



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

Plant Exports

HORTICULTURE EXPORT INDUSTRY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

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1 Introduction

With the completion of significant export reform initiatives of the Horticulture Ministerial Taskforce, in 2012 the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry agreed to continue and maintain an industry consultative committee to act as the peak consultative group between the department and the horticulture export industries.

The Australian government is a signatory to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and strongly supports international cooperation in controlling unwanted pests and diseases through science based quarantine measures. These measures prevent the unintended spread of pests and diseases of plants to other countries through imported products. Fresh fruit, vegetables and nursery stock products are covered by the IPPC. The Australian Government has designated the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources as the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO), which ensures Australia is meeting the requirements of the IPPC.

It is intended that these guidelines shall facilitate a smooth continuation of the Horticulture Export Industry Consultative Committee (HEICC).

2 Role of Committee

To provide a forum for the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to consult with the industries involved in the export of horticulture products. Within the framework of government policies and legislation delivered by the department that relate to the export inspection and certification, the committee is the primary consultation body to:

- discuss export inspection and certification issues affecting industry and propose solutions to address these issues
- discuss relevant market access issues
- discuss the performance of the department's programs
- communicate outcomes of the committee's work to relevant export industries; and explore, identify and promote opportunities to improve the efficient and effective administration, provision and consumption of the department cost recoverable regulatory activities and services

3 Membership

Industry membership must be representative of Australia's horticulture export industries. Members are appointed in their representative capacity in relation to the relevant industry sector. Due to the complexity of infrastructure and other environmental issues at a minimum each committee member must represent a national body that can demonstrate representation of stakeholders from a national perspective. In the absence of a national body committee members may be appointed that can demonstrate representation of stakeholders from any area of northern, eastern, southern, and western Australia or areas of potential significant export opportunities.

Prospective committee industry members need to demonstrate their suitability to be a representative of a key sector of the industry as described in the HEICC Terms of Reference.

Current representative groups include:

| Export commodity group | Export pathway groups |
|------------------------|---|
| Citrus | Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited |
| Cherry | Australian Horticulture Trade |
| Apple and Pear | |
| Summerfruit | |
| Nursery | |
| Mango | |
| Table Grape | |
| Vegetables | |
| Melons | |
| Berries | |
| Avocado | |

The department shall be represented by the Assistant Secretary, representative from the department's Plant Export Operations Branch, Horticulture Exports Program and Finance & Business Support. Refer to Terms of Reference s.6.

4 Terms of Appointment

The term of appointment for industry members is for a period of three (3) years, at which time members may apply for reappointment. A member's appointment will not be extended past two terms but the Deputy-Secretary consider reappointment beyond this point on a case by case basis.

HEICC committee chairperson should appoint and approve departmental committee members. Membership for the departmental committee members do not have an expiration date. Nevertheless, membership automatic expires if the member circumstances change.

5 Appointment process

The relevant department's Deputy Secretary determines committee membership. In acceptance of the formal membership invitation to the committee, the prospective member must:

- agree to the committee's Terms of Reference
- accept the Terms of Engagement
- agree to the member's code of conduct statement (Refer to s.6)
- complete and submit the following documents in support of the application:
 - Expressions of Interest for Appointment
 - Biographical Consent
 - Conflict of Interest Statement; and

- Private interests declaration (Appointment in Confidence)

6 Member Code of Conduct

The code of conduct requires that committee members must:

- be aware that their private interests, both financial and personal, could conflict with their duty as a committee member. Committee members must declare a conflict of interest statement, whether it is real or apparent, to the department and the committee secretariat;
- not improperly use their position, status, power or authority to gain a benefit or advantage for themselves or others. Committee members should not accept gifts or benefits without seeking advice from the department or the committee secretariat;
- treat everyone, including other committee members, departmental officers and guests, with courtesy and respect;
- display an awareness of and sensitivity to the diversity of the Australian community. It is unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of disability, sex, marital status, pregnancy, family responsibility, race, colour and national or ethnic origin;
- exercise reasonable care when giving information or advice. This applies equally to written or verbal advice. The standard of care required relates to the nature of the enquiry and the possible consequences that may arise if the advice given is incorrect;
- while in their capacity as a member of the committee comply, with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to take reasonable care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons at a workplace;
- use commonwealth resources in an appropriate manner and comply with all applicable Australian laws;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality as advised from time to time by the department or the committee secretariat and not make improper use of:
 - inside information; and
 - the member's duties, status, power or authority, in order to gain or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for the member or any other person;
- comply with any other conduct requirement that is prescribed by the committee;
- refrain from contacting the department 's Minister or Parliamentary Secretary for the department, members of parliament or the department 's Secretary concerning committee matters. Any approach is to be made through the committee secretariat; and
- refrain from making or causing any comment or statement concerning any committee matter to any member of the media. The committee secretariat or chairperson shall coordinate such comments through the department media channels.

7 Confidentiality

Any information or material provided to the committee by the Commonwealth in connection with the activities of the committee shall be used strictly in accordance with any conditions or restrictions that are specified by the Commonwealth. If that information or material is of a confidential nature, it is to be used solely for the purpose of the committee. If any committee members are provided with

any confidential information, they must return all such information to the secretariat on completion of their term or as specified by the committee chairperson.

8 Member Declaration of Interests

Each industry and departmental committee member must declare all known actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest to the department's Deputy Secretary through the committee secretariat.

9 Operation of the Committee

The committee shall operate as follows.

1. Secretariat services shall be provided by the department Plant Export Operations Branch.
2. The Secretariat shall establish a meeting schedule for the calendar year.
3. The committee shall meet a minimum of three (3) times per annum, usually at the department in Canberra but may be held at other capital cities and by teleconference as required.
4. Meetings shall be chaired by the Assistant Secretary, Plant Export Operations Branch.
5. A quorum shall consist of minimum of sixty percent (60%) or greater of members and representatives attending the meeting.
6. The committee shall deal with out-of-session business, action items, projects and general notifications from industry or the department.
7. The committee may co-opt independent expertise if required and establish working groups to deal with specific issues as required.
8. An appointment cannot be transferred or assigned to anyone else unless formally approved in writing by the department.

10 Meeting papers and correspondence

Committee members are required to provide agenda items including a brief summary of the topic and points to be discussed in a departmental template. Topics for agenda items should align within the purpose and aim of the committee (Refer to Terms of Reference S1 and 2), and should be discussed with the director of the Horticulture Exports program prior submission.

Agenda items and agenda papers must be provided to the committee secretariat two weeks prior committee meeting to be incorporated in the agenda prior to approval by the chairperson. Meeting papers will be sent to HEICC members via email prior to each meeting. Papers may from time to time, be sent out of session to HEICC members.

11 Meeting minutes

Minutes of each meeting summarising essential items of discussions will be finalized as soon as is practicable.

Comments will be sought from HEICC members on draft minutes within two weeks of receipt and a nil response will be regarded as acceptance of the minutes. A final version will be sent to each member and published in the HEICC external site.

Meeting minutes will be confirmed at the subsequent meeting of the committee.

12 Funding and expenses

Funding for catering, venue, and secretariat services are provided by the Horticulture Exports Program.

Members or representatives appointed to the committee will not be paid any fees to attend or participate in meetings.

HEICC members or representatives will not be entitled to remuneration or reimbursement of any travel expenses from the Commonwealth.

13 Secretariat

The department will provide a secretariat service for HEICC meetings. The HEICC secretariat will work closely with the chairperson to ensure all business is completed in a timely and efficient manner.

The secretariat shall be responsible for:

- arranging committee meetings
- preparing agenda and coordinating agenda papers for the meeting
- distributing committee papers and minutes
- arranging committee meeting locations, required equipment and catering
- committee coordinating responses from committee members when reporting on issues out of session
- maintaining the department external share drive to allow members to access and downloading committee documents (as appropriate);
- maintain the HEICC page under the department website and
- maintaining and tracking performance against the committee's objectives.

The secretariat shall not be responsible for arranging or booking members travel and associated accommodation.