

Nutgrower

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THE AUSTRALIAN NUT INDUSTRY COUNCIL JOURNAL



CELEBRATING

20
years

NUTS FOR LIFE

2003 - 2023

**Nuts
for Life**
Celebrating
20 years

**Original 'macas'
on publicity drive**

**Record Australian
nut exports FY2022-23**

Nuts for Life – 20 years on

By Michael Waring, Chair, Management Committee

The year 2023 marks 20 years of Nuts for Life, and we think that's worth celebrating! Thank you for being a part of our success over the years.



Mr Michael Waring,
INC Chairman

To me, Nuts for Life is an exemplary example of a productive, collaborative project, that has added significant value to the wider nut industry. We've built a reputation as Australia's credible voice for the vital role nuts play in good health and nutrition.

Over the years, Nuts for Life has played a key role in helping drive nut consumption in Australia – which has more than doubled in volume, and tripled in value since 2003 – to achieve an increase of around 5% compound growth pa.

The driving force behind the formation of Nuts for Life was Chris Joyce. He was appointed the inaugural Chair of Nuts for Life – a position he held for 16 years, until late 2019. We are forever thankful to Chris for his enormous contribution towards what Nuts for Life has been able to achieve.

Our 20 years' milestone is a time to celebrate our achievements and reflect on how far we've come.

We've achieved a lot. Some of the highlights include:

- The launch of the 2030 Vision, aimed at driving nut consumption
- Support from industry, including securing more than \$3 million in voluntary contributions
- Improved positioning for nuts in public health policy (e.g., Health Star Ratings System, and the Australian Dietary Guidelines),
- The launch of the Healthy Handful logo
- Commissioning PhD and other research projects that have advanced nut nutrition and health science
- A highly-effective website, with impressive ongoing growth in traffic
- Significantly more health professionals now recommending nuts



2003 - 2023

- Securing a General Level Health Claim for nuts and heart health
- Supporting industry, including through workshops and training
- Strengthened connections with the INC, International Nut and Dried Fruit Council, and securing INC dissemination grants

Thank you to past and present Nuts for Life team members – Anne Briggs, Lisa Yates, Elizabeth Munn, Claudia Higgins, Belinda Neville, and Maree Hall, and to all the other valued contributors to the program over the years.



The three managers of Nuts for Life over its 20 years – Belinda Neville, Lisa Yates and Anne Briggs.

We are also grateful to the Nuts for Life Management Committee members who, at various time points across the 20 years, have generously shared their time, expertise, and wisdom. More recently, thanks must go to the Australian Nut Industry Council, which provides the legal framework and the support under which Nuts for Life operates.

Most importantly, thank you to our nut industry contributors and to Hort Innovation. Our valuable work over the past 20 years would not have been possible without you.

Let's recognise and celebrate this milestone, and all that Nuts of Life has accomplished!

Nuts for Life -20 Years on' feature continues on page 13.

From NUTS = FAT = BAD to The Healthy Handful

By Chris Joyce, Chair of Nuts for Life, 2003-2019

Today, dietary health professionals accept that nuts are a positive and essential part of the human diet. This was not always the case.

Up to the 1990s, nuts were regarded as full of fat. All fat was bad. Dietary guidelines placed nuts at the narrow peak of the food pyramid to be consumed only on special occasions. Whilst the science on good fats was becoming obvious at this time, it was not generally accepted and certainly not accepted with respect to nuts.

In the 1990s there were a number of peer-reviewed papers, published in leading journals such as the New England Journal of Medicine and the British Medical Journal that showed clear positive association with nuts and reduced heart disease and the lowering of cholesterol. This good news was not receiving wide spread coverage or acceptance by health professionals.

The Australian nut industries attempted to form an organisation in the 1990s to spread the science of nuts and health. While there was generally strong support, the two largest nut industries at the time declined to participate. It was not until the Macadamia/ANIC (MANIC) conference of 2002 that the concept was revived. By 2003 Nuts for Health was formed with the support of all of the tree nut industries and most of the nut importers.

Nuts for Health received support from Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL) until 2004 when, based on doubtful legal advice, HAL decided that the name was in breach of the Food Standards Code. The name was changed to Nuts for Life (N4L) and ANIC took on legal administration. The Australian government through HAL and its successor, Hort Innovation, has continued to financially support N4L. The majority of the funds for the program come from voluntary contributions from about 30 grower associations and commercial industry participants in the nut industry.

The science on the essential contribution regular nut consumption makes to human health continues to be published with the almost total absence of any adverse stories, unheard of in the complex world of human nutrition.



2003 - 2023

Nuts for Life did not discover the science of nut health. N4L accelerated the passage of the knowledge to health professionals and food regulators. Today all health professionals accept the science. Food regulators include nuts in the official Australian Dietary Guidelines. In 2005 a N4L survey showed that 50% General Practitioners advised against nut consumption!

In the life of N4L, Australian nut consumption has trebled from about \$240 million in 2003 to about \$750 million in 2022. This is a growth rate of over 5% compound per annum, well above the combined population and inflation rates for the 20 years. The investment by the nut industries has been a little over \$2 million – it seems to have been a good investment.



In 2019 Lisa Yates received the the Healthy Handful award from ANIC for her significant contribution to Nuts for Life. (l to r) Brendan Sidhu, ANIC Chair, Lisa, and Chris Joyce, N4L Chair.

Nuts for Life – Celebrating 20 productive years



2003 - 2023

In 1995 a proposal was put to the Australian nut industry to create a program to inform consumers of the health benefits of nuts, but it was unsuccessful due to a lack of support from industry. However the evidence was gathering – more and more research supported nuts in a healthy diet.

In 2002 at a combined Australian Macadamia Society/ANIC conference there was widespread support by industry present to form what became Nuts for Health. So began the forerunner of Nuts for Life (N4L)....

- 2003** March - Nuts for Health established, managed internally by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL). Anne Briggs is employed as dietitian and Sharon Natoli as a consultant. Officially launched at World Congress of Clinical Nutrition in Brisbane.
First health professional attitude market research completed – would be repeated approximately every 2 years
- 2004** HAL manager suggests 'Nuts for Health' is in breach of Food Standards Code, and closes the program until it can be resolved. Industry registers 'Nuts for Life' as a holding registration.
- 2005** Dietitian Lisa Yates starts as Program Manager.
'Nutrient composition of nuts' resource first developed.
Launch of N4L website www.nutsforlife.com.au
- 2006** University of Wollongong is commissioned to do the first nuts and heart health literature review to substantiate a nut and heart disease high-level health claim (later switched to a general-level health claim).
First consumer attitude market research completed.
- 2007** First 3-year strategic plan developed.
First consumer PR campaign results in a Channel 7 news story. Includes sending out '400 kits' with five serves of nuts to famous Australians in sport TV.
First 20 recipes developed.
PR event causes alarm at Prime Minister's office. Nuts sent to Julia Gillard's office arrive in plain box and Federal Police called in to ask Lisa "please explain!" N4L sends an apology and Prime Minister replies with message to say she loves nuts and will continue to eat them. Even bad publicity is good publicity!
- 2008** N4L delegation meet with Senator Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Steve McCutchen, CEO of FSANZ and Commonwealth DOH, regarding the Nutrient Profiling Scoring Criteria (NPSC) and macadamias not passing (which prevents a food making claims). After only five minutes, the Senator turns to CEO of FSANZ and says "fix it". The NPSC formed part of the Health Star Rating algorithm years later.

- 2009** NutEBytes launches – mini media information sent out quarterly.
Submission made to the Front of Pack Labelling to Food Regulation Standing Committee.
First submission regarding core foods, leads to review of the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
NutENews launches - health professional monthly newsletter begins.
Nut myth-busting workshops delivered around the country.
- 2010** Twitter account launches.
Dietitian Liz Munn joins the team part-time.
National Library of Australia starts to annually archive the Nuts for Life website, as a valuable resource for librarians around the world, via their Pandora database.
Australian Dietary Guidelines review – a draft modelling document is released and nuts now included in diets at 30g, 2-7 times a week!



Liz Munn and Lisa Yates at one of the many events they attended promoting the health benefits of nuts.

- 2011/12** First Vision and Values for N4L are developed:
Vision
Grow our status as Australia's authority on tree nuts and health and improve the overall health of Australians by educating them about the importance of regular tree nut consumption.
Values
Information, Education, Communication, Advocacy, Affiliation, Collaboration.
- 2012** Submission made to the draft Australian Dietary Guidelines.
International Congress of Dietetics, Sydney – N4L and INC fund a nut symposium as part of the congress, bringing to Australia two of the PREDIMED Mediterranean Diet study researchers, Professor Jordi Salas Salvado and Dr Emilio Ros, who present with Professor Linda Tapsell.
Professor Clare Collins, University of Newcastle, commissioned to update nut heart health literature review.
The Nut Report – Nuts and the Big Fat Myth launches.
Facebook account launches.

Australian Nut Conference, Melbourne – presentations by Lisa Yates on Nuts for Life turning 10 and achievements to date.



Chair Chris Joyce receives the inaugural Golden Handful for his long-standing contribution to the Australian tree nut industry, including his role in establishing N4L.

Celebrating 10 years for Nuts for Life.

- 2013** Australian Dietary Guidelines (2013 edition) launched – recognises the role of foods containing 'healthy fats', no longer a need to avoid all fat, and that nuts play a role in cholesterol reduction.
- 2014** Launch of the Healthy Handful logo with celebrity chef Paul West, River Cottage Australia.
N4L presents at INC Congress, Melbourne.
- 2015** Dietitians Association of Australia conference – N4L sponsors keynote speaker Professor Rick Mattes, Purdue University, to present "Health benefits of nuts for weight and glycemia management". Resulted in 19 media clips, 3 radio interviews and a potential social media reach of nearly 600,000.
Launch of 'Storehouse' - dietitians bloggers directory, with Emma Stirling.
- 2016** A systematic literature review (led by Professor Linda Tapsell, University of Wollongong) to substantiate a general level health claim for nuts supporting heart health is completed.
Twitter consumer food styling event and competition campaign, #nuts30days30ways, launches.
Liz Munn departs and Belinda Neville starts as part-time dietitian.
Legal structure and operation moves from HAL to Australian Nut Industry Council (ANIC).
- 2017** Australian Nut Conference: General-level health claim ('Nuts support heart health') is officially launched by Chair Chris Joyce.
Media promotion around the health claim, with support from INC. Media outreach achieves 5.6 million impressions (which included 60 online articles).
Instagram account launches.
#Nuts30days30ways animation developed, aimed at fitness professionals.
Lisa Yates departs and Belinda Neville appointed as Program Manager.
100 FAQs developed for the website, for search engine optimisation gains.
- 2018** Claudia Higgins, Marketing Manager, starts.
Re-analysis of the 2011-2013 Australian Health Survey (AHS), shows that only 2% of Australians (at the time of the survey) ate 30g of nuts per day.
- 2019** Update of Vision, Mission, and Values
N4L wins €13,700 INC Dissemination Grant to spread the word about the re-analysis of nut consumption in the 2011-2013 AHS.

Launch of these results by Dr Elizabeth Neale, University of Wollongong, to health professionals. PR and media outreach achieves reach of more than 11 million.

Lisa Yates receives Golden Handful Award for Services to nut industry for her work as Program Manager.

Chris Joyce steps down as Chair, after 16 years at the helm.

2020 Michael Waring becomes Chair.

General-level health claim logo launched.

Belinda Neville presents at INC (online) Congress.

Maree Hall is appointed Digital and Communications Manager.

N4L joins Queensland Horticulture GrowCom initiative, 'Eat Yourself to Health', promoting the consumption of fresh produce including fruits, vegetables, and nuts.

Launch of Vision 2030.

The Healthy Handful podcast begins and Linked In account set up.



The current N4L team, Belinda Neville (l) and Maree Hall.

- 2021** Bid for a new €50,000 INC Dissemination Grant successful to support dissemination of the findings of the evidence for nuts and heart disease, and to apply for a high-level health claim.
- 2022** N4L welcomes peanuts to the program.
Belinda Neville presents at INC Congress, Dubai.
N4L is the first organisation to apply to FSANZ for a new food-health relationship (high-level health claim) that nuts 'reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease' (since withdrawn and will be re-submitted in 2024).
- 2023** Belinda Neville presents at INC Congress, London.
A further €50,000 INC Dissemination Grant to support two applications to FSANZ: for a food-health relationship (high-level health claim), and a change to the way energy is calculated for nuts.
N4L celebrates 20 years!



Over its 20 years, Nuts for Life has:

- engaged in 108 health professional conferences and events, with a reach to nearly 80,000 health professionals
- acquired nearly 4,000 subscribers to NutENews - for health professionals
- gained more than 44,000 social media followers – across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn
- showcased more than 190 recipes on the website
- grown website traffic, to achieve more than 180,000 page views this year.