

Media Release

29 January 2025

Richard Clayton elected Chair of the Australian Fresh Produce Alliance for 2025

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) is pleased to announce the unanimous election of Mr Richard Clayton, Managing Director of Australian Produce Partners, as AFPA Chair for the 2025 term. With decades of experience working in the fresh produce industry, Mr Clayton will take over the role from Piñata Farms' Gavin Scurr.

"I am honoured to take on the role of AFPA Chair and look forward to working with industry leaders, government and retailers to create a thriving future for Australian fresh produce. My priority is to support growers by improving our sector's viability while ensuring we continue to deliver quality produce to consumers at home and abroad," said Richard Clayton, AFPA Chair.

Led by Mr Clayton, Australian Produce Partners is a leading fresh produce business that collaborates with growers strategically located across North Queensland to produce, package, distribute, and promote a range of fresh produce, nationally and internationally, including avocados, bananas, citrus, and papaya. Mr Clayton has been involved in the industry all his life and has extensive expertise in growing, sales, logistics, ripening, and, more recently, innovation and varietal development within the banana industry.

"Throughout 2024 Gavin Scurr has provided outstanding leadership, driving the AFPA's efforts to address workforce and sustainability challenges and enhance technical market access for Australian fresh produce. I sincerely thank Gavin for his dedication and the progress he has achieved for our industry," said Mr Clayton.

The election of Mr Clayton has reinforced the AFPA's agenda for 2025 which continues to prioritise supporting pragmatic sustainability solutions, enhancing technical market access to capitalise on growth opportunities in export markets and improving industry's access to a stable and productive workforce.

"The last few years have been an incredibly difficult time for industry, plagued by rising input costs while at the same time we are seeing an overall decline in the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables in Australia. These challenges coupled with ongoing pressure to make fresh food cheaper, changes to industrial relations, migration reform and new environmental sustainability reporting continue to put pressure on industry's growth," said Mr Clayton.

The AFPA is made up of the largest growers in the fresh produce industry, representing half of the industry's annual turnover. AFPA membership is at the CEO level of each of these businesses and advocacy from the AFPA covers a range of issues across horticulture.

"A lot has been said over the past year about competition in the fresh produce industry and how to improve outcomes for growers and consumers. While there is no silver bullet, improving the business environment for industry will be key to supporting ongoing access to fresh and affordable food for Australian families. This means reduced red tape for industry helping to lower production costs, access to the right workforce at the right time and reaching more customers and consumers through improved export market access. I'm looking forward to leading the AFPA in 2025 and continuing to provide leadership on issues that are the most important for the future of Australia's fresh produce industry," said Mr Clayton.