



Media Release

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HORTICULTURE STRATEGY PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR FARMERS AND INDUSTRY BODIES TO SUPPORT NEW APPROACH

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) welcomes the release of Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited's (HIAL) new strategy focussed on driving knowledge and innovation in Australian horticulture through its expenditure of more than \$100 million in compulsory industry levies and matching Commonwealth Government contributions.

"Farmers and industry bodies should rally around HIAL's commitment to delivering the highest value R&D, Marketing and Trade investments for Australian horticulture and work together to maximise the growth of the industry for the benefit of all farmers," said AFPA CEO, Mr Michael Rogers.

Australian horticulture has grown in value by 40% over the last 5 years, with 22% annual average export growth over the same period. This makes the industry not only the fastest growing agriculture sector, but one of the strongest growth sectors in the Australian economy, generating more than 72,000 direct jobs, and many more in the supply chain.

With more than 120 horticultural products grown across Australia, horticulture and fresh produce needs to focus on key issues and concentrate resources to deliver outcomes. Key challenges for all farmers include sustainability - environmental, social and economic, export market access, R&D focussed on reducing production costs and improving efficiency and biosecurity.

"In order to ensure industry support and maintain good faith, it is important that the success of HIAL's strategy be clearly demonstrated over the next 12 months through proven and effective delivery of levy funded projects and significantly greater return on investment for growers", 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.