

Your Levy At Work



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JANUARY 2026

What 120 years of nursery experience looks like today

For more than a century the historical Yarralumla Nursery has shaped the greenspaces of Canberra. Today, with support from the GrowConnex program, they're building systems to thrive for the next 100 years.

For Yarralumla, a drive down main street or a stroll in the park presents a snapshot of years gone by. Having produced and nurtured acclimatised plants for Canberra's greenspaces for close to 120 years, the work completed by Yarralumla and its staff has contributed to an iconic and enduring backdrop to the nation's capital.

To keep with the times and address increased biosecurity risks, environmental changes and enhanced best management practices, Yarralumla turned to the levy-funded GrowConnex program in 2015.

With the support of their local GrowConnex expert Yarralumla has been lifting standards to achieve what they describe as the 'gold standard' of nursery production; their Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) accreditation.

Collaboration and partnership inform best practice

Working closely with their GrowConnex expert, Colin Hunt, the nursery has implemented a series of improvements to modernise operations, build resilience, and adopt best management principles. These include:

- **water treatment design** ensuring clean, consistent water for plant health and disease reduction therefore reducing the time needed for plant maintenance.
- **propagation facility overhaul** for better climate management and seedling care
- **automated systems introduction** to reduce labour pressure and improve operational consistency
- **introduced changes to growing substrate** to maintain optimal plant health, improve nutrient availability and address the physical degradation of the material
- **data capture and storage** to inform better decision making



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This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au

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Underpinning these projects has been the commitment to modernising and futureproofing the nursery.

Over her 30 years with Yarralumla, Belinda Ryan, Operations Manager, has seen firsthand how biosecurity threats and access to industry resources have changed the way they conduct business.

“Being an established nursery embedded in community, it is easy to become complacent in what we do and how we do it,” Belinda said.

“Our involvement with GrowConnex has been vital for critical reflection and improved systems.”

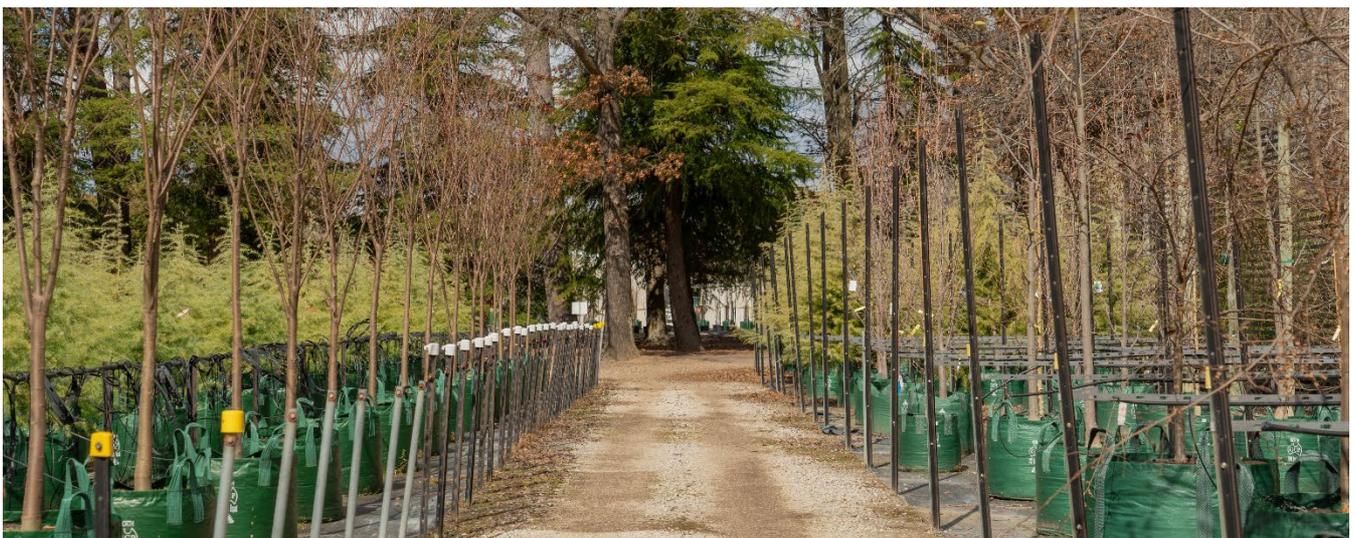
Practical changes for continual improvement

To Yarralumla, NIASA accreditation isn't just a 'box to tick' but has been the blueprint guiding improved nursery management across the board.

Product Supervisor Shane Campion said that accreditation is an ongoing discipline that Yarralumla has built into their nursery processes.

The most recent project the nursery has undertaken as part of NIASA has been the design of an improved water treatment facility. This step ensures the system is not only compliant and effective but also meets best management practice standards.

“Accessing levy resources via Colin gives us a greater sense of assurance and the confidence to continually improve and challenge our processes,” Shane said.



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Beyond water treatment, GrowConnex has provided Yarralumla with guidance to improve growing areas with the installation of 100mm gravel screen, improved drainage and a notable reduction in pests, disease and weeds.

“The levy reminds us that we’re not alone in our day-to-day challenges, or on a bigger scale we’re not the only nursery with incursions or stock issues that need to be addressed,” he said.

“We’re all a part of industry, and accessing resources via Colin and the levy makes us more interconnected and resilient to change.”

Next step, accreditation

“We know that we’re already doing the right things and have the foundations in place. Achieving NIASA will formally recognise the expertise, quality and management that underpins our operations,” Shane said.

“Now that we’re close to signing off NIASA we’re about to broaden our horizons and consider other accreditations that build from this one.

“We’re already looking at completing the Landscape Tree Stock Specification (LTSS) concurrently to keep raising our standards and reinforce our position as a trusted, historic, and ‘gold star’ nursery.

“The LTSS allows us to ensure the quality of a long-term product once planted into the landscape.”

Once NIASA and LTSS are secured, Yarralumla will continue to set new benchmarks for excellence with the ongoing support of the GrowConnex program.

Ready to improve operational efficiency and raise nursery standards?

Connect with your local GrowConnex expert today to access the benefits of the levy-funded program:

- 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

ENDS

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.



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