

# PROGRAM

## Australian Agriculture Roundtable Conference 2015 Hilton Sydney, 4 & 5 November 2015

### Conference Dinner

#### Wednesday, 4 November

- 6:00 pm Registration
- 6:30 pm Pre-dinner drinks
- 7:20 pm **Chairman's Address: David Anthony**, Australian Farm Institute
- 7:30 pm Presentation of the 2015 John Ralph Essay Competition Prize
- 8:00 pm **Dinner Speaker: Donald McGauchie**,  
Chairman, Australian Agricultural Company Limited  
*What Australian agriculture needs to do to achieve long-term success*
- 8:30 pm Questions and answers

### Roundtable Conference

#### Thursday, 5 November

- 7:00 am Registration and breakfast
- 7:40 am **Breakfast Speaker: Senator Richard Di Natale**,  
Leader of the Australian Greens, Senator for Victoria  
*The policy settings that are needed to help ensure agriculture becomes one of the future  
'growth engines' of the Australian economy*
- 8:10 am Questions and answers

### The Basin Plan three years on

A feature of the 2015 Australian Agriculture Roundtable Conference will be a review of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, three years after its inception. The Basin Plan was one of the most controversial agricultural policy issues when it was introduced, and was the culmination of over 100 years of water wars between various Australian states, the Australian Government, irrigators and environmental groups. Now, three years post inception, what lessons have been learnt, and what future changes may be needed? Three eminently qualified experts will address this question.

- 8:45 am **Introduction: Mick Keogh**, Executive Director, Australian Farm Institute
- 9:00 am **Colin Mues**, Acting Executive Director, Environmental Management Division,  
Murray-Darling Basin Authority
- 9:20 am **Dr Arlene Harriss-Buchan**, Healthy Rivers Campaigner, Australian Conservation Foundation
- 9:40 am **Gavin McMahon**, Chair, National Irrigators' Council
- 10:00 am Questions and answers
- 10:30 am Morning tea

# Roundtable Conference (continued)

Thursday, 5 November

## Succeeding in premium markets

It has been widely recognised that the major growth opportunities for Australian agriculture lie in higher value markets, in which brand values and national reputation and standards are important elements of the attractiveness of products for consumers. However, higher value domestic and international markets also bring their own challenges, with complex distribution systems, globalised, demanding retailers, the increased risk of reputational damage due to product failure, and the ever-present threat of imitation or counterfeiting. What does it take to be successful in premium markets, either within Australia or internationally? What are the critical issues for a company, and to what extent do national biosecurity standards and safety reputations have an impact? The speakers will provide some answers to these questions.

11:00 am **John Power**, General Manager, Batlow Fruit Co-operative Limited

11:20 am **Dalene Wray**, General Manager, OBE Organic

12:00 pm Questions and answers

**12:30 pm Lunch**

## China and Australian agriculture

China has been a rapidly growing market for Australian agricultural products over recent years, growing from 11.4% of the value of Australian agricultural exports in 2007–08 to 22% in 2013–14, and is now the sector's single biggest export market. The recent economic turbulence in China has had a major impact on the Chinese sharemarket, has resulted in lower rates of Chinese GDP growth, and the Chinese Government taking very strong action to attempt to reduce market volatility. Given that China is now Australian agriculture's largest single market, these developments could be of critical importance for the sector, but their implications are as yet uncertain. What will the economic slowdown in China mean for Australian agriculture?

1:30 pm **Professor Hans Hendrichske**, Professor of Chinese Business and Management, The University of Sydney Business School

1:50 pm **Brett Kelly**, Chief Executive Officer, Norco Co-operative Limited

2:10 pm **James Campbell**, Chief Executive Officer, Sanger Australia Pty Ltd

2:30 pm Questions and answers

**3:00 pm Afternoon tea**

## Rural telecommunications and digital infrastructure

Telecommunications and digital information systems are rapidly emerging as an important new opportunity to increase agricultural productivity. Modern agricultural machinery is now commonly internet-enabled, the cost of digital sensors has plummeted, and autonomous tractors and robots are now a reality, rather than a figment of a scientist's imagination. The big question for the agriculture sector in Australia is whether national telecommunications infrastructure will be adequate to enable these technologies to be fully utilised, or whether this will be a significant limitation. The speakers presenting during this session will attempt to answer this question.

3:30 pm **Professor David Lamb**, Precision Agriculture Research Group, SMART Farm Project, The University of New England

3:50 pm **Su McCluskey**, Panel Member, Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee

4:30 pm Questions and answers

**5:00 pm Conference close**