

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **New Research Centre to Fight Food Waste**

A new \$133 million 10 year research centre will target food waste to improve the future sustainability and profitability of the Australian food industry.

Food waste is a global issue with losses valued at \$1.3 trillion per annum. Food waste costs Australia \$20 billion each and every year and is directly affecting Australia's reputation as a clean, green food producer.

The Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), announced today as a successful Round 19 CRC bid, will be a game-changer in tackling the growing international problem of food waste.

The CRC will take a triple-bottom line approach to reduce and transform food waste to improve industry profitability, tackle food insecurity and enhance Australia's reputation as a sustainable producer of premium food products.

The Fight Food Waste CRC will:

- REDUCE food waste throughout the value chain
- TRANSFORM unavoidable waste into innovative high-value products
- ENGAGE with industry and consumers to deliver behavioural change.

The CRC involves 57 participants from around Australia and overseas who collectively raised \$103 million that will be matched with \$30 million from the CRC Programme.

The bid was led by a committee of industry participants with coordination by the Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA). The CRC will be head-quartered at the University of Adelaide's Waite Campus, the largest concentration of agriculture, food and wine research expertise in the southern hemisphere.

Nodes of the new CRC will be based in Melbourne at RMIT University (Reduce Program), Brisbane at the University of Queensland (Transform Program), and Sydney at the Central Queensland University campus (Engage Program).

The Inaugural Chair of the new CRC is Mr John Webster, previously General Manager of Meat & Livestock Australia, Managing Director of Horticulture Australia Ltd and CEO of Foodbank Australia. The interim CEO is Dr Steven Lapidge, the bid leader and the Director of Food Safety & Innovation at the South Australian Research & Development Institute, PIRSA.

Interim CEO Dr Steven Lapidge said, "we're thrilled the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) bid was successful, and our team is looking forward to formally commencing the CRC operations on 1 July 2018. The new CRC bid brings together industry, government and research

bodies to tackle the growing international problem of food waste, which is at the heart of future industry sustainability.”

This was echoed by CRC Chair, John Webster who thanked everyone involved in the CRC bid, including the industry advisory committee, industry participants, the management team and research institutes for all their work and support to see this game-changing CRC come to fruition.

Research Director, Prof Andy Lowe from the University of Adelaide explains “The CRC has assembled a talented team of experienced researchers to deliver great science for the many industry participants. Research leaders include Dr Bronwyn Laycock (University of Queensland), A/Prof Karli Verghese (RMIT University), A/Prof David Pearson (Central Queensland University) and Dr Valeria Torok (PIRSA).”

Potatoes South Australia’s CEO Ms Robbie Davis was a member of the bid advisory committee and in Sydney for the announcement. The Association and individual companies in the fresh sector including The Mitolo Group, Zerella Fresh, SA Potato Company and Thomas Foods International Fresh Produce are core participants in the new CRC and will be directly involved in research to address waste/loss transformation in the sector. Up to 40 percent of potatoes do not make retail specifications due to size, shape and skin finish and will be repurposed into high value products.

The new CRC will involve primary producers, processors, retailers, food rescue agencies and technology and service providers working right along the value chain with leading research institutes from around Australia.