



Media Release

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WELCOME INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE, SKILLS AND MARKET ACCESS

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) welcomes the Government's budget commitments to increase investment in infrastructure, skills and market access which will help to position Australia's fresh produce sector for success.

The new investment in Australia's transport infrastructure is key to increasing Australia's global competitiveness and delivering Australia's produce to Australian families and export markets. The measures to develop an Agriculture Workforce Strategy, encourage more Australians into Seasonal Work and increase uptake of the Seasonal Worker Program will support the fresh produce sector by facilitating a strong permanent Australian workforce, and meeting peak seasonal harvest labour requirements.

The increased funding to address non-tariff barriers, improve horticulture technical market access for exports and continue bilateral cooperation programs with our key trading partners are key elements of expanding exports.

"Increasing fresh produce exports are a key to growing Australia's rural and regional communities and the budget measures are a welcome first step. The funding for market access must also be supported by a whole of government approach backed by skilled negotiators and scientists, to deliver new market access for industry" said Michael Rogers, CEO, Australian Fresh Produce Alliance.

"Industry is developing a reliable, productive and diverse workforce as part of the long term sustainable growth of the industry. The new funding for agriculture and horticulture workforce initiatives will help farmers continue building local expertise and meeting the unique seasonal harvest requirements of fresh produce – picking fruit and vegetables when it is ready" said Mr Rogers.

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About the AFPA - The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) is made up of Australia's key fresh produce growers and suppliers. The members include Costa Group, Perfection Fresh, Montague, One Harvest, Pinata Farms, Fresh Select, Mitolo Group, Mackay's Banana Marketing, Driscoll's, 2PH Farms, LaManna Premier Group, Rugby Farming, Freshmax and Fresh Produce Group. These businesses represent half the industry turnover of the Australian fresh produce (fruit and vegetables) sector - \$4.5 billion of the \$9.1 billion total; 1,000 plus growers through commercial arrangements and more than 15,000 direct employees through peak harvest, and up to 25,000 in the grower network.