



Media Release

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Veronica Papacosta appointed as new CEO of the Australian Fresh Produce Alliance

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) today announced the appointment of Veronica Papacosta as its new Chief Executive Officer, commencing in January 2026. Veronica will replace Claire McClelland, who has worked with the AFPA since 2019, and in the role of CEO since 2022. Claire will continue with the AFPA throughout a transition period to ensure a smooth handover.

AFPA Chair Richard Clayton said the Board was delighted to welcome Veronica to the organisation and confident she would continue to build on the strong foundations established under Claire's leadership.

"Veronica brings extensive experience across the food industry, along with a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Australia's fresh food producers," Mr Clayton said.

"She has a proven track record of strong industry advocacy, commercial acumen and stakeholder engagement. The Board is confident that under her leadership, the AFPA will continue to advance key issues for the fresh produce industry."

Veronica Papacosta is a highly regarded agrifood industry leader with more than 20 years' experience spanning retail, supply chain management, and industry representation. She has served as Chief Executive Officer of Seafood Industry Australia (SIA) since 2020, where she has led the national peak body through a period of significant growth and reform. During her tenure, she delivered major initiatives to improve community trust, strengthen domestic and export markets, and promote sustainable industry practices.

With a background that bridges industry operations and strategic policy, Veronica brings a unique perspective on the intersection between primary production, retail, and consumer trust. Her appointment reflects the AFPA's continued commitment to strong leadership and practical advocacy on behalf of Australia's fruit and vegetable growers.

Mr Clayton also thanked outgoing CEO Claire McClelland for her leadership and dedication over the past six years.

"Claire has been an outstanding advocate for Australia's fresh produce growers, successfully positioning the AFPA as a trusted voice on workforce, trade, and food supply chain issues," he said.

"Under Claire's leadership, the AFPA has grown in influence and impact, helping to secure meaningful workforce reforms, expand international market access opportunities, and address key challenges facing Australia's fresh produce growers.

"Claire's commitment to collaboration and evidence-based policy has strengthened relationships across government, industry and retail, and delivered tangible benefits for growers across the country. On behalf of the Board, I thank Claire for her exceptional contribution and wish her the very best as she takes some well-earned time off to travel and recharge before her next chapter."

A formal transition process will take place over the coming months, with Veronica commencing as CEO in January 2026.

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