

## MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 15 September 2020

### **Robbie Davis to step down as CEO Potatoes South Australia Inc**



Following eight years at the helm of Potatoes South Australia, Robbie Davis will be stepping down from her role of Chief Executive at the end of 2020.

The change comes as the Association moves into new territory with a greater emphasis on Brand Australia and growing national significance of the world's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest food crop to the Australian horticulture industry.

Despite this inevitable and exciting new challenge, Robbie believes it is the right time to say farewell to the representative body she has built with the help of a band of dedicated stakeholders from all sectors (fresh, processing and seed) who desired a strong industry representative body for what is the nation's largest potato production region.

"It's been a genuine privilege to support the development of Potatoes South Australia during the past eight years. In particular, I take pride in the strength of the Association in delivering value-adding, relevant R&D outcomes through a strong partnership approach between government, industry and research providers both domestically and internationally. I entered the industry with little appreciation of the importance of horticulture to the national economy and depart it with a great respect for its enormous contribution to GDP and especially the pivotal role that potatoes provide."

Robbie recalls one of her first addresses to the potato industry. "I remember talking about how this was not about potatoes, but about food production; the most revered and trusted sector of the Australian economy. That's something which has remained a focus for me ever since, and I think that's evident in the collaborative and cross-sector initiatives Potatoes South Australia has continued to deliver. At a national level, it is critical for the industry to influence and ensure that the R&D levy is effectively spent to drive innovative practice through commercialisation and the uptake of research initiatives which will support the bottom line for all in the value chain. It is the only way in which Australia will remain competitive."

The representative body, steered by dedicated skills-based Directors and expert Independent Chairs, has relied on a voluntary levy, corporate partnerships and project management to provide extraordinary outcomes particularly in the areas of biosecurity ('Block of 4' approach to the management of TPP), industrial relations (Fair Work Commission-Horticultural Award variations) and addressing food waste and loss through transformation.

Another big highlight is winning the global bid to host the World Potato Congress (WPC) in 2023. Potatoes South Australia led the proposal to convene the event in Adelaide, South Australia-the first time the event has been held in Australia.

But for all of the collaborative achievements and many challenges over the years, the one thing that stands out most to Robbie is the need for stakeholders to work together for the good of the industry. This is about making the industry sustainable and profitable through appropriate leadership.

“I particularly wish to thank the Chairs, and all Board Directors during my time with Potatoes South Australia for their insight and extraordinary contribution to South Australia’s economy.”

Robbie will now pursue other interests in agribusiness, including continuing in her current positions on the Fight Food Waste CRC Board, Rural Bank’s Agribusiness Advisory Board and the Limestone Coast Landscape Board.

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