

### Outcome from the meetings

The Horticulture Industry Working Group met online on Monday 21 March and face-to-face on Monday 11 April 2022.

As part of the [Reset and Refresh: Roles, responsibilities and the advice mechanism](#) process, the Hort Innovation Board has acknowledged that no one size fits all in relation to the advice mechanism and that it should be up to the individual industry to determine its preferred model, as long as that model meets agreed criteria. The Board has acknowledged the role of Peak Industry Bodies (PIBs) in providing advice and the need for them to be resourced appropriately to do this.

The Working Group agreed it is equally important for PIBs to understand and manage the conflict of interest in the dual role of being a service provider. The agreed criteria for advice mechanisms must deal with conflict of interest and confidentiality.

In addition, the Hort Innovation Board acknowledged that Hort Innovation has significant work to do in developing its internal culture. There is also a broader culture between Hort Innovation and industry or PIBs that needs work, to improve outcomes for all industry participants.

The focus of the industry workshops in June 2022 will be on agreeing the roles and responsibilities for Hort Innovation, PIBs and the Commonwealth Government in relation to the investment of levy payer and taxpayer funds, plus the criteria advice mechanisms need to meet. The framework document being developed by the Working Group will set these out, as the basis for feedback and discussion at the workshops.

Key items that were discussed at the Working Group meetings in March and April are outlined below.

### Discussion items

- The governance, compliance and contractual obligations Hort Innovation must meet were outlined and discussed. The Working Group agreed a summary document of 'hard rules' will be developed as context and background to the industry workshops in June.
- How Hort Innovation meets those 'hard rules' was discussed, including improvements in processes and structures in response to stakeholder feedback. The Working Group agreed a summary document of this information should also be developed for the workshops.
- The function of Industry Strategic Plans were discussed, particularly their importance to each industry and the need for those plans to encompass more than just RD&E [and marketing] priorities. It is the responsibility of the PIBs, where capable, to develop and implement those plans, with the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) setting out specific RD&E [and marketing] priorities for each industry.
- The Hort Innovation Board's feedback and offer to industry was outlined, which was welcomed by the Working Group. On the back of this, the Working Group determined that the focus areas for the workshops should be:
  - The hard rules Hort Innovation must meet and how it does this
  - Hort Innovation Board's offer to industry
  - Working Group's feedback on the offer and this 'reset and refresh' process
  - Agreeing the roles and responsibilities of PIBs, Hort Innovation and the Commonwealth Government in relation to their engagement and relationship, and the investment of levies
  - The overall investment cycle as context to the advice mechanism
  - Agreeing the criteria advice mechanisms must meet
  - Process to be followed after the workshops so each industry can develop and agree its preferred advice mechanism, other areas of the investment cycle can be developed and improved via collaboration between industry, Hort Innovation and the Commonwealth Government.

## Next steps

The third Working Group meeting will be held virtually on Tuesday 10 May 2022. Key discussion items at that meeting will include finalising the framework document that will be provided to industry stakeholders prior to the workshops, format for industry workshops to be held in June, plus communication to industry stakeholders regarding the workshops.

## The Working Group

The Horticulture Industry Working Group was set up in response to feedback gathered through interviews Seftons completed with Peak Industry Bodies (PIBs), industry, government stakeholders and Hort Innovation teams, in August and September 2021. The overwhelming feedback from those interviewed was a request for more collaborative engagement, in an effort to raise the quality of outcomes for levy payers and tax payers.

For further background on the Reset and Refresh process and the establishment of the Working Group, please visit the web page [Reset and Refresh: Roles, responsibilities and the advice mechanism](#), where you will find links to the background paper developed by Hort Innovation in July 2021, the report capturing feedback gathered through the stakeholder interviews and the Terms of Reference for the Working Group.

The membership of the Working Group is:

- Jolyon Burnett, CEO, Australian Macadamia Society
- Joanna Cave, CEO, Greenlife Industry Australia
- Robert Clark AM, Director, Hort Innovation
- Fiona Hill-Stein, Director, Horticulture Policy, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
- Anthony Kachenko, GM Stakeholder Experience, Hort Innovation
- Rachel MacKenzie, Executive Director, Berries Australia
- Michael Nixon, Director, Hort Innovation
- Ross Skinner, Former CEO, Almond Board of Australia

Seftons & Associates was engaged by Hort Innovation to provide strategic project management support to the Reset and Refresh process, including secretariat support and independent facilitation of Working Group meetings.

If you have follow-up questions regarding the outcomes from the Working Group meetings in March and April 2022, please feel free to contact Sally Schilg, Account Director, Seftons [sally.schilg@seftons.com.au](mailto:sally.schilg@seftons.com.au)