Objective 6

To ensure the industry has the resources and structures needed to implement its vision

The first five objectives are geared toward making the industry more sustainable; the sixth objective addresses how this will be achieved. It outlines how the plan will mobilise the necessary resources, maximise efficiency and avoid duplication within the industry to deliver the desired outcomes.

As funding is critical for our industry, the priority at present is how we can be more

efficient in what we do, rather than attempting to find alternative revenue-raising avenues. To this end, the review of the nursery levy process has been postponed for six months – a decision that is supported by the fact that the levy revenue is meeting budget.

Importantly, the industry needs to identify and involve the right people to help achieve its vision.

The Nursery and Garden Industry Strategic Plan 2006–08 is available as an insert accompanying this Nursery Paper or online at the NGI website www.ngia.com.au.

For further information on the Strategic Plan, contact Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) on ph: 02 9876 5200 or via email: info@ngia.com.au.

An actor, not a reactor – the new Strategic Plan aims to position the industry as a community leader on environmental issues such as water, invasive plants and pest management.