

FEBRUARY 2022

Prune

Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021

PERFORMANCE REPORT



Prune SIP performance report

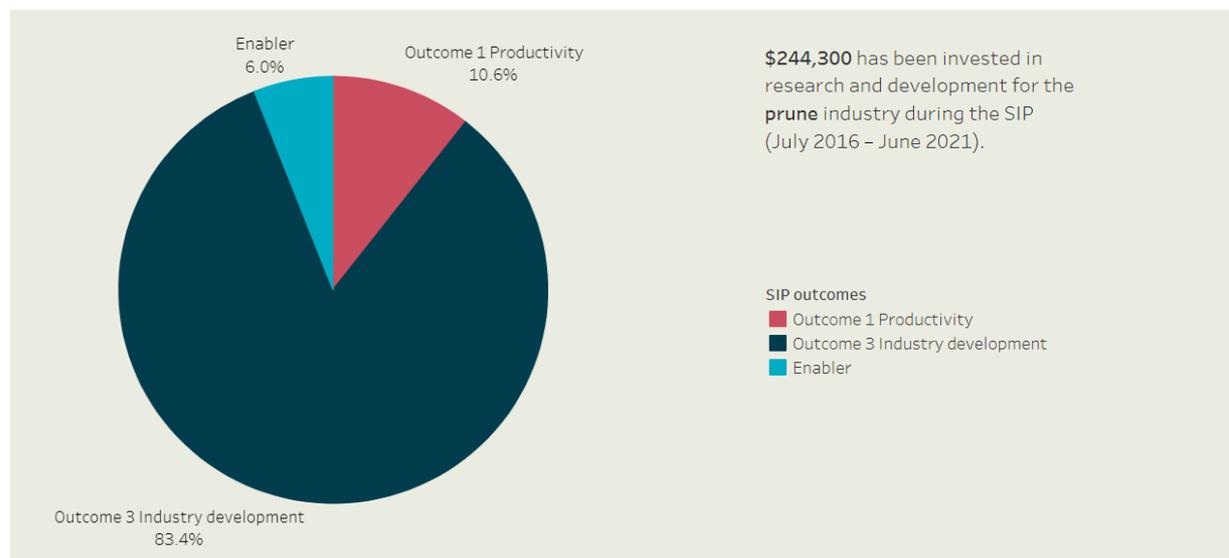
This performance report reviews the performance of levy investments delivered against the prune Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), which was active for the 5-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The SIP was developed to strategically guide research and development (R&D) levy investments in accordance with core industry priorities. The SIP featured three outcome areas, six strategies and 14 key performance indicators (KPIs), summarised in Table 1. A total of \$0.24 million was invested into the Prune Fund over the 5-year period of the SIP. The total investment expenditure allocated against each outcome is provided in Figure 1.

Table 1: Prune SIP outcomes

Outcome	Description	Expenditure allocation*
1. Productivity	Improve on-farm productivity and product quality so that Australia becomes a leading producer of high quality, nutritious fruit	10.6%
2. Demand	Undertake R&D and extension to provide results which can be used by industry to support 'precompetitive' activities to increase the demand for Australian prunes and improve producer profitability	0.0%
3. Industry development	Build skills, capacity and knowledge in the industry, both in existing and new industry participants, so that the capability exists to implement R&D outcomes and deliver the supply and quality improvements needed by the industry	83.4%

*Total investment \$0.24 million as of June 2021. Balance of expenditure comprises of enabler investments, which includes expenditure to support the delivery of the SIP including advisory meeting and publication costs.

Figure 1: Prune SIP investment expenditure analysis



SIP performance analysis

This performance report reviews the investment achievements delivered within each outcome area that have generated impact for growers. The overall status of each strategic area was informed through an assessment of KPI performance is also provided. The evaluation status and criteria were:

Strategic area status	Criteria
Achieved	KPIs for this strategic area were met
In progress	Investment delivery remains ongoing
Not achieved	Investment was not prioritised in this strategic area

The results have been informed from evidence compiled through reviewing investment documentation and engagement with project managers. Outcomes generated through the investments are documented and brief case studies of flagship performance and impact for each outcome area are also provided.

Outcome 1: Productivity – Improve on-farm productivity and product quality so that Australia becomes a leading producer of high quality, nutritious fruit

The prune SIP 2017-2021 assessed that the Australian prune industry needed to reach a critical mass – perhaps double its current supply base – over the following decade to make it competitive with other foods and with imported prunes. This would not happen unless prune growing became a more attractive enterprise to current and new participants: less laborious; more profitable; and less risky. More consistent supply of product would be crucial to ensure continuity of processing infrastructure and market positioning for the medium term.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support prune productivity are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Undertake R&D to deliver new technologies or refine existing ones to reduce cost of production, make production easier and/or improve quality	In progress
Undertake or collate research that can be used by growers (and industry) to support product demand building activities	Not achieved
Support new product development activities in conjunction with packing companies	Not achieved

KPI callouts:

- The *Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook* (HA18002) reported a small, 1% drop in fruit production when comparing average production over the 5-year period of the SIP, 2,540 tonnes of dried fruit compared to the average of 2,570 tonnes prior to the development of the SIP, while the average farmgate price received increased by 8% to \$2,270 per tonne (dried).
- Through multi-industry projects, the prune SIP invested in improved honey bee biosecurity through the project *Enhanced National Bee Pest Surveillance Program* (MT16005) and also biosecurity through *Improving the biosecurity preparedness of Australian horticulture for the exotic spotted wing drosophila (Drosophila suzukii)* (MT17005).

Outcome 2: Demand – Undertake R&D and extension to provide results which can be used by industry to support ‘pre-competitive’ activities to increase the demand for Australian prunes and improve producer profitability

The prune SIP 2017-2021 identified the potential to increase demand through R&D investments that clarified the benefits of prunes to increasingly health-conscious consumers, and identified and developed new uses for prunes.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support prune demand are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Undertake or collate research that can be used by growers (and industry) to support product demand building activities	Not achieved
Support new product development activities in conjunction with packing companies	Not achieved

Investment was not prioritised into this outcome area during the 5-year period of the SIP¹.

¹ A voluntary levy has been collected by major processors that has supported a promotional program seeking to increase demand for major Australian brands supplying prunes to the domestic market. Demand creation initiatives have included social media and public relations activity through ‘AusPrunes’ (<https://ausprunes.org.au/>) to increase consumer awareness and inspiration for purchasing and consuming Australian prunes. These initiatives are outside the management of Hort Innovation and are not captured in this report.

Outcome 3: Industry development – Build skills, capacity and knowledge in the industry, both in existing and new industry participants, so that the capability exists to implement R&D outcomes and deliver the supply and quality improvements needed by the industry

The prune SIP 2017-2021 noted the difficulty in retaining existing participants in the industry, much less attracting new generation of willing participants to the prune industry, as a result of the perceived or actual industry issues related to outcome 1 (laboriousness, risk, variability, low profitability). To address these issues, the development of industry participants’ capabilities to adopt innovations was seen as a critical enabler along with new R&D outcomes.

Summary of strategic area and achievement status:

The strategies in the SIP that were identified to support prune industry capacity are listed below. An achievement status is provided based upon internal evaluation of project performances:

Strategic area	Status
Undertake industry development, communication and R&D adoption activities to enhance the skills of existing participants and encourage new entrants	Achieved

KPI callouts:

- The *International Prune Association Conference 2016* (DP16700) supported seven Australian attendees at the *International Prune Association Conference 2016* held in Chile over four days. Attendance was for the purposes of building relationships, receiving updates, exchanging information and holding discussions on the global prune supply and demand situation and outlook; best-practice production techniques and emerging technologies; recent research coming out of producing countries; and promotion initiatives designed to increase prune consumption.
- Throughout the period of the SIP the *Communication and extension program* (DP15002, DP18000 and DP19000) kept the industry up to date on R&D, news, events and other critical information, through the dried fruit industry magazine *The Vine*, Ausprunes e-newsletters, field days, and an annual forum. The program facilitated the awareness of industry R&D, and supported industry coordination and networking.