

Meeting Information

Date	July 21, 2026
Time	07:21 – 09:10pm
Chair	Nick Young
Attendees	David Rutley, Damir Biki, Joel White, Angelo Fusella, Simon Walker Jackson Malley, Amanda Rofo, Joel White, Vele Civijovski, Belinda Lambert

Key Decisions

- **Treasurer Transition:** Angelo Fusella will serve as backup and trainer for the new treasurer (not primary role). Nick to reach out to potential candidates if no volunteers within a few days.
- **Rotating Chair System:** Board will decide on meeting chair at each meeting rather than using a fixed roster. Everyone to chair at least once per year. Jackson to lead the next meeting on August 18, 2026 7:30 PM .
- **Leticia's Webinar:** Propose to Letitia Ware that we promote the webinar (\$195, 10% member discount) on AGIA channels but *not* as an official AGIA webinar.
- **Strategic Plan:** Board members to provide feedback on Joel's draft within one month. Nick to create working document for input. Target completion by end of 2026. Potential collaborative weekend meeting in late October once key focus areas are identified.
- **Diggers Expression of Interest:** Don't include form in next newsletter (4 early adopters already signed up); re-evaluate for subsequent editions.
- **Oregon State University Inquiry:** Share member experiences and excerpts from AGIA resources paper on witch's broom/secondary shooting. Explore potential for collaborative data collection.

Quick recap

The AGIA board meeting addressed multiple key topics, including the treasurer role transition following Damir's departure. Nick and Angelo discussed support structures and the need for a new treasurer. The board agreed to implement a rotating meeting chair system to increase engagement. Nick presented a draft strategic plan, with members discussing its focus, representation of growers of all sizes, and potential collaboration with AusVeg and supermarkets. Members shared garlic crop updates, highlighting varied growing conditions across Australia. The board decided to promote Leticia's webinar with a member discount but not host it as an official AGIA event due to cost. The meeting also addressed an Oregon State University inquiry about witch's broom in garlic, with members sharing experiences and suggesting collaborative data collection. Other updates included progress on an AI weeding machine, expressions of interest for Diggers, and crop reports from members.

Next steps

Angelo

- Support and train the new Treasurer as a backup.

Belinda

- Send out the strategic plan slide (from Joel) to the board for comments.
- Contact Leticia to discuss the webinar promotion on AGIA Social media and communication channels. Discuss future engagements (e.g., conference speaker).
- Review the resources paper on secondary shooting (witch's broom) and share relevant excerpts with Oregon State University.
- Follow up with Angelo regarding access to Google Drive and WhatsApp.
- Do not include the Diggers expression of interest form in the next newsletter, then re-evaluate for subsequent ones.

Jackson

- Lead the next board meeting on Tuesday, 18th of August, with support from Nick and Belinda.

Nick

- Finalize the migration to Xero and Stripe syncing, and generate the financial reports for the past month.
- Reach out to potential candidates for the Treasurer role if no one volunteers within the next few days.
- Set up a working document based on Joel's strategic plan for board members to input their thoughts and ideas.
- Speak with Angelo about the Xero administrator setup.

Collaboration

- Board Members: Provide thoughts and feedback on the strategic plan document within the next month.

Summary

Garlic Experiment and Treasurer Update

Damir shared updates about his garlic growing method, noting that subtropical garlic plants performed better outdoors in crates than inside the greenhouse, despite colder weather conditions. Nick formally thanked Damir for his service as treasurer, acknowledging his valuable contributions during a transition period and expressing hope for continued involvement. Damir confirmed he would step down from the board but expressed willingness to return if a position became available in the future, and mentioned he would complete administrative tasks related to removing himself from bank and Stripe systems.

Membership and Treasury Updates

Nick reported eight renewals and three new members since the last meeting. He is working with Angelo to migrate to Xero while resolving Stripe account access issues. Nick requested volunteers for the treasurer role, with Angelo offering to serve as backup and trainer rather than taking the primary position. The board discussed implementing deputy and assistant treasurer roles to provide backup coverage for critical positions.

Rotating Meeting Chair System

The group discussed implementing a rotating meeting chair system. Jackson recommended that the board decide on a chair for each meeting rather than using a fixed roster. They agreed that everyone would chair a meeting at least once per year, with Jackson volunteering to go first.

Strategic Plan Discussion

Industry Representation & Focus

- The association discussed effective representation of both small and large growers
- David raised concerns about aligning with major retailers like Coles and Woolworths
- Joel emphasized the association's role in protecting the industry from potential issues caused by large operators, even when they operate independently
- Angelo clarified that AGIA represents the majority of garlic growers by *number*, though not necessarily by production volume
- Nick explained that while large companies like AGP and Moonrocks are members, they maintain separate operations and only engage with the association for specific needs like APVMA permits

Development Process & Timeline

- Nick proposed creating a working document based on Joel's work, with designated sections for team members to contribute thoughts and suggestions
- Target completion: end of 2026, with announcement as the 2026-2030 strategic plan
- Board members to provide feedback within one month to determine the organization's focus areas
- Nick expressed interest in organizing another collaborative weekend meeting (similar to the previous Negambie gathering) once key focus areas are established, potentially in late October

Webinar Pricing and Promotion Discussion

The board discussed Leticia's proposed webinar priced at \$195 with a 10% member discount, which was deemed too expensive compared to typical free AGIA webinar offerings. The group agreed to promote the webinar on their website and social media with the member discount rather than making it an official AGIA webinar. They also explored alternative options including inviting Leticia to speak at future conferences or the Garlic Festival.

Project Updates and Garlic Discussion

The team discussed several project updates. Simon reported that his AI weeding machine is currently in New Zealand and will be tested on farm at the end of next month to determine if it

can operate over garlic at maximum height. Belinda mentioned receiving four early expressions of interest for Diggers contract. Nick suggested not including this in the next newsletter since early adopters are already signed up.

Garlic Witch's Broom Research Planning

The group discussed a recent Oregon State University inquiry about witch's broom in garlic growing and explored methods for gathering scientific data. Nick suggested reaching out to Oregon State University for guidance on data requirements, while Angelo proposed creating an online questionnaire for growers to collect information over time. David mentioned the concept of citizen scientists and suggested working with a university to develop a survey that could be distributed to members to gather data points. The discussion also touched on potential future research comparing Australian garlic with imported garlic in terms of nutrient value.

Winter Crop Growth Updates

Member	Location	Key Update
Belinda	Victoria	Crop looking good, Leaves a lighter green in some cultivars, therefore pplied foliar nitrogen fertilizers. Weedmat working well. Experimental section struggling which is to be expected..
Angelo	Victoria	Five rows at different growth stages. First two rows planted in April (at 7-leaf stage), last three planted early June (still emerging, 6.5 weeks in). Spanish Roja and Italian Whites sprouting well — 60% found their own way through weedmat vs. 20% in earlier rows.
Joel	Victoria	Crop looking good at 15–20 cm height. All plants teased out of weedmat. Received ~100 mm rain in 2 weeks prior, with more forecast. Moisture levels excellent.
Vele	Cooma, NSW	Challenging conditions: temperatures dropped to –9.5°C, very dry (only ~20 mm in last 60 days, 507 mm year-to-date). Late-season varieties still haven't emerged. Slow growth overall. Daytime temps reaching 19°C — concerned about rapid temperature swings (up to 30°C daily variation) potentially triggering early maturity and witch's broom. Irrigating as needed.
David	Barossa, SA	Planning to manage around 18,000 plants. David has developed a successful garlic powder product line, including black garlic

		powder. Turbans up and looking good. Spanish Red planted later also looking good. Poor germination/establishment in some late-planted Turbans late planting causing rot and mold in seed. Gave crop 1 hour of drip irrigation due to dry conditions.
Jackson	Gippsland, Victoria	Consistent heavy rain (some days 130 mm). Crop okay but hasn't been inspected in 3 weeks due to other farm priorities and time off. Wet conditions making hand-weeding unappealing. Muddy ground from cattle pugging. Noted 100% witch's broom in experimental raised bed with 100% compost vs. <1% in standard soil — suspects excess nutrients (especially nitrogen) in compost as cause.
Amanda	Victoria	Growing Turbans. Plants at 5–6 leaf stage, growing slowly. Recently finished mulching and weeding, now starting another weeding cycle. Planning to apply fertilizer via foliar spray (currently wet) or fertigation through drip system (when dry). Hoping ground dries out before next visit.
Nick	Victoria	Crop growing well in wet conditions. At weeding stage. Too wet for tractor herbicide application (planned before 5-leaf stage). Considering drone spraying as alternative. Soil moisture excellent but making field operations difficult — tearing up paddocks. Row spacing (~40 cm pathways) too narrow for alternative spraying methods.
Simon	Queensland	Crop doing really well, bulbing nicely. SAP test scheduled for next week. Expecting early harvest (early September instead of late September) due to strong growth. Dealing with persistent 30–40 km/h winds from varying directions for past 6 days, making irrigation difficult.