

**Developing the  
Enviroveg program as  
a national  
environmental  
program in the  
vegetable industry**

Helena Whitman  
AUSVEG Ltd

Project Number: VG03088

## **VG03088**

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**Horticulture Australia Ltd.**

***Project VG03088***

**(Completion Date June 2006)**

**Developing the Enviroveg program as a national  
environmental program in the vegetable industry**

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## **Purpose of the Report**

In keeping with the recommendations of project VG00016 that the Enviroveg program be extended out to the national vegetable industry, this report outlines the process undertaken and the achievements made to the time of this final report.

## **Funding Sources**

*This project is facilitated by HAL in partnership with AUSVEG and is funded by the National Vegetable Levy. The Australian Government provides matched funding for all HAL's R&D activities.*



## **Date of Report**

May 2006

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## ABBREVIATIONS USED

AUSVEG	AUSVEG Ltd - Australian Vegetable and Potato Growers Federation Ltd
COP	Code of Practice
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
EMS	Environmental Management System
Growcom	formerly Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association
HAL	Horticulture Australia Limited
H4T	Horticulture for Tomorrow Guidelines
IDO	Industry Development Officer
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation.
LGA	Local Government Authority
NRM	Natural Resource Management
QA	Quality Assurance
R & D	Research and Development
SQF	Safe Quality Food
VGAV	Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria
VFF	Victorian Farmers Federation

## **MEDIA SUMMARY**

Originating in Victoria in 2000, the Enviroveg program was commissioned by the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria (VGAV) on behalf of growers in response to growing community and government beliefs that nutrient loss from horticultural activities was a major contributor to pollution of nearby waterways.

The program was funded by the VGAV, the National Vegetable Levy and matching commonwealth funds and first trialled in Victoria before being launched as a national program in 2003.

The program remains industry owned and is now managed by AUSVEG Ltd. Membership and participation in the Enviroveg program is freely available to all National Vegetable Levy paying growers.

Enviroveg is a simple self assessment tool that allows growers to demonstrate that they are environmentally responsible managers. It is a simple entry point for growers wishing to implement an environmental management system on farm.

Enviroveg is a voluntary program that assists growers to identify the farming practices that affect the environment and suggests practices that may be more beneficial to production, profitability and the surrounding environment.

Enviroveg consist of a manual which describes various practices and a self assessment checklist which is recorded by Enviroveg and compared to previous results.

Enviroveg has been reviewed against the Horticulture for Tomorrow Guidelines and several auditable environmental codes of practice and is being rewritten to enable growers to achieve certification against any of those codes of practice.

The aim of the program is to assist vegetable growers to implement environmental improvements on farm, demonstrate that they are responsible environmental managers and where required, to progress on to environmental certification.

Since the national launch of the program, membership from growers in other states has been increasing steadily. The program is also now supported through various grower organisations such as the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria, Growcom, and Vegetables WA.

All Catchment Management Authorities and Natural Resource Management Committees have been made aware of the program and where appropriate promote participation to growers.

Once the rewrite of the new Enviroveg manual is complete, AUSVEG Ltd will embark on an intensive promotion campaign for the program to encourage grower uptake and membership.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Enviroveg program was developed in Victoria in response to public concerns about the use of fertilisers for vegetable production. The Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria (VGA Vic) commissioned an R&D project (VG00016) to develop an industry owned environmental management program that would allow growers to meet public expectations and to obtain the necessary recognition for the efforts made.

The Enviroveg program was developed as a simple self-assessment tool to minimise environmental impacts and promote effective environmental management within the vegetable industry.

The good agricultural practices included in the guidelines were given a simple score to help growers measure their progress and demonstrate their level of implementation. The program also included a continuous improvement process as part of the requirements. The score system allows growers to benchmark their current environmental performance and improve on an annual basis.

At the conclusion of the initial Victorian pilot, the Final Report to HAL recommended that “to take full advantage of Enviroveg, the program will need to become available to all growers in Australia”.

## 1.2 NATIONAL PROGRAM

A proposal was put forward to HAL (Horticulture Australia Limited) for “*Developing the Enviroveg program as a national environmental program in the vegetable industry*”, the project to be managed by AUSVEG Ltd in keeping with the Industry’s vision that states “by 2010 the vegetable industry will be cohesive, market focussed, profitable and environmentally responsible”.

The aim of the project was to make the successful Enviroveg program available to all Australian vegetable growers and to establish a nationally standardised environmental management tool for environmental action and planning in the vegetable production industry.

With national adoption the program would encourage greater adoption of environmental planning and implementation in vegetable production, increase the frequency of self assessment of current environmental performance, reduce the potential for environmental damage caused by vegetable production and enhance the positive environmental outcomes from sound farm management practices.

## 1.3 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The transfer of management of the project to AUSVEG Ltd saw the appointment of Sarah Hearn to the position of National Enviroveg Coordinator. During this time Sarah had expended much effort in promoting the program nationally and developing potential partnerships for expansion of the program and achieving many of the objectives of the project. Enviroveg reference groups were set up in several States. A National Enviroveg Management Committee comprising of representative growers from each State was also

established and the extensive and time consuming interview and information gathering phase of the Scoping Study was undertaken. The report was later completed by Euan Laird and Helena Whitman.

Following Sarah's resignation in November of 2004, AUSVEG shifted the focus of the Enviroveg National Coordinator's position from management of the Enviroveg program to all matters environmental. Helena Whitman was appointed as AUSVEG Environmental Manager to oversee the Enviroveg program and to deal with all other environmental issues.

To further reflect the Industry's vision and the importance of environmental issues affecting vegetable production, the National Enviroveg Management Committee became the National Environmental Committee and the VGA's Enviroveg Committee relinquished management of the program to the National Environmental Committee.

#### **1.4 ENVIROVEG TRADE MARK**

To support a National program, the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria have very kindly given AUSVEG Ltd full use and access to the trade marked Enviroveg name to be used in conjunction with the program. This is conditional on the program always remaining in grower hands and appropriate recognition of the origin of the Enviroveg initiative.

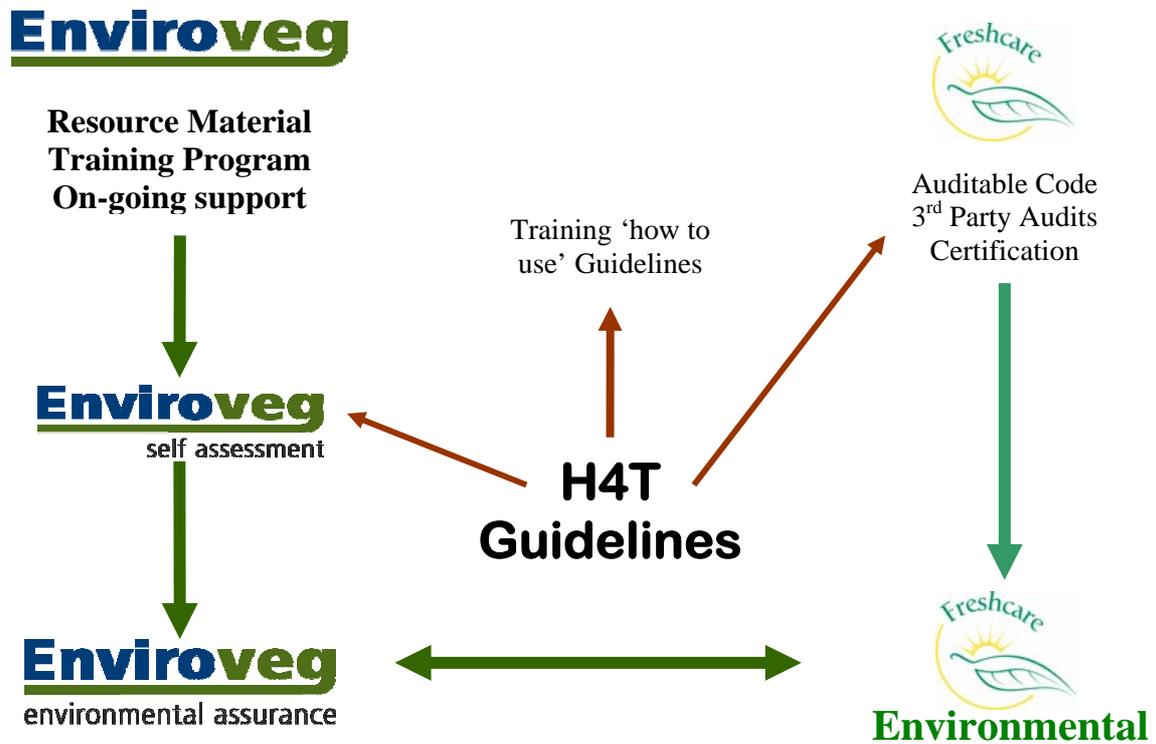
#### **1.5 WHERE DO THEY ALL FIT?**

The National Environmental Committee is very conscious of the need not to repeat the Quality Assurance (QA) disaster that befell horticulture at the onset of Food Safety requirements and regulation previously. The Committee is fostering partnerships with other organisations such as Growcom and programs such as H4T and Freshcare to ensure that the industry retains a grower owned and driven program that encompasses not only regulatory requirements but can also meet the requirements of the other programs and much more.

The Enviroveg program is a support program for vegetable growers wanting to implement environmentally responsible practices on-farm. The program **underpins** all of the environmental codes of practice by suggests practices, providing the tools, information and training growers need to successfully implement good environmental practices on their farms.

The program provides information that is necessary to enable vegetable growers to evaluate their current environmental position. It identifies funding sources, legislation, training needs of growers, courses and advisors. Working alongside Government Agencies, Catchment Management Authorities and Natural Resource Management Councils, Enviroveg can provide guidance and support specifically tailored for Australian vegetable growers.

In the following diagram Freshcare can be read as SQF, WQA or HACCP and Freshcare Environmental can be read as ISO14000, Eurepgap or Nature's Choice.



## 2. OUTCOMES

The introduction of the program nationally has prompted a review and rewrite of the Enviroveg manual and self assessment checklist, however due to other external events such as the development of the Horticulture for Tomorrow Guidelines and the Freshcare Environmental Code of Practice (COP), it was prudent to wait for their completion before commencing the rewrite.

Despite these delays the project has been able to achieve its outcomes and much more.

1. The Scoping Study was completed.
2. A National Environmental Committee was established with representatives from all States.
3. The program has been launched nationally with uptake across all states.
4. The Enviroveg manual is being reviewed and rewritten:
  - a. The rewrite takes into account the requirements of other programs such as the Horticulture for Tomorrow Guidelines, the Freshcare Environmental COP, Eurepgap, Nature's Choice and ISO14000.
  - b. Several new modules have been identified as essential and are being added:
    - i. Whole Farm Planning and recoding to enable growers to meet Catchment requirements
    - ii. Biosecurity to meet Plant Health Aust and quarantine requirements.
5. The program is being taken from a self-assessment only program to an Environmental Management System that will enable growers to achieve certification.
6. All Local Government Associations (LGAs) and Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) or Natural Resource Management (NRM) Authorities, where vegetables are grown, are aware of the program and are encouraging growers in their areas to take up membership.
7. The program is being promoted and supported by VGAV, Growcom in Queensland, the VFF Pathways program in Victoria and Vegetables WA who have recently appointed an Environmental Officer who will also promote the program in that state. The program is being actively promoted by the Vegetable IDOs in each state, as well through the use of print media, brochures and state visits by the Environmental Manager.
8. Information brochure, website and newsletters delivered.

The proposal to set up reference groups and facilitators in each State was not possible to achieve due to lack of resources both financial (this was an unbudgeted activity) and staffing, however potential partnerships with other organisations are being investigated.

In all, the Project has addressed and achieved most of the recommendations made in the previous Project VG00016. Some recommendations were overtaken by the results fo the Scoping Study and were modified accordingly.

### 2.1 SCOPING STUDY

The Scoping Study was commenced by Sarah Hearn and completed by Helena Whitman. The Study did make many recommendations (*See Appendix 1*), many of which have now been enacted whilst others are for longer term implementation.

Sarah undertook wide consultation with growers, stakeholders, retailers and Government agencies over an extensive period and in all States. Interviews were conducted through field days, workshops, face-to-face and by phone.

### **2.1.1 Tiered approach**

One of the recommendations of the Scoping Study and an element of the project was to develop a tiered structure for the Enviroveg program. Although not achieved in the life of this project due to delays in the review and rewrite of the manual, this is seen as a priority to be addressed immediately.

This must be developed before any discussion on Enviroveg branding can be progressed.

### **2.1.2 Enviroveg brand**

“Enviroveg” is a label and a concept, both of which are readily recognised in its name – environmental vegetables – vegetables that have been produced in an environmentally sustainable manner. It is an ideal name for the vegetable industry to use to brand its environmental program.

It is essential that the integrity of the name be protected and that growers ‘earn’ the right to use the label. Growers achieving certification and the Enviroveg benchmark will be able to apply for use of the logo on produce and/or packaging.

### **2.1.3 Resources**

The one single impediment to the successful uptake of Enviroveg by the vegetable industry is the ‘on-ground’ support required by growers. The Victorian pilot was successful because it had a facilitator (Rochelle Bunbury) who could conduct workshops and meetings with growers.

The national perspective of this program makes it difficult for the program manager to meet with growers in all states regularly. For the program to continue to succeed, the funding of state Enviroveg facilitators must be considered as a priority.

## **2.2 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE**

The National Environmental Committee was appointed in November of 2004 and since that time has been very active in driving the momentum of not only the Enviroveg program but all environmental issues. The Committee’s motto is *“to stay ahead of the game”*. The Committee believes that if industry can demonstrate that it is embracing environmental improvement on-farm, it may ultimately lead to reductions in the amount of regulation currently affecting growers.

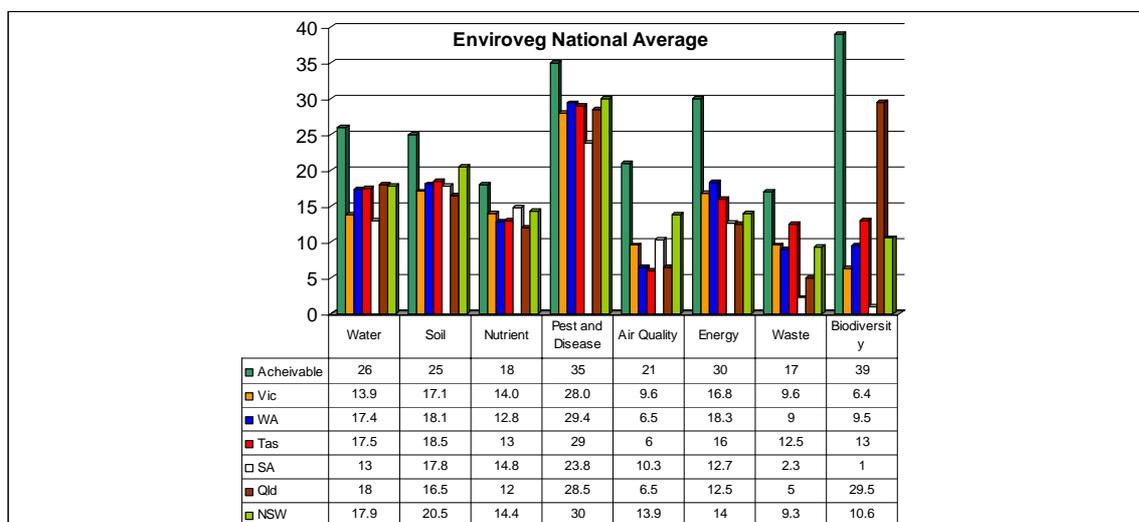
The Committee, chaired by Jeff McSpedden consists of growers and representatives from all States. Deputy chair David Anderson (WA), Liou Gazzola (Vic), Tim Burgess (Tas), Jason Huggins (Qld), Eddie Galea (NSW), Romeo Giangregorio (SA), and industry representatives Jane Muller (Growcom), Richard Bennett (HAL) and until recently Jonathan Eccles (AUSVEG).

## 2.3 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Enviroveg program is now national with members in all States. Due to the review and rewrite of the Enviroveg manual, a membership drive hasn't been feasible however there will be a concerted effort once the new manual and tiered structure is finalised.

Steering Committees in each State have not been established as there are insufficient resources to manage these Committees. This may become possible in the future through external funding sources such as the Landcare program.

One of the early benefits of national membership has been the ability to identify trends in each state and benchmark these against other states.



Growers will be able to compare their results with the state average and other states.

This has also enabled Enviroveg to identify shortfalls in information and investigate the feasibility of developing training material to support these modules. This is in keeping with the recommendation that were made in the Final Report of Project VG00016.

## 2.4 ENVIROVEG MANUAL

The review and rewrite of the Enviroveg manual was prompted by several circumstances:

1. Only a few original manuals remaining.
2. The national perspective.
3. The development of the Horticulture for Tomorrow (H4T) Guidelines and the Freshcare Environmental Code of Practice (COP).
4. The need for the introduction of new modules.

The rewrite of the manual will encompass the requirements of the H4T Guidelines and the Freshcare COP as well as Eurepgap, Nature's Choice and ISO14000. This is being undertaken to ensure that growers can have the choice of level of implementation and certification in the future.

At this stage it is premature to develop an Enviroveg program CD, however it will be considered as the program develops out further into the future.

## **2.5 TIERED STRUCTURE**

Enviroveg will have a tiered approach in the future with growers entering the program at a basic level and progressing to certification. Growers will still have the option of which level they want to participate at.

A stepped approach that is being considered:

1. Introduction to EMS – carrying out a self assessment and free membership to the program.
2. Progressing to certification – membership fee, annual 3<sup>rd</sup> party assessment and gate signage.
3. Additional requirements – annual use of Enviroveg logo.

**NB:** The new structure of the Enviroveg program has not been finalised at the time of this report.

## **2.6 RECOGNITION**

Over the past year all CMAs, NRMs, and LGAs have been informed about the Enviroveg program. Many have indicated support for the program and sought more information. Several are now promoting Enviroveg to vegetable growers in their regions and have requested to use the Enviroveg program as a basis for the development of other programs for their regions.

Meetings were held with the two major chains who indicated that they would support an industry program.

## **2.7 PARTNERSHIPS**

Growcom has given a very strong indication that they would like to formalise an agreement with Enviroveg with respect to delivery of the program in Queensland alongside their Farm Management System.

Vegetables WA has recently employed an Environmental Officer to assist with information dissemination to WA growers. Enviroveg will form the basis of this information.

The VFF Pathways project does not include a horticulture or vegetable component and therefore they are keen to have their 10 regional Pathways Officers use Enviroveg as the material being delivered to vegetable growers.

Partnerships for delivery in other states are yet to be developed.

There is an opportunity to work with state coordinators for Landcare to seek funding and resources for state based facilitators in the future.

### **3. OUTPUTS/TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER**

Over the life of this project considerable effort has been put into the development of information transfer and promotion of the program – directly and indirectly.

The launch of the program nationally, required a new image for the program. This involved the redesign of the suite of stationery and logos (*see Appendix 2*). The new image represents the interaction of vegetable production and the environment and is reflected in the letterhead, banner and posters used by the program. The logo was also redesigned to reflect the program as a whole and the 2 tiers of membership.

**Enviroveg**

**Enviroveg**  
self assessment

**Enviroveg**  
environmental assurance

#### **3.1 INFORMATION BROCHURE**

An information brochure was produced that was sent to every vegetable grower and also CMAs, NRMs and LGAs. The brochure did result in an increase in membership as well as enquires from other sectors. (*see Appendix 3*)

#### **3.2 ENVIRONEWS**

EnviroNews, a member newsletter is produced and sent out to all members bimonthly and also posted on the Enviroveg Website. The mail out will continue until such time as the membership numbers make this unviable. (*see Appendix 4*)

#### **3.3 WEBSITE**

The Enviroveg website is being redeveloped to include much more information for members. The site originally located with VGA Vic has been closed and a new site is now managed by AUSVEG.

The fully developed site will include a member's secure section where members will be able to download documents and information as well as directly input their self-assessments and compare these to their region (once membership is significant enough to be effective). Growers will also be able to directly update their own information.

The website will contain links to legislative and funding sites by state as well as other useful contacts and links.

#### **3.4 VEGETABLES AUSTRALIA & OTHER MEDIA**

Each issue of Vegetables Australia carries an environmental article referenced back to Enviroveg. Articles also have been prepared for the IDO's newsletters, Good Fruit & Vegetables and general media.

### 3.5 INFORMATION PACKAGE

An Information Package has been developed that is sent out to growers seeking more information about membership. The package consists of:

1. The Enviroveg brochure
2. Copies of recent EnviroNews
3. Summary Checklist
4. Membership Form
5. What Is Enviroveg flier
6. Where Does It Fit flier

A similar package minus checklist and registration form is sent in response to other enquires.

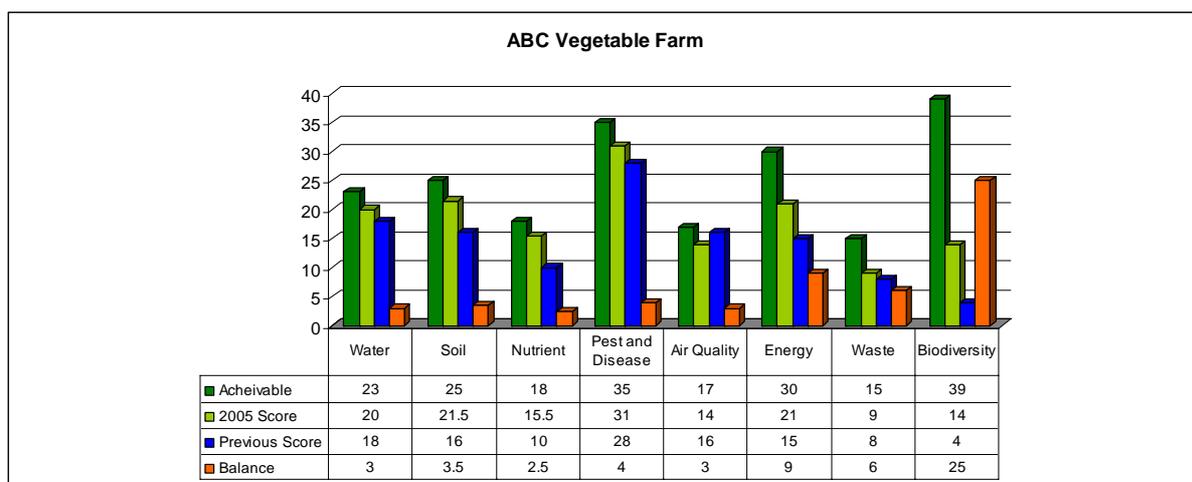
### 3.6 GROWER INFORMATION

#### 3.6.1 Enviroveg member reports

The Enviroveg Member reports are based on the outcomes of growers undertaking the annual self-assessment. The report shows growers their scores in relation to each of the Enviroveg areas total scores, and where available previous scores. It directly demonstrates their level of adoption of good environmental practices on the farm and shows areas where future improvement is possible.

One of the obstacles to be overcome is the belief by some growers that once they had signed up with the program in 2002/2003 and received their certificate of membership they no longer had to do anything. Despite many reminders to return completed self assessment checklists, there are still about 23% of growers who have failed to do so.

The National Environmental Committee has agreed that growers who do not return completed self assessments by the end of June 2006 will be deregistered from the program. It is an essential component of continual improvement and commitment that growers complete (at least) the self assessment annually.



### **3.6.2 Enviroveg Data Collection**

Through the completed and returned Registration Forms and Self Assessment Checklists, Enviroveg is able to gather information on farm size, QA system in place and crops grown by individual growers.

Other useful information that becomes apparent from Self Assessment Checklist data is the shortfalls in information and training that need to be developed for or disseminated to growers by Enviroveg. An example of this from national data collected to date is the lack of understanding or knowledge about biodiversity.

### **3.6.3 Grower Training**

The emphasis on training has changed significantly since the program took on a national focus. Previously the training consisted of growers attending workshops to go through the Enviroveg manual and the self assessment checklist. This form of training will once again become possible when facilitators/partners are appointed in each State.

Enviroveg is now looking at specific training designed around separate modules in the program, i.e. IPM training, Biodiversity recognition, chemical management. It is not the aim of the program to develop training courses for every module. The program will be identifying recognised or appropriate courses where available in each state or where there is no suitable training or course, the development of appropriate material such as the Soil Ute Guide and Interpretation Courses for Vegetable Growers.

## **3.7 PRESENTATIONS**

Over the past three years of the project, the Enviroveg message has been presented to growers either individually, at meetings, workshops and many other events. Several CMAs and other industries have requested presentations on Enviroveg be it to farmers or staff.

The program has also been outlined and presented at several Agricultural Colleges to horticultural students as a demonstration of an industry environmental program and a basis for students to carry out modelling as part of their competencies.

A presentation was also given by Sarah Hearn at the National EMS Conference in South Australia in 2003.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The future potential of Enviroveg to become the Industry's standard for responsible environmental management needs to be further investigated and developed. Many growers want to gain certification for their environmental management and to be able to use the Enviroveg Logo on packaging and on farm signage.

Through the proposed restructure of the program, the National Environmental Committee believe that the program can become self-sustaining and less reliant of industry levy funds.

To this end it is recommended that:

- 1. The Enviroveg program continues to evolve into a total farm EMS program with a tiered structure that enables growers to choose whether to remain at the self assessment level or progress to certification.**
- 2. That Enviroveg identifies the gaps in knowledge and information on environmental issues and either identifies existing courses or develops appropriate training programs for growers to link in with the modules of the Enviroveg program.**
- 3. That Enviroveg investigate the feasibility of partnerships with other industry organisations to provide maximum in-field support and training to growers wishing to implement Enviroveg on-farm.**
- 4. That Enviroveg investigates options and opportunities to enable the program to become self-sustaining in the future.**
- 5. That the Enviroveg program continues to be industry owned and driven.**

The Enviroveg program needs to remain vegetable industry owned and administered. This will give the industry a tool to properly respond to environmental issues and to demonstrate to regulators that the industry is committed to addressing environmental impact on-farm.

## **5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

AUSVEG Ltd and HAL are gratefully acknowledged for their financial support of this project as are all vegetable growers without whom the project would not be possible.

The tremendous input and management of the project by the National Environmental Committee must be acknowledged. The Committee's drive and commitment to have the industry on the 'front foot' on environmental issues has been tireless.

The Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria is acknowledged for its foresight in developing the program and ensuring that it remains a grower owned and driven program that is accessible to all growers.

Others that have made a major contribution to the project in the past include Rochelle Bunbury, Patrick Ulloa, the Victorian Enviroveg Committee, Sarah Hearn, Jonathan Eccles, Richard Bennett and numerous representatives of various Government Agencies.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1 - SCOPING STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**APPENDIX 2 - STATIONERY & LOGOS**

**APPENDIX 3 - PROMOTIONAL BROCHURE**

**APPENDIX 4 - ENVIRONews**

## APPENDIX 1

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There are many issues that need to be addressed for the long-term viability of the Enviroveg program. Some may be projects in their own right, whereas others would be the function of the AUSVEG Environmental Manager. Below is a list of recommendations.

**The National Enviroveg Committee will need to look at these as either:**

- 1. The role of the AUSVEG Environmental Manager under the current project term.**
- 2. The next phase of the Enviroveg Program (roll-over into another project application or funded by AUSVEG Levy)**
- 3. A separate project.**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**To progress the national adoption of Enviroveg, these issues must be addressed:**

- 1) Enviroveg members need to participate in trialling the “Guidelines for Environmental Management” Project to ensure that the vegetable industry has input into the final outcome.**
- 2) Undertake a review of the existing Enviroveg program to ensure that “Level One” Enviroveg reflects the changing requirements of CMAs and regional issues.**
- 3) Utilising the “Guidelines for EA”, develop “Level Two” Enviroveg as an auditable program that can be added to existing QA programs.**
- 4) Continue discussions with QA program providers to encourage them to adopt Enviroveg as their environmental module for vegetable growers.**
- 5) Develop a communications strategy to promote Enviroveg nationally.**
- 6) Develop an induction package for Enviroveg.**
- 7) Investigate and negotiate financial incentives for growers adopting the Enviroveg program.**
- 8) Identify and develop partnerships with State Agencies, CMAs as a conduit for resources and expertise.**
- 9) Assess the long term resource options for a National Enviroveg Program.**
- 10) Consider what value to place on the Enviroveg brand in terms of its minimum requirements for use and its subsequent licensing fees for growers.**
- 11) Ensure retention of ownership of the Enviroveg program by industry and its development into the future.**
- 12) Develop a revised set of key performance targets for the project for the duration of its current funding.**
- 13) Industry representative organisations through the auspices of the National Enviroveg Management Committee must ratify an agreed direction forward for the project.**

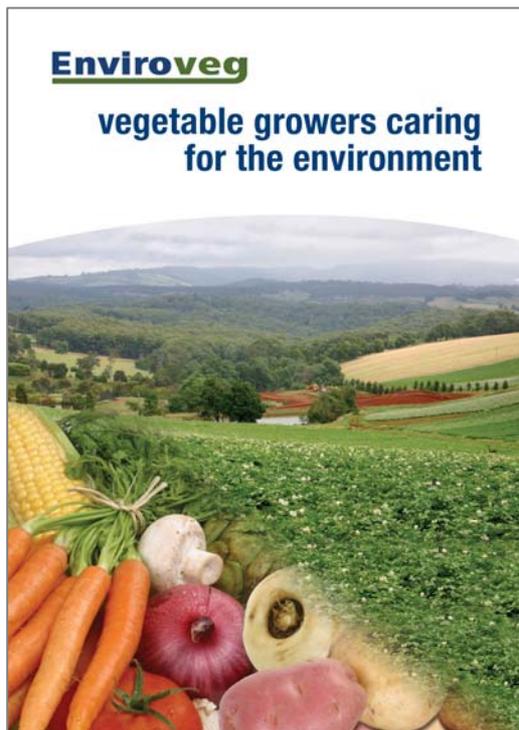
## APPENDIX 2



**Masthead**



**Letterhead**



**Enviroveg Poster**



**Membership Certificate**

### Logos



## APPENDIX 3

**Enviroveg provides growers with a visible way of demonstrating a responsible attitude towards the environment.**

**further information**

To become a member of Enviroveg, contact:  
 Helena Whitman  
 AUSVEG Environmental Manager  
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 Web: www.auveveg.com.au

Enviroveg is funded by the vegetable levy and the Australian Government through Horticulture Australia.

**Enviroveg**

**vegetable growers caring for the environment**








## Promotional Brochure

**vegetable growers and the environment**

All human activity impacts on the environment in some way. Vegetable production is no exception. Vegetable growers are dependent on the environment to produce crops and therefore appreciate the potential impacts of vegetable production. Growers acknowledge their responsibility to look after the environment for the future, and are keen to demonstrate responsible practices on and off farm. The public perception of growers is that they are not responsible managers of the environment. The Vegetable Industry is addressing this through the Enviroveg Program.

**about enviroveg**

Enviroveg provides growers with a visible way of demonstrating a responsible attitude towards the environment. Enviroveg is a set of tools for growers to assist them to achieve, measure and demonstrate good environmental practices on-farm. The Enviroveg program is grower owned and developed and outlines the principles and practices required for maintaining or improving environmental management on-farm. Using the Enviroveg program gives growers a way of measuring environmental improvements on-farm each year and recognition for improvements. Practices can be introduced and managed at a pace to suit the grower and their circumstances.

**what is covered?**

Enviroveg assists growers in the management of:

- water	- soil
- nutrients	- pest and diseases
- air quality	- energy conservation
- waste management	- biodiversity

**Enviroveg is a simple set of tools for growers to assist them to achieve, measure and demonstrate good environmental practices on-farm.**

Growers complete a self assessment of their farm and measure environmentally positive practices they have in place. A plan is developed to implement further improvements on-farm. These improvements are measured the following year, and so on. Enviroveg can be used to underpin Environmental modules developed for food safety programs such as Freshcare, SCF and HACCP which have already been implemented on-farm.

**benefits for growers**

Benefits of the Enviroveg program include:

- Industry owned and developed program free to all vegetable growers;
- Supporting information and assistance to members;
- Enabling growers to identify and manage environmental risks on-farm;
- Demonstrates environmental credibility to stakeholders and consumers;
- Achievable and practical environmental industry guidelines;
- Industry self-regulation;
- Continually measured environmental improvements on-farm;
- Opportunities for improved efficiency and profitability;
- Easily integrated into existing farm management strategies and food safety programs;
- List of useful contacts and experts for information;
- List of Government grants for environmental improvements on-farm; and
- Fact sheets and updates.

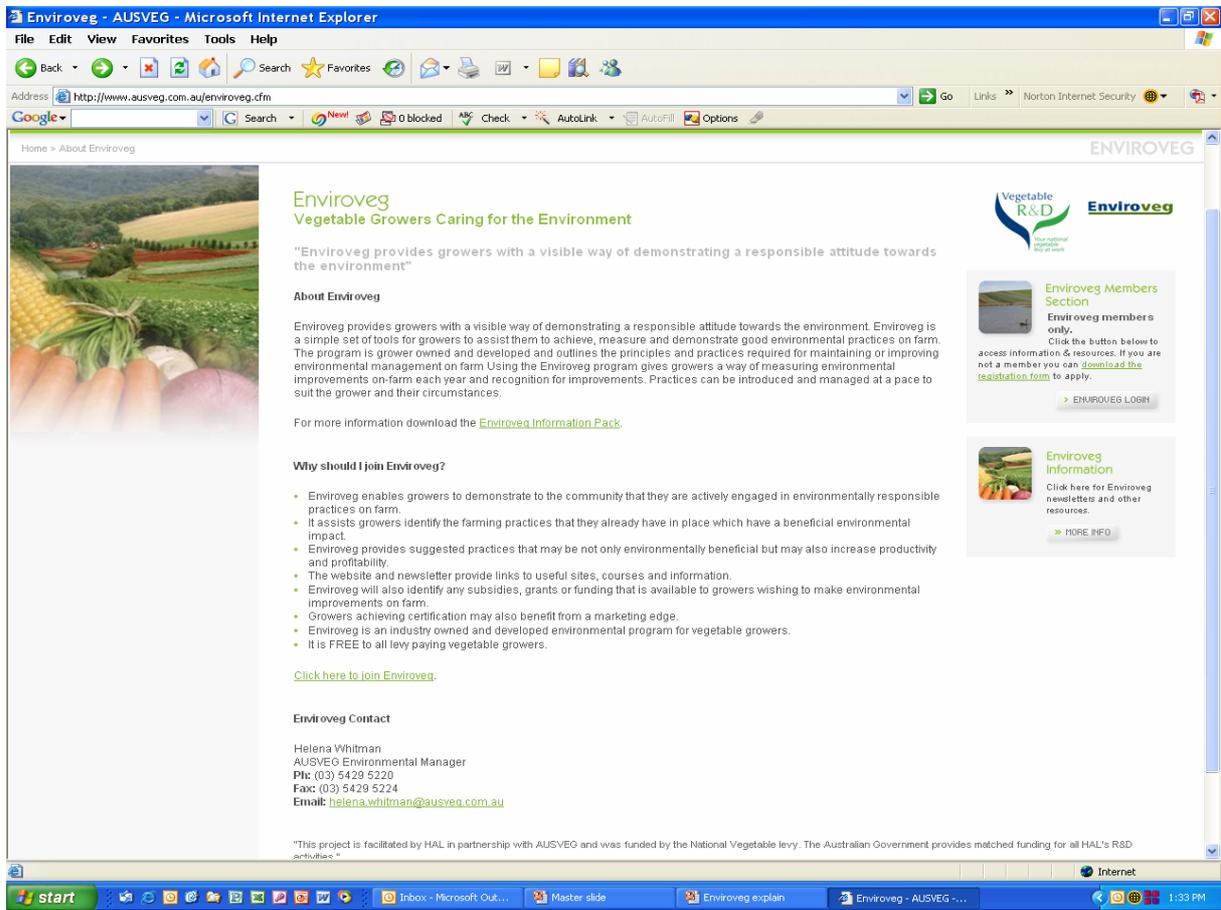
**benefits for the community**

Visible benefits to the community include:

- Responsible on and off-farm environmental management by the Vegetable Industry;
- Evidence of improved environmental practices on-farm;
- Reduction of on-farm by-products; and
- Continued supply of healthy and wholesome produce grown in an environmentally sustainable culture.




# Enviroveg Website



## APPENDIX 4



**EnviroNews – January, 2006**

### Compost for Vegetable Production

*(Extract from the Department of Primary Industries fact sheets on Compost.)*

Compost is a versatile material that can improve the physical, chemical and biological fertility of the soil. With regular use its greatest value is its contribution to soil carbon (organic matter) levels and biological activity. This in turn allows reduced use of fertiliser, irrigation and potentially, pesticides rates.

Compost can be safely made up of animal manures, garden waste, food, shellfish and other fish by-products, wool, hair and bio-solids, however they need to be mixed in a balanced and consistent 'recipe' to ensure optimal conditions for biodegradation to produce high quality and uniform compost. Heat generated by the microorganisms as they breakdown the matter must be in excess of 55°C to ensure that weed seeds and pathogens are eliminated. Heaps must be turned frequently. Moisture must also be monitored. Cooling down of the compost usually indicates the completion of the process. At this point the compost is most versatile and can be used for plant growth or soil conditioning.

To comply with food safety requirements, when purchasing compost you should request certification or a written guarantee that the product meets the Australian Standard for Composts, Soil Conditioners and Mulches (or equivalent) and that it is free of chemical, physical and microbial contamination. It should be moist – not wet or dusty and should have no or a pleasant smell. **Compost Resource Page – [www.howtocompost.org/](http://www.howtocompost.org/)** for all the information on composting.

### Useful Websites

Once the Enviroveg secure website is running, members with passwords will be able to access many useful websites. To obtain your new membership number and password you will need to have completed and returned a Self Assessment Checklist during 2005 or before the site becomes active. A full hard copy list is also being prepared, however until then here are a few that may be of interest:

- ✓ Enviroveg – [www.ausveg.com.au/cfm](http://www.ausveg.com.au/cfm)
- ✓ AUSVEG – [www.ausveg.com.au](http://www.ausveg.com.au)
- ✓ HAL (Horticulture Australia Ltd) – [www.horticulture.com.au](http://www.horticulture.com.au)
- ✓ Farmbls – [www.daff.gov.au/farmbls](http://www.daff.gov.au/farmbls)
- ✓ **Australian Government Envirofund - [www.nht.gov.au/envirofund](http://www.nht.gov.au/envirofund)**  
**Through the Envirofund community groups and individuals can apply for grants of a few hundred dollars up to \$50,000 to tackle local environmental and natural resource management problems. Typical Envirofund projects include tree planting, fencing, weeding and seed collecting. They also include training and education activities to help community groups improve their knowledge about the environment and sustainable agriculture.**
- ✓ Oil Collection Facilities – [www.oilrecycling.gov.au/directory.html](http://www.oilrecycling.gov.au/directory.html)
- ✓ APVMA Information on Chemical Registrations – [www.apvma.gov.au/](http://www.apvma.gov.au/)
- ✓ Poisons Schedule Information - <http://services.apvma.gov.au/PubcrisWebClient/welcome.do>



Growers are reminded to take advantage of the levy that they pay when purchasing eligible farm chemicals and to recycle their clean plastic and metal containers through the **drumMUSTER** program. Burning chemical containers or burying them uncleaned on-farm or in Council landfills is illegal and can incur substantial criminal penalties. The program is run by Councils and collection centres are generally located at landfills and transfer stations. Growers are given a receipt when delivering containers; these receipts are accepted by Quality Assurance programs and Environmental Management Systems as evidence of responsible waste disposal. For further information and details on Australian collection centres, please access the website [www.drummuster.com.au](http://www.drummuster.com.au) or ring your local Council.



Clean-leaf for Horticulture™

