

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Over \$1m /tonne paid for New Season Baby Potatoes!



Image courtesy of Fairfax Media

Attendance at the Annual Potato Industry Dinner at the National Wine Centre of Australia, Adelaide on Friday night exceeded all expectations!

Opened by Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, the auction of new season baby potatoes, the only one of its kind in Australia, resulted in a final bid of a very impressive \$10,250 by Thomas Foods International Fresh Produce. This was for 10 kgs so that means these very special potatoes actually sold for \$1.02m per tonne! This was a just a little shy of last year's record of \$11,000 set by The Mitolo Group.

Mr Tony Wetherall, SA Stud Stock Manager Elders Ltd, a Corporate Partner of the Association, worked a room of 140 key industry stakeholders to produce this outstanding result. New corporate partner, A-GAS Rural kindly donated a sensational bespoke brazier/BBQ for auction which was sold to Mr Ross Trimboli, Director GTS Farms Pty Ltd for \$2,200! And then another two were sold at the same price to the Widdison families of Kalangadoo, in the South East, so ultimately \$16,850 was raised!

Mr Rod Knight, CEO Thomas Foods International Fresh Produce was later crowned 'The 2017 King of Potatoes' by Senator Ruston. Earlier in the day at the Association's AGM, Mr Knight was appointed as a new Director on the Board of Potatoes South Australia.

All proceeds from the auction will be donated to the Little Heroes Foundation, a charity dedicated to supporting children living with cancer and serious illness, and their families.

Little Heroes Foundation Chairman and CEO Mr Chris McDermott, said “Potatoes South Australia has been a great supporter of the foundation for the last six years. This event is getting bigger and bigger and the foundation is grateful for the support of a great South Australian industry.”

Ms Robbie Davis, CEO of Potatoes South Australia Incorporated, the peak industry body, said “It was wonderful to see such united, collaborative support for the most significant sector of horticulture at both a state and national level, and for our Charity, the Little Heroes Foundation.” Ms Davis also thanked returning Dinner Sponsor; Westpac Agribusiness and other corporate partners, Elders, Peats Soils and Garden Supplies, A-GAS Rural and Prime Super. The wine was generously donated by Hazy Blur Wines and Mitolo Wines.

New Independent Chair, Dr Andrew MacDonald spoke to the guests about the necessary on-going revision of the Association’s strategic direction in order to remain relevant and value-adding to the stakeholders and members it represents. “The management of biosecurity and the commercialisation of product transformed from industry waste and loss are critical objectives moving forward”, he said.

The Dinner, coordinated by the National Wine Centre’s Chef de Cuisine Steve Clark, demonstrated just how sophisticated potatoes can be and how much potential there is to showcase their taste and versatility. An apple and mint sorbet, containing more than 60% potato was featured on the menu; a recipe formulated by TestKitchen and the Association utilising out-graded product.

The auction for the Little Heroes Foundation is held annually in Spring and it is evolving into an increasingly larger event. Potatoes South Australia is delighted to be associated with such a worthwhile cause.

ENDS



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