

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Monday, 14 December 2015

National Training Centre for horticulture innovation launched in Tasmania

A new collaboration between the [University of Tasmania](#) and Australia's horticulture industry is set to drive growth and innovation in the nation's fresh fruit and vegetable sector.

The [Australian Research Council](#) (ARC) [Industrial Transformation Training Centre for Innovative Horticultural Products](#) will train innovative, 'industry savvy' researchers who will contribute to the development of new products with improved shelf life and quality.

University of Tasmania Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Brigid Heywood, said the Training Centre provided an opportunity for industry and scientists to come together to strengthen Australia's industrial skills base to support the needs of the growing horticulture industry.

"Research will be enhanced through collaboration between the University of Tasmania and leading Australian businesses to support the needs of the future fresh produce sector," Professor Heywood said.

"Research underpins future innovation here in Tasmanian and throughout Australia, and the ARC Industrial Transformation Training Centre for Innovative Horticultural Products will play an important role in driving this agenda through applied research and the effective translation of this in Australia's fresh produce industry."

[Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture](#) food microbiologist, [Associate Professor Tom Ross](#), leads the Centre and says the focus will be on producing innovative fresh produce that is convenient, affordable, healthy and safe.

"The ARC Industrial Transformation Training Centre for Innovative Horticultural Products will train and mentor industry-relevant researchers who will also undertake a number of research projects focused on delivering more convenient and longer-lasting fresh fruit and vegetables," Associate Professor Ross said.

"Researcher training will be focused on needs and opportunities in the Australian fresh produce industry through projects, course-work and industry placements with active collaboration and mentoring from food growers, processors and retailers, such as the Centre's key industry investor Woolworths.

"The 10 PhD students and three postdoctoral researchers that we have taken on so far will enhance the capacity of Australia's fresh produce industry to innovate, to meet consumer needs and take advantage of the opportunities in local and international markets, aiding Australia's food security and improving the industry's competitiveness.

"We will deliver to industry research professionals who understand food product innovation and have a transdisciplinary approach to delivering products that satisfy market demand."

In addition to Woolworths, the Centre is partnering with [Houston's Farm](#), CSIRO and the Defence Science and Technology Organisation.

Research collaborators are Queensland Government and the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation.

The partnership with Woolworths has also allowed for the Centre to work with other groups including [Hansen Orchards](#), [Perfection Fresh](#), [Costa](#), [Zerella Fresh](#), and the [Australian Mango Industry Association](#).

The Centre has received more than \$2 million over three years in ARC funding and more than \$1.1 million in industry contributions.

The ARC Industrial Transformation Training Centre for Innovative Horticultural Products will be officially launched today at Government House by Her Excellency Professor The Honourable Kate Warner, AM, Governor of Tasmania.

Media Opportunity

- What:** Official launch of the ARC Industrial Transformation Training Centre for Innovative Horticultural Products
- When:** 11am, Monday 14 December 2015
- Where:** Government House, 7 Lower Domain Road, Hobart

The ARC Industrial Transformation Training Centre for Innovative Horticultural Products is supported through funding from the Australian Research Council's Industrial Transformation Training Centres scheme (project number IC140100024).

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