

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **INDEPENDENT CHAIR FOR POTATOES SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC**



The peak representative body for the potato industry value chain, Potatoes South Australia Incorporated, has appointed experienced and highly-regarded Director and Chairman Mr Brian Cunningham, as its Independent Chair, at a meeting of the Board of Management in Adelaide, last night.

With over 20 years as a Chief Executive in both the private and public sectors, Mr Cunningham brings significant high level management experience to the Potatoes South Australia Boardroom. Mr Cunningham's experience in business growth, investment opportunities, technologies and business, governance and structures and in budget setting, financial statements, and in audit and risk management will be significant assets for Potatoes South Australia with its talented group of newly constituted Directors.

Robbie Davis, CEO, and the Board of Potatoes South Australia are delighted with Mr Cunningham's appointment.

"The membership-based 'not-for-profit' association continues to improve its capacity and professionalism in the delivery of relevant, timely, value-adding information and services to industry stakeholders in the nation's largest horticultural sector. This strengthening at Board level will ensure that our strategic direction remains on target as the business further evolves, involving new complexities and challenges," Ms Davis said.

"Brian will lead a Board of very talented, passionate industry and independent directors, who collectively have a skillset complementing the organisation's growth. The strategic input of an Independent Chair will provide the vehicle for harnessing the skills of this new Board to achieve the higher level goals of the organisation supported by appropriate governance arrangements", she added.

The current Board comprises Mark Geraghty; General Manager Strategy, Marketing and Communications, Elders, Jeffrey Jackson; CEO, Moraitis Group, Gary O'Neill; General Manager-Farms, The Mitolo Group, Ross Trimboli; GTS Farms, James Wandel; Kangaroo Island Irrigated Seed Producers Group, Paul White; General Manager, Zerella Fresh and Andrew Widdison, Chair South East Potato Growers Association.

In terms of corporate profile and history, Mr Cunningham is probably best known in Australian Rules football states in Australia for his key leadership role in the successful tender for an Australian Football League Club franchise licence in 1994. This resulted in Port Adelaide Football Club entering the National competition in 1997. He subsequently drove the growth and development of this state-based sporting club to a highly successful National football league entity in the period 1996-2004.

Subsequently Mr Cunningham was recruited into senior Government roles as a Chief Executive in 2005 where he became recognised as an initiator and driver of organisational and cultural change in two significant Government Departments.

He led the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (budget \$480 million and over 6000 full and part-time staff) through a successful change management program and structural reform implemented in 2005-2008.

In his most recent public sector role as Chief Executive of the Department of Trade and Economic Development (2008-2010), Mr Cunningham led the South Australian Government's key agency for economic and industry development.

Mr Cunningham said he was delighted with his new role. "Potatoes South Australia has a unique opportunity to represent and drive this important sector of the state's primary production. The Board is made up of a highly skilled group of Directors and collectively the Board recognises and looks forward to addressing the challenges in the industry going forward".

Since leaving his last CEO role in 2010, Mr Cunningham has developed a niche and rapidly growing business consultancy focussing on people and business strategies. Aside from consultancy work he undertakes in both public and private sectors, he currently serves as a Director on six other Boards, and is Chairman of three of these.

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