# Hort Innovation Performance Statement 2024/25





# **Purpose**

Hort Innovation's funding agreement with the Australian Government (Statutory Funding Agreement 2025-2034) includes a requirement for a principles-based approach to reporting and accountability. Hort Innovation participates in a performance review meeting with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to demonstrate our performance against five key performance principles and 14 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) each financial year. The Performance Measurement Framework at Annex A describes how performance is to be demonstrated to DAFF as part of the review process.

To support transparency of the company's governance and performance, Hort Innovation's Performance Statement is published and shared with stakeholders annually on our website.





# **Principle 1: Stakeholder engagement**

# Outcome: Engage stakeholders to identify research, development and extension (RD&E) and marketing priorities and activities that provide benefits to portfolio industries

# Key Performance Indicators Actions taken in 2024/25 1.1 Strategy prioritisation and development processes include appropriate consultation plans, based Hort Innovation Strategy 2024-2026

on the Best Practice Guide to Ann Stakeholder Consultation.

1.2 Demonstrated industry stakeholder engagement in the identification of RD&E and marketing priorities and activities consistent with the consultation plan in 1.1.

1.3 Demonstrated incorporation of industry feedback on RD&E and marketing priorities and activities. Where incorporation is not possible, demonstration of feedback to a stakeholder/s on why incorporation was not possible.

#### **Annual Investment Plans (AIPs)**

- In developing the 2025-26 AIPs, industry-representative advisory panel members have been consulted across more than 101 Strategic Investment Advisory Panel (SIAP) and 'ideation' meetings and prioritised 145 research, development and extension investments valued at \$103.1M and 32 marketing investments valued at \$22.3M (as of 11 June 2025).
- The 2024-25 AIP process was delivered in full on time. AIPs are published on Hort Innovation's <u>website</u> and industry stakeholders are notified via established communication channels.

#### Strategic Horticulture Investment Framework (SHIFt) program

- The expiration of the current five-year Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs) by June 3O, 2O26, has provided an opportunity to review the planning system and to explore more ambitious and effective planning models with industry. Desired outcomes include greater impact and value for industry, simplified planning and reporting and deeper engagement with industry stakeholders.
- As at 11 June 2025, Hort Innovation has consulted with over 400 industry participants, including 57 growers, 40 PIB reps, 13 industry development officers, 6 AFPA reps, 34 delivery partners and consultants, and 133 PIB leaders and growers in SIAPs.
- The consultation was informed by a consultation plan, aligned to the Best Practice Guide to Stakeholder Consultation. Engagements have purposefully used key regional events to gain wider industry representation, breadth of perspectives and growers across industries.
- The result of this part of the SHIFt program will be a Consultation Report, to form part of the recommended way forward, and to be published as both a transparent report-back to industry and a clear rationale for any change to investment planning.

#### **PIB Forum**

- The PIB Forum was held in July 2024. Forum attendees provided feedback on a variety of issues and Hort Innovation has reported progress to PIBs in April 2025 with a further update to be provided at the next Forum on 24 July 2025.
- As a result of previous feedback, the PIB Forum agenda is developed in partnership through an extensive early consultation process.

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#### Principle 1: Stakeholder engegement continued

Key Performance Indicators	Actions taken in 2024/25	
	Grower and Partner Survey (GaPS) 2024 to support our continuous improvement	
The <u>GaPS</u> is an important instrument to support Hort Innovation's a improvement, with results from the 2024 survey for stakeholder en increasing to 64% (up from 62% in the 2023 survey) comprising:		
	Growers 50%, <b>up</b> from 46% Delivery Partners 72%, <b>up</b> from 70% PIBs 71%, <b>up</b> from 69%.	
	Results indicated positive progress in delivery partner and PIB engagement, with clear areas for improvement in the engagement of growers.	



# Principle 2: Research, development and extension (RD&E) and marketing activities

Outcome: Ensure RD&E and marketing priorities and activities are strategic, collaborative and targeted to improve productivity, competitiveness and preparedness for future opportunities and challenges through a balanced portfolio

#### **Key Performance Indicators**

#### Actions taken in 2024/25

2.1 Research and Development Corporation (RDC) investments align with strategic plans and have demonstrated outcomes to levy payers and taxpayers, including through growth in the industry, increased profitability of producers, commercialisation, access to new markets.

2.2 Levy payers who participate in RDC supported extension and adoption programs:

 Gain new knowledge or new information to improve their long-term profitability, productivity, competitiveness and preparedness

 Intend to make or have made changes to existing practices by adopting the outcomes of R&D.

# Balanced portfolio is aligned to industry priorities, as defined in industry SIPs and AIPs

- All investments are aligned to industry priorities, as defined by industry's fiveyear SIPs and AIPs, and use program logic to indicate how they contribute to longer-term outcomes.
- Hort Innovation has continued to strengthen its approach to the balanced portfolio requirement in our funding agreement based on an ambition matrix approach. Using this approach, innovation portfolios can be analysed to determine whether innovations are foundational (F), incremental (I) or transformational (T) (i.e. their FIT alignment).
- In partnership with industry, Hort Innovation has made progress in shifting focus towards more 'transformational' investments, with Q3 results showing that 'foundational' investments within the portfolio are 32% (down from 41% in FY24) 'incremental' investments 29% (up from 26% in FY24) and 'transformational' investments 39% (up from 33% in FY24).

#### **Balanced Portfolio is aligned to Government priorities**

- Hort Innovation has continued to deliver on Government priorities in 2024-25 with alignment and investment examples communicated within our company Annual Report.
- Investment examples include:
  - Next Generation Weed Management
  - Automating the Nuts Industry in Australia: A pathway to smarter orchards and labour optimisation
  - Driving on-farm productivity with augmented technologies for fruit growers
  - Progress on bumblebees as commercial pollinators in Australia: update on risks and opportunities
  - PestREADI regionally-enabled agroecological decision
  - Australia-Japan Showcase
  - Dried tree fruit industry communications program
  - Annual Vegetable Industry Seminars
  - Plus 1 serve of vegetables by 2030

#### **ESG priorities**

Hort Innovation's Q2 result for the number of sustainability investments as a percentage of our investment portfolio by value is 19%.

#### Principle 2: Research, development, extension (RD&E) and marketing activities continued

Key Performance Indicators	Actions taken in 2024/25	
	Average purchase intent	
	Average purchase intent, measuring the intent of Australian consumers to purchase key horticultural commodities in the next seven days, has declined in FY25.	
	Hort Innovation is reviewing the use of the purchase intent measure to ensure i reflects the levy paying industries we have the opportunity to impact.	
	Falling consumption of horticultural products continues to be an area of challenge for Australian consumers and an area of focus for the sector and fo Hort Innovation.	
	Hort Innovation will continue to deliver investments designed to drive consumption through high-impact, evidence-based domestic and export marketing campaigns.	
	Maintain or grow preference for Australian horticulture in key markets	
	Hort Innovation tracks the market share performance of Australia's top five export commodities (citrus, table grape, carrot, almond and macadamia) in terms of their share of import trade in the top five export markets.	
	The result in Q3 was 65% meaning that 65% of commodities by market have increased or maintained market share compared to the previous reporting period.	
	Hort IQ performance reporting	
	Hort Innovation has worked to make industry investments in consumer data and insights accessible through the Hort IQ portal launched in June 2024 and to support understanding by delivering webinars.	
	Hort IQ has 7,000 users since launch and in 2024/25, quarterly sessions have exceeded 2,200 sessions.	
	A survey of a subset of users conducted in March 2025 showed that 67% of these users have utilised Hort IQ insights to inform business decisions.	

# **Principle 3: Collaboration**

# Outcome: Undertake strategic and sustained cross-industry and crosssectoral collaboration that addresses shared challenges and draws on experience from other sectors

Key Performance Indicators	Actions taken in 2024/25	
3.1 Completed, current	growAG	
and future R&D including commercialisation opportunities is accessible through the growAG platform.	Hort Innovation has continued to contribute to the growAG platform, a collaboration between DAFF and all 15 RDCs. growAG is an online repository of world-leading agricultural research, unique technologies and commercialisation opportunities in one, easy to use location. For example:	
3.2 Number and quantum of cross-industry and cross-sector RD&E investments available.	Commercialisation partnering opportunity for pheromone lure for almond carpophilus beetle	
	Australian Grown Innovation Program	
	Collaborative investments summary	
	As of 16 June 2025, Hort Innovation funds 67 multi-industry projects with a total value of \$237M. These results represent an increase from our 2023/24 results of 59 multi-industry projects with a total value of \$194M.	
	Collaborative investment examples	
	Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative (PBRI)	
	Australian Food and Wine Collaboration	
	Wiggles Fruit and Veggies Yummy Yummy	
	Fresh And Secure Trade Alliance (FASTA)	
	Australian Tree Crop Map	
	${\mathcal O}$ Supporting the health and expansion of the Australian Stingless bee industry	
	Optimising Organic Waste and Cultivating Circularity for Australian Agriculture	



# **Principle 4: Governance**

# Outcome: Governance arrangements and practices fulfil legislative requirements and align with contemporary Australian best practice for open, transparent and proper use and management of funds

Key Performance Indicators	Actions taken in 2024/25	
4.1 Ongoing oversight, planning and reporting of investment activities is done in accordance with legislative and Australian Government requirements and timeframes.	<ul> <li>External financial Audit and internal Audit program</li> <li>As per the requirements of our funding agreement, audited financial statement are provided to DAFF and included in our company <u>Annual Report</u> which is published each October.</li> <li>Our program of internal audits further supports our compliance and continuous improvement. The internal audit program considered travel, payroll,</li> </ul>	
4.2 Demonstrated management of financial and non-financial risk.	levy and matching payments and business continuity in 2024/25. New Frontiers programs to drive commercial outcomes for growers	
4.3 Relevant policies and procedures adopted and implemented (e.g. privacy etc.)	The Hort Innovation Venture Fund, targeting investments in early stage startups was launched in November 2024.	
implemented (e.g. privacy, etc). 4.4 Non-financial resources implemented effectively (human resources, IT, IP, etc).	The <u>Australian-Grown Innovation</u> (AGI) program was launched in March 2025 to mentor Australian growers and those across the horticulture supply chain to turn innovative ideas into commercially viable products and services. The <u>first cohort</u> of program participants was announced in June 2025.	
	International Marketing model review	
	The international marketing agency model has been reviewed in 2024/25 to assess efficiency and effectiveness in delivery of international marketing services for industry. Industry stakeholders have been engaged in this review process.	
	A new in-country marketing agency model will be implemented in 2025/26.	
	Risk and compliance management review	
	Significant efforts have been made in 2024/25 to continue to uplift our Risk Management and Compliance Frameworks to improve effectiveness and design. The Risk Management Framework is reviewed and approved annually by the Board.	
	Policy suite reset and refreshed	
	The Intellectual Property (IP) Policy was independently reviewed and revised in 2024/25 and a new policy will apply from July 1, 2025.	
	A new <u>Supplier Code of Conduct</u> , to improve clarity over conduct expectations of Hort Innovation's suppliers, was implemented in May 2025.	
	A full review of company policies was undertaken in 2024/25, which led to the development of a new Technology and Data Management Policy which includes guidelines for the use of AI at Hort Innovation.	

#### **Principle 4: Governance continued**

Key Performance Indicators	Actions taken in 2024/25	
	New Delivery Partner Forum implemented	
	Hort Innovation has introduced a new Delivery Partner Forum, designed to inform current and future delivery partners of recent changes, critical programs and streamlined ways of working.	
	The first forum in May 2025 was successful, with active engagement from over 200 attendees.	
	- Team engagement	
	Our full year employee engagement result will be available in Q1 FY26, however the pulse survey result for employee engagement completed in February 2025 was 72% (baseline 64% in July 2023).	
	Our values result in the employee survey result will be available in Q1 FY26, however the FY25 result was 94% (baseline 49% in July 2023).	
	Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) delivered	
	The Hort Innovation Reflect RAP was delivered in April 2025, with activities underway to support implementation.	



# **Principle 5: Monitoring and evaluation**

Outcome: Demonstrated positive outcomes and delivery of RD&E and marketing benefits to levy payers and the Australian community in general, and continuous improvement in governance and administrative efficiency

Key Performance Indicators	Actions taken in 2024/25 Measuring the performance of our investments	
5.1 Impact (cost-benefit)		
assessment of a broad cross- section of RD&E and marketing investment undertaken annually.	At an organisational-level, our BCR result for 2023/24 was 5.57:1 and the five- year average is 4.06:1. Hort Innovation continues to review and improve the way investment impact is evaluated in line with guidelines from the Council of	
5.1 Impact (cost-benefit)	Rural Research and Development Corporations (CRRDC).	
assessment of a broad cross- section of RD&E and marketing nvestment undertaken annually.	At a project-level, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans are produced for the majority of investments and maintained for all ongoing investments to provide a clear logic and pathway to impact between a project's related activities,	
5.3 Transparent communication	outputs and outcomes. M&E plans help delivery partners report the progress	
o stakeholders (including	and success of their projects and consider areas of potential improvement.	
Government) on the impacts		

- Independent project evaluations are undertaken for a sample of projects to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and process appropriateness. This helps Hort Innovation work with delivery partners to continuously improve investment delivery and make changes where required. This work also informs the development of new investment recommendations.
- Investment expenditure analysis work continues to track alignment of investments to industry strategic priorities (as identified in SIPs), with performance reporting published on our website.

#### Seeking and responding to feedback

Hort Innovation has embedded a culture of seeking and actioning feedback received across multiple touchpoints with stakeholders. Receiving regular feedback from stakeholders enables the Hort Innovation team to better understand the opportunities for improvements to our service delivery on a continual basis. Examples include GAPs, Know to Grow surveys for advisory panel members, the PIB Forum, feedback forms after webinars, the Annual General Meeting, and the DAFF annual performance review.

#### **Communicating our impact through the company Annual Report**

Improvements were made to Hort Innovation's Annual Report, highlighting the impact and benefit of investments and company activities. The sharpened focus resulted in the <u>2023/24 Annual Report</u> being awarded Gold (the highest category) at the Australasian Reporting Awards.

#### Measuring our marketing impact

Hort Innovation is continuously enhancing how it monitors and communicates the impact of its marketing investments. A great example of this is the <u>Banana</u> <u>Gym Pass</u> campaign, which delivered 32.5 million impressions to more than 20 million Australian consumers, generated 177 pieces of PR coverage, and led to a 9.7% increase in sales at Woolworths stores near participating gyms.

#### Collaboration on communicating impact with RDCs

Hort Innovation collaborated with other RDCs on the development of the <u>Collective Ambition</u> report, showing that RDC investment is occurring across the spectrum of ESG priorities meeting societal, government and industry needs.

and benefits of the RD&E and

marketing activities.

# Annex A Statutory Funding Agreement Performance Measurement Framework 2024-2026

### **Purpose**

Hort Innovation's Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) 2024-2026 outlines how Hort Innovation will demonstrate it is achieving the 14 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out in the Australian Government Guidelines for Statutory Funding Agreements (SFAs).

## **1. Stakeholder engagement**

Outcome: Engage stakeholders to identify research, development and extension (RD&E) and marketing priorities and activities that provide benefits to portfolio industries

SFA Key Performance Indicator	Alignment to the Hort Innovation Strategy	Hort Innovation goals 2024-2026 and evidence of performance
1.1 Strategy prioritisation and development processes include appropriate consultation plans, based on the Best Practice Guide to Stakeholder Consultation.	<b>Priority 5.2</b> Transparent relationships	<ul> <li>Consultation and development of strategy are aligned to Hort Innovation's Stakeholder</li> <li>Engagement and Consultation</li> <li>Framework and the Best Practice</li> <li>Guide to Stakeholder Consultation.</li> </ul>
1.2 Demonstrated industry stakeholder engagement in the identification of RD&E and marketing priorities and activities consistent with the consultation plan in 1.1.	<b>Priority 3.1</b> Partner with industry to deliver Annual Investment Plans (AIPs) ensuring industry levy-funded projects deliver impact at scale	<ul><li>AIPs delivered in full on time (DIFOT).</li><li>Performance examples.</li></ul>
1.3 Demonstrated incorporation of industry feedback on RD&E and marketing priorities and activities. Where incorporation is not possible, demonstration of feedback to a stakeholder/s on why incorporation was not possible.	Goal Foster collaborative relationships	Stakeholder engagement factor in the Grower and Partner Survey (GaPs) > 60%.
	<b>Priority 5.2</b> Invest in relationships and prioritise transparent and open communication with all our stakeholders	<ul> <li>Partner and member satisfaction with service factor in the GaPs &gt; 60%.</li> <li>Performance examples.</li> </ul>

# 2. Research, development and extension (RD&E) and marketing activities

Outcome: Ensure RD&E and marketing priorities and activities are strategic, collaborative and targeted to improve productivity, competitiveness and preparedness for future opportunities and challenges through a balanced portfolio

SFA Key Performance Indicator	Alignment to the Hort Innovation Strategy	Hort Innovation goals 2024-2026 and evidence of performance
2.1 Research and Development Corporation (RDC) investments align with strategic plans and have demonstrated outcomes to levy payers and taxpayers, including through growth in the industry, increased profitability of producers, commercialisation,	Goal Help grow value	<ul> <li>Maintain or grow preference for Australian horticulture in key markets.</li> </ul>
	<b>Priority 1.1</b> Lead world-class innovation to ensure Australian horticulture is globally competitive	Work in partnership with industry to fund investments that address key ESG priorities, as specified in the Australian-Grown Horticulture Sustainability Framework.
access to new markets.		Performance examples.
	<b>Priority 2.2</b> Drive consumption through high-impact evidence-based domestic and international marketing campaigns	<ul> <li>Maintain or grow average purchase intent.</li> </ul>
2.2 Levy payers who participate in RDC supported extension and adoption programs:	Goal Satisfaction with service	Partner and member service satisfaction > 60%.
<ul> <li>Gain new knowledge or new information to improve their long-term profitability, productivity, competitiveness and preparedness.</li> </ul>	<b>Priority 1.3</b> Excel in breakthrough research to strengthen industry's readiness for existing and emerging opportunities and threats	Performance examples.
Intend to make or have made changes to existing practices by adopting the outcomes of R&D.		
	<b>Priority 2.3</b> Deliver valuable data and insights that help transform decision making and drive demand	<ul> <li>Hort IQ platform to inform industry decision making delivered in 2O23/24 and ongoing platform performance reporting.</li> </ul>

## **3. Collaboration**

Outcome: Undertake strategic and sustained cross-industry and cross-sectoral collaboration that addresses shared challenges and draws on experience from other sectors

SFA Key Performance Indicator	Alignment to the Hort Innovation Strategy	Hort Innovation goals 2024-2026 and evidence of performance
3.1 Completed, current and future R&D including commercialisation opportunities is accessible through the growAG platform.	<b>Priority 5.1</b> Build trust through quality compliance and governance processes	<ul> <li>Hort Innovation investments available on growAG website.</li> </ul>
3.2 Number and quantum of cross-industry and cross-sector RD&E investments available.	<b>Priority 1.4</b> Collaborate with industry to bolster resilience and future-proof supply chain disruptions	<ul> <li>Investments involving more than two industries are maintained or grow.</li> <li>Summary of number and quantum of cross-industry and cross-sector investments.</li> </ul>
		Performance examples.

## 4. Governance

Outcome: Undertake strategic and sustained cross-industry and cross-sectoral collaboration that addresses shared challenges and draws on experience from other sectors

SFA Key Performance Indicator	Alignment to the Hort Innovation Strategy	Hort Innovation goals 2024-2026 and evidence of performance
4.1 Ongoing oversight, planning and reporting of investment activities is done in accordance with legislative and Australian Government requirements and timeframes.	Priority 5.2 Transparent relationships	Independent external financial audit report included in company Annual Report.
		<ul> <li>Reporting on compliance management and the internal audit program in company Annual Report.</li> </ul>
		Performance examples.
4.2 Demonstrated management of financial and non-financial risk.	<b>Priority 3.3</b> Create a flexible investment framework attracting new partners and alternative funding sources	<ul> <li>Frontiers implemented and ongoing performance reporting.</li> </ul>
		Performance examples.
	<b>Priority 5.1</b> Build trust through quality compliance and governance processes	<ul> <li>Risk-focused IRP recommendations DIFOT as per company response.</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Reporting on strengthened Risk Management Framework and positive risk culture.</li> </ul>
		Performance examples.
4.3 Relevant policies and	Priority 5.1 Build trust through quality	Employee engagement > 70%.
procedures adopted and implemented (e.g., privacy, etc).	compliance and governance processes	Performance examples.
	Goal Live our values	<ul> <li>Values factor in Team Engagement Survey &gt; 59%.</li> </ul>
	<b>Priority 5.3</b> Remove complexity and simplify our ways-of-working to boost efficiency and enable better	<ul> <li>Performance examples of removing complexity and simplifying ways of working.</li> </ul>
	knowledge sharing	<ul> <li>Performance examples relating to effective use of non-financial resources.</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Reporting on implementation of Digital Strategy.</li> </ul>

# 4. Monitoring and evaluation

Outcome: Demonstrated positive outcomes and delivery of RD&E and marketing benefits to levy payers and the Australian community in general, and continuous improvement in governance and administrative efficiency

SFA Key Performance Indicator	Alignment to the Hort Innovation Strategy	Hort Innovation goals 2024-2026 and evidence of performance
5.1 - Impact (cost-benefit) assessment of a broad cross- section of RD&E and marketing investment undertaken annually.	<b>Goal</b> Deliver real impact for growers	Benefit Cost Ratio > 5:1 (methodology aligned to Council of RDCs Impact Assessment Guidelines).
5.2 Demonstrated consideration of and response to outcomes of monitoring and evaluation processes.	<b>Priority 5.1</b> Build trust through quality compliance and governance processes	<ul> <li>Organisational Evaluation</li> <li>Framework updated and embedded as per IRP recommendation and company response.</li> </ul>
		IRP recommendations DIFOT as per company response.
		Performance examples.
	Priority 5.2 Transparent relationships	<ul> <li>GaPs results and continuous improvement actions to respond to the results.</li> </ul>
5.3 Transparent communication to stakeholders (including Government) on the impacts and benefits of the RD&E and marketing activities.	Priority 5.2 Transparent relationships	<ul> <li>Reporting on impact of investments in company Annual Report, Fund Annual Reports, Impact Updates and media releases.</li> </ul>



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