

Turf Strategic Investment Advisory Panel meeting summary

Attendance:

Meeting Title: Turf Strategic Industry Advisory Panel			
Meeting Date: 21 and 22 Sep 2017			
Name	Role	Name	Role
Simon Adermann	Advisory SIAP Member	Michael Worthington	Chair
Ross Boyle	Advisory SIAP Member		
Darren Kirkwood	Advisory SIAP Member		
Robert Prince	Advisory SIAP Member	John Vatikiotis	Hort Innovation (Relationship Manager)
Lawrence Stephenson	Advisory SIAP Member	Neil Burgess	Hort Innovation (ex officio)
Sarah Mason	Advisory SIAP Member	Anthony Kachenko	Hort Innovation (ex officio)
		Graeme Yardy	Hort Innovation (ex officio)
		Marilyn Hill	Independent Minute Taker

Apologies: Anthony Heilig, Todd Layt

Overview

The SIAP meeting was held on the 21st & 22nd of September. The main focus was specific to the Marketing and R&D programs.

Day 1

Hort Frontiers Fund Update

- Sharyn Casey joined the meeting to provide updates on activities within the Green Cities and Leadership Fund
- Leadership fund focused on building investments that will benefit the whole of horticulture

Masterclass in Horticulture Business

Turf grower Lachlan Moncrieff, Paragon Gardens, Townsville received a scholarship to undertake the course. The Masterclass is undertaken over nine months, with three face-to-face sessions, in various places across Australia, and the balance is on-line learning supported by tutors. Applications are now open through the University of Tasmania, for the 30 positions available across the whole of horticulture for 2018. The SIAP is encouraged to promote the opportunity within its networks.

Graduate Engagement Program. This is a two-phase program in which final year university students from any discipline, undertake an internship within a horticulture business, by virtue of a scholarship which is a co-investment from the business. Under phase two of the program, the business is encouraged to employ the graduate and the fund will co-invest in the first year's salary and a five-day leadership program. The program started this year with a KPI of six businesses becoming involved. So far twelve businesses have become involved.

Churchill Fellowship - will become available next year. For this fully paid scholarship program, the applicant chooses a cross-sectoral research topic that has not been investigated in Australia before, and the reason for the overseas travel is to meet with experts, or visit relevant places to gather the

research and bring the knowledge back to Australia. The travel is undertaken in countries of choice for eight to twelve weeks. The applicant also must share the knowledge with industry.

“Which Plant Where.” This is a five-year project, examining the performance of different plant and turf species under different climate zones. Some testing will be done in greenhouses at Macquarie University/Western Sydney, along with case study sites across Australia.

A research meeting is being planned for 2 Nov 2017 at the University of Wollongong’s meeting rooms at Circular Quay. The intent is to invite representatives of the turf industry. Collective gathering of approximately 60 people from the Green Cities Fund, but also of researchers who are working on other Green Cities projects, to come together to share research.

R&D Updates

- Projects out to Market
- Anthony Kachenko provided an update on the only outstanding investment that is still being negotiated – **TU16002 Market Development Program**.

Industry Stats Project Update

Alastair McLennan joined the meeting via telephone hook-up to provide an update on the project.

The numbers are proving very interesting, as they are much closer to the ABS data than any other statistics.

Final report is due end-October, the final task will be to develop reports for the growers involved.

Communications Project Update

Ms Liz Mecham, Turf Australia, joined the meeting to provide a presentation and overview of the project, TU16004, which was contracted on 10 August, 2017, with the first milestone report due in February 2018.

The hard copy magazine is distributed to turf industry levy payers. It was suggested that consideration could be given to widening distribution to local councils, specifiers, landscape architects.

R&D Concept Review

A number of concepts were presented to the SIAP for further review and advice.

Some examples of concepts discussed are as follows:

- Education on the timing and delivery of herbicides for the Australian turf industry
- Improve capacity for the management of Black Couch Smut
- Direct Engagement with the Australian turf industry to increase profitability and ensure global competitiveness
- Phytophagous Mites and their control in turf

Day 2

Turf Marketing Plan Development

Graeme Yardy joined the meeting to lead the discussions on the development of the marketing plan.

The presentation titled “Turf Strategic Marketing SIAP Consultation” had been previously circulated and Mr Yardy presented an overview.

The document is a draft and offers three key strategic pillars that could be followed for the next three years, and based on these pillars and combined with the research, a suite of initiatives was proposed.

The proposals, that are designed to ensure alignment with the SIP, will be workshopped and, with the collective experience in the room, evaluated as to the best use of the marketing levy.

Project Green, U&A on Lawn Turf

Rigas Harbilas, from The Practice, joined the meeting to present the findings.

Following is a sample of the discussion points:

- The 600 people surveyed were drawn from across Australia, across the life stage span, and across freestanding homes and medium density
- The point was noted that there is consumer awareness of brand, but not of the differences and characteristics of the various types of grass
- Consumer education is required on new generation (smart) grasses.

Turf Marketing Plan Development (cont.)

A range of potential initiatives were put forward that could form part of the strategy the industry is trying to achieve. The SIAP was invited to provide evaluation and comment on each one. Where ideas are generated that require research and understanding, funding can be directed from the levy funding. The initiatives will be reviewed and based on feedback will be presented back to the SIAP for further advice.

Anyone seeking further information on Hort Innovation's turf R&D investments should note that a full list of projects, together with an overview of the program financials are available on the turf webpage of the Hort Innovation website

Next steps

It was agreed that there would be three face-to-face meetings during the year, with teleconference calls scheduled on an as needs basis.

It was agreed to schedule the face-to-face meetings for:

- Thursday/Friday 01 + 02 March 2018
- Thursday/Friday 21 + 22 June 2018
- Thursday/Friday 18 + 19 October 2018

Contact

For more information please contact John Vatikiotis:

T: 02 8295 2384

E: John.Vatikiotis@horticulture.com.au