

Final report

Project title:

BerryQuest International 2025

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Project code:

MT24004

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Public summary

BerryQuest International is the biannual conference of the Australian berry industry. It is a key joint initiative across the berry category that unites berry growers with supply chain stakeholders, researchers and industry experts, as well as facilitating knowledge transfer on key issues such as biosecurity, trade, market development, marketing and adoption of R&D outcomes. It is an opportunity for industry to be engaged with the outcomes of their levy investments (both R&D and marketing) in the berry category (inc. blueberry, raspberry and blackberry, and strawberry), as well as hear from international experts and learn from farm tours.

The key objective for Hort Innovations investment in BerryQuest 2025 is to assist with extension and transfer of knowledge about levy investment (both R&D and marketing) in the berry category (including blueberry, raspberry and blackberry, and strawberry). The focus is to communicate best practice to berry growers and improve their knowledge and skills to enable them to adopt R&D outcomes funded through the grower levy and the Australian government.

Berries Australia managed the conference content as well as the logistics and organisation including but not limited to:

- Reviewing and organising conference venue including AV options and catering
- Organising off-site meal venues and logistics
- Managing registrations including dietary requirements, name tags, conference bags and registration desk
- Managing accommodation bookings for key staff and speakers
- Negotiating delegate accommodation rate packages and setting up accommodation booking systems online
- Managing delegate lists to provide data for tours and sessions (plenary and breakout)
- Logistics for farm tours (supported by the IDOs) including transportation, catering and ensuring WH&S and biosecurity requirements are adhered to.
- Speakers needs - including travel arrangements
- Trade show organisation including sponsor support and management
- Financial management of these components

Three working groups were established to deliver BerryQuest international 2025:

1. Berries Australia conference management team – led by Jen Rowling and including Wendy Morris, Claire McCrory and Rachel Mackenzie and tasked with all logistical tasks associated with conference delivery;
2. Program development working group – led by Jen Rowling and including all Industry Development Officers as part of project MT22010. This group was tasked with the identification of conference themes, topics and speakers, and development of conference program and farm tours.
3. BerryQuest Planning Subcommittee – led by Simon Dornauf (BerryQuest Chairman), facilitated by Jen Rowling and including a range of industry people including growers and industry associates. The subcommittee provided oversight of all logistics for conference delivery, and input into program design and development of complete program including farm tours, conference and social events.

The key outcomes for the Australian berry industry through delivery of this conference are:

- An increased industry understanding and adoption of best practice and emerging production and supply chain information in relation to R&D project outcomes and outputs.
- Knowledge transfer to the berry industry value chain through presentations on research findings, best practice, emerging risks and opportunities
- A better-informed industry to increase farm productivity and berry quality across all business sizes of berry growers.
- Provision of information from the conference to berry industry stakeholders who are unable to attend through industry publications, website updates and social media content.
- An opportunity for delegates to discuss issues that are impacting the industry, as well as future opportunities for research and development.
- An increased attendance rate following on from the success of the previous conference, improved marketing and as a result of an informative program which is highly relevant to a cross section of industry.
- An increase in sponsorship and exhibitor numbers as a result of broader promotion and improvements in sponsorship/exhibitor packages available.

All conference sessions were recorded and with speaker permission, have been uploaded to the Berries Australia Resource Library (slides and video recording).

Introduction

BerryQuest is a key joint initiative across the berry category that unites berry growers with supply chain stakeholders, researchers and industry experts, as well as facilitating knowledge transfer on key issues such as biosecurity, trade, market development, marketing and adoption of R&D outcomes. It is an opportunity for industry to be engaged with the outcomes of their levy investments (both R&D and marketing) in the berry category (inc. blueberry, raspberry and blackberry, and strawberry), as well as hear from international and local experts and participate in coordinated farm tours where the latest in on-farm production methods, technology and farming practices are demonstrated.



BerryQuest is held biannually and the 2025 conference continues to build on the success of this very important event on the Australian Berry Industry calendar. Once again, there has been a significant increase in delegate numbers, sponsors and exhibitors which highlights its importance to the industry and its reputation as a well-coordinated, relevant and informative event that brings the industry together to learn, reflect and celebrate all that the Australian berry industry has achieved and continues to improve for future growth.

The conference was held at Wrest Point Hotel and Casino in Hobart, Tasmania. With advice from the newly formed BerryQuest subcommittee, the format of the event was changed to include two days of farm tours at the beginning of the conference (rather than the traditional format of farm tours at the end). This was followed by a Welcome Reception and two days of conference, culminating in the Gala Dinner and inaugural Industry Awards on the final evening. No formal dinner was organized mid-conference to allow delegates to have some time with friends and colleagues enjoying all that Hobart has to offer.

Some highlights from BerryQuest International 2025 include:

- Two days of farm tours visiting six farms from the North of the state to the South. Farms included two berry producers (Pinata and Hillwood), a berry propagator (Driscolls), plus cherry and apple farms (Reid Fruits, R&R Smith and Hansens Orchard). Approximately 160 delegates participated in each tour;
- 570 delegates registered for the event with 540 delegates checking in via the newly acquired automatic check in system. This is an increase of 45 delegates compared to the 2022 event held on the Gold Coast.
- Of the 540 who checked in:
 - 231 were growers or employees of a berry growing business (43%)
 - The remaining delegates consisted of sponsors and exhibitors, industry stakeholders, speakers and students (57%)
 - 58 delegates from overseas attended including visitors from Belgium, Chile, China, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Scotland, Singapore, Thailand and United Kingdom
 - States represented include:
 - New South Wales (113)
 - Victoria (131)
 - Queensland (99)
 - South Australia (20)
 - Western Australia (20)
 - Tasmania (76)
- 57 trade exhibitors were on-site across three areas (up from 37 in 2022)
- 53 speakers participated including international speakers in person from UK, Poland and Singapore, plus two via live stream from UK and Vietnam
- 479 people attended the Gala Dinner and Awards at PW1.

Methodology

A small team from Berries Australia led by Jen Rowling, Conference Manager were tasked with logistical delivery of the conference which included but not limited to:

- Reviewing and organising conference venue including AV options and catering
- Organising off-site meal venues and logistics
- Managing registrations including dietary requirements, name tags, conference bags and registration desk
- Managing accommodation bookings for key staff and speakers
- Negotiating delegate accommodation rate packages and setting up accommodation booking systems online
- Managing delegate lists to provide data for tours and sessions (plenary and breakout)
- Logistics for farm tours (supported by the IDOs) including transportation, catering and ensuring WH&S and biosecurity requirements are adhered to.
- Speakers needs - including travel arrangements
- Trade show organisation including sponsor support and management
- Financial management of these components

Two additional groups assisted in the development of the conference:

1. Program development working group – led by Jen Rowling and including all Industry Development Officers as part of project MT22010. This group was tasked with the identification of conference themes, topics and speakers, and development of conference program and farm tours.
2. BerryQuest Planning Subcommittee – led by Simon Dornauf (BerryQuest Chairman), facilitated by Jen Rowling and including a range of industry people including growers and industry associates. The subcommittee provided oversight of all logistics for conference delivery, and input into program design and development of complete program including farm tours, conference and social events.

Additional details about roles and responsibilities are listed below:

Position	Name	Organisation	Roles and responsibilities
Conference Manager	Jen Rowling	Berries Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs the efforts of conference management team, Program Development Working Group and Planning Subcommittee • Creates chain of command and decision-making/approval processes • Budget development • Recording of income and expenditure • Monitors cash flow • Works with book keeping service to create ongoing financial reports and updates, and final financial report • Works with Registration platform / Conference App provider (Cvent) to develop online registration/ sponsorship processes • Management of all registrations • All reporting requirements for Berries Australia / PIBs / Hort Innovation and other funding bodies • Leads key organizational meeting planning • Works closely with venue/s on logistics of the conference and associated social events • Works closely with Trade Show Manager/Conference Coordinator on overall coordination of event.

Trade Show Manager and Conference Coordinator	Wendy Morris	Berries Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange conference insurance • Work closely with venue staff and trade show building company to ensure smooth set up and pack down of trade show area • Liaison with all exhibitors to ensure all sponsor needs are met • Works closely with Conference Manager on overall coordination of event.
Sponsor and Exhibitor Management	Jen Rowling & Wendy Morris	Berries Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sponsorship and exhibitor prospectus, with approval from Planning Subcommittee • Distribution of sponsorship/exhibitor prospectus • Customisation of sponsorship packages where possible • Management of sponsors and exhibitors
Digital and Print Resource Manager / PR Manager	Jane Richter	Teres Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference branding and creative design • Website development (Cvent) • Production of print and online media in collaboration with the PR Manager • Designs and handles production of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online sponsorship prospectus ○ delegate badges ○ banners and onsite signage, digital graphics and conference merchandise ○ Holding/sponsor promotion slides for use during presentations • Responsible for the promotion of the conference to delegates and wider media. • Development of media releases • Communication of key messages about the conference • Manage the conference's social media accounts • Creation of a media list for event promotion and coverage • Builds attendance by including date on event calendars
Program Development Working Group	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jen Rowling 2. Wendy Morris (IDO Qld) 3. Angela Atkinson (R&D Manager) 4. Melinda Simpson 5. Gaius Leong (IDO NSW) 6. Sandy Shaw (IDO Vic) 7. Ella Roper (IDO Tas) 8. Helen Newman (IDO WA) 9. Claire McCrory (Admin) 10. Rachel Mackenzie (as required) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that a well-balanced, high-quality technical program is organized and presented at the conference • Assists in the scheduling of session rooms and helping with local arrangements for the program • Develops the program for Farm Tours and/or workshops for conference • Identifies extent and content of conference program • Recruits prospective presenters and session organizers • Co-ordinates keynote sessions • Organizes sessions and select session chairs • Sets guidelines for speakers • Ensures onsite audio/visual and IT needs are being met • Co-ordinates speaker appreciation gifts and session evaluations

BerryQuest Planning Subcommittee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simon Dornauf – Chair (Hillwood Berries) 2. Jen Rowling 3. Wendy Morris 4. Claire McCrory (Admin) 5. Rachel Mackenzie 6. Daniel Young (Driscolls) 7. Sarah Miles (Costa) 8. Stephanie Terry (Tasmanian Berries) 9. Fiona Turner (Bitwise Agronomy) 10. Andrew Bell (Mountain Blue) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for overseeing the overall organization and financial planning of the conference. • Collates key ideas for the conference and steers its strategic direction. • Contributes ideas for technical content • Advises the Conference Manager and Program Leaders, and assists them in making decisions, especially around budget and technical content of the conference.
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The Cvent Event Management system was purchased to assist with website development, sponsor management, registrations and self-serve check-ins on site. Whilst proving somewhat challenging to begin with, the team now have worked with the company to fine tune the processes in line with our conference and were pleased with the outcome.



Results and discussion

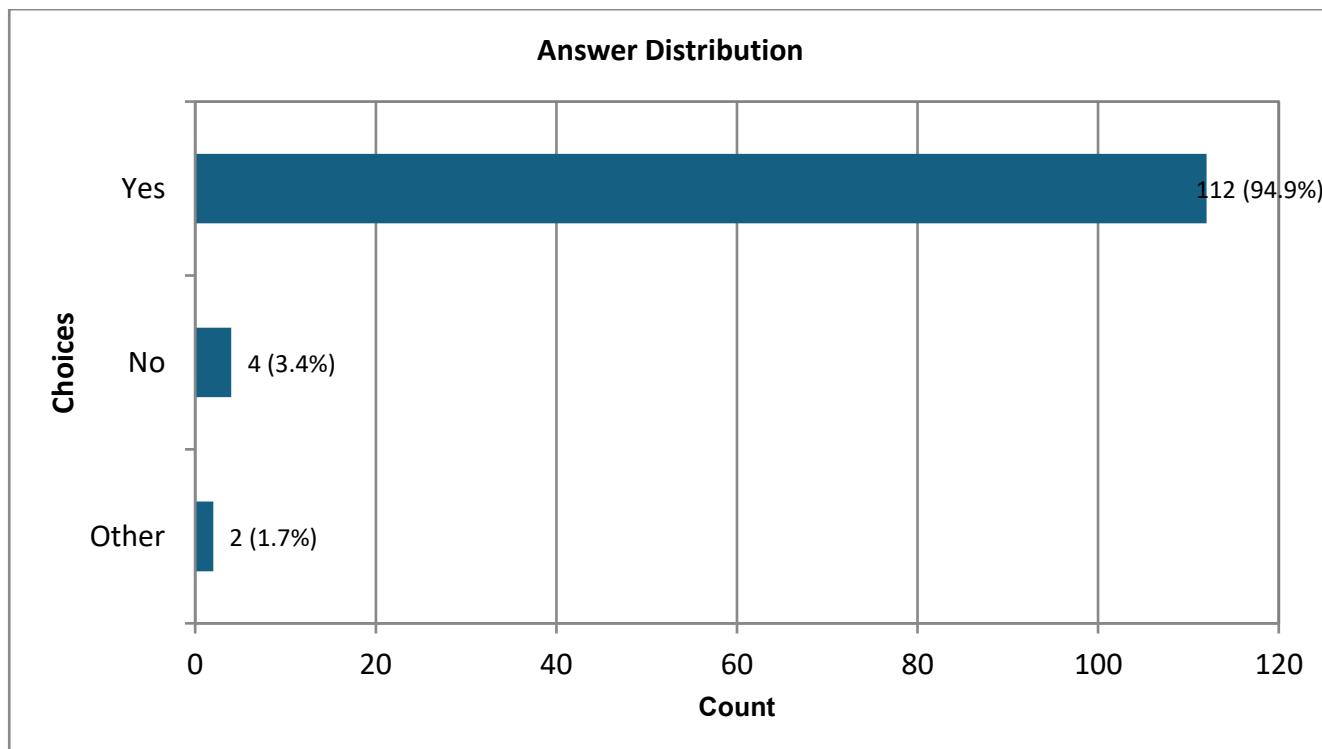
Development of the schedule of activities was loosely based on the previous BerryQuest Conference held in 2022 but with some adjustments made on the advice of the BerryQuest Planning Subcommittee. The changes included adding two days of farm tours instead of one, plus moving the farm tours to before the conference instead of at the end. We also removed an informal dinner from the program so that delegates could have a break from conference, could enjoy the local restaurants in Hobart by making their own plans or organize group activities for their own teams.

The program therefore comprised two full days of farm tours, a Welcome Reception, two days of presentations in a combination of plenary and concurrent sessions plus panel discussions, a Happy Hour and Gala Dinner on the final evening.

Monday, 24th February 2025		
7.00am to 5.00pm	Northern Farm Tour	Launceston to Hobart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driscolls Nursery • Hillwood Berries • Reid Fruits Refer Appendix 1: Farm Tour North Info Sheet Refer Appendix 1.1: On-farm Program – Hillwood Berries
Tuesday, 25th February 2025		
8.00am to 4.00pm	Southern Farm Tour	From Hobart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinata Farms • Hansens Orchard • R&R Smith Organic Apple • Willie Smiths Apple Shed Refer Appendix 2: Farm Tour South Info Sheet
5.30pm to 7.30pm	Networking event	Welcome Reception – Trade Area
Wednesday, 26th February 2025		
8.30am to 10.00am	Conference plenary session	Conference opening Keynote presentation: Leading on the Edge (Rachael Robertson)
10.30am to 12.30pm	Conference plenary session	Keynote presentations: A Global Berry Perspective
1.30pm to 3.05pm	Conference concurrent sessions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trade 2. Pest, Disease and Disorders 3. Breeding and Genetics
3.30pm to 5.00pm	Conference plenary session	Securing the future of Berries
5.00pm to 6.00pm	Networking event	Hump Day Happy Hour
Thursday, 27th February 2025		
8.30am to 10.30am	Conference plenary session	Food Safety and Workforce Issues inc. Workforce Panel discussion
10.55am to 12.30pm	Conference concurrent sessions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retail and Marketing 2. Growing Environment 3. Pollination
1.30pm to 3.05pm	Conference concurrent sessions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Innovation 2. IPDM 3. Sustainability
3.30pm to 5.00pm	Conference plenary session	Farming into the Future inc. Panel Discussion – Observations from BQI25 and what it means for the future
From 6.30pm	Networking event	Gala Dinner and Awards evening – Princes Wharf 1

Refer **Appendix 3 – BQI25 Final Conference Program** for full program details.

DELEGATE FEEDBACK QUESTION: Did the program have the right balance of commercial, social and personal time and space?



The selection process for speakers and topics for the program incorporated feedback and advice from a range of sources including IDOs, BerryQuest Planning Subcommittee, Berries Australia/ABGA/RABA/SAI committee members, Hort Innovation and growers/agronomists etc. We unfortunately had one of our international speakers cancel at the final hour due to illness but were able to review the program so that session was not noticeably disrupted. We had two presentations via live stream from the UK and Vietnam but otherwise, all speakers presented in person.

DELEGATE FEEDBACK QUESTION: Overall, how did you find the program content? Eg. Range of topics, presenters chosen, content of sessions, arrangement of sessions?

Positive responses included:

- ✓ Broad and interesting
- ✓ Nice mix of topics
- ✓ The overall program content was good
- ✓ From the keynote speaker all the way through it was an excellent program
- ✓ Program content was high quality and great content
- ✓ A great range of areas and it suited our teams interests

Comments on areas for improvement included:

- ✗ Some good speakers. Need more international insights. Also more plant physiology talks.
- ✗ I found it very informative and engaging, but could have had more commercial info on average returns YOY etc, and maybe more info re what channels were moving what - ie; % sold to export, % sold to chains, % sold through independents etc. Apologies if this was covered and i happened to have missed it...

Berries Australia invested in a conference website and event management platform with conference app and self-check in facilities. The Cvent system, whilst challenging to develop at first proved to be an efficient way for both sponsors and delegates to book packages and registrations.

A comprehensive prospectus of sponsorship packages was developed with a range of conference sponsorship and exhibitor options. Costings were discussed in detail with the Berries Australia board and BerryQuest Planning Subcommittee and compared to similar industry conference events to ensure they were relevant and affordable, whilst marking sure that all expenses associated with running the event were met. This information was distributed to a wide range of companies including all of those involved in BQI2022.

All Australian berry growers were kept well informed of the progress of planning and regularly encouraged to attend. Promotional material was distributed via the Berries Australia Facebook page, the Australian Berry Journal, the Burst eNewsletter and Berries Australia website.

Those who were not able to attend can still benefit from the conference program through the articles that will be compiled for industry publications and resources such as the Australian Berry Journal, the Burst eNewsletter and Berries Australia website, and via the Industry Development Officers across the combined berry industries. All sessions were also recorded and where permission by the speaker has been provided, both video and slide presentations have been uploaded to the Berries Australia Resource Library - <https://berries.net.au/resource-library/>



Outputs

The primary output of this investment is a successful, well-attended conference with multiple opportunities for Hort Innovation to raise awareness about R&D and marketing levy investment in the berry category as articulated in a detailed sponsorship agreement. Berries Australia managed the conference content as well as the logistics and organisation including but not limited to:

- Reviewing and organising conference venue including AV options and catering
- Organising meal venues and logistics
- Managing registrations including dietary requirements, name tags, conference bags and registration desk
- Accommodation bookings including negotiating delegate rate packages
- Managing delegates lists providing data for hotels, tours, sessions (plenary and breakout)
- Logistics for field tours (supported by the IDOs) including transportation, catering and ensuring WH&S and biosecurity requirements are adhered to
- Speakers needs, including travel arrangements
- Trade show organisation including sponsor support and management
- Financial management of all these components



All general outputs listed above have been successfully delivered and the logistics of the conference well managed. This can be substantiated by responses provided to a post-conference survey distributed to all delegates:

DELEGATE FEEDBACK QUESTION: Overall, how would you rate this event?

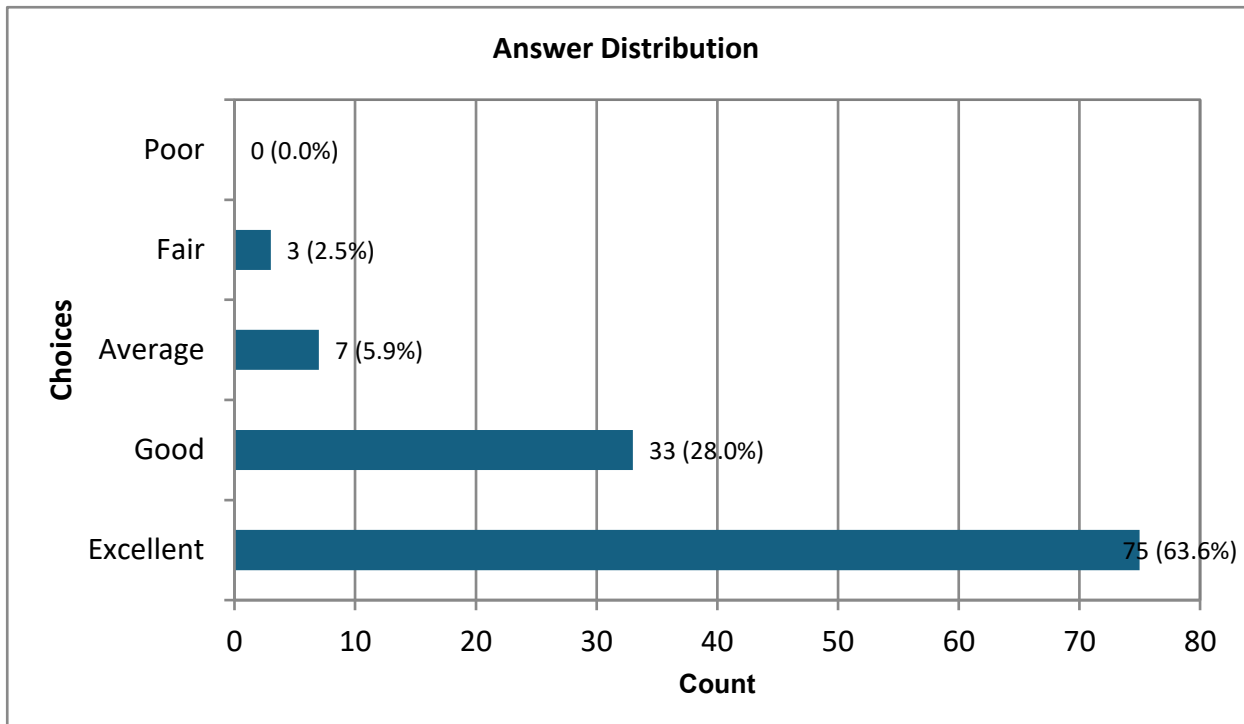






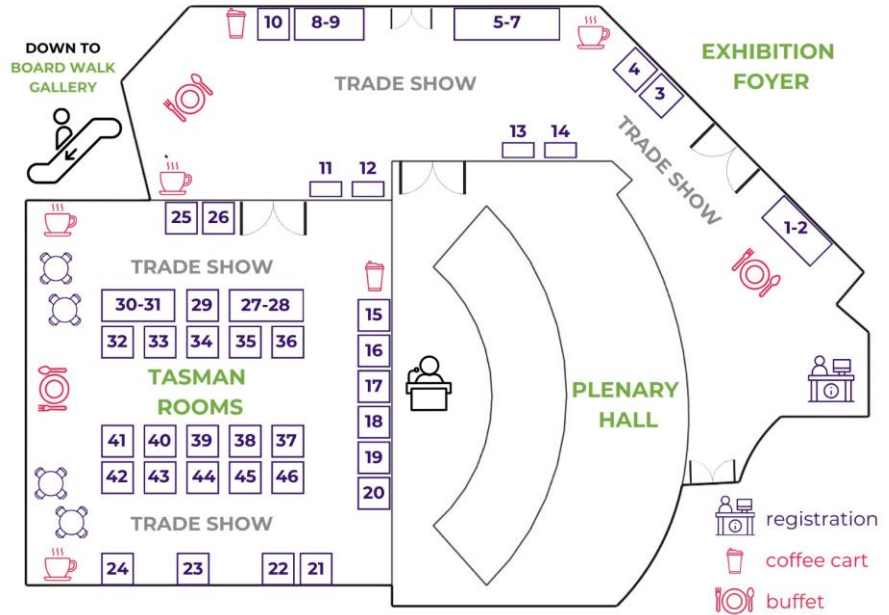
Table A. Key Outputs of Sponsorship Agreement

Output	Detail
Branding	
<p>Recognition of levy fund support throughout the conference, including keynote presentations such as opening and closing addresses, speaker sessions relating to levy funded projects and activities, and conference promotional material.</p>	<p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brett Fifield, CEO Hort Innovation – Supporting a Berry Bright Future (A Global Berry Perspective plenary session) • Jenny Van de Meeberg – Export and Trade Development update (MT23004) • Dr Jodi Neal– Cultivating Success: The Strategy and Impact of the Australian Breeding Program 
<p>Levy fund branding to be featured throughout conference, including conference website, conference materials such as handbook, signage, program, registration brochure, conference app and name badges.</p>	<p>Conference website: https://web-eur.cvent.com/event/72300428-448a-4aff-a1fe-56fe8def6367/summary</p>  <p>Sponsor acknowledgement: https://web-eur.cvent.com/event/72300428-448a-4aff-a1fe-56fe8def6367/websitePage:41973245-55ba-473c-b9b7-8921b05ef465</p> 

	<p>Conference signage (Farm Tour North – Hillwood):</p> 
<p>Levy fund logo on Berries Australia website with hyperlink to the Hort Innovation website.</p>	<p>As outlined above.</p>
<p>One piece of promotional material in conference bag and/or on delegate seats.</p>	<p>As provided by Hort Innovation.</p>
<p>Presentation</p>	
<p>A minimum of two speakers at conference on Levy Fund investments (R&D and/or Marketing)</p>	<p>As outlined above. Refer Appendix 3 – BQ125 Final Conference Program for full program details.</p>
<p>Media</p>	
<p>Media release pre and post conference acknowledging Levy Fund support.</p>	<p>Media releases issued acknowledged the Hort Innovation sponsorship where possible. Examples to be provided.</p>
<p>Access</p>	
<p>Four complimentary tickets with admission into all conference sessions, social events and field day.</p>	<p>Complimentary full registration tickets supplied for:</p>
<p>One additional complimentary entry to exhibitor space for support staff.</p>	<p>No additional support staff advised, however additional complimentary registration provided for Julie Bird.</p>
<p>Display</p>	
<p>Opportunity to place three pull up banners in high traffic areas and priority placement in the main conference venue, including main stage.</p>	<p>Opportunity available – unsure if and where signage was placed. Hort Innovation logo featured in session holding slides (as per details above)</p>

Exhibition

Exhibition space with specially designed trade booth for the conference days.



EXHIBITION FOYER

- 1-2 ECOMIX
- 3 LEGRO BOTANICOIR
- 4 CRAVO EQUIPMENT / POWERPLANTS
- 5-7 MOUNTAIN BLUE
- 8-9 PERFECTION FRESH
- 10 AGNOVA TECHNOLOGIES
- 11 UNDERCOVER AGENCY / BEESTAR
- 12 AGSPEC
- 13 A&D WEIGHING AND INSPECTIONS
- 14 AGRI AUTOMATION

TASMAN ROOMS

- 15 ABC SOFTWARE
- 16 MULTISTEPS
- 17 IRRIBIZ
- 18 GINEGAR PLASTIC PRODUCTS
- 19 AUSTRALASIAN PLANT GENETICS
- 20 RIVULIS
- 21 APEX GREENHOUSES
- 22 BEE FRIENDLY FARMING
- 23 HORT INNOVATION
- 24 BEEKENKAMP VERPAKKINGEN
- 25 GARDEN CITY PLASTICS
- 26 BIOLOGICAL SERVICES
- 27-28 DRISCOLL'S
- 29 UNITEC
- 30-31 ELITE TUNNELS / GREENLIFEGRO
- 32 ECO TRELIS HORT SOLUTIONS
- 33 WINHARVEST
- 34 BEE INNOVATIVE
- 35 HAYGROVE
- 36 AUSTRALIAN GROWING SOLUTIONS
- 37 VISCON AUSTRALIA
- 38 DE SANGOSSE AUSTRALIA
- 39 REDOX
- 40 ROYAL BRINKMAN
- 41 NETAFIM
- 42 MUIRS / COCOGREEN
- 43 AGPICK
- 44 PARADISE BERRY PROPAGATORS
- 45 WEICHTER
- 46 BOOMAROO NURSERIES

BOARD WALK GALLERY

- 47 AUSTRALIAN PACIFIC LABOUR ALLIANCE
- 48-49 FRESHTRACK SYSTEMS
- 50-51 FRESHTRACK BUSINESS LOUNGE
- 52 PINATA FARMS / BERRY WORLD
- 53 STACKPACK
- 54 VAN DER HOEVEN
- 55 BITWISE / NANOBUBBLE
- 56 BERRIES AUSTRALIA
- 57 PRODUCE PLUS
- 58 PROTECTED CROPPING AUSTRALIA
- 59 AGRI-TECH PACIFIC
- 60 VACANT
- 61-62 TOMRA
- 63 ELIFAB SOLUTIONS
- 64 SQM
- 65 GREENPRO
- 66 TRANSPLANT SYSTEMS
- 67 MAF OCEANIA

Distribution of promotional material to delegates from trade booth.

As per Hort Innovation.

Opportunity for special promotion/competition to be promoted to delegates by MC.

Opportunity not taken.

Opportunity to exhibit at the Field Days.

Signage used during lunch at Hillwood Berries (Northern Farm Tour). Image above.

Delegate information	
Access to list of all delegates pre and post event.	List is available on request.
Input	
Formal and informal engagement on program content as defined in the sponsorship agreement.	Informal engagement on program provided through discussions with several key Hort Innovation staff including Brett Fifield, Adrian Englefield and Susanna Trusheim.



Outcomes

Table B. Outcome summary

Outcome	Description and Evidence
An increased understanding and adoption of best practice and emerging production and supply chain information in relation to R&D project outcomes and outputs.	<p>A post-conference survey was distributed, however a follow up survey will be conducted to help identify key areas of practice adopted as result of information gained at the Conference.</p> <p>Refer to post-conference survey results in M&E Section of this report.</p>
Knowledge transfer to the berry industry value chain through presentations on research findings, best practice, emerging risks and opportunities.	<p>Comprehensive program developed based on advice and suggestions from a range of sources including IDOs, BerryQuest Planning Subcommittee, Berries Australia/ ABGA/RABA/SAI committee members, Hort Innovation and growers/agronomists etc.</p> <p>50 speakers presented on 53 separate topics. Two of these speakers presented via live-stream from overseas.</p> <p>Refer Appendix 3 – BQI25 Final Conference Program for full program details.</p>
Provision of information on the conference to berry industry stakeholders who are unable to attend through industry publications, website updates and social media content.	<p>Recorded sessions and presentations have been uploaded to the Berries Australia Resource Library (with approval from speakers). See details above.</p> <p>Articles will be derived from presentations at the Conference for the Australian Berry Journal and delivered in future editions. Social media posts will also be uploaded with links to articles.</p> <p>Articles in Australian Berry Journal:</p> <p>Autumn 2025:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BQI25 Event Report (From pg 18)
An opportunity for delegates to discuss issues that are impacting the industry, as well as future opportunities for research and development.	<p>A BerryQuest Ideas Session was held on Friday, 28th February after the completion of the conference, as a component of project MT23003. The objectives of the session were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise awareness and understanding of the SIP and the R and D advisory mechanism, including the role of HIA, the ideation Panel, and the R and D Investment Advisory Panel and Berries Australia. • To generate wider industry engagement particularly with growers (as the levy payers). • To showcase examples of current projects that have been developed from the new advisory mechanism. • To gather potential issues or project ideas/concepts for consideration by the Ideation Panel <p>The workshop was attended by 34 conference delegates, including researchers, growers, agronomists, berry industry development officers and Hort Innovation staff.</p> <p>Refer Appendix 4 – RD Workshop Agenda</p>
An increased attendance rate following on from the success of the previous conference, improved marketing and as a result of an informative program which is highly relevant to a cross section of industry.	<p>BerryQuest 2025 received an increase in attendance numbers since last held in Gold Coast in 2022, from 495 to 540 delegates (570 registered with 540 checking in) which includes a cross section of industry, as a result of the improvements in promotion and development of an informative and relevant program. BerryQuest is also building a reputation as a highly valuable event on the Australian Berry Industry calendar, hence the increased interest in attending.</p>

<p>An increase in sponsorship and exhibitor numbers as a result of broader promotion and improvements in sponsorship/exhibitor packages available.</p>	<p>Updated sponsorship and exhibitor packages were developed and distributed to a broad network of industry associated businesses. All prices were higher than the previous conference due to the increase in expenses but were compared against other events of this type to ensure appropriateness. Almost all packages sold out and there was a significant increase in sponsorship funding received.</p> <p>A total of 68 businesses supported the event through sponsorship and/or exhibitor packages (compared to 44 in 2022), and there were 57 trade sites (35 in 2022).</p>
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Monitoring and evaluation

Table C. Key Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Question	Project performance	Continuous improvement opportunities
Effectiveness: To what extent has the project achieved its expected outcomes?		
To what extent has the conference increased the understanding and/or adoption of industry best practice?	Conference sessions incorporated a broad range of topics addressing best practice. Refer Appendix 3 for details of presentation topics. Overall satisfaction with program content as per survey feedback is a good indication of an increase in understanding across topics.	Improved survey options for each session/presentation to be implemented in future to better evaluate understanding and/or adoption for related topic.
To what extent has the conference improved knowledge and awareness of research findings, emerging risks and opportunities?	Conference sessions designed to improve knowledge and awareness across research findings, emerging risks and opportunities. Refer Appendix 3 for presentation topics. Overall satisfaction with program content as per survey feedback is a good indication of an increase in understanding across topics.	Improved survey options for session/presentation to be implemented in future to better evaluate improvements in knowledge and awareness.
To what extent has the conference increased/decreased in delegate numbers and sponsorship relative to previous events?	Delegate numbers increased by approx. 10% (495 in 2022 to 540 in 2025). A total of 68 businesses supported the event through sponsorship and/or exhibitor packages (compared to 44 in 2022), and there were 57 trade sites (35 in 2022).	Refer to survey responses from sponsors and exhibitors to improve benefits offered eg. Equal trade show floor space across all exhibitors. With the increase in sponsor support, more opportunities are available for next conference to subsidy grower participation.
How have the conference presentations been shared outside of those who were able to attend in person?	Recorded sessions and presentations have been uploaded to the Berries Australia Resource Library (with approval from speakers).	Improve method of uploading presentations for future events (efficiency).
Relevance: How relevant was the project to the needs of intended beneficiaries?		
To what extent has the conference met the needs of industry levy payers?	From feedback received, the majority of levy payers who attended the conference were happy with the scope and quality of information and networking opportunities provided at BerryQuest.	Specific surveys relative to each session to be explored for next conference.
Process appropriateness: How well have intended beneficiaries been engaged in the project?		
To what extent were the target engagement levels of industry levy payers and sponsors/exhibitors achieved?	KPI: 1. Number of registered attendees (target: 500+ participants) → 540 delegates checked in 2. Percentage of attendance vs. registrations (target: 80%) → 570 delegates registered with 540 checked in = 95%	Continue to build confidence of industry that BerryQuest is a well-run, informative and enjoyable conference for the benefit of both levy payers and the broader industry/supply chain.

	3. Sponsor/exhibitor numbers increased significantly (details above)	
Have regular updates been provided through linkage with the industry communication project?	15 E-newsletters dedicated to BQ125 Hort Innovation Sponsorship recognition in The Burst 51 Posts on Facebook & 61 Posts on LinkedIn Articles in the Australian Berry Journal	Continue to build on promotion of conference in lead up to event.
Process appropriateness: To what extent were engagement processes appropriate to the target audience/s of the project?		
Did the project engage with industry levy payers through their preferred learning style?	Engagement with levy payers achieved through presentations, panel discussions, on-farm demos and networking opportunities.	Workshop-style activities to be incorporated into next conference as an additional method of information sharing.
How accessible was the conference to industry levy payers, sponsors and exhibitors?	Very accessible for most.	Pricing to be further reviewed to encourage more growers to attend, and to reach more sponsors.
Efficiency: What efforts did the project make to improve efficiency?		
What efforts were made to improve efficiency with the delivery of the conference?	The Cvent website, registration platform, app and self-serve check in facilities provided improvements in efficiency.	Next conference will improve further with the knowledge of how to best utilize the Cvent system.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- ✓ Number of registered attendees (target: 500+ participants) → 540 delegates checked in
- ✓ Percentage of attendance vs. registrations (target: 80%) → 570 delegates registered with 540 checked in = 95%
- ✓ Number of keynote speakers and industry experts (target: 20+) → 50 speakers covering 53 topics
- ✓ Attendee satisfaction rate (target: 85% positive feedback) → 91.6% rated overall satisfaction as Good / Excellent
- ✓ Media coverage and social media engagement metrics → to be reviewed



Recommendations

- The addition of the Industry Awards to the Gala Dinner was very well received and we will continue to build on this as a biannual event in line with the conference.
- Additional cheaper sponsorship packages will be added to the Sponsorship Prospectus to allow smaller businesses to support BerryQuest.
- The venue for the next conference will need sufficient floor space in one area to accommodate a large trade show with equal benefit to all (not across various rooms as this was seen to be a problem by some exhibitors).
- A campaign to attract more growers needs to be developed in collaboration with industry. This may include subsidized registrations or other incentives to encourage growers to attend.
- The program needs to be in place (as much as possible) at least six months in advance to allow for delegates travelling to the event both domestically and from overseas. Further promotion overseas (via industry associations in other countries) to be done to attract more international interest.
- A motivational keynote speaker has been highlighted as a good way to start the conference off on the right foot. Rachael Robertson (keynote) was very highly regarded at this years event.
- Farm tours to remain at the beginning of the program, with the gala dinner and awards night to be the final event.
- Further improvements on the website and registration platform to be done to ensure ease of access to information and registrations.
- The Gold Coast is once again being considered as the location for the next conference in 2027. This would incorporate a farm tour starting in Coffs Harbour and ending in the Gold Coast for the conference. Details still to be confirmed.

Intellectual property

No project IP or commercialisation to report

