

# **Sustainable Urban Environmental Developments**

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Landscaping Australia Inc

Project Number: NY10700

## **NY10700**

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**Landscaping Australia Inc**

**Sustainable Urban Environmental Development  
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**Purpose of Report:**

This report fulfils the requirement for Milestone 190 of the agreement between Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL) and Landscaping Australia Inc.

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## **MEDIA SUMMARY**

The landscape National Conference was held 12 – 14 May 2011 at Lachlan’s Old Government House, Parramatta. The theme of the conference “Sustainable Urban Environmental Developments” is a bi-annual event. This is only the third such conference held with the first two held in Queensland and South Australia.

Landscaping Australia Inc., works with the host states to ensure each conference is successful and addresses the issues relevant at the time to the landscaping industry in Australia. Sustainable Urban Environmental Developments explored the future of landscaping and its direction towards 2020.

Technology, innovation, communication and business processes and strategies change at a rapid pace and this conference aimed at addressing some of those issues. The landscape industry brings together the vast supply chain of wholesale nurseries, turf production, irrigation and soils all of which are affected by climate change and its variability. The affects on tomorrow’s landscape in our cities and urban developments was addressed with growing areas such as green-walls, rooftop gardens, regeneration and revegetation of environmental hotspots covering erosion control are all part of the landscape contractors skills. It is all about ensuring that the landscape industry contributes to the future establishment of green cities in Australia.

The conference proved to be an outstanding success according to the evaluation sheets with the only disappointment in the lack of number of delegates attending. Every effort was made by all states to attract more delegates to the conference however with the current tough economic times, many landscapers said they could not afford to go or even leave their business at these critical times.

The conference was held over three days 12 – 14 May at the beautiful historic Lachlan’s Old Government House Parramatta, with the first day being a welcome reception where delegates from different states could meet and network. Day two was a full day conference with presentations from varied and topical speakers. Delegates agreed the topics relevant and interesting with plenty of interaction and questions directed at each speaker. The evening finished with awards presentations recognising the quality work and professionalism of finalists from each state. Awards were presented for three residential, two commercial, maintenance and environmental projects. The final day was a bus tour to visit a number of high profile quality landscapes in both residential and commercial sites. At each of the sites the architect and contractor spoke about each of the projects and the issues relevant to each project. In all of the projects the common theme was sustainability and care to address the environment.

It was encouraging to see a number of young landscapers attending the conference and their interest and concern for the future direction of the industry. They felt that

“Sustainable Urban Environmental Developments” certainly addressed these issues along with innovative technology. The next Landscaping Australia Inc national conference will be held in Perth in 2013.

*(Refer Appendix I – Conference Sub-committee Chair Report)*

## **EVALUATION of EFFECTIVENESS – SURVEY RESULTS**

The conference was attended by delegates from each state of Australia. The post conference survey showed that 100% of delegates were happy with the conference content and quality of speakers (nil not satisfied). Delegates believed that networking at conferences provided benefit across industry and is always high on their outcomes. They were positive about having their peers as guest speakers especially those companies who have made a success of their business and are embracing new technologies within the landscape industry such as the green walls and the fast growth of future communications. From general comments and verbal feedback, the conference was considered highly successful and of great benefit albeit below targeted attendance.

*(Refer Appendix II – Evaluation Summary – LAI Conference May 2011)*

## **CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

The conference program was developed in consultation with the conference committee as well as industry representative from all states. A conference book was also developed which included the conference program, information about the conference sponsors and exhibitors and bio’s on all speakers. Unfortunately there was a late change to one of the speakers, Judy Bates from Ryde TAFE Northern Sydney Institute who had to cancel at the last minute due to change in her travel to the UK to attend the Chelsea Flower Show. Her presentation was delivered by John Monty, Manager Teaching and Learning, Ryde TAFE Northern Sydney Institute.

*(Refer Appendix III – Conference Program; Appendix IV – Conference Book & Bus Tour Flyer)*

The conference program sought to cover topics/issues of relevance for today’s economic climate. The deliver of the topics was professional and interesting sparking much debate and questions being asked from the floor. All presentations were PowerPoint based with full audio-visual support.

*(Refer Appendix V – Conference PowerPoint Presentations)*

## **DELEGATE LIST**

Delegate numbers attending the conference were short of expectations. Every effort was undertaken by Landscaping Australia Inc as well as the state bodies in promoting the event. It was thought that with the event being held in Sydney that it would attract the right number to the conference. This however was not the case even though

promotion of the event was evident in all states as well as having the conference committee doing a ring around. The total number of delegates attending was 112. (*Refer Appendix VI – Delegate List 2011*)

## **KEY OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE**

It is believed that the conference objectives were met. Landscapers are aware of the environment through promotion of best practice. Environmental extension activities are being undertaken through awareness programs and raising the profile of the industry. Promotion of a career path within the industry is being supported by all landscapers for the future sustainability of the industry.

1. Conference delegates felt that this conference was a good guideline for future conferences.

***Recommendation: LAI continue to undertake a bi-annual conference in conjunction with the host states. The next event to take place in Western Australia in 2013.***

2. Conference delegates would like to have more guest speakers from the private sector.

***Recommendation: LAI to work with Western Australian Association to ensure more speakers from the private sector included.***

3. Due to the changing urban landscape and the backyard becoming smaller it was felt by the conference delegates that more information is needed on commercial projects i.e. parklands.

***Recommendation: LAI to work with Western Australian Association to include guest speakers relating to commercial landscape projects. These could also include case studies.***

4. Current challenges in the landscape industry with innovation due to the smaller backyards and city sprawl. How the landscape industry can assist with climate change and rising temperatures within our cities.

***Recommendation: increase information on current new areas such as green walls and green roofs. This is just one example of sustainable urban environmental development. Dissemination to be via the state associations to their entire member base.***

5. Conference delegates were keen to obtain new information from the diverse supply and demand chain within the landscape industry.

***Recommendation: ensure continued further relations with main suppliers such as nursery, turf, soils, and irrigators etc promote constructive dialogue with related***

*sectors to foster understanding and develop partnerships in the interest of the urban environment.*

6. Throughout the conference quality projects and best practice was an area that all agreed was important.

***Recommendation: strive for higher standards of care for the environment through promotion of best practice, dissemination of information. Develop better business programs within the landscaping industry.***

7. During the conference landscapers agreed it was difficult to attract and retain qualified staff.

***Recommendation: initiate and contribute to training and development activities to support the landscape industry career path and growth.***

8. With new technologies and faster communication landscapers were particularly interested in how they could best promote their businesses through the new media.

***Recommendation: undertake awareness of future communication processes through social networks.***

#### **Learning and reflection process:**

Education and training through extension will be provided through association websites and the release of speaker papers to delegates. The awards for excellence programme where seven categories were judged and winners announced provided a forum for awareness of quality of projects being developed and the diversity of projects across Australia. Again this will be available for review on the website. At all times the landscape industries program of quality and professionalism was promoted. New direction for the landscape industry in regards to regeneration, revegetation, green roofs, green walls and new nursery marketing programs were all discussed.

#### **Dissemination process:**

Conference papers and technical data along with the awards program will all be available via the national association's web site for review by landscape industry contractor and related industries and suppliers.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Horticulture Australia Limited was acknowledged throughout the conference as well as in all promotional materials. Sponsors and exhibitors were also acknowledged and their contribution to the conference was greatly appreciated.

### **CONFERENCE BUDGET**

2011 again proved to be a tough year with the impact of the Global Financial Crisis as well as cyclones and floods that impacted the eastern states of Australia. Sponsors supported the conference however delegate numbers were down as business owners found it difficult to justify the costs of the conference and interstate travel through

these times. Even though Australia is coming out of hard times, the GFC and floods made a huge impact on the landscape industry.

Those delegates that did attend however felt that it was one of the better informed conferences that they have attended and most said that they would attend the event in 2013 in Perth.

*(Refer Appendix VII – Conference Budget)*