

AH00015
Review of the AusHort Program

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Know-how for Horticulture™

AH00015

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 AusHort Program

Over recent years, the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation (HRDC) has identified an increasing range of research and development opportunities that have implications for a number of horticultural industries. In response to this identified need, HRDC established the AusHort R&D program two years ago.

After discussion with horticultural industries, it was apparent that there would be a number of benefits to the sector as a whole from a multi-industry approach to issues, which had cross-commodity implications. These benefits include:

- The conduct of important R&D that would not be undertaken by individual industries;
- Wide benefits to horticulture for minimum investment by individual industries; and
- Industry collaboration through identification of (and addressing) common R&D priorities for horticulture.

The program is led by the AusHort steering committee, which comprises representatives of the major industry groups who are partners in HRDC programs. The committee members represent their own and other related horticultural industries. There are currently twenty three industries represented under the AusHort umbrella. A list of current committee members is included as Appendix A.

The steering committee has some very clear roles and responsibilities, namely:

- Developing an AusHort strategic plan;
- Making recommendations to the HRDC board about multi-industry R&D projects based on the strategic plan;
- Assisting HRDC to communicate the benefit of multi-industry R&D initiatives to the wider horticultural industries; and
- Liaising with the horticultural industries represented by steering committee members on multi-industry R&D issues.

A strategic plan workshop, facilitated by Richard Strategic Services, was held in Sydney in January 1999. This workshop involved a number of industry representatives and service providers. The resulting strategic plan was designed to establish a framework for future cross-commodity R&D activities. The plan was intended to cover the period 1999 – 2003. At the same time, the committee also adopted a set of operational policies and procedures.

The AusHort strategic plan follows the same basic structure as that of the HRDC strategic plan. It is organised under a number of key result areas. These are:

- Market requirements and opportunities;
- Product development;
- Product to end user;
- Production; and

- Industry development services.

Each year, the AusHort committee considers priorities for multi-industry projects in line with the strategic plan. The committee then determines the annual funding requirement based on new projects that have been allocated priority and on existing project commitments. The required funds are then raised from industries participating in HRDC programs (including those with statutory levies and also those that make voluntary contributions).

Participating industries allocate a maximum of 5% of levy funds to the program each year. (Industries with statutory levies allocate 5% of gross levy receipts; industries with voluntary contributions allocate 5% of their previous year's R&D program.) Actual levy commitments are determined once the program is finalised towards the end of each financial year.

Projects undertaken under the AusHort program have, to date, comprised a combination of:

- Commissioned projects;
- Initiated projects;
- Projects called for as part of the annual HRDC general call; and
- Unsolicited proposals.

The AusHort R&D program has increased from two projects valued at just over \$200,000 in the first year of operation to 13 projects valued at more than \$950,000 in 1999/2000. The value of the eleven projects in the 2000/2001 program is yet to be finalised but is estimated to be just over \$1.2 million. A list of the projects commissioned through the AusHort program is included as Appendix B.

1.2 Program Review

The environment facing horticultural industries has changed significantly over the period that the AusHort program has been in operation. In view of these changes, HRDC considered it timely to review the progress and direction of the program. The aim of the review was to ensure that the AusHort program remains focussed and continues to meet the needs of participating industries.

To that end, HRDC commissioned this project. A full copy of the project brief is included as Appendix C.

In summary, the outcomes of the project were to develop recommendations with respect to:

- Program processes: the effectiveness, equitability, transparency and appropriateness of the current AusHort R&D program processes, and recommendations for amendments.
- Communication strategies: the effectiveness and efficiency of communication strategies of the AusHort R&D program outcomes to all stakeholders.
- R&D program priorities: the appropriateness of current AusHort R&D program priorities and their review process.

- Resourcing requirements: the appropriateness of resourcing requirements for the effective development and conduct of the AusHort R&D program.
- Future role of the AusHort program: the role of the AusHort R&D program in the new horticultural organisation that will replace the HRDC and the Australian Horticultural Corporation (AHC).

1.3 Methodology

A preliminary briefing meeting was held with the project steering committee. At this meeting, the aims outlined above were ratified. There was some discussion of possible approaches and time lines. A number of relevant contacts were also identified.

After refining the list of possible contacts, the consultants then designed a questionnaire for use in seeking comment on the AusHort R&D program. A copy of the questionnaire follows as Appendix D.

As part of the review process, 38 interviews were completed from almost 50 contacts made. These interviews took place in person, on the telephone or via email. Three distinct groups of respondents were targeted: industry representatives; research providers; and representatives of HRDC and AHC. A summary of interview responses follows as Appendix E.

Several industry members of the AusHort R&D committee were interviewed, together with a number of other industry representatives, including industry development personnel. A number of research providers with current projects under the AusHort program were interviewed. Other researchers interviewed had either completed projects under the program or had not undertaken AusHort projects but had worked on projects under other HRDC programs. A meeting was also arranged with a number of HRDC program managers and staff. Some who were unable to attend the group session were interviewed individually. Separate interviews were also conducted with the chairs and executive officers of both HRDC and AHC. A number of unsuccessful attempts were made to interview several other contacts.

Feedback gained through these interviews then provided the basis of recommendations outlined in this report. Comments and views gathered through the interview processes were analysed. This information was categorised into headings according to the terms of reference, as outlined in the project brief. A draft report was then prepared.

The information and draft recommendations were presented to a meeting of the AusHort committee in Sydney on 13 October 2000. The group made a number of comments and suggestions that were taken into account in reviewing the draft report. This final report was then prepared and presented to the board of HRDC at a meeting in Sydney on 1 December 2000.

2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

2.1 Program Processes

2.1.1 Project Consideration Processes

AusHort projects have, to date, been developed through a combination of methods:

- Commissioned projects;
- Initiated projects;
- Projects called for as part of the annual HRDC general call; and
- Unsolicited proposals.

In general, industry representatives were comfortable with the current way projects are identified and developed.

However, a number stressed that they did not want to see AusHort to become a 'cash cow' for researchers to pursue their own interests at industry expense. There was some preference for projects to be identified by AusHort. They considered that it was time for industry to take more responsibility for the direction of the program and to put a greater emphasis on commissioning of projects.

Views amongst researchers varied. Those with current projects all felt they would like to be able to approach AusHort directly with project ideas. Most of those that did not have current projects said they did not know a great deal about AusHort. They considered that information about the program should be made more widely available. If they were more aware of AusHort, they would be better able to respond to project briefs. They also thought that it would be valuable to have the opportunity to submit project ideas directly to the committee rather than necessarily having to go through the formal project call process.

HRDC program managers considered that the system of identifying projects worked well and that the current balance provided a good mix of outcomes. The managers understood that the committee wanted to be pro-active and identify projects themselves. They also felt that, through their exposure to the wider industry, they themselves had a unique opportunity to identify relevant projects. However, they were conscious of the sensitivities of flagging these ideas with the committee without being seen as taking over the role of AusHort industry representatives.

Industry development managers (IDMs) suggested they and the industry development officers (IDOs) needed to be more involved in the process of identifying and commissioning projects. They felt this was especially important where there was an expectation from researchers that they would have some role to play in research or project activities.

There was also a general view that many research providers were not aware of AusHort and therefore they did not approach the committee with ideas. This was particularly the case with researchers not directly involved in horticultural research (eg research managers).

As projects with cross-commodity implications are becoming more important, the program managers considered this was an important area that needs to be addressed.

2.1.2 Committee Structure and Industry Representation

A number of people commented that some in industry believed that the committee was an HRDC construct, rather than an industry committee. It was emphasised that industry needs to be encouraged to take full ownership of, and responsibility for, the committee and the program.

The fragility of the program was also recognised. Cross-industry co-operation is the cornerstone of the program and this is undoubtedly difficult to secure and maintain. Better communication will assist in ensuring a stronger support base.

Generally, it was felt that the current committee had a good mix of growers and industry people and that, within the constraints of a committee of this type, it was working reasonably well. However, it was suggested that attention needed to be paid to gender balance on the committee.

The HRDC program managers considered the sub-committee structure for making decisions is effective. There was also good feedback on the speed of decision making. This is an important issue for research providers.

However, there was a strong view that the large size of the committee was less than efficient. It was recognised this was probably a necessary compromise at this stage of the program to ensure all industries were represented. It was thought that, in time, industry would gain sufficient confidence in the process of deciding upon projects so that there would be no need for each industry to be represented. However, this stage has clearly not yet been reached. Nonetheless, the development of an effective communication system may assist in successfully achieving the transition to a more manageable committee size.

A number of industry representatives considered that the members of the committee could be nominated by the participating industries – in much the same way as other industry representative committees have been in the past (eg the HIA steering committee and the Hort2000 committee). Others, however, felt this was not necessary and were comfortable that the consultation framework which had grown out of the HIA process would result in an effective committee which could adequately represent the views of all stakeholders. Some suggested that the whole committee should be skills-based and that direct industry representation should not be an issue if the right people were elected to the committee.

Most people agreed that members of the committee should be appointed for a specific term. Three years was period most commonly mentioned.

The survey initiated a number of comments about the importance of the role of the chairperson. There was a general view that there needed to be a process where the position of chairperson is reviewed on a more frequent basis than it has been in the past.

It was suggested that the chairperson should be re-elected annually with a maximum of three years in the position. There was strong agreement that this position needed to be filled by an industry representative.

However, several people took this one step further by proposing that this role should be filled by an independent person with horticultural experience but no direct ties to any one industry, rather than a representative of any specific industry.

It was also suggested that it might be appropriate for a member of the HRDC board to act as chair of the committee. It was thought that this would also assist in ensuring transparent independence from any one commodity sector.

Most recognised that it was appropriate for there to be some level of remuneration for the chairperson.

Some people (particularly researchers) thought that it would be useful to have a person with a scientific background on the committee to ensure project proposals had scientific rigour. However, the fact that most of the current projects were not, strictly speaking, 'scientific' in nature led others to believe this was not necessary.

There was a view by some that the program probably would become less focused on issues which were production driven (ie 'scientific' as it is commonly accepted). The areas of government policy/sustainability etc were, in the main, considered to be the ones where there would be strongest cross-commodity interest. In any case, it was noted that advisers with expertise relevant to specific projects could be brought in to advise the committee when appropriate. It was also pointed out by some that many of the IDOs and IDMs had strong scientific backgrounds and could provide input as required.

Several other suggestions were made regarding committee membership. One person considered that it was essential for all areas within the supply chain to be represented on the committee. However, this was not a suggestion that met with general acceptance. To ensure accountability and a free flow of information, it was suggested by a number of people interviewed that an HRDC Board member should be on the committee.

Some of the industry members of the committee indicated that they felt the responsibility of representing a number of other industries was difficult. There is clearly a need to develop a more efficient system of communicating with industry stakeholders.

It is not reasonable to expect the burden of communicating information about the program to fall upon the industry representatives on the committee, as they are all unpaid volunteers with significant workloads in their 'real lives'. This will be discussed further in the section relating to communications below.

There was some comment on the role of the HRDC program managers in the AusHort program. Some of those interviewed felt there was an opportunity for them to play a bigger role to ensure that the interests of their industries were adequately represented.

The views of the managers themselves were mixed: they agreed they had a contribution to make but were concerned about any added work load on top of what are already becoming unmanageable schedules.

At present, the secretariat is provided by one of the HRDC program managers (ie Libby Abraham) in addition to her other duties. She acts as secretary at meetings, takes the minutes, prepares papers, and organises project submissions and budgets and so on. This limits her ability to contribute to the proceedings at meetings effectively and places an unreasonable burden on her.

There needs to be a more clearly defined secretariat role. The program manager should fill an executive officer type role rather than a hands-on administrative one, as is now the case. Additional administrative assistance needs to be provided to support the manager's position. Obviously, this has cost implications that would need to be taken into consideration in framing future budgets.

One person felt that there could be a risk in having HRDC provide the secretariat, as this could result in the perception that HRDC was driving the program. This view could in turn contribute to the current lack of ownership of the program by industry. However, it was recognised that provision of the secretariat in any other manner was probably impractical, particularly within current budget constraints.

2.1.3 Industry Satisfaction

At the outset of this section, it is important to note that all those interviewed stressed that industry support was a basic pre-requisite to enable the establishment of the AusHort. From the work undertaken as part of this review, it is clear that there is strong support for the AusHort program.

However, there is still an obvious lack of awareness in some quarters about the program and its constituent projects. This lack of understanding could potentially threaten the program longer term if it is not addressed.

Overall, representatives of the industries involved in the program recognised the constraints under which the committee operates. Whilst industry representatives were in general not dissatisfied with the program, a number felt that they would like to see more consultation by committee members before decisions are made. This is an issue that will be addressed in the section relating to communications.

Those interviewed all acknowledged the inherent complexity of the AusHort program, in that projects by definition involve a number of industries. This of necessity results in large projects, often with a number of researchers and sources of funds. All spoke highly of the efforts of the HRDC staff in making the AusHort program successful. In particular, the enormous contribution made by the responsible program manager was recognised.

It was suggested that better handling of the process of developing and budgeting for the AusHort program could improve industry involvement and ownership.

Industry representatives said that some people within their industries considered that their commitment of 5% of levy funds was as far as their responsibility extended.

This lack of ownership was exacerbated by the timing and process of development of the AusHort program, and the fact that very limited detail about the costing and progress of projects actually comes back to industry R&D committees. It is almost as though, in some cases, the industry committees commit the money and then effectively write it off. In the main, they certainly do not monitor progress and budgets with the same interest as they do for industry-specific projects.

Most industry R&D committees meet at around the same time as the AusHort committee to consider their programs for the coming year. This means that industry committees are often considering the AusHort program as a one-line costing item, with only a brief outline as to what the projects in the program might be. This does not encourage a sense of commitment and ownership – or even of interest.

One suggested way around this would be to change the cycle of the AusHort program so it would run six months out of session with the general HRDC round. Then the details of the AusHort program would be well and truly finalised by the time industries met to consider their own specific programs. Industry committees could then be informed in detail about the projects and how the funds allocated were to be used.

There were also some issues raised relating to management of AusHort projects. By their very nature, these are generic projects. Nonetheless, it is important to ensure that they don't become so generic that the outcomes are not useful to anyone.

The potential for these projects to lose focus was recognised, especially in cases where there is no strong sense of industry ownership. Several people mentioned the production and sustainability project (AH98002) as one instance where this was thought to have happened. In these cases, projects had arisen out of what was clearly a good idea and an important priority. However, lack of close supervision could mean the results were too generic to be of any meaningful relevance to any of the industry stakeholders.

One possible way of dealing with this problem would be to include provision for appointing project leaders in the budget for each project.

The role of the leader would be to act as project manager. They would be responsible for co-ordinating reports and progress; liaising between researchers in teams, particularly where these are from several agencies; ensuring milestones were met and that budgets were adhered to. Project leaders would be independent of the researchers and would report to the HRDC program manager. Whilst it was recognised there would be an initial cost in this approach, it was thought this investment would be well re-paid by better project outcomes.

It was suggested that adopting a 'project champion' approach would also assist in overcoming these problems. Many individual industry R&D committees use this system very successfully. The R&D committee appoints a specific industry person as the contact (or 'project champion') for each project. The champion is usually (but not always) a member of the R&D committee. This ensures that at least one industry person can focus in-depth on each project. It also provides a peer contact for other industry people seeking more information.

The project champion also participates in project steering committee meetings where these occur and is the point of contact for the research leader. This ensures clear accountability and that outcomes remain focussed on industry needs. For some projects, there may be scope for IDOs or IDMs to take on the role of project leader. If this were to be done, however, it would be important to recognise the resourcing implications this would have on their workloads.

2.2 Communication

There was unanimous agreement that this was an issue of primary importance to the continued support of industry for the AusHort program.

Industry representatives were generally satisfied with the communications from HRDC. They did feel that, in some cases, the information flow from peak industry bodies (PIBs) to growers was often not optimal.

To some extent, however, these views came from a self-selected industry sample. The representatives of industry who were interviewed all had some involvement in the AusHort program, and so could reasonably be expected to be aware of activities within the AusHort program. There is no doubt that if a wider sample of general growers were interviewed, the level of awareness would not be high.

There was some discussion about whether this was actually a major concern, with a number of those surveyed considering that in reality it probably was not. This led to discussion about where the line of responsibility for communicating with individual growers fell – whether this should be the role of HRDC or of the individual PIBs.

The consensus seemed to be that it was up to HRDC to ensure that there was user-friendly and targeted information made available to the PIBs, but that it was the role of the PIBs to ensure this information was then passed on to growers. It was suggested that short press release type information on the function of AusHort and the program should be prepared and circulated by HRDC to PIBs to assist in communicating information to growers.

Some thought that the AusHort projects were not really industry projects ie there was no need for individual PIBs to take responsibility as 'they' (someone else) would look after these. Others considered that branding projects as AusHort enabled industry to avoid taking full responsibility for projects.

It was suggested that a different vocabulary could assist in overcoming these perceptions. Perhaps projects could be described as specific industry projects, but undertaken in co-operation with other industries. This would help to re-inforce ownership and break down artificial barriers between 'ours' and 'not ours'. Strengthening the links between industry R&D committees and the AusHort committee would also assist in erasing these lines.

Industry development personnel felt that they were not fully in the loop. They indicated they often only heard about projects when researchers approached them to undertake mail surveys or some other similar task.

It was suggested that HRDC industry program managers needed to keep industry development personnel better informed and where possible involve them in the development of project briefs and so on.

In general, research providers felt they had good communication channels with HRDC. However, they acknowledged that often their linkages with PIBs were lacking. They felt this was an important area to be addressed by all parties, although it is difficult to see how this could be perceived as a responsibility of AusHort.

Research providers would like to be made more aware of the appropriate information channels for reaching growers in individual industries.

For example, this may be through industry journals, industry people, groups, IDOs and IDMs. They also expressed a need for more information about the overall aims of the program and of how the processes worked.

Researchers recognised that communication is a significant part of all project briefs and considered that, by and large, they discharged their responsibilities in this area satisfactorily. However, industry representatives considered that the communications components of projects were often best handled by communications people, rather than by the researchers themselves. It was suggested that it would be useful to require explicit and detailed communications strategies as part of every project.

It was pointed out that many of the AusHort projects might be undertaken by researchers who have had no direct association with the horticultural industry before. It was therefore suggested that it would be useful to them to be provided with a list of contact personnel, relevant industry publications, PIBs, IDOs & IDMs etc to aid in their development of a communications strategy for each project.

It was recognised that this would require specific budget allocations, accountabilities and milestones. This was considered to be a positive move. It would highlight the importance of communications strategies within each project, rather than leaving these to be seen as an optional add-on, as seems to be the case in many projects now.

Program managers considered that there may be an opportunity to further develop the system of 'project champions' as previously outlined.

Program managers also thought that more use could be made of IDOs and IDMs. These groups have access to growers on a regular basis and so can assist in dissemination of project information. They are also close to the situation in industry and can provide useful feedback and input. If this were to be done, it would be important to develop better tools to assist them in disseminating information.

However, they stressed that caution needs to be exercised in expecting IDOs and IDMs to become involved in projects without first seeking their explicit agreement. They already have heavy workloads and any expectations of assistance need to be sensitively managed. Not unexpectedly, this view was also strongly voiced by industry development personnel.

It was also suggested that a pro-active strategy for expanding industry involvement in the program needed to be developed.

2.3 R&D Program Priorities

A number of those interviewed had participated in the development of the AusHort strategic plan. Whilst this was seen as a necessary and useful exercise, some expressed concern at the constraints under which the plan had been developed. The coming changes to the Corporations, and the outcome of this review, were seen as providing an opportunity to review the plan.

It was also noted that, whilst the plan may provide a broad outline of the program priorities, it was now necessary to develop a more detailed annual operational plan with in-built review processes. This would be seen to enable the program to become pro-active rather than reactive.

It would also lessen the perceived influence of researchers who were often thought to be pushing their own barrows rather than responding to industry priorities and needs.

Concern was expressed that there was still a view amongst some industries that their issues were unique, and that overlap with other industries was limited. This is clearly not the case, but there is little concrete evidence to demonstrate the areas of common interest. It was suggested that it would be useful to undertake an explicit analysis of individual industry strategic plans to identify and clearly document commonalities. This could then form the basis of a review of the strategic plan and for development of an annual operating plan.

Such an analysis of commonalities could also provide a platform for development of a tool to better demonstrate industry benefits. Using a preference mapping approach across industries, a 3D matrix could be developed to show commonalities, industry trends and resultant industry benefits.

Of course, this approach would be dependent on all industries having current strategic plans in place – which it is understood is not currently the case.

All industry representatives interviewed were asked to comment on the relevance of the priorities identified in the current AusHort strategic plan in relation to Australian horticultural industries in general and to their industry specifically. Table 1 summarises the responses. In some cases, interviewees made no comment.

Figure 1: Industry Responses to AusHort Priorities.

Priority area	Responses re Relevance		
	Relevant	Possibly	Irrelevant
Market requirements & opportunities	8		4
Production	10		1
Industry development services	8	1	2
Product to end user & product development	8	3	1

Most of these responses all came from industries participating in the AusHort program. Two were from industries that make voluntary contributions to HRDC but are not participants in the AusHort program.

The major reason given for considering that a priority area did not have relevance to the AusHort agenda was where the issue was thought to be industry specific. It is not clear whether this reflects reality or a lack of understanding of how relevance and benefits could accrue. It seems likely that it is largely an issue of perception, and that it could be addressed by specifically targeted information about project benefits.

It was noted that the definition of an AusHort project required it to have relevance to two thirds of the participating industries.

A number of those interviewed felt the test was not applied with sufficient rigour and that some projects were being approved that did not meet this requirement.

Several people noted that proposed projects were sometimes clearly relevant to two or three of the industries, rather than to the majority of industries. They considered that this did not necessarily constitute an AusHort project. In these cases, it was suggested that these industries should work together outside the AusHort framework. As noted previously, there were some concerns within industry about the focus of the program. There are a number of projects within the program that are outside the traditional scope of production oriented R&D and which some have difficulty in relating to. Some industries were uncomfortable with this, while others felt it was the way the program should be headed.

One example of this type approach raised by several interviewees was the WTO research program (AH9001 and AH9010). In this instance, a number of the smaller industries had difficulty perceiving the relevance of this project to their activities. These industries are domestically focussed and do not become involved in any international trade or export issues. However, there are spin-offs to these industries from this sort of work, in that WTO agreements will also set the scene for products which can be imported into Australia and hence influence domestic market situations. The biotechnology/GMO project (AH9904) was another about which some concerns were expressed regarding relevance and benefits.

This indicates that there is a need for better explanation of the context of these projects and of how they are relevant. There is also clearly a need for more comprehensive information about the overall program for all levy payers. This could perhaps be in the form of short press releases and 'sound bites', which could be included in industry publications and also forwarded to the general media.

The issue of relevance was of particular importance to the nursery industry. Many of the projects undertaken through the AusHort program are focused on food safety or related issues.

Obviously, these projects are of no relevance to the ornamental industry where products are not edible. This has been addressed by putting in place an agreement whereby the nursery industry contributes on a case by case basis to AusHort projects rather than on a flat 5% basis as for other participating industries.

However, it is important to bear this concern in mind for any future developments in this program and to consider some way of formalising this arrangement.

There are other industries, which might potentially participate in the program which, for various reasons, would be in a similar situation.

For example, the mushroom industry, whilst food related, would have no interest in projects focussed on traditional production issues such as fruit fly baits as these are not techniques used in crop production in this industry.

HRDC program managers considered the priorities of the AusHort were in line with the overall HRDC key result areas (KRA) and priorities. In general, they felt the review process worked well. This consists of revisiting one KRA each meeting and reviewing the priorities on a regular basis.

Some research providers were concerned that the priorities identified were not sufficiently focussed on production issues, as this is where they felt most growers had the greatest interest. (It would be fair to say, too, that this is where the interests of many of the research providers interviewed would fall.)

Whilst having a conceptual appreciation of the cross-commodity imperative of the AusHort program, it seemed some of those interviewed were finding it difficult to accept a definition of R&D which has been expanded to include developmental activities instead of only the more traditional research focussed projects. This also extended to views as to who should be considered as 'researchers'.

It was clear that some considered research could only be conducted in laboratories by scientists wearing white coats. Clearly, this does not reflect reality of the current AusHort R&D program – nor, for that matter, of many of the specific industry AusHort R&D programs.

This raises the issue of the language used with respect to research and development. More emphasis needs to be given to promoting the 'development' aspects of the program. This, in turn, could then be used to expand the definition of 'researchers' to include people undertaking projects which are focussed on addressing issues of industry development. This would move the focus away from the traditional 'white coat' laboratory interpretation of research.

One researcher also commented that the projects included in the program appeared to be of a short-term nature and did not address long term big picture issues. Others disagreed, noting the important longer-term implications of projects such as WTO project (AH99001), the analysis of Codex issues (AH99012), and the mapping study of value-adding technologies (AH0013).

2.4 Resourcing Requirements

2.4.1 Financial Resources

At present, the budget for AusHort is approximately \$1 million annually. This must support both on-going and new projects (including commissioning expenses), and also to fund all committee and secretariat expenses.

In the current year, there are three on-going projects with a total budget of \$650,000. Program costs (secretariat, committee expenses, project commissioning expenses) are anticipated to be \$65,000. This leaves approximately \$245,000 for allocation in the next round of projects. Those interviewed recognised that this amount was clearly inadequate to address the range of pressing needs facing the horticultural sector at present.

All groups interviewed agreed that, in principle, the budget of \$1 million was small in light of the significant problems that need to be addressed within the AusHort program.

However, it was also recognised that an increase in the budget at this stage was unlikely. When it came down to the specific question of how additional funding could be generated, mixed responses were received from industry representatives.

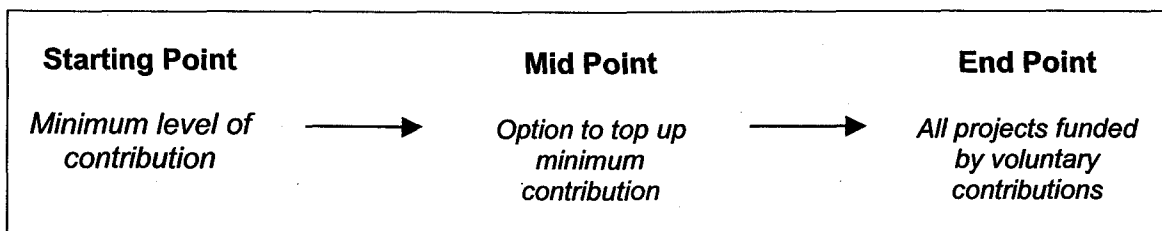
Generally, industries were comfortable with the current 5% levy and felt it would be difficult to achieve an increase in their contribution level at this time. As previously mentioned, the nursery industry finds it difficult to justify a 5% contribution and has negotiated with AusHort to participate in non-food projects only.

Before any increase in levy contributions could be considered, it is clear that a great deal of effort must be made in informing industries of the activities and benefits of AusHort. This relates back to matters raised in the discussion with respect to communications issues.

It was suggested that it would be appropriate to review the process by which industries subscribe to AusHort projects to allow some industry discretion as to the level of their contributions.

The ideal situation proposed by several people interviewed was seen as a continuum, as shown below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Continuum Funding Model



The starting point would be a minimum level of contribution which would be generally applied (as is now the case). The mid point would be an option for industries to top up their minimum contribution if they considered a project was of sufficient importance to their industry. The end point would be a situation where all funding contributions were voluntary and projects would only be funded if sufficient industries could be convinced of the worth of the proposed work.

It was recognised that it will probably be quite some time before such a laissez-faire approach could be successful. At the very least, most considered that improved flexibility would encourage clear identification of benefits to industry.

Of course, the best outcomes for this continuum model would come if the budget cycle for AusHort were moved as discussed earlier. This would enable industries to consider project proposals in more detail and to more clearly assess potential benefits.

It was suggested that it might also be useful to have provision to involve other contributors from outside the horticultural industries from time to time where there were issues with relevance to a wider group of stakeholders.

Suggestions here included possible cross-sectoral interests with other crop farming industries (eg grains) or perhaps even enabling voluntary contributions from the corporate sector where there was a co-incidence of interests rather than a potential conflict.

For example, RIRDC funds a range of generic projects which would potentially have some interest for horticulture. These include things such as climate change, occupational health and safety and business management. It was suggested that there should be the capacity for the AusHort program to contribute to research of this nature where appropriate, rather than necessarily rely only on the resources within the horticulture industry.

Several of those interviewed had been involved with the plant industry steering group (PIIMCC) which worked with government to achieve the recent establishment of Plant Health Australia Limited. PIIMCC included representatives from all plant industries, both broadacre and horticultural. This was cited as a good example of what might be gained through wider co-operation.

Several people emphasised that, in a changing business environment, horticultural industries needed to keep up with general business trends. In the business world, projects are sold to potential contributors on the basis of demonstrated returns on investment.

In this sort of approach, industries would be offered the opportunity to participate in AusHort projects on an equity basis and would gain returns on the basis of their investment. Perhaps this is an idea a little before its time, but it does emphasise the fact that R&D should be seen as an investment rather than a cost.

Some concerns were expressed about putting too many eggs in one basket – in other words, committing large chunks of the very limited budget to one project. This was especially problematic where the project was one which did not have clearly evident benefits to industry. The biotechnology/GMO project (AH9904) was cited as an example of this, with a budget of \$300,000 over 5 years. Again, consideration needs to be given as to whether this lack of benefits is real or merely perceived. This is clearly a situation where a benefits statement as proposed previously would be of assistance in assessing and promoting the impact of projects.

2.4.2 Human Resources

Whatever approach is to be taken to the development of projects within the AusHort program in the future, there must be consideration of the human resource needs.

All those interviewed spoke highly of the efforts of the HRDC staff in making the AusHort program successful. In particular, the enormous contribution made by the responsible program manager was acknowledged.

The current resourcing of the secretariat is recognised as a limiting factor. There needs to be a more clearly defined secretariat role. The program manager should have an executive officer type role rather than the current secretary focus and needs to be supported by additional secretariat assistance as appropriate. Resourcing of the secretariat needs to reflect real needs and the actual commitments this would entail.

At present, the program managers are responsible for developing project briefs. AusHort projects are often sizeable with large budgets and a great many people who need to be consulted. This places a considerable burden on project managers in addition to their specific industry responsibilities.

This inevitably limits the commitment they are prepared to make to the AusHort program. Spreading the load through the use of project leaders and project champions, as previously outlined, would perhaps alleviate some of these problems.

2.5 Future Role of AusHort R&D Program

Responses to questions in this area were interesting. Some people interviewed had obviously given this matter considerable thought and there were a number of responses which reflected a fairly lateral approach.

There was almost unanimous support for a continued future role for AusHort, although opinions as to what this role might be were varied. It was, however, emphasised that such support was dependent on development of better communication processes.

Some people considered the role should be akin to that of a more traditional R&D committee. A number of others saw scope for AusHort to take a strong leadership role in addressing issues about how the competitive advantage of horticultural industries could be improved. In this case, AusHort would need to stay ahead of the pack – identifying issues say five years out and developing strategies to address these.

Obviously, the forthcoming changes to the Corporations will have a major impact on how this role might develop.

In May 2000, as part of the 2000/01 Budget, the Commonwealth Government agreed to form a new horticulture services company operating under Corporations Law. The new company structure will allow industries to identify and enhance synergies between marketing and R&D and undertake all the major initiatives currently undertaken by HRDC and AHC. The new company will also administer the export control powers that are currently administered by the AHC. In effect, HAL will be a merger of AHC and HRDC. Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) will be in place from 1 January 2001.

In the view of most of the people interviewed, the forthcoming changes would provide an opportunity to review the needs of industry in terms of future development. It was suggested that, if horticultural industries continue to simply react as they always have to the surrounding environment, their future was problematic. Many suggested that, if the horticultural sector is to progress, there is a need now to 'step outside the square' and to do things differently.

It was clear that many felt there was a need for more pro-active leadership within the horticultural sector. There may well be a role for AusHort in addressing this issue.

Certainly, many of those interviewed considered that there was scope for an expanded role for AusHort if it is to better address issues of industry wide significance.

Whilst some remained fixed in their views as to what constituted legitimate 'research', there was a general feeling that the brief of the AusHort committee should be expanded to encompass a wider range of projects than is currently the case. Communications and marketing issues, which have largely been seen as the role of AHC, will in many cases now be seen as legitimate areas of industry development. Thus the scope of what is defined as R&D projects should expand to include more projects focussed specifically on industry development.

'Traditional' research projects have formed the basis of most R&D programs in the past and these have been eligible for matching funding from the federal government.

Whether all of the projects under the aegis of a new-look AusHort committee with a wider brief would be eligible for matching funding, and how this issue should be dealt with, is beyond the scope of this report but would certainly need to be considered.

Several people identified the need for a 'blue sky' research committee to identify and scope areas where greatest future benefits could accrue. This is an area which is neglected in horticulture but which is a necessary building block of all successful businesses.

For example, maybe research into genetic adaptation for drought tolerance would offer the greatest long term returns to industry. Sociology was another area identified as potentially offering enormous benefits. Great effort and emphasis is placed on the fact that growers are slow to adopt new technology and to adapt to change. Perhaps research into how this resistance could be overcome would pay huge dividends. Leadership was also identified by many as an important issue for the industry – maybe the industry could look at establishing or sponsoring a leadership program.

If this approach were taken, it was thought that it would be important to allocate this group a budget to enable them to commission scoping reports etc. This would be somewhat analogous to the project areas covered within RIRDC's Future Agricultural Systems program. This area could be addressed separately under a HAL working group structure, or it could perhaps fall under the aegis of an AusHort R&D committee with an expanded terms of reference.

Along similar lines, it was suggested that an industry 'think tank' could perhaps be established to take responsibility for predicting future trends and issues. The think tank would ideally include people from outside industry with specific skill and expertise.

This group could consider things such as the definition of horticulture. For example, areas which may assist in developing a picture of the future shape of the horticultural industries may well be outside the scope of what we now think of as horticulture: areas such as pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, nutrient mixes, and technology. Again, this area could be addressed separately, or it could come under an AusHort R&D umbrella.

A number of other suggestions which could be considered to be 'left field' came out of the interviews. These are not really within the scope of this review, but nonetheless indicated that there was a willingness to adopt different and innovative approaches in the future to industry development. As one respondent said, "we never start off with the big picture and work back; we always start at the bottom and then can't look up".

At the very least, the AusHort committee under HAL will need to deal with a wider range of projects arising from the expanded range of issues which will result from the amalgamation of HRDC and AHC. This will require a review of committee membership to ensure that all possible aspects of projects could be appropriately dealt with.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Program Processes

3.1.1 Project Consideration Processes

- The AusHort cycle should be moved out of alignment with the general HRDC project call cycle, so that the process is finalised prior to the consideration of industry programs each year.
- Following the establishment of HAL, and the reconstitution of the AusHort committee, a detailed review should be undertaken of the committee's strategic plan. The expanded role of the program under the new structure should be incorporated. The review should include the development of an annual operating plan.
- On the basis of the outcomes of this review, greater emphasis should be placed on commissioning projects to meet the identified priorities of industry.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on involving HRDC program managers, IDOs and IDMs in the process of developing project briefs, commissioning projects and managing research.
- Where appropriate, provision should be made in project development for specific project managers to lead projects. This is particularly important for projects where there are multiple research providers or issues that need to be dealt with sensitively.
- Provision should be made in project development for specific communications strategies and budgets. The project outline should also identify where responsibility for implementation lies, and the most appropriate person(s) to implement these strategies.
- Provision should be made in project development for appointment of project leaders for projects which have significant budgets, complex accountabilities or special sensitivities.
- All industries should be encouraged to maintain current strategic plans, including clear identification of priorities for research and development.
- An analysis should be undertaken of all individual industry strategic plans to identify areas of commonality and a benefits matrix. This would highlight areas that would then be appropriately considered within the terms of reference of the AusHort program.
- Benefit statements should be required as part of each project submission. These statements should include reference to the relevance of the proposed project on the basis of the industry commonalities analysis.
- Efforts should be made to ensure research providers are made aware of the AusHort program and priorities well in advance of cycle timing.

3.1.2 Committee Structure and Industry Representation

- Membership of the committee should be reviewed after the establishment of HAL to ensure appropriate skills representation and gender balance.

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- The new committee should be a skills-based one, rather than a representational one, appointed in consultation with participating industries for a three-year term.
 - The chair should be an independent person with involvement in, or understanding of, the horticultural industries.
 - The chair's appointment should be for a three-year term, and carry an appropriate level of remuneration.
 - The secretariat should continue to be provided by HRDC, but with an expanded resource base and a specific program manager.

3.1.3 Industry Satisfaction

- Greater efforts need to be made to ensure industry ownership of the AusHort program.
- Stronger links should be established between the AusHort committee and industry R&D committees.
- Stronger links should be established between the AusHort committee and PIBs.
- In communicating with growers, PIBs should be encouraged to consider AusHort projects as part of their own R&D programs and brand them as such, rather than continually identifying the separation of these projects.
- An annual industry forum should be held to allow participating industries to be kept up to date with progress on projects. This would also provide a clear channel for them to have input into the program and to comment on outcomes and directions.
- A system of 'project champions' should be established to take responsibility for specific projects.
- A strategy should be established to target potential participating industries and groups to expand the coverage of the program.

3.2 Communication

- Following the review of the strategic plan, detailed consideration should be given to communications needs and strategies. This should draw on work done by HRDC, participating industries and other groups such as RIRDC.
- On the basis of this consideration, a targeted communications strategy should be developed. A specific budget allocation should be made within the program to fund implementation of communications activities identified within the strategy.
- More comprehensive information should be made more widely available regarding the role of AusHort and the benefits and achievements of AusHort, and of specific projects within the program. This could be done through publicity of specific projects. Information should be kept concise and in layman's terms.
- Existing workshop programs for HRDC program managers, IDOs and IDMs should incorporate regular updates on the AusHort program, specific AusHort projects and projects in development.

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- Information about the AusHort program should be presented to industry annual conferences, in industry newsletters and at workshops where relevant.
 - Information about the AusHort program on the Horticulture Australia website should be expanded and more links established to other relevant sites.
 - Regular news releases or short information articles should be prepared by HRDC about the program generally and specific AusHort projects. These should be distributed to PIBs and relevant industry media.
 - A contact list of all avenues available for the dissemination of information on AusHort projects should be developed in consultation with participating industries. This should include lists of industry publications, contact persons and deadlines, lists of IDOs and IDMs, lists of the general horticultural industry media etc.

3.3 R&D Program Priorities

- Following the establishment of HAL, and the reconstitution of the AusHort committee, a detailed review should be undertaken of the strategic plan. This should include the development of an annual operating plan.
- In support of this strategy, a benefits matrix should be developed to allow ready identification of areas of commonality and quantification of potential benefits.
- On the basis of the outcomes of this review, greater emphasis should be placed on commissioning projects to meet the identified priorities of industry.
- The guidelines as to what constitutes an AusHort project (ie how many industries does it have to be relevant to) should be reviewed and steps taken to ensure that projects comply with these guidelines before they are submitted for consideration to the committee.
- Where only two or three industries have a common need (rather than the two-thirds requirement for an AusHort project), a framework should be developed to facilitate opportunities for co-operation in developing a project. This could perhaps be under the umbrella of AusHort, but should be separately identified and managed.
- Consideration should be given to establishing a 'blue sky' research working group to scope possible future areas of R&D. This committee should have a budget allocation to assist in the development of discussion papers to be presented to the AusHort committee.

3.4 Resourcing Requirements

3.4.1 Financial Resources

- Following the review of the strategic plan and the development of an annual operating plan, a realistic assessment should be made of the financial resourcing requirements necessary to achieve the desired outcomes.

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- In discussion with participating industries (and potential participating industries), a strategy should be developed to ensure sufficient funding is available on an on-going basis to enable implementation of the identified priorities.
 - This should include consideration of increased flexibility in industry funding contributions, including provision for industry top-ups, voluntary and corporate contributions, partnerships with other research agencies etc.

3.4.2 Human Resources

- Following the review of the strategic plan and the development of an annual operating plan, a realistic assessment should be made of the human resourcing requirements necessary to achieve the desired outcomes.
- A more detailed specification should be developed for the committee secretariat, and resources allocated to enable the secretariat to meet the committee's expectations.
- A dedicated program manager should be appointed to oversee the AusHort program. (This need not be a full time appointment but should be assessed on the basis of job specifications.)
- Appropriate assistance should be provided as needed to the program manager.
- Project leaders and project champions should be appointed as outlined above.
- Greater efforts should be made to involve HRDC program managers, IDOs and IDMs in the AusHort program, recognising the resource implications this would have.

3.5 Future Role of AusHort R&D Program

- Following the establishment of HAL, an in-depth review of the future role of the committee should be undertaken. This should take the form of a facilitated workshop involving the board of HAL, members of the AusHort committee, representatives of participating industries and other interested people (eg HRDC and industry staff, research providers).
- This review should canvass all possible scenarios from continuation of a traditional R&D committee model to some of the more wide-ranging options identified in this report.
- A formal review of the program should be undertaken in three years.

APPENDIX A: AUSHORT R&D COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<p>Tim Dyer (Chairman) Unilever Ltd 1490 Ferntree Gully Road KNOXFIELD Vic 3180 Ph: 03 9765 1700; Fax: 03 9764 1081 Email: tim.dyer@unilever.com</p>	<p>Mark Panitz QFVG PO Box 19 BRISBANE MARKETS Qld 4106 Ph: 07 3213 2470; Fax: 07 3213 2454 Email: mpanitz@gfvq.org.au</p>
<p>Silvio Favero AusVeg 515 Narre Warren Road CRANBOURNE Vic 3977 Ph: 03 5996 0314; Fax: 03 5995 7244</p>	<p>Geoff Moar Sandwick Park PO Box 36 OAKLANDS NSW 2646 Ph: 02 6035 4415; Fax: 02 6035 4331</p>
<p>Robert Armstrong ASFGA Doocarrick, Nancarrow Lane Nashdale ORANGE NSW 2800 Ph: 02 6365 3262; Fax: 02 6365 3143</p>	<p>Jon Durham AAPGA 62 O'Connell Street NORTH MELBOURNE Vic 3051 Ph: 03 9329 3511; Fax: 03 9329 3522 Email: ceo@aapga.com.au</p>
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<p>Andrew Pearce Welcome Creek Plantation MSB 827, Pashleys Road BUNDABERG Qld 4670 Ph: 07 4159 8100; Fax: 07 4159 8504 Email: welcomecreek@bigpond.com</p>	<p>Jolyon Burnett NIAA PO Box 907 EPPING NSW 2121 Ph: 02 9876 5200; Fax: 02 9876 6360 Email: niaa@ozemail.com.au</p>
<p>Peter Freeman AAGA PO Box 462 RENMARK SA 5341 Ph: 08 8595 8151; Fax: 08 8595 8191</p>	<p>Peter Walker PO Box 357 RAMBO SA 5322 Ph: 08 8541 4100; Fax: 08 8541 4101 Email: walker@riverland.net.au</p>
<p>Mark Napper Managing Director Australian Horticultural Corporation Level 1, 51 Druitt Street SYDNEY NSW 2000 Ph: 02 9264 9966; Fax: 02 8267 4199 Email: mark@hort-corp.com</p>	<p>Les Baxter Acting Executive Manager, R&D HRDC Level 6, 7 Merriwa Street GORDON NSW 2072 Ph: 02 9418 2200; Fax: 02 9418 1352 Email: baxterl@hrdc.gov.au</p>
<p>Jonathan Eccles Senior Program Manager, HRDC Level 6, 7 Merriwa Street GORDON NSW 2072 Ph: 02 9418 2200; Fax: 02 9418 1352 Email: jonathane@hrdc.gov.au</p>	

APPENDIX B: AUSHORT R&D PROGRAM 1998/99 – 2000/01

APPENDIX C: PROJECT BRIEF AH00015

Project Description

The Horticultural Research and Development Corporation (HRDC) requires a consultant to work with a reference group to review the Australian Horticultural Industries (AusHort) R&D program and processes. The program has been in place for almost two years, and it is timely to review it to ensure that it remains focussed, is meeting industries' needs and to ensure the continuing success of the program.

The outcomes of the consultancy will be recommendations on:

- The effectiveness, equitability, transparency and appropriateness of the current AusHort R&D program processes, and recommendations for amendments
- The effectiveness and efficiency of communication strategies of AusHort R&D program outcomes to all stakeholders
- The appropriateness of current AusHort R&D priorities and their review process
- The appropriateness of resourcing requirements for the effective development and conduct of the AusHort R&D program
- Recommendations on the role of the AusHort R&D program in the new horticultural organisation that will replace the HRDC and Australian Horticultural Corporation

Background

Prior to the development of the AusHort R&D program there was no mechanism to effectively and efficiently address the numerous research and development (R&D) issues affecting multiple horticultural industries.

In mid 1998 HRDC in partnership with the horticultural industries formed the AusHort R&D Committee to facilitate strategic multiple industry R&D. This Committee is comprised of industry nominated leaders from the major industry groups who are partners with the HRDC. The Committee members represent their own and other related horticultural industries.

In January 1999 the AusHort Strategic Plan was developed by the Committee that has since driven the focus of the AusHort R&D program. The Plan is based on the same five Key Result Areas in the HRDC Strategic Plan. At this meeting the Committee also developed a set of operational 'Policies and Procedures'.

To date the program has comprised a combination of commissioned, initiated, called-for as part of the annual general call and unsolicited proposals.

There are presently 23 industries participating in the AusHort R&D program, represented by 11 Committee members. Refer to Appendix 1 for these details.

The Chair of the Committee is Tim Dyer who also represents the processing tomato industry. The Secretary is Mark Panitz, also representing Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers.

HRDC provides the Secretariat to the Committee with costs charged back to the program. However, the HRDC management fee absorbs HRDC Program Manager involvement in specific AusHort R&D projects.

The AusHort R&D program has increased since inception from \$205,435 and two projects in 1998/99, \$904,608 and 13 projects in 1999/2000 and \$957,530 and 11 projects in 2000/01 (to be finalised). Refer to Appendix 2 for a list of project listing.

Funding for the AusHort R&D program comes by way of the participating levy industries allocating up to a maximum of 5% of annual gross levy receipts to the program.

Actual levy commitments are determined once the program is finalised towards the end of the financial year. Similarly, voluntary contribution industries pledge 5% of their previous financial year's R&D program and are invoiced for the actual amount required once the program is finalised.

Terms Of Reference

The review will focus on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the following in relation to the AusHort R&D program and make recommendations for improvements/alternative approaches:

1. The process of proposal consideration, including

Commissioning	Specific projects as advertised and briefed by AusHort R&D Committee. (full costs met by AusHort)
Initiating	In conjunction with a co-investor – thus requiring combined brief and objectives; shared management etc. (Leverage achieved)
Proposals Called-for	Not specific projects but a general call for proposals, perhaps in nominated priority areas
Unsolicited	If received and worthy of consideration.
2. The Committee decision making structures.
3. Committee makeup and industry representation.
4. Satisfaction and effectiveness of industries being represented on the Committee.
5. Communication at all levels including HRDC to peak industry bodies (PIBs), Committee members to industries they represent, PIBs to growers, R&D Committees and Industry Development Officers/Managers etc.
6. Effectiveness of HRDC involvement including the HRDC Board, Program Managers and Secretariat.
7. Relevance and appropriateness of the current AusHort R&D priorities and process for their review.
8. The appropriateness of the current budget allocation and future requirements. Currently the annual allocation per industry is 5% of gross levy receipts which, when matched with Commonwealth funds, provides an annual potential budget of approximately \$1m to support ongoing and new project.

Project Outputs

1. Full written and electronic report addressing:

- The assumptions (and other relevant considerations) made in conducting the project;
- The approach taken in conducting the project;
- Any difficulties encountered and how they were resolved;
- The terms of reference above ;
- Recommendations for future AusHort R&D program reviews; and
- A list of all sources of information referred to and personal communications in conducting the review.

2. Other outputs

- Presentation to the HRDC Board and AusHort R&D Committee;
- A copy of any other electronic data produced or compiled during the project; and
- A brief report suitable for publication in mainstream media.

Draft Timetable

It is proposed that the review begin at the end of July 2000 to be completed by the end of August 2000 prior to the development of the new 2001/02 program.

The proposal submission should include an initial briefing meeting with the reference group, draft timetable and project milestones to achieve the desired outputs.

Project Management Responsibilities

The consultant will report to Libby Abraham, AusHort R&D Committee Secretariat and the reference group in the first instance. The Secretariat is responsible for the coordination of the reference group.

Key groups to be consulted as part of the project:

- AusHort R&D Committee members;
- AusHort R&D participating industries who are represented by other industry members on the Committee;
- Horticultural industry representatives not participating in the AusHort R&D program;
- R&D providers to HRDC; and
- HRDC staff members.

Note: The AusHort R&D Secretariat and reference group will assist in determining appropriate interviews.

HRDC contact

Libby Abraham
AusHort R&D Committee Secretariat
Horticultural Research and Development Corporation

Level 6, 7 Merriwa Street
Gordon NSW 2072
Ph: 02 9418 2200; Fax: 02 9418 1352; Mobile: 0418 287 974
Email: labraham@hrdc.gov.au

Resource Allocation To The Project

Consultants will provide their own administrative support, including word processing and printing requirements.

Consultants will be responsible for the collation of data and the analysis of the results.

The HRDC contact will provide assistance in accessing relevant HRDC documents and appropriate HRDC and industry representatives as may be agreed to.

Consultancy personnel allocated to the project cannot be changed throughout the project without the concurrence of HRDC.

The budget available for the project is \$10,000. This is excluding reference group expenses, and travel for presentations to the HRDC Board in Tasmania in mid September 2000 and the AusHort R&D Committee in mid October 2000. These expenses will be managed separately by HRDC.

General Conditions Of Contract

HRDC expects that:

- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.
- The copyright of all documentation and intellectual property developed, as a result of the project will be vested with the HRDC or as agreed.
- The project is undertaken in an impartial, objective and professional manner
- EEO principles will be applied in both the selection of personnel for the project and in the conduct of the project.
- The consultant has insurance cover for property damage and public risk, public liability and accident or injuries to employees of their company.
- Any areas of potential conflict of interest be identified at the time of the consultant's response to the brief and updated during the course of the project should potential conflicts arise.
- The consultant's contract may be terminated or the work content reduced, with a fair and reasonable monetary adjustment determined by HRDC, subject to the consultant being given notice in writing.
- Any material provided by HRDC for this project which has been developed by another consultancy or agent will be used only for work done for HRDC.
- A formal Research Agreement will be entered into at the commencement of the project. The general conditions as stated in the brief and the specific conditions as stated in the Research Agreement will apply.

Consultant's Proposal

The consultant's response to the brief must address:

1. Methodology:
 - a) Demonstration of a detailed understanding of the project requirements;
 - b) A description of the proposed methodology to address the specific project outcomes and associated timeframes.
2. Costing and payment:
 - a) A breakdown of anticipated costs including allocation of the consultant's time, material and other costs;
 - b) An outline of when project payments are due.
3. Qualifications of consultants:
 - a) A statement of the names, role, qualifications and experience of personnel allocated to the project must be provided;
 - b) Contact details for all personnel to be involvement in the project.

Criteria For Selection

The criteria for selection will include:

- Demonstrated understanding of the project requirements ;
- Demonstrated experience and success in conducting analyses of a similar nature;
- Demonstrated skills and knowledge relevant to the project;
- Appropriateness of proposed project approach and methodology;
- Cost effectiveness and value for money.
-

Other References And Personal Communications

- AusHort Strategic Plan, 1999-2003 (www.horticulture.com.au);
- AusHort R&D Committee Policies and Procedures;
- Current AusHort R&D program summary;
- AusHort R&D Committee contact details
- AusHort R&D Program participant contact details (represented by others on the Committee);
- Contact details of horticultural industries not participating in the AusHort R&D Program; and
- R&D providers to HRDC.

Lodgement Of Response

Please submit a proposal including acknowledgment that all terms and conditions stated in this brief are accepted by 5pm, Friday 14 July 2000.

Please address the proposal marked "Confidential" as follows:

Proposal for: AusHort R&D program review (AH00015). Address proposal to Libby Abraham at the above address.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Background

- What is your position/title and role within your industry group?
- What involvement do you have with HRDC? For how long have you been involved?
- What do you know about the AusHort program?
- Do you consider there is a need for a cross-sectoral R&D program like AusHort?

AusHort Priorities

- Have you seen the AusHort strategic plan?
- Do you consider the following priorities identified in the plan to be appropriate?
- Market requirements and opportunities
- Production
- Industry development services
- Product to end user
- Product development
- Are there other areas that AusHort should be focussing on?
- How well do these priorities reflect the issues that your industry group considers to be important?

Funding

- Do you consider the current method of funding AusHort programs to be the most effective way of doing this?
- Have you any suggestions or comments about funding options for the AusHort program?

Structure

- Do you consider the current structure of the AusHort committee to be the most effective way of managing the AusHort program?
- Have you any suggestions or comments about structural options for the AusHort program?

Communication

- What comments or suggestions do you have about how HRDC can most effectively keep industry groups informed about AusHort programs and activities?
- Do you see a role for industry associations in passing information about AusHort programs on to members?

General

- Do you have any comments or feedback you wish to make about any specific AusHort projects?

- Do you have any general comments or feedback you wish to make about the overall AusHort program?

APPENDIX E: PEOPLE CONTACTED FOR INTERVIEW

Name	Organisation	Role	Comment
Tim Dyer	AusHort Committee	Chair	No response
Robert Armstrong	Stonefruit R&D Committee	Chair	
Laurie Bolitho	Nashi R&D Committee	Past Chair	
Ron Gray	Australian Banana Growers Council	Chair	
Ian Bryce	Aust Processing Tomato Research Council	Chair	No response
Brian Chung	Botanical Resources Australia Pty Ltd	Research Manager	AusHort researcher
Mark Chown	Citrus R&D Committee	Chair	No response
Silvio Favero	AusVeg	Chair	No response
Peter Freeman	Almond R&D Committee	Chair	No response
Chris Gallagher	Australian Passionfruit Industry Association	Secretary	No response
Brian Newman	AusVeg	Executive Officer	
Jolyon Burnett	Nursery Industry Association of Australia	Executive Officer	
Bob Grainger	Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Industries	General Manager	
George Green	Avocado R,D and Extension Committee	Chair	
Tim Groom	Australian Onion Industry Association	Chair	No response
Ian Hay	Cherry Growers Association of Australia Ltd	Past Chair	
Rod Lewis	Strawberries Australia	Chair	No response
Jack Meagher	Potato R&D Committee	Chair	
Jeff Moon	Australian Melon Association	Chair	
David Ogilvy	Chestnut R&D Committee	Chair	
Andrew Pearce			
Kevin Sanders	Apple and Pear R&D Committee	Chair	
Michael Brown	Mushroom Industry R&D Committee	Chair	
Patti Stacey	Aust Custard Apple Growers Association Inc	Secretary	No response
Kim Wilson	Macadamia R&D Committee	Chair	
Ivan Routley	Canned Fruit Industry Council of Australia	Chair	
Brian Woodford	Australian Table Grape Association	President	No response
Ian Atkinson	Nursery Industry Association of Australia	IDM	
Jessica Purbrick	Aust Apple and Pear Growers Association	IDM	
Les Baxter	HRDC	Acting Exec Officer	
Jonathon Eccles	HRDC	Program Manager	Vegetables
Libby Abraham	HRDC	Program Manager	Nursery, AusHort
Gerard McEvilly	HRDC	Program Manager	Fruit
Leigh Sparrow	HRDC	Program Manager	NRM
Yvonne Lobrick	HRDC	Program Manager	Communications

Name	Organisation	Role	Comment
Tony Biggs	HRDC	Deputy Chair	
James McGeoch	HRDC	Chair	
Richard Bennett	AHC	Program Manager	AusHort researcher
Mark Napper	AHC	Managing Director	
Ann Briggs	AHC	Program Manager	Nursery
Bob Seldon	AHC	Chair	
Kevin Bodnaruk	AKC Consulting	Consultant	AusHort researcher
Annice Lloyd	QDPI	Snr Researcher	AusHort researcher
Margie Milgate	QFVG	Program Manager	AusHort researcher
Doug Hocking	NSW Agriculture	Program Manager	
Terry Hill	Agriculture WA	Program Manager	
Steven Underhill	QHI	Program Leader	
Don Plowman	SARDI	Director, R&D	