

## **Final Report**

# **National Apple and Pear Grower Communications Program**

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Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL)

**Project code:**

AP15007

**Project:**

National Apple and Pear Grower Communications Program – AP15007

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## Content

Summary	4
Keywords	5
Introduction	6
Methodology	7
Outputs	8
Outcomes	12
Recommendations	14
Monitoring and evaluation	15
References	17
Intellectual property, commercialisation and confidentiality	17
Appendix	19

## Summary

Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL) has completed delivery of the *National apple and pear grower communications program* project (AP15007). The project ran from 8 December 2015 to 15 December 2018.

APAL is the peak body for the Australian apple and pear industry and provides support services to around 560 commercial growers nationally.

The objective of the project was to support growers in their endeavour to improve profitability and sustainability by sharing the best available information on developments in orchard and packing shed management, research, new varieties and market opportunities to inform decision-making.

Using the apal.org.au website as an information hub and repository, APAL's communications team sourced, wrote and curated relevant content from its extensive network of researchers, industry partners and grower businesses, as well as from external national and international news sources.

Emphasis was placed on communicating research outcomes, and existing networks with Hort Innovation and research project delivery partners were further developed to facilitate better and more timely access to and communication of research outcomes.

Harnessing the extensive reach of APAL's own database of growers and contacts, information was communicated to over 1200 subscribers to the weekly *Industry Juice* newsletter, 1000 subscribers to the *Australian Fruitgrower* magazine, and a wide audience of social media-followers and media.

Complementary media such as video was utilised to provide accessible visual communication of specific snapshots of information via grower interviews, and animated information videos on industry issues or hot topics.

To further facilitate information transfer, APAL built communication capacity in the industry by building relationships with rural media to strengthen industry knowledge and understanding and by providing media training to key industry spokespeople and state association members.

### Outputs

- Australian Fruitgrower magazine – 6 issues annually
- Industry Juice newsletter – 50 issues annually
- Videos – Six short videos annually featuring growers and visiting researchers
- Industry collateral – Extensive research library housed on website for ongoing sharing; researched background pieces on hot topic consumer issues; and image library
- Capacity building – media training for industry spokespeople

### Outcomes

The Independently conducted mid-term review found evidence of strong industry engagement with the communications program and that”

*“There is some evidence that the program is contributing to adoption – which is a good result and indicative of a level of success for the industry communication program.”*

Further the review identified that APAL was able to do that while at the *‘lower end of the (spending) scale at 9 per cent of the combined R&D/marketing budgets (average 22pc across the industries represented in the review).’*

## Keywords

Communications; Australian Fruitgrower magazine; Industry Juice

## Introduction

Apple and Pear Australian Limited (APAL) is a not-for-profit organisation and peak body for the Australian apple and pear industry and provides support services to around 560 commercial growers nationally, serving as the central point connecting them to a far-broader network of industry research bodies, commercial businesses and service providers.

APAL is uniquely and strategically positioned to provide communications services to industry by virtue of its deep industry involvement, networks and knowledge; its apple and pear focus guaranteeing high relevance of content; and its extensive network of established industry relationships.

APAL has extensive expertise in industry communications having delivered industry communications through various projects (AP12013, AP11026 and AP08054) since 2007 and worked with Hort Innovation's predecessor Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL) in partnership on apple and pear communications.

APAL's vision is a growing, profitable and sustainable apple and pear industry. It recognises an informed industry, making decisions on the basis of the latest and most comprehensive information, is best placed to achieve this vision.

The rationale for the project is that access to a broad range of information and resources improves the quality of decision-making and more informed and effective decision-making will help drive the future profitability and sustainability of the industry.

The Apple and Pear Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021 identifies the need for industry communications to drive practice change in a range of areas include increased mechanisation, supply chain mechanics, food safety compliance and levy activity. (Horticulture Innovation Australia, 2017).

APAL proposed a project which would inform decision-making through the sourcing, development and provision to industry of relevant, practical and current information including developments in research, marketing, technology, orchard best practice, market opportunities, competitor practices and consumer preferences.

This would be shared, in accordance with a communications strategy and workplan, with industry via the following channels:

- Australian Fruitgrower magazine, six issues a year
- Weekly e-newsletter Industry Juice
- Videos
- Social Media
- News releases
- Information and resources hub apal.org.au website.

APAL has now delivered this project and has met and exceeded its communication project milestones throughout the project and has a documented record of success engaging, informing and influencing industry.

The independent mid-term evaluation conducted by Coutts J&R (Coutts, January 2018) found:

- " Evidence of strong industry engagement with the Australian Fruitgrower magazine, Industry Juice e-newsletter, digital news bulletins and APAL videos";
- (ii) That respondents saw the magazine and e-newsletter in particular as having "above-average level of relevance to their decision-making, with the Australian Fruitgrower magazine rated as the most relevant"; and
- (iii) "There is some evidence that the program is contributing to adoption – which is a good result and indicative of a level of success for an industry communication program."

## Methodology

The communications program was developed around three core pillars

**Communication** – increasing industry knowledge and improved decision-making through the delivery of timely and relevant information on developments in R&D, marketing, technology, orchard best practice, new varieties and opportunities, risk management and consumer trends. This formed the core of the project work and outputs.

**Engagement** – to ensure information was timely and relevant, met grower needs and was communicated accurately and widely, strong networks and relationships with all stakeholders, researchers and media were built and nurtured.

**Central information hub** – the apal.org.au website served as the central repository for an research material, industry resources and data, which was cross-shared against multiple channels and could be repeatedly referenced to provide deeper context around shared content.

An annual Communications Strategy and Work Plan was developed to set out an overarching strategy plan for content, channels and communication activity with reference to:

- Industry identified objectives as outlined in the Apple and Pear Industry Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) 2017-2021; and the Apple & Pear Industry Export Development Strategy and other industry levy funded project and relevant industry strategies
- Key production cycle timings to maximise relevance of communications
- Current and expected levy-funded R&D and marketing activities, including any communications deliverables
- Matching information to the best-suited delivery channel
- Distribution to growers nationally
- Need to inform industry of emerging issues.

Editorial meetings were held weekly to review availability of new material, current seasonal and industry issues and assess the need to realign work plans.

Content was sourced from project updates; existing Hort Innovation publications; current events including Future Orchards® orchard walks; seminars or conferences; and extensive canvassing of available information from horticultural information sources and networks.

Information was researched, gathered, commissioned, developed, and checked with subject experts if necessary, before being delivered via the following communication outputs.

Communications were shared across the following channels:

- Australian Fruitgrower magazine
- Industry Juice
- Digital news bulletins
- Videos/You Tube
- Social media
- Media releases and hot topic background pieces

## Outputs

APAL's website ([www.apal.org.au](http://www.apal.org.au)) is the central information hub that underpins not only the delivery of the *National Apple and Pear Industry Communications Program* but serves as a readily-accessible repository for research reports from a range of other projects, technical information and information about the industry.

The APAL website receives an average 19,500 visitors a month.

**Australian Fruitgrower** magazine – APAL's flagship communication was published six times each year of this project and circulated to 990 apple and pear industry subscribers. The project funded 32 pages of the 36 pages produced. The last three issues were 40-page publications.

*Australian Fruitgrower* is widely read and particularly well-suited to the broad dissemination of non-time sensitive, detailed, data-driven information which can be kept as a resource and referred back to. It also enables information delivery to industry members who have either poor access to telecommunications or prefer to receive information via hard copy.

It was found by the independent mid-term evaluation conducted in 2017 by Coutts J&R (Coutts, January 2018) to be the highest ranking of the project's delivery channels, with 77 per cent ranking it the one they preferred.

Standard sections included

- Orchard management research to improve productivity and quality - Future Orchards® and Productivity,
- Irrigation, Pests and Soils (PIPS) research reports
- Hort Innovation marketing updates
- State Roundups to facilitate cross industry learning
- Grower profiles demonstrating the gains from implementation of new systems and technologies

Special features during the project focusing on priority outcomes identified in the SIP included:

- Labour-saving techniques (Technology/Automation) ([AFG April/May 2017](#))
- Smarter control of orchard pests (IPDM) ([AFG August/September 2018](#))
- Listeria – no room for complacency (Food Safety/Risk mitigation) (AFG December 2018/January 2019)
- Succession planning leads to-multi generational success (Business skills/sustainability) ([AFG June/July 2018](#))

*Australian Fruitgrower* magazine covers left to right: Dec 2018/Jan 2019, Aug/Sep 2018 and Jun/Jul 2018



**Industry Juice** – is delivered weekly to 1,200 industry subscribers via the Mailchimp platform.

*Industry Juice* was identified by the mid-term review to be the program’s second most-preferred channel of communication (Coutts, January 2018), delivering timely R&D/marketing updates, industry developments, events, opportunities and news to 1,200 industry subscribers.

The weekly format is particularly suited to time-sensitive updates, events, opportunities and news, but is also used to share Hort Innovation publications; Future Orchards trial updates and newsletters; links to long-form articles published in *Australian Fruitgrower*, and to provide a deeper context to news items.

In-house knowledge of issues, background and archive resources and the ability to easily link back to material housed on the website, allows for, where relevant, linking through to associated research, background or deeper context.

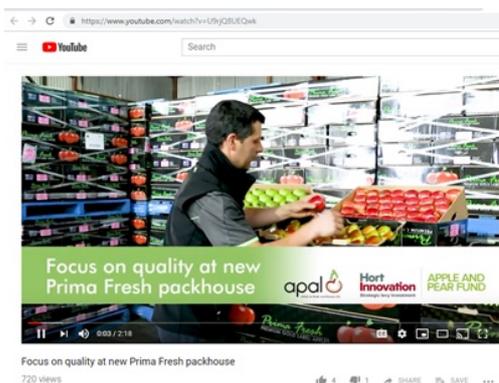
*Industry Juice* is subscribed to by a high number of industry and mainstream media and so also proves an effective means of extending the reach of industry stories and activities into the wider community. There is a high level of pick up and circulation by publications including Weekly Times, ABC, Fruitnet and Fresh Plaza.

The Mailchimp platform provides good analytics of engagement with content and shows that *Industry Juice* has a very high level of engagement as follows:

- Open rate – average 41 per cent (around 500 of the 1200 subscribers), compared to the Agriculture and Food services industry average of 18.7 per cent, and
- Click rate – average of 16.4 per cent (industry average 2.5 per cent).

All [Industry Juice issues](#) are available on the APAL website





**Videos/You Tube** – Short videos distributed via *Industry Juice* or social media and embedded in reports on the website are an engaging and effective method of information transfer. For example, a particular pruning technique; research project update; a summary of Future Orchards presentations; or the key points contributing to a profiled growers productivity growth.

The video above with Goulburn Valley grower and packer Gerard Alampi has been viewed 720 times, while the one below on netting to protect crops was seen by 625 viewers.



**Feature Videos** – In addition to the research and grower feature videos, APAL contracted Monkey Video Productions to produce a series of animated videos to provide an informed background on topical issues from apple waxing and storage, to chemical residues and labour.

The [Apple Waxing video](#) has been viewed 5,078 times. The backgrounder on apple waxing is consistently in the top 5 pages viewed on APAL’s website and has been visited 13,000 times.

The [Storing Apples video](#) has been viewed 1,550 times. Both are embedded on the Aussie Apples landing page.



**Social media** – A presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Flickr allows for rare and valuable two-way engagement with industry allowing APAL to share information, then enabling industry discussion and providing an insight into industry views.

Followers of [APAL’s Facebook page](#) rose steadily during the project. There are now 1,700 people following and engaged with APAL’s Facebook page. This includes industry stakeholders, retailers and both current and former politicians. It allows the broad reach of notifications of events, e.g. *the sharing*

of an item on free pest and disease workshops delivered by the levy-funded IPDM project on 21 August, 2018, reached 671 people.

On sharing of articles by these followers, e.g. See [ADAMA share of IPDM article](#) below, magnify significantly the reach of APAL's communications and ensure a much wider audience than the base channel subscribers and followers.



**News and hot topics, media engagement and training** – Building and maintaining networks with media increases the reach of industry communications, ensures industry views are heard and increases the visibility and understanding of apple and pear growers.

APAL has established good working relationships with rural and regional media Australia-wide and is regularly contacted by media for information on issues impacting the industry. Through *Industry Juice* and Twitter, APAL shares news ideas with media who often review, seek more information and cover the topic further. APAL also distributes media releases and addresses issues as they arise in the media, including the promotion of levy-funded research projects and related events.

A total of 32 news releases for media circulation and 50 industry news articles were prepared, circulated and promoted across the various communication channels. Some examples are linked below:

- [Consumers give insights into what they want in pears](#) (18 Apr 2018)
- [Hailstorm Heroes campaign opens in SA](#) (3 Apr 2018)
- [Apple and Pear Crop Estimate](#) (8 Feb 2018)
- [APAL welcomes new Hort Innovation marketing manager](#) (9 Jan 2018)
- [National Residue Survey 2016-2017 Results](#) (3 Jan 2018)
- [NRS to test for metals and microbes from 2018](#) (3 Jan 2018)
- [Exporters to EU advised iprodione approval to end in 2018](#) (19 Dec 2017)
- [Orchard Business Analysis 2016-2017](#) (13 Dec 2017)
- [Brown marmorated stink bug alert](#) (4 Dec 2017)

To build industry capacity for telling their story to the media, APAL organised media training for industry spokesman and state association members in 2017 and 2018.

## Outcomes

The *National apple and pear grower communications program* was contracted as an output-based project to disseminate information and engage with industry to improve communications towards knowledge transfer and adoption.

Through delivery of the project outputs, APAL has met its objective of sharing helping and timely information with growers on orchard and packing shed management and industry news to help them make decisions that improve the profitability and sustainability of their businesses.

Through the development of extensive networks with researchers in both levy-funded projects and those funded by bodies other than Hort Innovation, the program has provided growers and industry with timely access to a wide range of information on new developments, techniques, varieties and opportunities.

Measures of effectiveness include:

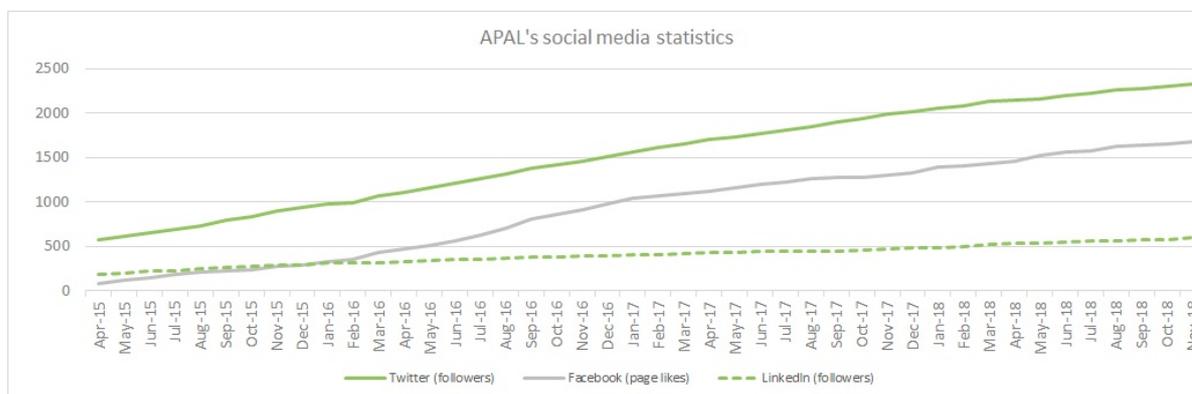
**Strong engagement:** Over the life of the project subscribers to APAL’s communication channels have steadily grown, both demonstrating industry engagement and increasing the reach of communications.

Content on APAL’s communications channels is consistently picked up and share by other industry and mainstream media outlets increasing the reach of industry information.

Stronger networks with other levy-funded projects have improved the ability to track and communicate research outcomes increasing the effectiveness of knowledge transfer.

Website traffic has grown steadily over the project. The website attracts some 19,500 visits a month, a significant rise from 12,765 at the start of the project, and is a massive repository of industry research, information and resources.

Social Media platform engagement has grown strongly and continues to amplify the reach of communications.



**Relevance and evidence contributing to adoption:** The mid-term review of the project by assessors Coutts J&R provided an ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme delivery.

The mid-term review found the program was meeting its objectives of

- Sharing timely and helpful information, and
- Engaging with growers and service providers.

Coutts JR found evidence of strong industry engagement with the communications program, and that the program was contributing to adoption, "*indicative of a level of success for the industry communication program.*"

Over half of interviews and online survey respondents noted making changes as a result of or prompted by information received through grower communications activities. Many commented that improvements were ongoing. (Coutts, January 2018)

In particular it found the core outputs of *Australian Fruitgrower* and *Industry Juice* were viewed as having a high degree of relevance. (See Coutts Jr, Table 3).

**Table 3:** Average rating of relevance of communication outputs to business and decision-making processes (Coutts J&R online survey)

Communication output	Overall average rating of relevance (average rating out of 10)	No. of respondents with no knowledge of activity
<b>Australian Fruitgrower magazine</b>	7.6 (n=48)	0
<b>Industry Juice</b> (weekly e-newsletter)	7.3 (n=47)	2
<b>Industry website</b> ( <i>apa1.org.au</i> )	6.8 (n=48)	1
<b>Apple and pear news alerts</b> (sent daily via email)	6.3 (n=45)	5
<b>APAL videos</b> (interviews with growers and industry experts)	6.2 (n=47)	3
<b>Media coverage</b> (e.g. local news, online news, ABC radio)	5.5 (n=47)	4
<b>Facebook</b> (social media)	4.2 (n=55)	6
<b>Flickr*</b> (photo sharing website)	2.8 (n=47)	20
<b>Twitter**</b> (social media)	2.4 (n=48)	12
<b>LinkedIn***</b> (social media)	2.4 (n=44)	11

## Recommendations

The mid-term evaluation made a number of recommendations for improving the program in future projects including:

- Systemising the provision of R&D information between Hort Innovation and APAL, with APAL to be sent briefing information on new R&D projects as part of the contracting process;
- Future projects to be based around a program logic and monitoring evaluation framework;
- APAL to further explore R&D and marketing content of increased relevance to growers including investigating the information required to ‘join the dots’ between levy funds and outcomes and how to present this information to stakeholders; and
- An effort should be made to include more content demonstrating the use of marketing and R&D levy.

Some of these recommendations have already been acted upon, with Hort Innovation now supplying details of newly contracted projects.

APAL worked with Hort Innovation to develop a draft M&E plan (see M&E section) and agreed to voluntarily report against this in parallel to this final report, bearing in mind that as it was only developed at the end of the project, the only objective measures are those that can be captured through communications analytics and those measured by the mid-term review.

APAL incorporated the Coutts JR recommendations into its proposal to deliver industry communications under the successor to AP15007 project (AP18000). It was awarded the contract in December 2018.

## Monitoring and evaluation

**Note:** An M&E did not form part of the AP15007 project requirements when contracted, but is undertaken here voluntarily as a trial in keeping with the recommendation of the Coutts JR mid term review and to demonstrate APAL’s commitment to continuous improvement. It follows the M&E developed with Hort Innovation in response to the Coutts JR review recommendations.

APAL has historically continually reviewed the progress and performance of the program by monitoring communications output analytics, stakeholder feedback, and industry feedback through the bi-ennial communication survey.

Analytics were monitored on all electronic communications to assess engagement and interest and inform continual improvement.

The bi-ennial stakeholder survey due for 2018 was developed in conjunction with Coutts JR and Hort Innovation and formed part of the mid-term review in late 2017. The format of the survey was substantially different from earlier surveys conducted by APAL and APAL was not provided with the data resulting, so only outcomes where data is available have been evaluated here. Subsequent iterations of the project will include an M&E and annual surveys ensuring capture of data on levels of knowledge, relevance and adoption.

**Outcome 1:** Growers have **access** to information to improve the growth, profitability and sustainability of their Australian apple and pear production businesses.

**Performance indicator for Outcome 1:** Information is provided through a programmed delivery of publications across channels including website, print, electronic and social media. (As measured by milestone deliverables met and subscription numbers).

**Discussion:** The project has provided **access** to information to improve the growth, profitability and sustainability of their Australian apple and pear production businesses.

The project deliverable communications of *Australian Fruitgrower*, *Industry Juice*, Social Media, News releases and Hot Topics, Media Training and Grower and Feature videos have been delivered as set out in the Outputs section above and in greater detail through the reporting cycle of the project in MS 103, MS104, MS 105 and MS 106.

Coutts JR found in their mid-term review that “To date, program outputs have been met on time and at a generally high standard.” (Coutts, January 2018).

Respondents to the bi-ennial stakeholder survey reported an above average level of improvement to their knowledge (6.6/10).

### Current subscription figures

Australian Fruitgrower	990
Industry Juice	1200
Facebook	1739
Twitter	605
Website traffic in November	18,037 site visits.

**Outcome 2:** High level of industry **engagement** is maintained in the information service provided. The Apple and Pear Communications Program is seen as the go-to hub for researchers, service providers and growers, facilitating a comprehensive cross-industry collaboration delivering maximum value.

**Performance indicator for Outcome 2:** The level of engagement can be quantitatively measured by various analytics including: magazine subscriptions, website traffic, Google Analytics, MailChimp statistics, social media metrics and grower surveys.

[Website: Annual visits to site of at least 200,000; E-news: Open rates of at least 35pc (industry avg is 19pc) and click through rates at least 10pc (2.9pc). Grower surveys – 7/10 respondents rate information as relevant to needs]

**Discussion:** The project engaged very well with industry as evidenced by all monitored analytics hitting targets and by grower survey feedback.

Website – Site visits in the 12 months from 13 Dec, 2017 to 13 Dec, 2018 were 208,044; Industry Juice open rates averaged 41 per cent (and hit 50 per cent on a number of occasions) with click through rates in excess of 16 per cent.

Coutts JR concluded that, based on the results of the bi-ennial stakeholder survey which informed the review, that *'the grower communication program is largely relevant to the needs of the apple and pear industry.'* (Coutts, January 2018)

Of the respondents to the online survey, 7.4/10 reported that they were quite satisfied that their interests were being adequately represented and their information needs met. (Coutts, January 2018)

The Australian Fruitgrower magazine was rated the most relevant at 7.6/10 cent followed by Industry Juice (7.3/10).

**Outcome 3:** Growers are using information communicated from current levy funded and other research projects and the latest variety developments, export opportunities and advances in technology to **implement** change in business decisions

**Performance indicator for Outcome 3:** Grower surveys – at least 5/10 respondents say information impacts decision making. Grower profiles/case studies show implementation of new varieties, techniques, research outcomes.

**Discussion:** It is difficult to determine any one factor that contribute to behavior change. Communications form part of the transfer of knowledge process and support and reinforce other factors, such as trials on farm, individual research, discussions with industry colleagues etc. However, respondents to the bi-ennial stakeholder survey conducted by Coutts JR reported (Coutts, January 2018) clearly reported that program communications were contributing to adoption of new practices.

*'Practice change linked to information being received, is a strong indicator that this objective is being met, with over half (63 per cent) of interviewees and only survey respondents (58 per cent) reporting making changes as a result of or prompted by information received through grower communication activities. Many commented that improvements were ongoing.'* (Coutts, January 2018)

**Outcome 4:** Growers are aware of *how their levy funds are invested* by Hort Innovation and the outcomes delivered.

**Performance indicator for Outcome 4:** Apple and pear industry levy funded activities and final reports are clearly identified using the agreed acknowledgement framework. Awareness of levy-funded activity among respondents to biennial surveys is demonstrated to have increased from the previous response.

**Discussion:** While respondents to the bi-ennial survey forming part of the Coutts JR mid-term review reported a high degree of relevance to the content communicated by the program, the level of awareness of research and development programs was only moderate (5.7/10). (Coutts, January 2018)

Awareness of marketing investment was a little lower at 5.3/10.

Coutts JR noted that ‘Several, however, noted they were aware of the (marketing) activities, but did *not agree with the direction*, did not think much of what was being delivered; and found it to be *useless*.’ (Coutts, January 2018)

The mid-term review found that the provision of information on research and development could be improved by more regular inclusion in all channels, joining of ‘the dots’ and regular project updates.

Towards improving this, Coutts JR recommended systemised communicating of new projects with details of contacts by Hort Innovation. This has been undertaken by Hort Innovation and has considerably improved APAL’s ability to know what projects have been funded and who to contact. It is expected that as AP18000 rolls out, the early access to information on funded projects, combined with the connections with researchers already established during this project, will facilitate more regular coverage of levy-funded projects to growers.

## References

Mid-term Evaluation National Apple and Pear Grower Communications Program (AP15070) (Coutts, January 2018)

Apple and pear Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021 (Horticulture Innovation Australia, 2017).

## Intellectual property, commercialisation and confidentiality

The IP for the APAL website URL, Future Orchards® program, *Australian Fruitgrower* magazine, APAL’ and Industry Juice newsletter is owned by Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL).

## Appendix

M&E Plan and Program Logic interim (2018 proposed M&E developed in response to mid term review, to be revised for new AP18000 project MS102)

# PROGRAM LOGIC AND M&E FRAMEWORK *draft*

## Apple and Pear Grower Communications Program

Evaluation hierarchy	Project details	Performance Indicators and Measures (Project deliverables)	M&E methods (Used by APAL for ongoing outcome assessment)
<p><b>Vision and Mission</b> Long-term goals towards which the organisation is ultimately expected to contribute.</p>	<p><b>Vision:</b> <i>A profitable, sustainable and globally competitive apple and pear industry, which has lowered its costs through improved productivity and better business skills and has access to a range of both domestic and export markets through collaborative supply chains.</i></p> <p><b>Mission:</b> <i>To help drive the future profitability and sustainability of the industry through the sourcing, development and provision to industry of relevant, practical and current information needed to inform business decisions, including: developments in research, marketing, technology, orchard best practice, market opportunities, competitor practices and consumer preferences.</i></p>		

<p><b>Project Outcomes</b> Outcomes at this level refer to a change or effect on the industry.</p>	<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Growers have <b>access</b> to information to improve the growth, profitability and sustainability of their Australian apple and pear production businesses.</p> <p><b>Outcome 2:</b> High level of industry <b>engagement</b> is maintained in the information service provided. The Apple and Pear Communications Program is seen as the go-to hub for researchers, service providers and growers facilitating a comprehensive cross-industry collaboration delivering maximum value.</p> <p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Growers are using information communicated from current levy funded and other research projects and the latest variety developments, export opportunities and advances in technology to <b>implement</b> change in business decisions</p> <p><b>Outcome 4:</b> Growers are aware of how their levy funds are invested by Hort Innovation and the outcomes delivered.</p>	<p><b>Performance indicator for Outcome 1:</b> Information is provided through a programmed delivery of publications across channels including website, print, electronic and social media. Physical communication deliverables are met</p> <p><b>Performance indicator for Outcome 2:</b> The level of engagement can be quantitatively measured by various analytics including: magazine subscriptions, website traffic, Google Analytics, MailChimp statistics, social media metrics and grower surveys.</p> <p><i>Website</i> : Annual visits to site of at least 200,000</p> <p>E-news: Open rates of at least 35pc (industry avg is 19pc) and click through rates at least 10pc (2.9pc)</p> <p>Grower surveys – 7/10 respondents rate information as relevant to needs</p> <p><b>Performance indicator for Outcome 3:</b> Grower surveys – at least 5/10 respondents say information impacts decision making</p> <p>Grower profiles/case studies show implementation of new varieties, techniques, research outcomes.</p> <p><b>Performance indicator for Outcome 4:</b> Apple and pear industry levy funded activities and final reports are clearly identified using the agreed acknowledgement framework.</p> <p>Grower surveys: Awareness of levy-funded activity among respondents to biennial surveys is demonstrated to have increased from the previous response</p>	<p>Project publications deliverables are met Subscription figures</p> <p>Engagement monitored by: (i) engagement rate using quantitative analytics, and (ii) Biennial industry online survey – growers confirm information shared via comms channels is influential and has prompted change</p> <p>Interviews as part of Independent program reviews (including mid- term evaluation) confirm adoption/implementation of new information</p> <p>Grower surveys and mid term review</p>
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Evaluation hierarchy	Project details	Performance Indicators and Measures	M&E methods
<p><b>Outputs</b> <i>Publications other media</i></p>	<p>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Framework - M&amp;E Framework updated by first milestone to reflect new project deliverables and context</p> <p>Communications Strategy produced annually during life of project to inform communications strategy</p> <p>Stakeholder survey (biennial)</p> <p><b>Earned</b> – media coverage, unsolicited social media mentions</p> <p><b>Shared</b> – Other delivery channels: <i>Australian Fruitgrower</i> magazine (6 editions annually), <i>Industry Juice</i> e- newsletter (50 editions), media releases, social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter).</p> <p><b>Owned</b> – Website acting as a central hub for all content including: research reports, marketing updates, industry profiles, news.</p> <p>Communications expertise made available to other projects – work with other projects to ensure results are clearly articulated and presented to optimize communication and information transfer</p>	<p>M&amp;E Framework is basis of project assessment setting out project logic, intended outcomes and performance indicators</p> <p>Ensures project outputs align with M&amp;E goals and that communications are timed appropriately for prompt response to seasonal and other issues.</p> <p>Serves to monitor grower feedback and views on communications outputs to ensure the are delivering against M&amp;E goals.</p> <p>Industry communications result in media coverage in key publications eg ABC radio, specialist magazines and rural newspapers and social media shares (provide links or copies of articles).</p> <p>Key measurements can be quantitatively measured by various analytics including: magazine subscriptions, website traffic, Google Analytics, MailChimp statistics, social media metrics (including level of interaction) and grower surveys.</p> <p>E-news – open rate 35pc (industry avg is 19pc) Click through rate of 10pc (Industry avg 2.9pc) Website – 200,000 visits per annum</p> <p>Reports of other projects are shared via APAL channels.</p>	<p>Monitor media for mentions that accurately reflect industry position respond to media enquiry</p> <p>Liaising with other project leads to provide communications expertise, share stories and information</p>

<p><b>Activities</b> <i>Development and engagement activities to achieve outputs and impacts</i></p>	<p>Extensive research, interviewing researchers and growers, attending industry events, taking photos, producing videos, monitoring news and current events, building networks, stakeholder liaison</p>	<p><b>Out-takes</b> (Stakeholder reactions, engagement) Feedback from Hort Innovation, mid term review, stakeholder meetings and grower surveys</p>	<p>Biennial survey used to measure stakeholder awareness, engagement and implementation</p>
<p><b>Foundational activities</b> <i>Underpinning structures and process to guide and support activities and outputs.</i></p>	<p>The Apple and Pear Grower Communications Program is guided by a M&amp;E Framework, Project Contract, annually updated media strategy, mid-term review, ongoing APAL-stakeholder communication and monitoring of current and topical events.</p>	<p>Planning methods are based on annual growing and orchard calendar, levy funded projects research outputs, industry strategy goals and any emerging industry challenges that require communications response.</p>	
<p><b>Context</b> <i>Factors that could influence the impacts and outcome of the project</i></p>	<p><b>Situation Analysis</b> – the context of the project and influencing factors at an industry and organisational level.</p>		
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivered by APAL – respected peak body with extensive, established networks; expertise; deep industry knowledge through proprietary database and demonstrated communications experience through successive projects, highlighted by positive mid-term review assessment; highly qualified and skilled communications staff and a wider team of support staff with technical and other industry knowledge</li> <li>Strong relationships with growers and industry partners including state-based associations, researchers, agronomists and service providers.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery channels are already crowded with many other organisations sending their own information.</li> <li>Growers are time poor and may not be able to digest all the detailed information made available</li> <li>Poor telecommunications provision in rural/remote areas may make it difficult to access digital communications</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthened engagement with researchers through the <i>Working better together</i> industry communications program will facilitate a clearer, better aligned communication of research projects and a deeper understanding of the projects provides an opportunity to improve the <i>joining of the dots</i> between levy funds and outcomes.</li> <li>High response rate to video identifies this as an opportunity for greater communication of research and development and extension (note: additional costs associated)</li> <li>To extend the communications offering and include podcasts.</li> <li>Leveraging off other projects to expand communications and assist in building networks.</li> <li>Take information that’s quite technical and digest it into easy to understand stories growers can relate to and adopt.</li> <li>Share Hort Innovation authored project fact sheets as per mid-term review recommendation.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Declining industry profitability.</li> <li>Declining number of growers.</li> <li>Information overload – challenge of ensuring apple and pear industry communications stand out and are read.</li> </ul>	

