

Final Report

Persimmon industry extension and communication program

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Delivery partner:

Persimmons Australia Incorporated

Project code:

PR16001

Project:

Persimmon industry extension and communication program PR16001

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Summary

The Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program (PR16001) extended from January 2017 to December 2020. The objective was to help Hort Innovation contribute to the advancement of the Australian Persimmon Industry by facilitating adoption of R&D and enabling businesses to leverage opportunities from industry marketing activities. The target audience included persimmon levy payers, supply chain partners and other relevant industry stakeholders.

Persimmons Australia Inc (PAI) was engaged to deliver the tools to increase Persimmon levy payers' awareness of industry issues, particularly those related to Hort Innovation's R&D and Marketing Programs, and foster the rapid uptake of successful R&D outcomes by levy payers and supply chain partners. This was achieved by producing and distributing the biannual industry newsletter; hosting biennial industry field day and conferences; and maintaining and resourcing the industry-focused, secure area of the Persimmons Australia website.

Eight issues of the industry's electronic newsletter, Persimmon Press, were produced in PDF format and delivered via email directly to all listings on PAI's database. Content included updates on relevant R&D projects supported by Hort Innovation and updates on Hort Innovation's activities specific to persimmons and on the organisation's operations and processes, as well as, additional articles and industry news written or sourced by the Project Team.

Two National Persimmon Industry Field Day/Conferences events were held. The first, themed "*In it for the future*", was held in the Sydney region, NSW, in June 2017 and had a progressive program to ensure that delegates were updated on the current recommendations for persimmon production, with a glimpse into technologies which may impact future production and marketing. The second, themed "United in the West", was held in Perth, WA, in June 2019, focused on uniting the persimmon industry from coast to coast while delivering updates on persimmon production. By appropriate and targeted promotions, attendance at both events exceeded expectations. The events included farm visits, conference sessions, group dinners and market visits, to maximise delegates access to information and advice and encourage a high level of interaction. Post-event evaluation indicated a high level of delegate satisfaction with all aspects of the events, with field visits being the highlight, and requests for similar events in the future.

The Persimmon Australia Website was regularly maintained and resourced with current industry news and information, to communicate and promote the program's activities to a wider audience and securely archive program outputs.

In 2017 and 2020, industry-wide, online surveys evaluated the success of all aspects of the communications program at meeting its objectives. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, with progressively greater importance placed on the project deliverables as valuable sources of industry specific information, and indicated the program has:

- Increased persimmon levy payers' awareness of industry issues, particularly those related to Hort Innovation's R&D and Marketing Programs,
- Fostered rapid uptake of successful R&D outcomes by levy payers and supply chain partners,
- Equipped growers for more innovative problem solving and strategic decision making within their businesses, and
- Built linkages between levy payers, supply chain partners and other relevant stakeholders, thus improving communication throughout the industry and encouraging the various sectors to work more collaboratively, Thereby furthering the advancement and professional development of industry members and delivery providers by encouraging the adoption of best management practices to raise the overall profitability and sustainability of the persimmon industry.

Key recommendations for future levy funded persimmon industry communications and extension activities, include:

1. PAI retaining direction and control of levy funded communication and extension activities to leverage the synergies it can provide through its networks and linkages with the target audience.
2. Program activities continue to include the production of Persimmon Press, on at least a biannual basis but possibly more frequently; the biennial National Conference and Field day events; and the regular maintenance and resourcing of the Persimmons Australia website.

3. Program activities be extended to include support for industry development activities that arise in conjunction with the core outputs of the communication and extension program and the relationships that have been established with the target audience.
4. The timing of subsequent communication and extension programs consider the proposed activities and their required lead times.
5. Program activities further develop, resource and promotion of the Persimmons Australia Website to leverage the cost benefits of this communication medium for information delivery to both the target audience and the wider community, and drive efficiencies as the first stop for sourcing industry knowledge.

Keywords

Persimmon; Communication; Extension; Adoption; Persimmons Australia; Persimmon Press; National Conference; Field Day; Website.

Introduction

The Australian Persimmon Industry extends across all mainland states, from the far north to the south east corner of Queensland, through the east coast regions of New South Wales, along the River Murray into the South Australian Riverland, and in the south west corner of Western Australia. This broad geographical spread challenges communication within the industry and the adoption of R&D outcomes.

The key goal of the Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program was to advance the Persimmon Industry by providing the much-needed tools to increase awareness of industry issues and foster the rapid uptake of R&D outcomes by levy payers. The outputs of the Program were intended to provide a range of avenues for Hort Innovation funded R&D and Marketing programs to directly reach the levy payer base. The delivery mechanisms were aimed at directly targeting the widest possible audience and efficiently and effectively transferring information related to R&D, marketing, and industry issues to levy payers, supply chain partners and other relevant stakeholders.

Moreover, this Communication Program aimed to further the advancement and professional development of industry members and delivery providers by encouraging the adoption of best management practices. This was to be achieved by keeping stakeholders abreast of technologies and increasing awareness of persimmon and broader horticultural industry issues, as well as raising awareness of markets, market development and trends.

Persimmons Australia Inc (PAI) was well positioned to provide the services for the Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program, having a sound record of regular and professional engagement with growers throughout the Persimmon Industry and the most extensive and accurate database of Persimmon growers from across Australia. In addition, PAI had established effective relationships with supply chain partners and other relevant stakeholders, enabling it to have widest possible reach for direct and targeted engagement with the entire supply chain.

Prior to this Industry Extension and Communication Program, PAI had been instrumental in delivering the highly successful, Hort Innovation funded 2016 Persimmon Field Day Program and had a track record of producing the grower focused publication, Persimmon Press.

It was considered that the continued publication of the biannual industry newsletter, Persimmon Press, the hosting of biennial industry field days and conferences and the regular maintenance and updating of resources on the Persimmon Industry website, would contribute significantly to the advancement of the Australian Persimmon Industry by facilitating adoption of R&D and enabling businesses to leverage opportunities from industry marketing activities, and thereby support the outcomes and strategies of the Persimmon Industry Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021.

Methodology

Persimmon Press

Persimmon Press was produced electronically in full colour on a 6-monthly basis, providing at least the equivalent of 20 A4 pages of content per edition to levy payers, supply chain partners and other relevant stakeholders to increase their awareness of industry issues and to foster the rapid uptake of successful R&D outcomes. The focus was on 'easy to read' and 'easy to access' content to engage the target audience and challenge them to strive towards best management practices. Eight issues of the newsletter were produced in PDF format and delivered via email directly to all listings on PAI's database, including Australian persimmon growers, nurseries, supply chain partners, such as input suppliers, marketers, and consultants, as well as other key industry like government officers, Hort Innovation staff and researchers.

The key sources of content for each edition of Persimmon Press were relevant projects supported by Hort Innovation. Contributions were sought from the project leaders of the Australian Sweet Persimmon Industry Development Project- Phase 4, and the National Persimmon Varietal Evaluation Program. Updates on Hort Innovation's activities specific to persimmons and more generally on the organisation's operations and processes were encouraged from the Persimmon Relationship Manager/Industry Strategic Partners, the Persimmon Marketing/Brand Managers, and other relevant Hort Innovation staff. Additional articles were written or sourced by the Project Team to supplement the grower's knowledge and increase their ability to make sound decisions on their production and marketing strategies for Persimmons. PAI continued to build effective relationships with supply chain partners and other relevant stakeholders and encouraged them to contribute feature articles and news to the publication.

Persimmon Field Day/Conferences

During PR16001, the Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program, PAI hosted two events in its series of biennial National Persimmon Industry Field Day/Conferences.

To promote the events, PAI undertook appropriate and targeted promotions, primarily to persimmon growers on its database using a series of direct emails with an event banner. In addition, the grower members of the Project Team personally telephoned other known growers to further encourage participation. A conference brochure and registration form were produced for distribution to the database and linked to news posts on the industry's website. Reference to the event was also posted on the Hort Innovation website. Press releases generated editorial about the events.

PAI processed delegate registrations and made all bookings and catering arrangements with venues. Delegates were responsible to their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

The format for the events included both field day style, on-farm visits, and structured conference presentations, to ensure that information was delivered to the target audience of persimmon growers both in an on-farm environment where they felt most at ease and in conference where researchers could present a greater level of detail. Combining different styles of information delivery maximised delegates access to information and advice. At all times, a high level of presenter-delegate and delegate-delegate interaction was encouraged.

Delegates were provided with a bound, hard copy of the event program and proceedings. Proceedings were also made available electronically and were posted on the Persimmons Australia website thus making them available to all Australian persimmon growers. The distribution of information from the 2017 conference was enhanced by the horticulture industry publication, Good Fruit and Vegetables' coverage and live streaming of presentations on Facebook Live and making the videos available on their Facebook page.

Post-event evaluation sheets were distributed to all delegates and speakers attending the events to gain feedback on their success and provide insights for future events. Completed forms were returned to the PAI office for analysis.

The first event was held in the Sydney region, NSW, with a conference session on Wednesday, 14 June 2017, followed by a conference dinner that evening. Delegates were based on the field tour on Thursday, 15 June 2017, and to the Sydney Markets visit on Friday, 16 June 2017. The conference and dinner were held at the

Campbelltown Catholic Club, Campbelltown, in Greater Western Sydney, 50km south-west of Sydney's CBD. Most delegates were accommodated within the same complex at the Rydges Campbelltown.

Themed *"In it for the future"*, a progressive conference program was created to ensure that delegates were updated on the current recommendations for persimmon production and were given a glimpse into some of the technologies which may impact future production and marketing. The conference program commenced with a welcome from the PAI President and was then divided into four sessions focusing on marketing, fruit fly, production and industry issues. In particular, the event showcased Hort Innovation's R&D and Marketing Programs and disseminated the outcomes of the Australian Sweet Persimmon Industry Development Project-Phase 4, including a report on the 2016 International Persimmon Symposium held in Spain attended by the Project Leader. A total of 14 presentations were delivered by the 12 presenters. Each session concluded with a Q&A style panel discussion involving all presenters from that session.

The conference dinner provided an excellent opportunity for delegates to relax and get to know each other, while guest speaker Mr Brett Fifield's (Deputy Director General Performance and Engagement, NSW Department of Primary Industries) presentation on *"How communication defines us: our past, our present, and most importantly, our future"*, added value to the delegates' involvement in the program.

The field day program visited three persimmon orchards, with the owners sharing their experiences growing and managing persimmons. A post-conference tour to the Sydney Produce Markets was added to the event program to introduce those grower delegates who had not visited the Sydney markets previously as well as to allow others to make contact with their agents. The Sydney Markets Operations Manager gave a welcome and introduction to the markets, followed by organised visits to three key market agents dealing with persimmons.

The second event was held in Perth, WA, with a conference session on Tuesday, 18 June 2019, followed by a conference dinner that evening. Delegates were taken by bus on a field tour to the Perth Hills and subsequent dinner on Wednesday, 17 June 2019, and on a visit to the Perth Markets on Thursday, 20 June 2019. The conference and dinner were both held at the Aloft Hotel Perth in Perth's inner eastern suburb of Rivervale, ideally located between Perth CBD and Perth Airport, and interstate delegates sought accommodation at the same venue.

Themed *"United in the West"*, Perth offered the perfect location to truly unite the persimmon industry from coast to coast. The conference program was generated to ensure that delegates were updated with the current recommendations for persimmon production and marketing, with a speaker line up including a lot of fresh, new faces. The conference program commenced with a welcome from the current PAI President and was then divided into four sessions focusing on the role of Hort Innovation and current research projects (Working Together), a global perspective on persimmons (Our Place in the World), marketing (A Common Goal) and production inputs (Better Together). A total of 18 presentations were delivered by the 16 presenters. Each session concluded with a Q&A style panel discussion involving all presenters from that session.

The conference dinner again offered delegates the opportunity to relax and get to know each other, while guest speaker, Dr Bronwyn Walsh's (Industry Development Manager, WA Citrus) discussion on the WA citrus industry's journey to success added value, clearly demonstrating techniques for adoption of R&D outcomes by the industry and individual businesses.

The field tour to six orchards highlighted the growing group of dedicated and enthusiastic persimmon producers in Western Australia, particularly as orchardists in the Perth Hills have been looking to crops which offer a high value alternative to integrate into their production regime and have found the beautiful display of Autumn colour on the persimmon trees has become a great tourist attraction for the region. An early morning visit to Market City in Canning Vale, Western Australia's only Wholesale Fresh Produce Market, gave delegates an insight into marketing in WA and a further opportunity to network with one another and wholesalers. The tour commenced with a brief welcome and introduction to the markets from Market West's Member Services Manager and Retailer Program Manager, followed by planned visits to four market agents focusing on both the domestic and international trade in persimmons.

Website

The website was used to communicate and promote the Program's activities to a much wider audience and securely archive program outputs as a resource for the future reference by Australian persimmon levy payers. A

half day training session on WordPress provided the necessary upskilling of the Project Leader to be able to regularly provide essential maintenance and resourcing of the Persimmons Australia Website with current industry news and information, as well as manage subscriber activation and user consolidation.

Industry Survey

An industry-wide survey was conducted at the end of 2017 and again in mid-2020 to evaluate the success of Persimmon Press at meeting the objectives of the Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program, of keeping growers and other industry stakeholders up to date with the latest research activity, marketing initiatives and other news and issues objectives. The survey was extended to encompass all aspects for the communications program. The survey was prepared online using JotForm and a hyperlink provided to all listings on the PAI database via direct email, and in the December 2017 issue of Persimmon Press. The results were collated and analysed by PAI.

Outputs

Persimmon Press - prepared and distributed to Persimmon Industry.

- Issue 58 June 2017, 28 pages, distributed by email to 100 recipients, on 18/5/17.
- Issue 59 December 2017, 32 pages, distributed by email to 104 recipients, on 28/11/17.
- Issue 60 June 2018, 22 pages, distributed by email to 107 recipients, on 18/6/18.
- Issue 61 December 2018, 32 pages, distributed by email to 116 recipients, on 18/12/18.
- Issue 62 June 2019, 30 pages, distributed by email to 130 recipients, on 6/6/19.
- Issue 63 December 2019, 34 pages, distributed by email to 134 recipients, on 7/1/20.
- Issue 64 June 2020, 30 pages, distributed by email to 140 recipients, on 15/06/20.
- Issue 65 December 2020, 36 pages, distributed by email to 154 recipients, on 9/12/20.

2017 Australian Persimmon Industry Conference and Field Day, Sydney NSW, June 2017.

Conference and Field Day:

- Sydney region, NSW. Total of 60 delegates across the program.
- Conference and Conference Dinner: Wednesday, 14 June 2017, Campbelltown Catholic Club, Campbelltown, NSW. Summary of the conference program, detailing presentations and speakers:

Session 1 | Is there a future – a marketing perspective

- Marketing opportunities for persimmons – a market perspective | Daniel Lutman (J.E.Tipper)
- What is a digital wholesale market & why it is good news for producers? | Daniel Bowling (HiveXchange)
- Postharvest technologies and the potential for market growth in the Australian sweet persimmon industry | David Oag (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries)

Session 2 | What's the future for fruit fly management?

- Spatially explicit simulation modelling of QFly: How models can inform management strategies | Florian Schwarzmüller (CSIRO)
- Evaluating costs and benefits of AWM using SIT for Qfly | Mia Tam (PIRSA)
- The Sterile Insect Technique as part of an Area-Wide Integrated Pest Management system to control Q-fly | Polychronis Rempoulakis (Macquarie University)
- Fruition: A revolutionary new strategy for managing fruit flies | Prof Dick Drew (Griffith University)

Session 3 | Production of persimmons in the future

- Advances in strategies for control of mealybug of persimmon in Australia | David Oag (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries)
- Robotic crop intelligence in orchards | Zhe Xu (The University of Sydney)
- Drape Net – What is it all about? | Michael Cunial (Drape Net)
- Foliar Nutrition - Using the right tool in the right place | Vince Hewson (ACE Ohlsson)

Session 4 | Taking the Persimmon Industry into the future

- Eat with the seasons | Monique Emmi (Hort Innovation)
- Horticulture Innovation Australia – Persimmon Strategic Investment Plan | Astrid Hughes (Hort Innovation)
- An overview of the persimmon industry in Spain | David Oag (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries)

Dinner |

- How communication defines us: our past, our present, and most importantly, our future | Brett Fifield (Deputy Director General Performance and Engagement, NSW Department of Primary Industries)

- Field tour: Thursday, 15 June 2017. Orchards included:

- The Persimmon Place, Galston | Warren Waddell
- Kathleen Haven Orchard, Cobbitty | Brett Guthrey
- Cedar Creek Orchard, Thirlmere | Mark Silm

- Sydney Produce Markets Post-conference tour: Friday, 16 June 2017

 - Welcome and introduction to the markets | Mr Adrian LaCava (Sydney Markets Operations Manager)
 - J.E. Tipper
 - Fresh Produce Group
 - Arize Fruits Orchard

Email Banners:

- Conference Banner, Created and used on all emails sent from admin@persimmonsaustralia.com.au, from 31/1/17 to 19/06/17.
- Conference Banner, Updated to show sponsors and hyperlinked to Registration Form on Persimmons Australia website and used on all emails sent from admin@persimmonsaustralia.com.au and by PAI President, B. Guthrey, on 17/5/17.

Conference Brochure & Registration Form:

- Conference Brochure & Registration Form, Electronic format emailed to 99 recipients, on 9/3/17.
- Conference Brochure & Registration Form, Full colour hard copy posted to 56 recipients, on 9/3/17.

Online presence:

- "Save the Date – 2017 Persimmon Industry Conference & Field Day", Posted on **Persimmons Australia Website**, <http://www.persimmonsaustralia.com.au/news/save-the-date-2017-persimmon-industry-conference-field-day/>, on 31/1/17.
- "2017 Australian Persimmon Industry Conference & Field Day – Register Now!", Posted on **Persimmons Australia Website**, <http://www.persimmonsaustralia.com.au/news/2017-australian-persimmon-industry-conference-field-day-register-now/>, on 9/3/17.
- "Australian Persimmon Industry Conference and Field Day", Posted on **Hort Innovation Website** under Events, <http://horticulture.com.au/events/australian-persimmon-industry-conference-and-field-day/>.

Press Releases:

- "Save the Date - Australian Persimmon Industry Conference & Field Day, Wednesday, 14th & Thursday, 15th June 2017", Prepared 8/2/17.

Editorial generated from Press Releases:

- "Persimmon Conference in June", article in **Australian Tree Crop Magazine**, February/March 2017, Page 26.
- "Australian Persimmon Conference and Field Day Heads to Sydney", article in **Persimmon Press**, Issue 58 June 2017, Page 5-6.

Regular Communications with Growers & Industry Stakeholders:

- "Save the Date", Notification emailed to 92 recipients, on 31/1/17.
- "Notification about web post", Notification emailed to 7 recipients, on 9/3/17.
- "PAI Members - get the Earlybird rates now!", Notification emailed to 31 recipients, on 25/4/17.
- "Persimmon Growers - get the Earlybird rates now!", Notification emailed to 40 recipients, on 25/4/17.
- "Persimmon Industry Stakeholders - get the Earlybird rates now!", Notification emailed to 19 recipients, on 25/4/17.
- "Only 7 days until Earlybird Rates close off", Notification emailed to 71 recipients, on 14/5/17.
- "Earlybird registrations close soon", Notification emailed to 59 recipients (excluded those already registered), on 19/5/17.
- "Earlybird registrations close tomorrow", Notification emailed to 59 recipients (excluded those already registered), on 20/5/17.
- "Registrations close on Monday, 5th June", Notification emailed to 54 recipients (excluded those already registered), on 2/6/17.
- "Registrations close TODAY!", Notification emailed to 54 recipients (excluded those already registered), on 5/6/17.
- "Good Fruit and Vegetables showcases persimmons", Notification emailed to 104 recipients, on 22/6/17.
- "Persimmons get more media attention", Notification emailed to 102 recipients, on 23/6/17.

Conference Program and Proceedings:

- 58-page full colour, spiral bound hard copy, distributed to all conference delegates, on 15 & 16/6/17.
- 58-page full colour, electronic copy, distributed to all conference delegates.
- 58-page full colour, electronic copy, posted on **Persimmons Australia Website**.

Post Conference Reviews:

- “All the photos from the Persimmons Conference”, article on **Good Fruit and Vegetables website**, <http://www.goodfruitandvegetables.com.au/story/4731509/all-the-photos-from-the-persimmons-conference/?cs=4920>, released 15 June 2017.
- “Persimmons aiming to be a lunchbox contender”, article on **Good Fruit and Vegetables website**, <http://www.goodfruitandvegetables.com.au/story/4742559/persimmons-aiming-to-be-a-lunchbox-contender/?cs=4928>, released 22 June 2017.
- “Macarthur area persimmon industry grows at farms including Cedar Creek Orchard as demand for the exotic fruit rises”, article on **The Daily Telegraph website**, <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/macarthur/macarthur-area-persimmon-industry-grows-at-farms-including-cedar-creek-orchard-as-demand-for-the-exotic-fruit-rises/news-story/a1fa5ec4a5c28523e559671278d4f698>, released 22 June 2017.

Participant Survey:

- 4-page hard copy, distributed to all conference delegates, on 15 & 16/6/17.
- 4-page electronic copy, distributed by email to all conference delegates, on 30/6/17.

2019 Australian Persimmon Industry Conference and Field Day, Perth WA, June 2019.

Conference and Field Day:

- Perth, WA. Total of 67 delegates across the program.
- Conference and Conference Dinner: Tuesday, 18 June 2019, Aloft Hotel Perth, Rivervale, WA. Summary of the conference program, detailing presentations and speakers:

Session 1 | Working together

- Hort Innovation | Investing in your future – Persimmon Fund Update | Mariannel Azarcon (Hort Innovation)
- National Persimmon Varietal Evaluation Program - Update | Dr Tahir Khurshid (NSW Department of Primary Industries)
- Protect the persimmon industry and consumers from microbial food safety risks | Dr Sukhvinder Pal (SP) Singh (NSW Department of Primary Industries)
- Mating Disruption update for Persimmon Clearwing Borer – MSTRS on their way | Russell Fox (InSense Pty Ltd)

Session 2 | Our place in the world

- National Persimmon Varietal Evaluation Program - Project collaboration, communication and extension | Dr Tahir Khurshid (NSW Department of Primary Industries)
- The IVIA persimmon breeding program: varieties and rootstocks | Prof Maria Badenes (Instituto Valenciano de Investigaciones Agrarias | Valencia, SPAIN)
- Korea's persimmon industry status and breeding program | Mr Kyeong-Bok Ma (Pear Research Institute, National Institute of Horticultural & Herbal Science | Naju-si, KOREA)
- Importing persimmons | Paul Harvey (Bullfrog International)

Session 3 | A common goal

- Celebrating the Season: Australian Persimmons Marketing Update | Mariannel Azarcon (Hort Innovation)
- Security of Supply | Steve Barnes (J.E.Tipper)
- Drape Net - Cost effective crop protection | Ross Caltabiano (Drape Net)
- Hort Innovation and Persimmon exports | Sam Turner (Hort Innovation)
- TradeStart - Helping you begin your export journey | Darren Levy (International Trade & Investment Centre)

Session 4 | Better together

- Strategic Agrichemical Review Process (SARP) | Jodie Pedrana (Hort Innovation)
- What is this "IoT" thing I'm hearing about and how can it help my operations? | Kieran Coupe (Wildeye)
- Seasol – The Business & The Product | Alan Corke (Seasol)
- Experiences with the Cryptolaemus Ladybird of Mealy Bug control | Russell Fox (InSense Pty Ltd)
- Medfly - the pest that just keeps giving | Dr Darryl Hardie (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development)

Dinner
• WA citrus industry's journey to success Dr Bronwyn Walsh (Industry Development Manager, WA Citrus)
• Field Tour: Wednesday, 19 June 2019. Orchards included: • Spring Hill Orchard Brett and Jim DeSimone • Canning Orchard Paul Civa • Franca Holdings Henry Chmielewski • Illawara Orchard Tom Price • Marchetti Orchard Andrew Marchetti • Arena Orchards Frank Arena
• Market City, Canning Vale, Post-conference Tour: Thursday, 20 June 2019 • Welcome and introduction to the markets Ms Inci Humberstone (Member Services Manager and Retailer Program Manager, Market West) • Mercer Mooney • Etherington • WA Farm Direct • Bullfrog International • An Introduction to Steritech Ben Reilly (Steritech)

Email Banners:

- Conference Banner, showing involvement of Hort Innovation and hyperlinked to Registration Form on Persimmons Australia website, created and used on all emails sent from admin@persimmonsaustralia.com.au, from 8/2/19 to 30/06/19.

Conference Brochure & Registration Form:

- Conference Brochure & Registration Form, Electronic format emailed to 74 recipients, on 8/2/19.
- Conference Brochure & Registration Form, Electronic format emailed to 70 recipients, on 19/3/19.

Online presence:

- "Save the Date – 2019 Persimmon Industry Conference & Field Day", Posted on **Persimmons Australia Website**, <https://www.persimmonsaustralia.com.au/news/2019-persimmon-industry-conference-save-date/>, on 8/2/19.
- "2019 Persimmon Industry Conference – Time to Register", Posted on **Persimmons Australia Website**, <https://www.persimmonsaustralia.com.au/news/2019-persimmon-industry-conference-time-register/>, on 20/3/19.

Press Releases:

- "2019 Persimmon season coming soon", Prepared 4/2/19.
- "Persimmon conference heads to the West", Prepared 6/2/19.

Editorial generated from Press Releases:

- "Date Claimer", article in **Persimmon Press**, Issue 61 December 2018, Page 3.
- "Persimmon conference heads to the West", article in **Australian Tree Crop Magazine**, February/March 2019, Page 27.
- "Persimmon season in full swing", article in **Fresh Source** magazine, Issue 66 Autumn 2019, Page 14.
- "It's time to try new persimmons", article in **Ruth** magazine, Autumn 2019, Page 20-21.
- "Australian Persimmon Conference and Field Day Heads West", article in **Persimmon Press**, Issue 62 June 2019, Page 12-14.
- "Persimmons United in the West – Conference Report", article in **Persimmon Press**, Issue 63 December 2019, Page 17-23.
- "Power of the persimmon", article in **Small Farms Magazine**, May 2019.

Regular Communications with Growers & Industry Stakeholders:

- “PAI Members Register NOW - Persimmon Industry Conference 18-20 June 2019”, Notification emailed to 34 recipients, on 8/2/19.
- “Persimmon Levy Payers Register NOW - Persimmon Industry Conference 18-20 June 2019”, Notification emailed to 40 recipients, on 8/2/19.
- “PAI Members Register NOW - Persimmon Industry Conference 18-20 June 2019”, Notification emailed to 30 recipients, on 19/3/19.
- “Persimmon Levy Payers Register NOW - Persimmon Industry Conference 18-20 June 2019”, Notification emailed to 40 recipients, on 19/3/19.
- “Conference announcement - Support from JE Tipper”, Notification emailed to 74 recipients, on 26/3/19.
- “PAI Members Register NOW - Persimmon Industry Conference 18-20 June 2019”, Notification emailed to 27 recipients, on 16/4/19.
- “Persimmon Levy Payers Register NOW - Persimmon Industry Conference 18-20 June 2019”, Notification emailed to 39 recipients, on 16/4/19.
- “Be quick - Registrations close 31 May 2019”, Notification emailed to 82 recipients, on 23/5/19.
- “6 days to go - Registrations close 31 May 2019”, Notification emailed to 81 recipients, on 26/5/19.

Conference Program and Proceedings:

- 80-page full colour, spiral bound hard copy, distributed to all conference delegates, on 18-20/6/19.

Post Conference Reviews:

- “Persimmon Love”, article in **The West Australian** newspaper, released 29/6/19.

Participant Survey:

- 4-page hard copy, distributed to all conference delegates, on 18-20/6/19.
- 4-page electronic copy, distributed by email to all conference delegates, on 1/7/19.
- 4-page electronic copy and reminder, distributed by email to all conference delegates, on 7/7/19.

Website - regularly maintained.

Website Launch:

- Invitation (REGISTER NOW to use the Persimmons Australia Website) and attachment (How to gain access to the Login Area of the Persimmons Australia Website) emailed to 39 PAI Members, on 23/10/17.
- “Website Launch” article in **Persimmon Press**, Issue 59 December 2017, distributed by email to 104 recipients, on 28/11/17.

General maintenance of website:

- Users consolidated, regularly between 2017 and 2020.
- Contacts and emails updated, regularly between 2017 and 2020.

News Posts published on website:

- Save the Date - 2017 Australian Persimmon Industry Conference & Field Day published 31/01/17.
- 2017 Australian Persimmon Industry Conference & Field Day – Register Now!, published 9/03/17.
- Leadership and Exploration and Development (LEAD) Program, published 21/03/19
- 2019 Persimmon Industry Conference – Save the Date, published 8/02/19
- 2019 Persimmon Industry Conference – Time to Register, published 8/02/20
- Australian Persimmon to Thailand under new protocol, published 30/03/2020.

Documents to accompany New posts uploaded to website:

- LEAD Registration Form_Persimmon Final, uploaded 21/03/18.
- 2019 Conference Brochure, uploaded 20/03/19.
- 2019 Conference Registration Form, uploaded 8/02/19
- 2017 Conference Brochure, uploaded 9/03/17.
- 2017 Conference Registration Form, uploaded 9/03/17.

Industry Strategic Plans uploaded to website:

- Persimmons Strategic Plan 2017-2021, uploaded 16/08/17.
- Persimmons Strategic Plan at a glance 2017-2021, uploaded 16/08/17.
- Persimmons Strategic Plan 2014-2019, uploaded 16/08/17.

Conference Proceedings uploaded to website:

- Proceedings Australian Persimmon Conference & Field Day – Barooga, NSW February 2016, uploaded 17/08/17.
- Proceedings Australian Persimmon Conference & Field Day – Sydney, NSW June 2017, uploaded 17/08/17.
- Proceedings Australian Persimmon Conference & Field Day - Perth, WA June 2019, uploaded 10/12/20.

Persimmon Press uploaded to website:

- Persimmon Press Issues 53 December 2011, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmon Press Issues 58 December 2017, uploaded 16/08/17.
- Persimmon Press Issues 59 December 2017, uploaded 19/07/18.
- Persimmon Press Issues 60 June 2018, uploaded 19/07/18.
- Persimmon Press Issues 61 June 2018, uploaded 10/12/2020.
- Persimmon Press Issues 62 June 2019, uploaded 10/12/2020.
- Persimmon Press Issues 63 December 2019, uploaded 10/12/2020.
- Persimmon Press Issues 64 June 2020, uploaded 10/12/2020.
- Persimmon Press Issues 65 December 2020, uploaded 10/12/2020.

Marketing Plans uploaded to website:

- Persimmons Marketing Report 2013-14, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmons Marketing Report 2012-13, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmons Marketing Report 2010-11, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmons Marketing Plan 2009-10ii, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmons Marketing Report 2009-10, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmons Marketing Report 2008-09, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmons Marketing Report 2007-08, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmons Marketing Plan 2006-07, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmons Marketing Report 2006-07, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmon Marketing Campaign 2018 – Tip Sheet, uploaded 14/12/18.
- Persimmon Export Market Development Strategy 2023 (Summary), uploaded 19/07/18.

Annual Reports uploaded to website:

- Persimmon Annual Report for FY05, uploaded 16/10/17.
- Persimmon Annual Report for FY06, uploaded 16/10/17.
- Persimmon Annual Report for FY16, uploaded 16/10/17.
- Persimmon Annual Report for FY17, uploaded 19/07/18.
- Persimmon Annual Report for FY18, uploaded 14/12/18.
- Persimmon Annual Report for FY19, uploaded 10/12/2020.
- Persimmon Annual Report for FY20, uploaded 10/12/2020.

Links to 2017 Conference material added to website:

- Video – Welcome & Session 1 : Is there a future – a marketing perspective, added 18/08/17.
- Video – Session 2 : What is the future for fruit fly management? , added 18/08/17.
- Video – Session 3 : Production of persimmons in the future, added 18/08/17.
- Video – Session 4 : Taking the Persimmon Industry into the future, added 18/08/17.

Industry Statistics uploaded to website:

- Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2014-15, uploaded 23/10/17.
- Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2015-16, uploaded 23/10/17.
- Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2016-17, uploaded 19/07/2018.
- Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2017-18, uploaded 10/12/2020.
- Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook 2018-19, uploaded 10/12/2020.

Cultural Information uploaded to website:

- Persimmon IPDM manual, uploaded 17/10/17.
- Persimmons Pollination Aware, uploaded 19/07/18, uploaded 19/07/18.
- Persimmon Postharvest Manual 2nd Edition November 2017, uploaded 19/07/18.
- Summary of Cultural Resources V3, uploaded 19/07/18.
- Persimmon IPDM manual Edition 2 2017, uploaded 10/12/2020.

2017 Industry Survey - Persimmon Press and Communications Program.

Online survey:

- Constructed on JotForm and hyperlink distributed in Persimmon Press Issue 59 and by email on 13/12/17 to 104 recipients.

Results reported:

- “Industry Survey”, article in **Persimmon Press** Issue 60 June 2018, Pages 3-4.

2020 Industry Survey - Persimmon Press and Communications Program.

Online survey:

- Constructed on JotForm and hyperlink distributed by email on 18/06/20 to 140 recipients.

Results reported:

- “Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program Success”, article in **Persimmon Press** Issue 65 December 2020, Pages 21-22.

Outcomes

Intermediate outcomes:

The Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program has contributed to the advancement of the Australian Persimmon Industry by:

- *Increasing Persimmon levy payers' awareness of industry issues, particularly those related to Hort Innovation's R&D and Marketing Programs*

A comparison of the results on the 2017 and 2020 industry surveys have indicated a significant increase in persimmon levy payers awareness of industry issues, particularly those related to Hort Innovation's R&D and Marketing Programs, with more respondents indicating that PAI has been extremely effective at keeping them informed about levy funded R&D (4% v. 59%) and Marketing (0% v. 53%) Programs. The respondents value the information that has been delivered by the program because it is specific to the industry which they find can be difficult to access from other sources. In particular, the information provided on chemical permits and updates are relevant research are critical to the industry.

- *Fostering the rapid uptake of successful R&D outcomes by levy payers and supply chain partners*
- *Equipping growers for more innovative problem solving and strategic decision making within their businesses*

Most survey respondents in 2020 provided examples for how they have used the information gained from the outputs of this communications program, including Persimmon Press, the Conferences/Field Days, and the Industry Website, to make decisions to change their management practices and/or attend an event. In 2020, 71% of survey respondents considered that they gain new ideas from Persimmon Press, 14% more than in 2017., with 67% using the information to change and/or improve their on-farm practices. Here are some examples of how levy payers and supply chain partners have used the information delivered by the program:

- ✓ Attending field days and conferences (3 responses).
- ✓ This was the first year that the National Persimmon Conference was held in WA. A lot of important localised knowledge was shared as well as vertically integrated contacts.
- ✓ WA conference and farm visits were great, and I have started to look at different growing practice's with pruning and netting – this is a real change in growing practices for me.
- ✓ I have attended two conferences through the comms.
- ✓ After seeing the height of the trees in W.A. I have decided to lower the height of my trees.
- ✓ Pruning and management advice from other growers in comfortable surroundings (farms).
- ✓ I have re-grafted pollinator trees and made adjustments to my pest management after conference conversations and Persimmon Press articles.
- ✓ Kept up to date on chemical registrations.
- ✓ Pest and fungicide control programmes.
- ✓ Changing from chemicals to IPM.
- ✓ Finding out about the new mating disruption product for Persimmon Clear wing Borer.
- ✓ Strategic planning.
- ✓ Best practice.
- ✓ Varietal information.
- ✓ Gained an understanding of how my business can grow moving forward.
- ✓ Helping our suppliers get access to knowledge.
- ✓ COVID 19 Compliance.
- ✓ Good to have an overview of key activities in the industry to determine impact and relevance to export.
- ✓ Often exploring and trying things that are mentioned within the communications. Have used the sources to obtain new planting material. Currently exploring netting over my persimmons. Looking to investigate some of the new varieties mentioned in the latest Persimmon Press to further expand my plantings.

- *Building linkages between levy payers, supply chain partners and other relevant stakeholders, improving communication throughout the industry and encouraging the various sectors to work more collaboratively*

The Communication Program has created the opportunity for the persimmon industry to building linkages between levy payers, supply chain partners and other relevant stakeholders. In 2020, 71% of Persimmon Press readers have used the information to share with another grower or industry supply chain partner, compared 29% in 2017. PAI too has been able to establish relationships with a broader range of supply chain partners during the course of the program and has encouraged their involvement at industry events and contributions to Persimmon Press. Attendance at both industry events exceeded expectations and it is evident from some of the comments above how the networking opportunities created at the conferences and field days have allowed levy payers to share information with each other and to follow up with supply chain partners for goods and services to improve their on-farm management practices. This clearly demonstrates that communication has improved throughout the industry and there is now greater collaboration between the sectors. Moreover, the growth in listings on the PAI database, especially in the number of supply chain partners, is further evidence of the value of the Communications Program in making these linkages.

End-of-program outcomes

- *Further the advancement and professional development of industry members and delivery providers by encouraging the adoption of best management practices which will raise the overall profitability and sustainability of the Persimmon Industry.*

Given the success of the program in achieving the intermediate outcomes as detailed above, the Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program has made a significant contribution to the advancement and professional development of industry members and delivery providers by encouraging the adoption of best management practices to raise the overall profitability and sustainability of the Persimmon Industry.

Monitoring and evaluation

Hort Innovations current project M&E planning guide and template differs somewhat from the template used for the program logic and monitoring and evaluation plan, and stakeholder engagement and communication plan which were developed for this project in consultation with Hort Innovation as part of Milestone 102 in April 2017. In reviewing the M&E Plan for this project, it is clear to that the project met or exceeded most of the Key Performance Measures for program logic outputs identified in April 2017 (Table 1).

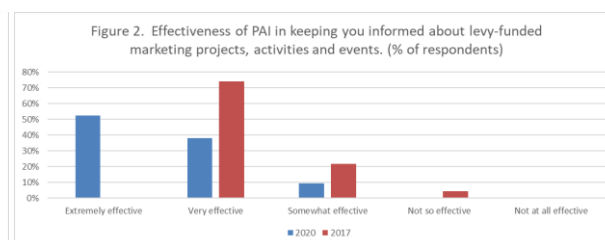
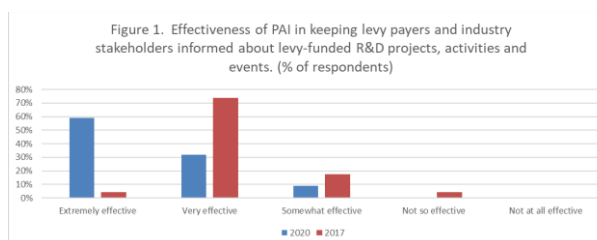
Table 1. Monitoring key performance measures of program logic outputs.

What to monitor	Key Performance Measures	Achievement
♦ Refined Industry Extension and Communication Program	♦ Submitted on time	♦ Achieved KPM.
♦ Electronic Persimmon Industry Newsletter - Persimmon Press	♦ At least 20 pages of content per edition ♦ At least 4 articles directly associated with Hort Innovation funded activities ♦ Distributed electronically to at 100% of known growers with email addresses	♦ Exceeded KPM. Range: 22-36 pages. Average: 30.5 pages. ♦ Exceeded KPM. Range: 4-12 articles. Average: 6.75 articles. ♦ Achieved KPM, every issue.
♦ Biennial Persimmon Industry Field Day/Conference	♦ Attendance by 20% of known growers with email addresses	♦ 2017: Exceeded KPM. 60 delegates, 31 Growers from 18 businesses (25% of known businesses with email addresses) ♦ 2019: Exceeded KPM. 67 delegates, 38 growers from 24 businesses (30% of known businesses with email addresses)
♦ Conference Brochure and Registration Form	♦ Distributed electronically to at 100% of known growers with email addresses ♦ Distributed electronically to at 100% of known growers with valid postal address but without email addresses	♦ Achieved KPM. 2017: 99 recipients; 2019: 74 recipients ♦ In 2017: Hard copy posted to 56 recipients with postal address only, no email addresses provided.
♦ Conference announcements and advertisements	♦ Distributed electronically to at 100% of known growers with email addresses	♦ Achieved KPM. 2017: 12 notifications emailed; 2019: 9 notifications emailed.
♦ Conference Press Releases	♦ At least 2 press releases per event ♦ Publication of press releases in at least 4 different locations	♦ 2017: Underperformed KPM - 1 press release. Underperformed KPM - 2 publications. Justification: Short lead time to event. ♦ 2019: Achieved KPM - 2 press releases. Exceeded KPM - 7 publications.

♦ Online presence through the Persimmons Australia Website	♦ Registration by 50% of known growers with email addresses	♦ Underperformed KPM. 35% of known growers are activated users. Justification: Challenges with uploading large documents to website up until November 2020 have limited the value of growers subscribing and therefore reduced effort of promotion.
♦ Conference Proceedings	♦ Prepared prior to event ♦ Distributed to delegates at the event ♦ Posted on website	♦ Achieved KPM. 2017 & 2019 ♦ Achieved KPM. 2017 & 2019 ♦ Achieved KPM. 2017 & 2019
♦ 6-monthly Milestone Status Reports	♦ Submitted on time	♦ 75% of reports submitted ahead of schedule (Range: 1-40 days in advance) or on time; 2 reports were not submitted on time and Hort Innovation were advised of delays.
♦ Final Project Report	♦ Submitted on time	♦ Achieved KPM.

In 2017 and in 2020 industry surveys were conducted to evaluate the success of Persimmon Press and other activities at meeting the objectives of the Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program, of keeping growers and other industry stakeholders up-to-date with the latest research activity, marketing initiatives and other news and issues objectives. A comparison of the results of these two surveys indicated that during the course of the program there has been an increase in industry satisfaction and an overall improvement in services delivered to industry.

The feedback in the 2020 survey was overwhelmingly positive for the services provided through the Program, as well as PAI's ability to deliver exceptional information and services to the persimmon industry. Of note was PAI's ability to keep levy payers and other industry stakeholders informed of R&D projects and marketing initiatives supported by the Persimmon Levy Fund. The results also showed that PAI has become increasingly effective at delivering on this outcome compared to the 2017 survey results (Figures 1 & 2).



The industry's thirst for information has grown throughout the term of the Communications Program, and greater importance is being placed on the various information sources delivered by PAI (Table 2). Respondents noted

- the importance of information specific to the industry,
- the value of information on chemical permits,
- the difficulty of accessing from other sources,
- the updates on relevant research, and
- the learning opportunities from other orchardists.

Table 2. Proportion of persimmon levy payers and industry stakeholders that consider various sources of industry specific information useful, showing changes in importance from 2017 to 2020. (% of respondents)

Sources of information	2020	% change	2017
Persimmon Press	95%	22%	78%
Conferences and field days	77%	27%	61%
PAI emails	73%	-2%	74%
Persimmons Australia website	55%	151%	22%
PAI office	41%	214%	13%
Persimmon Industry Brand Manager	18%	318%	4%
Consultants	9%	-	0%
Hort Innovation website	9%	5%	9%
Industry Strategic Partner - Tropical Cluster	5%	5%	4%
Other (Other growers through PAI)	5%	-	0%
Annual levy payers meeting	0%	-100%	9%

Persimmon Press

The survey suggested that 8% more respondents now receive Persimmon Press than in 2017, with 90% of respondents now saying that they read it all.

Respondents were unanimous in their supportive view of the usefulness of Persimmon Press to them and their business (Figure 3), with the information used to keep up to date with what is happening in the industry, obtain new ideas, share with others, change and/or improve on-farm practices and assist or prompt discussions with consultants.



Persimmon Press scored highly for the quality of the content, the ease of understanding the information and its ability to meet reader's needs. Whilst there was generally positive response to the quantity and technicality of content and frequency of the publication, there were suggestions to lift the design and layout to a more user-friendly format with toolboxes and graphical presentations. New topic ideas for future editions of Persimmon Press included: MRL's, product quality issues, water usage, export opportunities, and seasonal market reports by state.

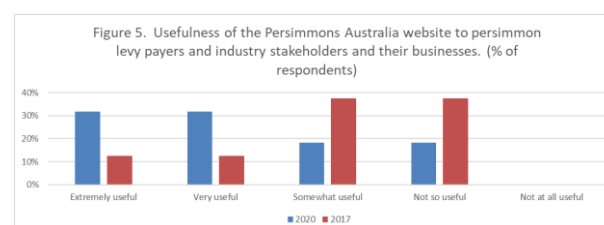
Australian Persimmon Industry Conference and Field Day Events

The Australian Persimmon Industry Conference and Field Day events polled very well in the survey. Most recipients (86%) had attended at least one of the three events hosted by PAI, and nearly all (95%) were interested in attending similar events in the future.

Persimmon Australia website

The Persimmon Australia website gained in popularity as a useful source of industry information (Figure 5).

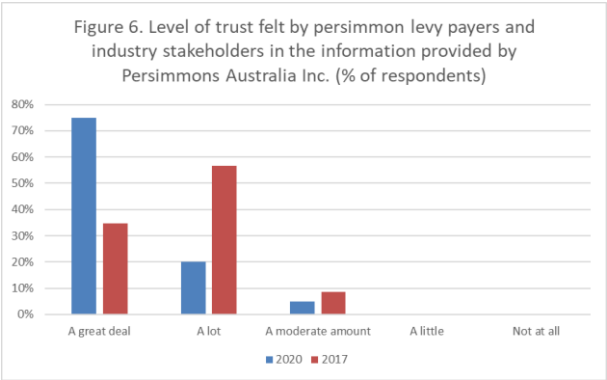
In 2020, more respondents had visited the website, 91% compared with 79% in 2017. Whilst half had no specific agenda in mind when they visited the site, 70% considered it met their needs and seemed happy with the layout and information available. Perhaps levy payers are more comfortable with traditional forms of information delivery – even if the newsletter is delivered electronically to their inbox – than turning to resources in the website's login area. With few using the login area effectively, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on engaging with industry to demonstrate the value of accessing the website more regularly.



It was interesting to note that, like in 2017, 83% of respondents regularly look to other websites for information to help with their business, as well as YouTube. A small positive change was noted in the use of other sources of digital information and social media platforms, particularly Facebook, however only about a third of respondents follow the Persimmons Australia Facebook page and only 15% the Instagram page.

PAI looks to implement suggestions to improve communications with its key stakeholders to continue to be a trusted source of relevant industry information (Figure 6).

The monitoring and evaluation have supported the project’s outcomes of building linkages between levy payers, supply chain partners and other relevant stakeholders, improving communication throughout the industry and encouraging the various sectors to work more collaboratively. Moreover, it has allowed the Project Team to look more critically at the services provided during the Communications Program and will help to inform the delivery of future outputs to meet the industry’s needs.



Recommendations

The Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program (PR16001) was conducted over a four-year period and was the first such program fund using the persimmon research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government. The evaluation of the program undertaken through industry-wide online surveys was highly supportive of the quality and value of the program's deliverables to the industry, and on that basis the following recommendations are made with respect to future persimmon industry communication programs:

1. PAI retains direction and control of levy funded communication and extension activities to leverage the synergies it can provide through its networks and linkages with the target audience of persimmon levy payers; supply chain partners, including marketing agents, suppliers of farm inputs, transport companies, consultants, and agronomists; and other relevant stakeholders, including Hort Innovation staff, researchers, and staff from relevant government agencies.
6. Program activities continue to include the production of Persimmon Press, on at least a biannual basis but possibly more frequently; the biennial National Conference and Field day events; and the regular maintenance and resourcing of the Persimmons Australia website.
7. Program activities be extended to include support for industry development activities that arise in conjunction with the core outputs of the communication and extension program and the relationships that have been established with the target audience, and through enquiries from other Hort Innovation funded programs.
8. The timing of subsequent communication and extension programs take into consideration the proposed activities and their required lead times, in particular, for booking conference venues.
9. Program activities further develop, resource and promotion of the Persimmons Australia Website to leverage the cost benefits of this communication medium for information delivery to both the target audience and the wider community, and drive efficiencies as the first stop for sourcing industry knowledge.

Refereed scientific publications

None to report.

Intellectual property, commercialisation and confidentiality

Persimmons Australia Inc (PAI) is the copyright holder of Persimmon Press, the Persimmons Australia Inc Website and the Persimmons Australia Inc Logo.

No project IP, project outputs, commercialisation or confidentiality issues to report.

Acknowledgements

Persimmons Australia Inc would like to thank Hort Innovation for funding the Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program using the Persimmon research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government. Special thanks go to all contributors and readers of Persimmon Press, all presenters and delegates at the national conferences and field days, those that have used the Persimmon Australia Website and completed the surveys– you give the Persimmon Industry Extension and Communication Program purpose.

Appendices

None to report.