

SA GROWER

Innovation creates industry for future

POTATOES SA
By **ROBBIE DAVIS, CEO**

I WAS very fortunate to attend the recent Agrifutures EvokeAG conference as a guest of our leading corporate partner Elders.

Almost 1200 delegates, including primary producers, value chain stakeholders, entrepreneurs and innovators, from 21 different countries attended this sold-out inaugural international agri-food technology event.

It really was the not-to-be-missed ag-tech event, connecting our producers and the global ag-tech community to each other in a hands-on way.

The standout for me was a program full of new people with new ideas.

This sentiment, to highlight the great things happening in our part of the world and to inspire by hearing from provocative world-leading thought leaders, was reinforced by AgriFutures Australia managing director John Harvey.

The Australian agri-food tech sector's value is estimat-

ed to reach \$100 billion by 2030 - rivalling our mining and construction sectors - and greater investment flow is critical for the industry's success.

The 100 thought-leaders who took to the stage across the two days are renowned for changing the very notions of how we will feed the world's rapidly growing population.

Regarded as 'disruptors' for their visionary innovation, the world-leading speakers connected Australian primary producers with global insights in an Australian first.

Mr Harvey said the event, the first of its kind in the country, exceeded all expectations.

He also emphasised a deliberate focus on the Future Young Leaders Program, comprising the next generation of agribusiness advocates.

The AgriFutures Pitch Tent was another first feature.

Built in consultation with Australia and New Zealand's leading accelerator pro-

grams, it showcased start-ups from across the world looking to scale globally.

There were three finalist group pitches; Investment Ready, Seed Funding and Producer Problem which were at different stages of development/investment.

Additionally, producers were offered a place at the Pitch Tent table, pitching their problems to an audience of start-ups and world-class businesses that were able to provide intelligent, succinct solutions.

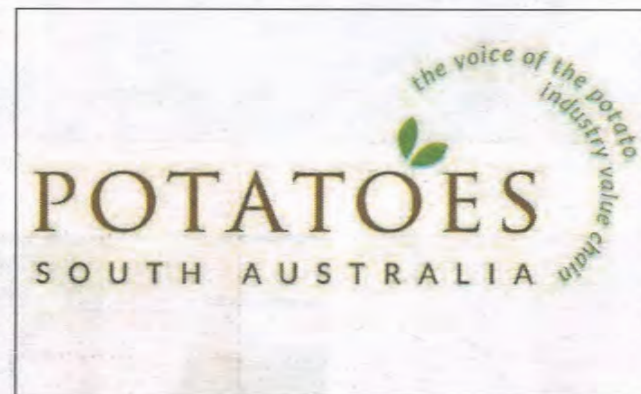
There was also a Start-up Alley featuring 20 inspirational agri-food tech start-ups with potential solutions to some of agriculture's greatest challenges - from insects to marketplaces to robotics.

Some of the most inspirational presentations and fresh insights were provided by international leaders from Israel and the Netherlands, with sessions highlighting key lessons in growing local agri-food tech markets.

Israel's Oded Shoseyov and Nitza Kardish offered



Rural Research and Development Corporations executive officer Tim Lester and AgriFutures Australia managing director John Harvey at the Evoke Ag conference.



Potatoes SA is the voice for seed producers, processors, growers, marketers, exporters, wholesalers and retailers.

ideas on how to compete effectively, particularly by accelerating innovation in the agricultural sector.

Session members Mark Zwinkels from the World Horti Centre and Priva's

Meiny Prins looked at how the Netherlands has developed disruptive technologies and ecosystems to become the second-largest food exporting nation in the world, despite being half the size

of Tas.

Then there was the social aspect with the Festival of Food. I got to taste grasshoppers - a potential alternative source of protein.

Inspirational 'take-aways' include:

- Data is the new gold
- We grow plants in warehouses as opposed to greenhouses
- Focusing on start-ups is not high risk. High risk is to continue doing what we have been doing for the past 30 years.

AgriFutures Australia will bring back evokeAG in 2020 and this should not be missed.

■ Need to know more? evokeag.com