

Your Levy At Work



Greenlife
INDUSTRY AUSTRALIA

Your levy has funded this success story

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Building staff confidence to improve efficiency

At a glance

Who this is for

Nursery managers and leaders looking to improve their efficiencies through staff training and confidence building.

Why it matters

Oasis Horticulture demonstrates how investment in people can free up leaders for high-value work while generating independence and more streamlined processes for staff.

At Oasis Horticulture routine spraying tasks were taking more management time than they should, with staff needing frequent check-ins to confidently complete the work, redirecting two to three hours a week from leaders in the business.

During peak production periods that lost time has the potential to significantly impact output, especially when every additional hour spent on high-value, technically demanding tasks is critical.

“It was clear that we needed to support our staff, particularly our sprayers, in becoming more independent and confident in carrying out their jobs,” Manufacturing Manager, Luca Magi, said.

“That’s where support from GrowConnex expert, Stuart came in.”

By accessing the support of the levy-funded GrowConnex program, Oasis Horticulture has recorded:

- Increased staff engagement and confidence
- Reduced management burden
- Improved spraying efficiencies
- Time savings
- Improved chemical use

Investment in long-term learning

Oasis Horticulture produces more than one million seedling trays and pots annually. To achieve these outputs, the business relies on a workforce of between 50-100 employees.

Spraying is a necessary undertaking to reduce risk of pest and disease, while also ensuring overall plant health.

At Oasis Horticulture, this task is performed by team members drawn from both the dispatch and grow teams. While duties matched individual skillsets, their backgrounds in specialist teams meant that their confidence and knowledge in spraying was at times limited.

“Our sprayers are an important part of the Oasis team, and the job is vital for the success of the business,” Luca said.

“I found myself drawing up schedules and spending a lot of time briefing staff to make sure they were confident to do the job well.

“Since accessing the training I have observed not only an increase in their confidence but more engagement in what it is they’re asked to do—they’re asking questions, being more proactive, and supporting one another in problem solving.”

The shift in confidence has delivered benefits beyond the spraying team. At an operational level, Luca’s freed up time has been reinvested into tasks that improve whole-of-nursery performance and reduce bottlenecks during busy periods.

A call for confidence

“We all know that we’re paying the pot levy, but we all forget about it,” Luca said.

“Out of the blue our GrowConnex Extension Officer called me up and asked if we needed some levy-funded support.

“After a short conversation about where the business was at, he suggested that we did some staff training and courses.”

Finding that training and development opportunities were available through the levy came as a welcome surprise to Luca.

Across the industry, the demands of day-to-day nursery operation often mean that investing time in staff development becomes deprioritised or forgotten. Existing resources and availability of nursery support through the GrowConnex Program means that proactive upskilling opportunities are available year-round.

Training tailored to Oasis

With more than 600 lines grown at Oasis throughout the year, pest and disease pressures as well as spraying requirements, are frequently changing.

After a short consult with Luca, GrowConnex Extension Officer Stuart Burns developed a robust training session designed specifically for Oasis and its known challenges.

“Stuart’s communication was excellent and the training he delivered was bespoke, just for us,” Luca said.

“He took the team through pest and disease management for pests we frequently identify at Oasis, and chemical rates that were relevant to our lines.”

Since the training, Oasis sprayers have become more self-directed and are identifying ways to improve how work is done – reducing the need for manager oversight and freeing up time for higher-value tasks.

This has included revised chemical rate delivery resulting in better efficacy and reduced chemical use.

“The team now all have their eyes wide open, are more invested in the work, and are taking pride in what they are doing. I consider this an absolute success.”

Looking to improve time efficiency and confidence within your nursery? GrowConnex is a levy-funded program that helps nurseries identify opportunities, upskill team members and access practical training for all levels of nursery staff.

Get in contact with your GrowConnex Officer:

- QLD/Northern NSW: Barry Naylor barry.naylor@greenlifeindustry.org.au
- NSW/Northern Vic: Colin Hunt colin.hunt@greenlifeindustry.org.au
- Vic: Stuart Burns stuart.burns@greenlifeindustry.org.au
- WA/NT: Bill Hollingworth bill.hollingworth@greenlifeindustry.org.au
- TAS/SA: Celeste Cook celeste.cook@greenlifeindustry.org.au

The 'National Biosecurity and Sustainable Plant Production Program' (NY20001), funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery levy and matched by the Australian Government, is a horticulture initiative designed to support nurseries in strengthening biosecurity and sustainable production practices.