



# FUTURE READY ALMONDS

## OFFICIAL PROGRAM



AUSTRALIAN  
ALMOND  
CONFERENCE

ADELAIDE  
2-4 OCT  
2024



# Are your trees receiving the perfect micronutrients?

## Haifa Micro Fe-EDDHA (6% Fe)

The highest quality iron chelate with 5.2% ortho-ortho

### Don't waste time and money

Choose the correct iron chelate for your soil pH and carefully check its analysis



## A new standard in soluble chelates

In addition to using Haifa's renowned high quality water soluble fertilisers, you can also now access the company's superior chelated micronutrients. This includes chelates with the highest stability, such as EDDHA iron with the strongest soil stability. Haifa also can supply specific micronutrient blends compatible with a wide range of fertilisers.





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**ALMOND BOARD  
OF AUSTRALIA**



# EVENT INFORMATION



## REGISTRATION

Please see the Conference registration desk at the venue if there are any questions in regard to your registration.

## ACCOMMODATION

The InterContinental Hotel is conveniently right next to the Adelaide Convention Centre. The InterContinental has offered a 25% discount to all attendees of the Australian Almond Conference. All you need to do is let them know you're attending when you make your booking!

## ARRIVAL

Exhibitors must check in at the Registration Desk prior to setting up their exhibition booths.

## INTERNET

The Conference venue has facilities for wireless or cable internet services. Exhibitors that require internet services will need to arrange this at their own expense with their service provider or with the venue.

## INSURANCE

Exhibitors must ensure that adequate insurance coverage is taken out against the loss, theft or damage of all products brought to the Exhibition. This includes during transportation to and from the event. It is recommended that Exhibitors take out public liability insurance to cover any loss, damage, expense, liability, mishap or injury which may occur within their stand area or in connection with the construction of their stand.

## CASHLESS VENUE

The Adelaide Convention Centre is a fully cashless venue. We accept payment via card only for all onsite charges, including car parking, food and beverages.

Major credit cards, debit cards and mobile pay (Apple Pay, Google Pay and Samsung Pay) are accepted. Any applicable payment surcharges will be absorbed by the venue.

## PARKING

If you are driving to the Centre, we offer two undercover car parking options with our North Terrace and Riverbank car parks. The Riverbank car park is accessible from Morphett Street / Festival Drive. Both car parks are located directly under the Centre and operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Each is fitted with video surveillance camera systems and security patrols both areas. Clearance is 2.0 metres and automated payment stations accept payment via card only (major credit cards, debit cards and mobile pay). Please note that our car parks can reach capacity early in the day during busy events.

0-1 HOUR \$7.50

1-2 HOURS \$12.00

2-3 HOURS \$16.00

3-4 HOURS \$18.00



# WELCOME

The Australian Almond Conference in Adelaide from October 2-4 this year promises a program full of engaging subject matter that showcases the challenges and opportunities the industry faces on farm and beyond.

The biennial event will attempt to tackle the opportunities looming to future proof the industry and gain access to some of the most astute almond minds in the world.

There will subject matter for growers big and small and speakers along with a trade exhibition area featuring new technology to help growers do more with less.

The design of conference is specifically tailored to ensure trade exhibitors and sponsors gain maximum access to delegates. We are back in the same location at the Adelaide Convention Centre with two speaking forums at each end of the trade exhibition area and hospitality hub.

Instead of keeping all things separate the aim is to immerse suppliers and growers in the one environment so everyone gets the opportunity look, listen and learn.

There is no glossing over the fact that many growers (and suppliers) have experienced tough times since our last conference and this year's program will tackle issues like pollination, water efficiency, disease and pest management, dieback, new varieties and autonomous machinery. Our conference will also utilise Slido app to ensure all delegates can interact with presenters and get the answers they want to their specific problems.

Since our last conference, we have seen:

- Australian production continue to grow. Now over 64,000 hectares.
- Almond sales exceed annual production
- After two tough years, global pricing has started to improve
- Investment in new Australian orchards continues unabated
- Our revised tonnage timeline push toward 180,000 tonnes by 2030
- India re-emerges as one of our biggest customers due to a new trade agreement
- Orchards embrace autonomous machinery to cut costs
- Renewed interest in self fertile varieties and higher density plantings
- Pollination costs skyrocket due to arrival of varroa
- Sustainability credentials emerge as a fact of life in agriculture
- Drying and effective on-farm storage a key focus

Despite all the challenges we have faced, Australian almonds continue to emerge as a powerhouse industry that has attracted significant investment.

The ABA, in conjunction with Hort Innovation, has almost 30 research and development programs dedicated to addressing key issues on farm, doing more with less and promoting the benefits of consuming a handful of almonds every day.

The aim of the Conference in 2024 will be bringing together as many stakeholders as possible by delivering a Conference program that educates, facilitates, collaborates and celebrates on issues throughout the supply chain.

We will again run the alternative spouses wine and chocolate tour to the McLaren Vale winery region on day two and our Wednesday-Friday fixturing leads straight into the October long weekend. It is recognition that growing almonds is a partnership that starts at home and the Conference should be an event that has something for everyone.

We will also celebrate those that have contributed significantly to the industry and have an entertaining program lined up for our Gala Dinner at the Convention Centre.

We would look forward to seeing you there and trust the event represents the value deserved of your sponsorship.

Tim Jackson (CEO)

Peter Hayes (Chairman)





Belt-Type Sorter  
**CSX600BW**

# Advanced X-Ray with AI Optical Sorting

- Industry proven with successful Pinhole Detection combining X-ray with AI technology on both Kernel & Inshell almonds
- Additional Full RGB along with Dual-IR technology
- X-Ray with AI Shape & Foreign sorting capability
- Patented MIX technology

## Fast AI for Demanding Quality Inspection

- Satake-Borde Partnership offer fully automated inline QC grading to USDA standards
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- Constant feedback of entire batch for product quality to your QC team





# GALA DINNER



The Australian Almond Conference Gala Dinner is a standout event during the conference, offering attendees a lavish experience filled with fine dining and entertainment. It serves as a wonderful occasion for all participants to gather, enjoy themselves, and commemorate the industry's achievements.

The evening's highlights encompass the induction of a Hall of Fame honorees, captivating music by Ben Whittington, and comedic and hypnotic performances by Gerald V!

<b>WHEN</b>	Thursday, October 3rd, 2024
<b>TIME</b>	6:30PM - 10:30PM
<b>WHERE</b>	Adelaide Convention Centre, Panorama Ballroom
<b>DRESS</b>	Black Tie
<b>EVENTS</b>	Red Carpet Cocktails in Foyer 'M' at 6:30pm, Dinner, Live Music & Entertainment in the Panorama Ballroom from 7:30pm.

## MEET MUSICIAN BEN WHITTINGTON.

The Gala Dinner attendees will be dancing in their seats when Ben Whittington graces the stage.

He is the lead singer and guitarist for That 90's Show band at The Adelaide Fringe, with every show without fail selling out. Ben is a long time solo and duo artist from Adelaide, a frequent featuring artist at Finn McCools, The Arkaba, Coopers Ale House, The Highway, The District at Sky City. He was the supporting artist for Reese Mastin tour this year and in the process of recording his first album of his own originals. Ben's musical stylings are sure to get the party started at the always-popular dinner.

## MEET COMEDY HYPNOTIST GERARD V.

'Hilarious, quirky, comedy hypnotist stage shows that people will be talking about for years.

Gerard V has been wowing audiences everywhere with his easy going fresh approach, awesome hypnotic skills and outrageous humour. This is all 'round good fun. This clean hypnotist show is utterly amazing and is regularly booked internationally. The gags are all clean, family friendly and safe for work functions, club functions, conferences and customer events. Sit back and relax while Gerard V adds sparkle and energy to the proceedings, gets the laughter going, and keeps everyone enthralled and entertained.'



GALA DINNER SPONSORED BY OMNIA



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# CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2ND

### **Almond Board of Australia Annual General Meeting**

4:30pm - 5:30pm in halls M, N  
Adelaide Convention Centre  
Registrations open 3pm - 5pm

### **Welcome function**

5:30pm - 7:30pm in halls M, N  
Adelaide Convention Centre

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3RD & FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4TH

Registrations open 8am

**Conference presentations**  
from 8.30am in halls L and M, N  
Adelaide Convention Centre  
Grand Stage and Experts' Forum

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3RD

### **Spouses Tour**

### **Explore McLaren Vale**

9:15 am pick up, 4.30pm return to Adelaide  
Convention Centre Entrance

## THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 3RD

### **Gala Dinner**

6.30pm Red Carpet cocktails in Foyer M  
7.30pm dinner in Panorama Ballroom  
Adelaide Convention Centre



## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2ND.

**THE ABA'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 4:30 - 5:30PM**  
**WELCOME RECEPTION – SPONSORED BY STOLLER, 5:30 - 8:00PM**  
**BOTH IN TRADE EXHIBITION HALLS M, N.**

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3RD.

### STAGE ONE (Hall L)

### STAGE TWO (Halls M, N)

- 8.30 Welcome and setting the scene**  
Daniela Ritorto, Julie Bird (Hort Innovation), Peter Hayes (ABA), ABA Directors
- 9.00 Opening and fertiliser future**  
Motti Levin (CEO HAIFA), Trevor Dennis (HAIFA Australia MD)
- 9.15 State of the Industry**  
Tim Jackson (ABA)
- 9.45 Where is the water market headed?**  
Ryan Gormly (AITHER)

**Closed for plenary session on Stage One**

**Spouses tour will visit McLaren Vale, including lunch and an afternoon tour of Haigh's Chocolate Factory. Meet at 9:15am for 9:30am departure, returning at 4:30pm**

### 10.15 MORNING TEA: 30 MINUTES

- 10.45 Politics, Policy, the Basin Plan**  
Professor Neville Crossman (One Basin CRC)
- 11.20 Where to now for irrigators**  
Zara Lowien (National Irrigators Council)
- 11.55 Agri-outlook for the Australian economy**  
Mark Bennett (ANZ)

- MC - Zelmary Coetzee (Hort Innovation)**
- 10.45 Spanish high-density orchard systems and management techniques**  
Xavier Miarnau, IRTA (Institute of Agrifood Research and Technology)
- 11.30 PANEL: High density orchards with Spanish, Californian and Australian experts**  
Xavier Miarnau (IRTA), Roger Duncan (UC Cooperative Extension), Roberta De Bei (PFR)
- 12.15 Q&A**

### 12.30 LUNCH: 1 HOUR

- 1.45 Taking Aussie almonds to the world**  
Mel Wyness (Brand MO), Sumit Saran (India)
- 2.15 Global nut supply demand snapshot**  
Michael Waring (INC)
- 3.00 Almond market snapshot Q&A**  
SHV, NPA, ofi, Almondco

- MC - Ash Zamek (Hort Innovation)**
- 1.45 PANEL: Stockpile management - protecting your crop**  
Michael Ward (SHV), Ben Cant (Almondco), Michael Coates (NPA), Joanne Holloway (NSW DPI)  
*Facilitated by Peter Jealous*
- 2.25 Hive tech to drive grower savings - an independent review**  
Theotime Colin (Macquarie University)
- 2.45 Panel: Pollination – varroa a game changer**  
Trevor Monson, Keegan Blighaut (Duxton), Danny le Feuvre (AHBIC), Theotime Colin (Macquarie University)  
*Facilitated by Deidre Jaensch*

### 3.30 AFTERNOON TEA: 30 MINUTES

- 4.00 Keeping an eye on quality - Qcify give a global perspective**  
Raf Peeters (Qcify)
- 4.30 PANEL: Farming into the future - the new obligations?**  
Rob Cox (Amaretto), Claire Kneller (Leading Harvest), Gemma Nunn (Century Orchards)  
*Facilitated by Ella Henson*
- 5.15 Close**

- MC - Onyeka Nzie (Hort Innovation)**
- 4.00 Inputs to improve productivity - Californian researcher Jim Adaskaveg**  
Jim Adaskaveg (University of California)
- 4.45 PANEL: Where to now for monterey**  
Len Tesoriero (Crop Doc Consulting Pty Ltd.), Peter Reynolds (Yenda Producers), Nathan Payne (Agefild Services)  
*Facilitated by Josh Fielke*
- 5.15 Close**

**GALA DINNER: 6.30 - 10.30PM IN PANORAMA BALLROOM**



# FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4TH.

## STAGE ONE (Hall L)

## STAGE TWO (Halls M, N)

- 8.30 Robotics - new technology to save money**  
Brian Baumgartner (Bonsai Robotics)
- 9.00 Newcomers Panel: New entrants to the industry share their insights**  
Liam Lenaghan (GoFarm), David Armstrong (Murray Downs Almonds), Stephen Beckwith (WA), James Loechel (Koompartu)
- 9.45 PANEL: Saving money in repairs and maintenance**  
Jeremy Giddings, Nick Walker, Harry Goy.  
*Facilitated by Peter Jealous*

- MC - Zelmary Coetzee (Hort Innovation)**
- 8.30 Rootstocks and varieties - A Californian perspective with Roger Duncan UCCE**  
Roger Duncan (UC Cooperative Extension)
- 9.00 The latest on Aussie rootstock trials**  
Josh Fielke (ABA)
- 9.30 Rootstocks plus cultivars - what looks promising for Aussie conditions**  
Darren Graetz (PIRSA)
- 10.00 Q&A**

### 10.15 MORNING TEA: 30 MINUTES

- 10.45 PANEL: Staying in business - Strategies to make ends meet**  
Jeff MacDonald (RLS Agribusiness), Clare Hamilton-Bate (Australian Macadamia Society), Jane Barter (Agfield Services), Neale Bennett (Cowanna)  
*Facilitated by Andrew Francey*
- 11.15 PANEL: The big question - what do I plant?**  
Nathan Payne (Agfield Services), Brendan Sidhu (Century Orchards), Luke Stoeckel (Cannonball Almonds), Ben Brown (Select Harvests), James Callipari (Wilga Lane Produce), Cassandra Collins, Roger Duncan (UCCE), Dr Sebastian Saa (ABC).  
*Facilitated by Josh Fielke*

- MC - Onyeka Nzie (Hort Innovation)**
- 10.45 Managing hull rot**  
Tonya Wiechel (Agriculture Victoria)
- 11.15 Phytophthora and trunk disease**  
Brittany Oswald (SARDI)
- 11.45 Carpophilus - is there a silver bullet?**  
David Madge, Paul Cunningham (Agriculture Victoria), Brian Slater (AFS), Dr Lauren Fann (ABC).  
*Facilitated by Deidre Jaensch*

**12.15 Q&A**

**12.15 Q&A**

### 12.30 LUNCH: 1 HOUR

- 1.30 Ask the Experts**
- On the Couch with Keynote Speakers**  
Roger Duncan, Jim Adaskaveg, Xavier Miarnau, Dr Sebastian Saa, Dr Lauren Fann, Liam Lenaghan, Trevor Dennis, Jeff McDonald
- 2.30 - 3.30 Take Home Messages. What's Next?**  
Paul Thompson and emerging industry leaders.

**Location: The conference will be held at the Adelaide Convention Centre for the duration of the listed events**



**TRADE EXHIBITION HAPPY HOUR 3:30PM - 4:30PM – SPONSORED BY NETAFIM**  
**TRADE EXHIBITS FULLY BOOKED & OPEN BOTH DAYS!**





# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



## Ryan Gormly - Aither

**Where is the Water Market Headed? - Stage 1, 9.45AM DAY 1**

Ryan is an economist and policy advisor specialising in water. He has deep knowledge of Australia's rural and urban water sectors, and extensive experience in policy, regulation, markets, pricing, institutions and governance, and reform. Ryan's key strengths include his ability to critically analyse complex problems, develop solutions, and provide high quality, outcomes focused advice. Ryan leads Aither's water policy and management consulting area and manages consulting teams to deliver a range of water related projects across Australia. He has extensive experience in rural water management and water markets and trade, at the state and Commonwealth levels, and strong knowledge of interjurisdictional water management and sharing arrangements. Ryan successfully led the Phase 1 Review of Schedule D under the Commonwealth Water Act. The review involved delivering a recommendation report advising on issues and solutions associated with Schedule D. Other key recent projects on water markets include assessments of water market effectiveness in Victoria, analysis of water market trends and drivers in NSW, advice to the Victorian and NSW state governments on the ACCC's recently proposed water market reforms, and advice to the MDBA on provision of water market information. Ryan's previous role at the National Water Commission involved delivery of rural water projects and programs. He developed a deep understanding of state-based water rights, water markets and trade including interstate arrangements, and water accounting, through delivery of analysis and reforms. He delivered flagship reports such as the Australian Water Markets Report and Australian water markets: trends and drivers report. In this role Ryan also participated in interstate Trade Working Group and Trade Operator Panel meetings as a Commonwealth observer and in support of the Commission's reform assessments and water market analysis and reporting.



## Roger Duncan - University of California Cooperative Extension

**Panel with Spanish, Californian and Australian Experts - Stage 2 11.30 DAY 1**

**Rootstocks and Varieties A Californian Perspective - Stage 2, 8.30AM DAY 2**

**Panel The Big Question What Do I Plant? - Stage 1, 11.15AM DAY 2**

**Ask the Experts On the Couch with Key Note Speakers - Stage 1, 1.30PM DAY 2**

Roger Duncan has been an orchard crops farm advisor with the University of California Cooperative Extension for over 30 years, working primarily with almonds and peaches. Roger works closely with growers, consultants, and commercial tree nurseries in Stanislaus County, an area with over 90,000 hectares of commercial almond orchards located in the North San Joaquin Valley. Roger's research and extension program has included testing new rootstocks and varieties, minimal pruning systems, and orchard design for efficient almond production. He has written several grower-directed publications on almond rootstocks, including the rootstock chapter for the new UC Almond Production manual and a UC tri-fold pamphlet, and produced content for an on-line rootstock database at [fruitsandnuts.ucdavis.edu](http://fruitsandnuts.ucdavis.edu). Roger received his M.S. in plant science / plant protection from California State University, Fresno, and his B.S. from UC Davis.



## Neville Crossman - One Basin CRC and Flinders University

**Politics, Policy, the Basin Plan - Stage 1, 10.45AM DAY 1**

Professor Neville Crossman is a Professorial Research Fellow in Economics at Flinders University. He is currently the Program Leader for Adaptation and Innovation and the Government Engagement and Business Development Lead at the One Basin CRC. Professor Crossman is internationally recognised for his research and policy work in managing land, water, and biodiversity. His research focuses on the social and economic benefits of good environmental stewardship and how this knowledge can improve decisions and investments in land and water in Australia and internationally. Throughout his 20-year career, he has worked in various sectors, including as a Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO, a private international consultant, and the Lead Economist and Director of Social Economics at the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. He has also held numerous international advisory roles with organizations such as the United Nations, European Union, World Bank, and WWF. Professor Crossman has published nearly 70 papers in high-impact international journals and has over 13,000 career citations. He has also presented over 40 papers at international conferences and held editorial roles in several high-impact journals.



# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



## Xavier Miarnau - IRTA

**Spanish High-Density Orchard Systems and Management Techniques - Stage 2, 10.45 DAY 1**

**Panel High-Density Orchards with Spanish, Californian and Australian Experts - Stage 2 11.30 DAY 1**

**Ask the Experts On the Couch with Key Note Speakers - Stage 1, 1.30PM DAY 2**

Xavier Miarnau has a degree in Agronomic Engineering from ETSEALL (University of Lleida (Spain), 1997) and a PhD in Plant Production from ETSEALL (University of Lleida, 2008).

He joined IRTA in 2007, as specialist in almond crop at the Lleida Experimental Station (Fruit Production Program). He works on issues of plant material (involved in the IRTA almond breeding program) and on issues of crop technology. Within the period of the last 10 years (2013-2023), he has participated in 12 R+D+i coordinated and non-coordinated projects funded by various national and international Public Administrations and specifically participated as IP (coordinator) in two projects. Within the same period, he has participated in more than 100 contracts, agreements, or non-competitive R+D+i projects, mostly with private companies. The researcher has published 18 articles (2 more sent this year) in scientific journals with impact index (WOS-JCR, Clarivate), and more than 50 additional contributions to technical journals. He has to date 50 contributions to national and international scientific congresses (international and national). Regarding the technology transfer, he has participated in more than 100 national and international technical seminars and conferences within the last ten years, and in more than 100 national technical and research transfer actions to the sector. He is currently supervising 2 PhD theses in collaboration. He has supervised in the last 10 years: 9 final degree projects (TFG), master's (TFM) or equivalent. He performs as a reviewer for different scientific journals, mostly focused on Agriculture and Crop Protection.



## James (Jim) Adaskaveg - University of California

**Inputs to Improve Productivity Californian Researcher - Stage 2, 4.00PM DAY 1**

**Ask the Experts On the Couch with Key Note Speakers - Stage 1, 1.30PM DAY 2**

Dr. James E. Adaskaveg is a professor of plant pathology in the Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology, University of California, Riverside for nearly 30 years. He is a world-renown plant pathologist who has been recognized for his outstanding research efforts by commodity groups and professional organizations. The California almond, cherry, and citrus industries, the American Phytopathological Society (APS), and international organizations in Argentina and Chile have awarded his distinguished contributions in pre- and postharvest research on fruit and nut crops. He is a Fellow of APS and received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the APS-Pacific Division. Dr. Adaskaveg has over 100 scientific publications, he wrote numerous book chapters, and he co-edited the recently published book on "Postharvest Pathology of Fruit and Nut Crops".

Dr. Adaskaveg specializes in studying fungal and bacterial diseases of many tree fruit and nut crops grown in California. He has developed epidemiological models based on pathogen biology and environmental conditions (i.e., temperature and wetness) to forecast fungal diseases such as Alternaria leaf spot and shot hole of almond, rust of peach, Septoria spot and brown rot of citrus, and he developed the XanthoCast model for forecasting the bacterial disease walnut blight. Professor Adaskaveg was instrumental in identifying numerous fungicides, biopesticides, and biological controls to manage fruit and nut diseases for in-season and after-harvest use during storage, transportation, and marketing of commodities. In cooperation with the registrants and the United States federal IR-4 specialty crop registration program, Dr. Adaskaveg has evaluated nearly all treatments currently available for temperate crops including pome fruits, stone fruits (including almond), walnuts, and kiwifruit, as well as subtropical crops such as citrus and avocado. His latest efforts have led to an improved understanding of the Phytophthora species affecting tree crops in California and the registration of new fungicides for managing Phytophthora diseases of almond, avocado, and citrus with registrations pending on cherry and other stone and pome fruit crops.



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# CONFERENCE MC SPEAKERS

## **Julie Bird - Hort Innovation**

Julie is an experienced non-executive director in the agribusiness sector, with a broad background in the Australian horticulture industry. She is current Chair of Hort Innovation and Australian Seafood Industries, owner of retail floristry business 'Say It With Flowers' and Non-Executive Director of Cotton Research & Development Corporation and Grain Producers SA. Julie's prior roles include Non-Executive Director and Deputy Chair of Plant Health Australia, CEO of the Almond Board of Australia, and Non-Executive Director of United Almonds Limited/Almond Investors Limited and the Australian Nut Industry Council. She also served as Independent Chair of the Australian Apple and Pear Industry Advisory Committee and the South Australian Apiary Industry Advisory Group. Julie is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and holds Bachelor of Teaching degree and Master of Business Administration (MBA Executive).

## **Peter Hayes - Independent Chair, Almond Board of Australia**

Peter Hayes has over 30 years of experience in the wine industry, covering education and training, R&D investment, viticultural operations, and government affairs. His roles include State Viticulturist at Agriculture Victoria, Executive Director at GWRDC, Director of Viticulture at Rosemount Estates, and National Viticulturist at Southcorp Wines (now Treasury Wine Estates). A strong advocate for R&D and professional development, Peter has contributed to innovation in the wine sector in Australia, India, and the UK. He chairs the advisory board at Charles Sturt University's Gulbali Institute and is a board member of the One Basin Cooperative Research Centre. He became independent Chairman of the Almond Board of Australia in February 2020. Peter has held various industry leadership positions, including President of the OIV, Chair of the Irrigation Futures CRC, and Council Member of the AWRI. He was named a Fellow of the ASVO in 2015 and appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in January 2016. His qualifications include a B.Sc. from the University of Melbourne, a Dip.Ed. from Monash University, a B.App.Sci. in Wine Science, and an MS in Horticulture from UC Davis.

## **Tim Jackson - CEO, Almond Board of Australia**

Tim has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Almond Board of Australia since October 2021. He has been working in the almond industry for the past 13 years and was previously the Group Sales and Marketing Manager of Almondco Australia Ltd. He is also a former director of Almond Board of Australia and served on several industry committees. Tim has more than 30 years' experience in agri-business through a wide range of communications and marketing roles including running his own business.

## **Daniela Ritorto - Communication Professional**

Daniela Ritorto is a journalist, MC and communications professional with two decades of national and international experience including as BBC World News presenter in London, SBS Chief Political Correspondent in Canberra and managing communications for an ASX top 30 company. Using her vast Master of Ceremony experience, Daniela will host the two days of speakers and facilitate a number of panel Q and As and discussions.



# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **David Armstrong - Australian Farming Services**

### **New Comers Panel New Entrants to Industry Share their Insights - Stage 1, 9.00AM DAY 2**

David Armstrong is CEO of Australian Farming Services, a farmland development and management company. David has two masters degrees and more than 25 years experience in agribusiness management, working with listed companies and international investment funds. He is a strong believer in decentralised management teams.

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## **Jane Barter - Agfield Services**

### **Panel Staying in Business Strategies to Make Ends Meet - Stage 1, 10.45AM DAY 2**

Jane is the Business Manager of AgField Services, a business established with her husband, Nathan Payne, that provides almond development, management and contracting services to nearly 2,000 hectares of almond orchards within the Riverina. Jane's diverse career background includes working for Rural Funds Management in compliance, risk management and capital raising, managing a 70 room boutique hotel in Canberra responsible for operations, budgets and staff management as well as in HR for the Attorney General's Department. This range of experience has been vital in establishing AgField Services where Jane is involved in all aspects of the business from finance, operations, safety, HR and business strategy.

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## **Brian Baumgartner - Bonsai Robotics**

### **Robotics New Technology to Save Money - Stage 1, 8.30AM DAY 2**

Brian Baumgartner is an autonomy expert with experience in land, air, sea, and space robotics. He has led teams at high profile companies like Uber, Aurora, and SpaceX, as well as conducted cutting edge research for the U.S. Department of Defense and Australian CSIRO. Brian joined Bonsai Robotics with a goal of bringing lessons from on-road autonomous vehicles (a.k.a. "self-driving cars") to the orchard in order to improve agricultural efficiency in labour, cost reduction, and speed.

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## **Stephen Beckwith - Indian Ocean Farms**

### **New Comers Panel New Entrants to Industry Share their Insights - Stage 1, 9.00AM DAY 2**

ABA Director, Swan Region Grower Representative.

Stephen holds a Bachelor of Business Degree and is currently the General Manager of Indian Ocean Farms, which includes three properties in Western Australia. Stephen joined the almond industry in 2019 after spending six years with the Berry Division of the Costa Group, as Regional Manager Tasmania and Regional Manager Western Australia. Prior to this Stephen was Operations Manager of the Sumich Olive Oil Division in Western Australia for 10 years. Stephen is a past Chairman, Treasurer and Director of two local Community Banks and has been involved with numerous industry and community groups, including Industry Advisory Committees. Stephen is a member of the ABA Production Committee, Conference Committee, a proxy member of the Audit Committee and the current Chair of the ABA Chemical Taskforce.



# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

## **Mark Bennett - ANZ**

### **Agri-Outlook for Australian Economy - Stage 1, 11.55AM DAY 1**

I currently lead ANZ Agribusiness in Australia with a focus on strategy and Industry Insights that are designed to deliver information and promote positive change for our industry. I also have direct accountability for our portfolio of large or complex commercial businesses in regional Australia that together with Agri make a significant contribution to our regional economy.

I've worked in Agribusiness for 25 years with previous senior business management roles at Rabobank that exposed me to agribusiness in Australia and around the world.

My family continue to farm on a dry land cropping property at Waitchie, Northwest Victoria where I was brought up.



## **Neale Bennett - Grower and Almond Board of Australia director**

### **Panel Staying in Business Strategies to Make Ends Meet - Stage 1, 10.45AM DAY 2**

Neale is a fourth-generation horticulturist who is still farming the same land that was cleared by his ancestors in the early 1900's at Merbein, approximately 20km's from Mildura in Victoria. He has worked in the horticulture field for 40 years. In 1992, he started converting the 17 ha family property from vines (dried fruit) to almonds. This was completed by 2005. Neale is also a current member of the Almond Board of Australia as one of the two Sunraysia Representatives. He also served as the Board Chair for 6 years.



## **Keegan Blighaut - Duxton Bees Pty Ltd**

### **Panel Pollination Varroa a Game Changer - Stage 2, 2.45PM DAY 1**

Keegan's beekeeping journey began at 11 years old, taking him from South Africa to New Zealand, and more recently to Australia. With over two decades of involvement in the beekeeping industry, Keegan brings a wealth of experience and expertise. He is currently the Managing Director of Duxton Bees Pty Ltd, whilst also actively engaging with industry bodies including the South Australian Varroa Industry Advisory Committee and the Agrifutures Honey and Pollination Advisory Panel. Keegan's international exposure has provided him with a comprehensive understanding of global beekeeping practices, and he is committed to helping beekeepers to manage Varroa mite effectively and so support pollination dependent industries. His passion for apiculture drives his vision for collaboration, innovation, and sustainable practices in the Australian beekeeping industry.



## **Ben Brown - Select Harvests**

### **Panel The Big Question What Do I Plant? - Stage 1, 11.15AM DAY 2**

Ben Brown joined Select Harvests as Project and Technical Manager in November 2014. Ben's role was to lead the development of greenfield orchards and expansion of the company's horticultural assets. In addition, Ben led the development, monitoring and evaluation of the horticultural program, and assist in its implementation. On 1st April 2018, Ben was appointed the General Manager Horticulture. Before joining Select Harvests, Ben was the Industry Development Manager at the Almond Board of Australia for nearly eight years, and an irrigation and soil agronomist at Yandilla Park for a similar duration. In addition to this, Ben's had experience in the applied production of almonds, stonefruit, citrus and carrots. Ben is an Applied Science graduate with Honours in Soil Science and has nearly 20 years' experience across perennial irrigated horticulture with expertise in: orchard development; production horticulture; the development of detailed RD&E strategies; and extension and technology transfer of best practice.





# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **James Callipari - Wilga Lane Produce, Almond Board of Australia Director**

### **Panel The Big Question What Do I Plant? - Stage 1, 11.15AM DAY 2**

James completed a Bachelor of Applied Science (Agriculture) degree, graduating in 2003 before returning to the family farming business in a formal capacity. He has extensive experience in all aspects of the production of a wide range of fruits, vegetables, and grains, both irrigated and dryland. James commenced his involvement in the Australian Almond Industry with the development of an almond orchard in the Riverina region during 2006 where his past farming experience proved invaluable. In 2013, James was the recipient of the Phil Watters Award which recognises excellence and service to the Australian Almond Industry. In 2019, James joined the Board as a Director representing the Riverina growing region and has since become a graduate of the Australian Institute of company Directors.

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## **Ben Cant - Almondco**

### **Panel Stockpile Management Protecting your Crop - Stage 2, 1.45PM DAY 1**

Ben Cant is a seasoned executive with extensive experience in the horticultural industry, currently serving as the Group Operations Manager at Almondco Australia. In this role, he focuses on optimizing production processes, maximizing outputs, whilst developing staff and systems to ensure long-term success. His strategic leadership has been pivotal in achieving Almondco's growth and sustainability goals. Before joining Almondco, Ben was the National Citrus Supply Manager at Costa Group, Australia's largest citrus grower, where he managed complex global supply chains and enhanced operational efficiencies. His tenure at Costa Group underscored his expertise in complex supply chain management and operational excellence. Ben also served as a Grower Director and Chair of Citrus Australia for nearly a decade, driving initiatives that significantly boosted exports, grower returns and industry profitability. His leadership at Citrus Australia was marked by a focus on collaborative growth, efficiency, and innovation. Ben's commitment to the horticultural sector continues to drive success and advancement at Almondco Australia.

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## **Michael Coates**

### **Panel Stockpile Management Protecting your Crop - Stage 2, 1.45PM DAY 1**

Dr Michael Coates is the former Commercial R&D Manager at Nut Producers Australia. Michael has a bachelor's degree in engineering (Mechanical / Mechatronic) and a PhD in thermodynamics where he developed models of moisture movement in almond fruit. He has spent the last 12 years researching tree nuts in the harvesting and drying space to develop methods to dry commercial quantities of fruit including the development of technologies to monitor and maintain fruit quality.

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## **Theotime Colin - Macquarie University**

### **Hive tech to drive grower savings - an independent review - Stage 2, 2.25PM Day 1,**

### **Panel Pollination Varroa a Game Changer - Stage 2, 2.45PM DAY 1**

Dr. Théotime "Theo" Colin is a honeybee scientist focusing on techniques to improve honeybee health in Australia. He specialises in hive monitoring and colony-level population dynamics. Dr. Colin also leads the Hort Innovation project "Best practices for evaluation of bee health technology" which aims at comparing commercially available hive sensor technologies to improve the health and management of honeybee hives for pollination purposes.





# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Cassandra Collins - University of Adelaide**

### **Panel The Big Question What Do I Plant? - Stage 1, 11.15AM DAY 2**

Associate Professor Cassandra Collins (BAGSc Hons Viticulture, PhD, Grad Cert Higher Ed) has been a researcher in viticulture for over 25 years. After completing a Bachelor of Agricultural Science and a PhD in Horticulture, she gained experience in the wine industry as a cellar hand, an assistant winemaker and a viticulturist. However, a love of plants and a passion for research and teaching led her to researcher roles with the South Australian Research and Development Institute and the University of Adelaide, and then to her current role as a lecturer and manager of the almond breeding program.

Cassandra's current research specialisation is breeding, reproduction, yield prediction, organic and biodynamic management, canopy management, agrivoltaics and new technologies for assessing vine performance.

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## **Robert Cox - Amaretto Almonds**

### **Pannel Farming into the Future, The New Obligations - Stage 1, 4.30PM DAY 1**

Robert was appointed Senior Almond Orchard Manager at Amaretto Almonds in December 2017. A local to the Sunraysia area, he has extensive experience in horticulture, focusing on almonds since 2003. He began his career at Sunsalt (1996–2003), where he developed problem-solving skills in a challenging environment. In 2003, Robert joined Select Harvests, learning various aspects of the almond industry, including irrigation and processing. By 2005, he was the Assistant Manager at Narcooyia Orchard, successfully managing a 1513 ha development. He later transferred to Lake Powell, where he planted an additional 615 ha before becoming Orchard Manager at Kyndalyn Park in 2008. From 2008 to 2013, Robert managed several orchards for Select Harvests and then served as Manager for Bright Light Agribusiness (2013–2017), establishing accounting and safety policies while improving infrastructure across various orchards. Since joining Amaretto Almonds, Robert aims to position the company as an innovative industry leader, overseeing both orchards and driving further development in the horticultural sector, including the recent 567 ha Nora Leigh Orchard project.

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## **Paul Cunningham - Agriculture Victoria**

### **Carpophilus Is There a Silver Buller? - Stage 2 11.45AM DAY 2**

Associate Professor Paul Cunningham: Paul is Research Leader for the Invertebrate and Weed Sciences group, a team of 32 scientists in the Agriculture Victoria Research (AVR) Division of DEECA. Paul's team develops and evaluates new tools and practices for detecting, monitoring, and controlling Australia's priority insect pests, through integrated pest management (IPM), applied chemical ecology, insect diagnostics and surveillance, and biocontrol. Paul has 25 years of research experience in the behaviour, ecology and management of insect pests, with over 50 refereed publications in this field. The research he leads developing new insect lures for IPM has led to one approved patent (almond carpophilus beetle lure) with 3 further patent filings currently in review. Paul has developed and led many large collaborative industry-coinvested projects in IPM, forging strong links with local growers that suffer problems with insect pest management.



# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Roberta De Bei - Plant & Food Research Australia Pty Ltd**

### **Panel High-Density Orchards with Spanish, Californian and Australian Experts - Stage 2 11.30 DAY 1**

Dr Roberta De Bei is a senior scientist and plant physiologist at Plant and Food Research Australia. Roberta's work focuses on understanding tree and orchard light environment, tree architecture, vigour management, fruit quality, production efficiency, tree/plant training and orchard systems. Roberta leads the almond component of the Hort Innovation program "National Tree crop intensification in horticulture" which aims to provide the Australian almond industry with a greater understanding of the performance of intensive almond production systems.

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## **Trevor Dennis - Haifa**

### **Opening and Fertiliser - Stage 1, 9.00AM DAY 1**

### **Ask the Experts On the Couch with Key Note Speakers - Stage 1, 1.30PM DAY 2**

As the Managing Director of Haifa Australia, Trevor has had a front row seat to the challenges around supply of fertilisers to Australian agriculture over the past 16 years. He is a board member of Fertiliser Australia, the peak industry body for the Australian fertiliser industry and has a decorated career across a range of roles in the agriculture sector.

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## **Dr Lauren Fann - Almond Board of California**

### **Carpophilus Is There a Silver Buller? - Stage 2 11.45AM DAY 2**

### **Ask the Experts On the Couch with Key Note Speakers - Stage 1, 1.30PM DAY 2**

Lauren Fann is the Senior Pest Management Specialist at the Almond Board of California (ABC), a role she has held since September 2022. In this capacity, Lauren oversees the pest management research portfolio, acting as the primary resource on pest management issues. She engages with the industry to develop and implement pest management strategies, collaborating with various partners to create effective outreach vehicles. Lauren holds a Ph.D. in Entomology from the University of Kentucky, where her research centered on managing the brown marmorated stink bug in organic and small-acreage vegetable systems. Her expertise is instrumental in identifying ways to communicate new findings and best practices to growers and Pest Control Advisors. She leads the technical review of research proposals and provides valuable insights on pesticide use. Additionally, Lauren engages with stakeholders to understand the industry's pest management needs and seeks innovative solutions, including agricultural technology, biopesticides, and assessments of current practices.

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## **Josh Fielke - Almond Board of Australia**

### **Facilitator Panel Where to Now for Monterey - Stage 2, 4.45PM DAY 1**

### **The Latest on Aussie Rootstock Trials - Stage 2, 9.00AM DAY 2**

### **Facilitator Panel The Big Question What Do I Plant? - Stage 1, 11.15AM DAY 2**

Josh is an Industry Development Officer at the ABA. Josh has been involved in the horticulture industry since 2010 working with a variety of crops. Josh began as a farm hand at QFM Productions, and then completed a Bachelor of Environmental Science at the University of South Australia. Josh then gained a post-graduate job at the Mitolo Group as an agronomist. This role was based around nutrition, and pest and disease management.



# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Jeremy Giddings - Agriculture Victoria**

### **Panel Saving Money in Repairs and Maintenance - Stage 1, 9.45AM DAY 2**

Jeremy Giddings has spent nearly 30 years' delivering irrigation extension in the lower Murray Darling. Since joining NSW DPI in 1996 and later Agriculture Victoria in 2016, he has developed and delivered training in drip irrigation management, soil management and irrigation scheduling to a range of horticultural irrigators. Jeremy is a Certified Irrigation Agronomist and Certified Irrigation Designer (Sprinkler) with Irrigation Australia. In addition, Jeremy has been involved in overseas citrus irrigation extension projects in Pakistan and Bhutan. For the last three years he has helped Almonds Australia deliver irrigation workshops and webinars to interested almond producers in Sunraysia, Riverland and the MIA.

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## **Harry Goy - Fieldin**

### **Panel Saving Money in Repairs and Maintenance - Stage 1, 9.45AM DAY 2**

Harry Goy is Fieldin's Head of Business Development and Grower Success. A third-generation tree nursery grower with a Masters in Agribusiness, Harry leverages his extensive knowledge and hands-on experience in almond orchard development and irrigation to help growers succeed using Fieldin's advanced farming technologies.

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## **Darren Graetz - PIRSA**

### **Rootstocks plus cultivars - what looks promising for Aussie conditions - Stage 2, 9.30AM DAY 2**

Darren Graetz is a Senior Research Scientist with more than 30 years' experience in SARDI's Horticulture Production team. Originally a general pathologist, much of Darren's career has been spent breeding apricots and cherries, evaluating varieties and developing new growing systems in a range of crops (apricot, cherry, almond). Darren's diverse and practical experience has included viticulture irrigation bench marking, managing the operations of the Australian Pastures Genebank (APG) and advancing ultra-high-density production systems for various tree crops. Darren contributes to multiple field experiments at the Almond Centre of Excellence and is responsible for SARDI's rootstock compatibility screens.

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## **Clare Hamilton-Bate - Australian Macadamia Society**

### **Panel Staying in Business Strategies to Make Ends Meet - Stage 1, 10.45AM DAY 2**

Clare Hamilton-Bate has over 30 years' experience across all sectors of the fresh produce and agri-food supply chains, both in Australia and internationally. As the CEO of the Australian Macadamia Society, the representative body for the macadamia industry in Australia, Clare leads the AMS team in delivering services to industry including industry & market development, communication & engagement, and advocacy & representation where a united industry voice is stronger than any one business can be alone. Beyond her qualifications, experience and industry involvement, Clare's greatest qualities are her passion for the industries she works with and her drive to always find an answer, firmly believing nothing is impossible!

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Ella Henson - Almond Board of Australia**

**Facilitator of Pannel Farming into the Future, The New Obligations - Stage 1, 4.30PM DAY 1**

Ella Henson was appointed to the position of Industry Development Officer - Sustainability in May 2022. Ella completed a Bachelor of Environmental Science (Honours) at Deakin University in Melbourne. Her role is to drive efforts to ensure that sustainability is integrated into best management practice and adopted by the industry.

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## **Jo Holloway - Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development**

**Panel Stockpile Management Protecting your Crop - Stage 2, 1.45PM DAY 1**

Jo Holloway has worked as an entomologist for over 20 years with the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. Work has involved management of insect pests in stored grain, as well as broadacre crops. The main focus of her research has been insecticide resistance management and integrated pest management (IPM). She has been part of the Hort Innovations funded IPM in Almond project team since 2018. Work with this project has concentrated on the postharvest management of almond insect pests, primarily investigating phosphine fumigation of almonds.

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## **Deidre Jaensch - Almond Board of Australia**

**Facilitator Carpophilus Is There a Silver Buller? - Stage 2 11.45AM DAY 2**

**Facilitator Panel Pollination Varroa a Game Changer - Stage 2, 2.45PM DAY 1**

Deidre joined the ABA in October 2019 as Industry Development Manager. She holds a Bachelor of Agricultural Science and has worked in irrigated horticulture within the government, industry and private sectors for over 27 years. Deidre manages the research and development program working with growers, researchers, suppliers and service providers as well as industry collaborators to generate the knowledge, skills and technologies required to enhance industry's competitiveness and further development in line with the almond industry strategic investment plan.

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## **Peter Jealous - Almond Board of Australia**

**Facilitator Stockpile Management - Protecting your Crop - Stage 2 1:45PM DAY 1**

**Facilitator Saving money in repairs and maintenance - Stage 1 9:45AM DAY 2**

Peter Jealous has been serving as an Industry Development Officer (IDO) with the Almond Board of Australia (ABA) since March 2023. In this role, Peter works directly with almond growers and industry stakeholders, focusing on developing impactful education programs, managing research projects and providing technical support to improve industry outcomes. He holds a master's degree in Agricultural Sciences, specialising in Horticultural Production from The University of Queensland. With a strong focus on industry trends and innovation, Peter is dedicated to supporting the growth and sustainability of the almond industry.

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## **Claire Kneller - Leading Harvest**

**Pannel Farming into the Future, The New Obligations - Stage 1, 4.30PM DAY 1**

Claire is a food systems and circular economy expert with almost 20 years' experience in the UK and Australia. She's a member of Minister Plibersek's Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group and has a wealth of expertise in systems change. She recently joined as GM for Leading Harvest's Australian operations, leading their work on building the credibility of regenerative agriculture claims and helping to drive a market value for certified products in both domestic and international markets.



# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Danny Le Feuvre - Australian Honey Bee Industry Council**

### **Panel Pollination Varroa a Game Changer - Stage 2, 2.45PM DAY 1**

Danny is the CEO of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) and has been involved in the recent Varroa incursion in NSW. He is a non-executive director of AgriFutures Australia and is passionate about rural industries, especially the honey bee industry. With 15 years of experience as a commercial beekeeper with Australian Bee Services (ABS), he is skilled in pollination services and honey production in South Australia. Danny has a strong background in agricultural science, RD&E, and agribusiness consultancy, and has volunteered in many industry roles. He was previously an executive member of AHBIC and a member of the Hort Innovation Expert Advisory Panel. Danny holds a Bachelor of Applied Science from Melbourne University, a Master of Agribusiness from the University of Adelaide, and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD).



## **Liam Lenaghan - GO.FARM**

### **New Comers Panel New Entrants to Industry Share their Insights - Stage 1, 9.00AM DAY 2**

### **Ask the Experts On the Couch with Key Note Speakers - Stage 1, 1.30PM DAY 2**

Liam is the founder and Managing Director of GO.FARM, Chairman of Australian Farming Services, and a Director of several orchards and farms. With over 20 years of experience in agricultural research, agronomy, and investment, he started GO.FARM in 2013 to transform underutilized farming assets. GO.FARM has managed \$1.1B in agricultural assets across New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania, covering over 90,000ha and producing various crops, including almonds. Since 2014, the company has invested in the Australian almond industry, acquiring around 6,250ha of orchards in Sunraysia and Riverina, and recently expanded into the Above Choke Murray Valley and Goulburn Valley. GO.FARM aims for strong investment returns and a positive legacy, contributing to Australia's thriving almond industry.



## **Motti Levin - Haifa Group**

### **Opening and fertiliser future Stage 1, 9.00AM DAY 1**

### **Facilitator Panel Pollination Varroa a Game Changer - Stage 2, 3.00PM DAY 1**

Motti Levin has been the CEO of Haifa Group since February 2018. With nearly three decades of senior management experience in international companies, he has held CEO and CFO roles in logistics, international trade, chemicals, fertilizers, and Agtech. Levin was CEO of Gadot Group (2014-2018), UTI Logistics (2011-2014), Maman Group (2006-2011), and Arava Export Growers (2004-2006). He also served as CFO of Netafim and held various positions at ICL, including Deputy CEO and CFO. His extensive experience in leading global companies positions him to drive Haifa Group's success in Agtech and the Israeli economy. Levin holds bachelor's and master's degrees in economics and business administration from Bar Ilan University.



## **James Loechel - Renewable Resources Group (RRG)**

### **New Comers Panel New Entrants to Industry Share their Insights - Stage 1, 9.00AM DAY 2**

James is a Vice President at Renewable Resources Group ('RRG'), a global alternative asset manager. With extensive experience in the identification of underutilised assets and optimisation of water, agriculture, land, renewable energy and conservation value, James co-leads the Australia business & manages a portfolio of permanent crops including almonds, table grapes and macadamias. Prior to joining RRG, James worked for Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan developing & managing almond properties across South Australia and Victoria. James is a Chartered Accountant with 10 years' experience at Ernst & Young. He graduated from the University of Adelaide with a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Laws and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Zara Lowien - National Irrigators Council**

### **Where to Now for Irrigators - Stage 1, 11.20 DAY 1**

Zara was interim CEO of National Irrigators' Council in mid-2023, leading NIC through the negotiations and input into the Australian's Government' Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) Bill 2023 and was appointed CEO in early 2024. She was previously the Executive Officer and Secretary of the Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association for 13 years where she managed water policy issues, identifying risks, preparing solutions and implementation strategy with the local committee with a strong focus on win-win outcomes for the local community and economy. Zara also supported the project, research, and extension aspects of the GVIA as EO. Prior to GVIA, Zara worked in Natural Resource Management for the NSW Government and consulting. Zara is a graduate of the Peter Cullen Trust program and a through support by NIC a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Zara graduated with Hons. in Land and Water Science from the University of Sydney. Zara lives in North-West NSW where her husband's family are broadacre farmers.



## **David Madge - Agriculture Victoria**

### **Carpophilus Is There a Silver Buller? - Stage 2 11.45AM DAY 2**

After graduating from Adelaide University in 1981 with a Degree in Agricultural Science, David joined the Victorian Department of Agriculture's horticulture group at Irymple. In 1987 he joined the crop protection group where he carried out field research and extension in integrated pest management for the grape and citrus industries and provided extension and industry development support for the organic industry. Since 2011 David has been investigating management options for the industry's major almond pests – carpo-philus beetle and carob moth. He is currently managing a five-year project to develop 'An Integrated Pest Management program for the Australian almond industry', with a focus on those two pests.



## **Jeff McDonald - Riverland Lending Services (RSL)**

### **Panel Staying in Business Strategies to Make Ends Meet - Stage 1, 10.45AM DAY 2**

### **Ask the Experts On the Couch with Key Note Speakers - Stage 1, 1.30PM DAY 2**

Jeff was born and bred on an irrigation property at Loxton in the Riverland region of South Australia. Instead of becoming the third-generation male on the property, he took on a career in finance instead. After 20 years with a major bank, Jeff established a finance brokerage business in 2002 – Riverland Lending Services (RLS). RLS has grown over the last 22 years to more than 20 staff and agents, spread across the country. The RLS Agribusiness Brand was developed five years ago to assist with facilitation work with Primary Producers. This ranges from acting as Independent Chairman on Farm Boards, to Succession Planning – and much more! Jeff's experience in all areas of Agribusiness makes him well qualified to facilitate and advise on business decisions in agriculture. He has created a number of collaborative farming models over the last 15 years and still Chairs most of these boards. Assisting farmers to manage and grow their businesses in an ever-increasing compliant world – is Jeff's passion.



## **Trevor Monson - Monsons Honey & Pollination**

### **Panel Pollination Varroa a Game Changer - Stage 2, 2.45PM DAY 1**

Trevor's particular interest in pollination began at the age of 16 in the 1960's, when local Italian growers noticed their glasshouse cucumbers were not pollinating as they should. Through careful observation Trevor developed a way of enticing bees into the crop and rewarding growers with a bountiful harvest. He and his father, Mo Monson, were the first to supply bees for almonds in NW Victoria, and again, it wasn't long till Trevor worked out better placement techniques that were far easier for beekeepers and produced higher yield for growers. His extensive experience and pioneering methods have been invaluable for government research and advice, agriculture, beekeeping and growers of most crops, including almonds.



# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Gemma Nunn - Century Orchards**

### **Pannel Farming into the Future, The New Obligations - Stage 1, 4.30PM DAY 1**

Gemma has a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences from the University of Adelaide, receiving academic prizes in Soil and Plant Nutrition and Plant Breeding. Throughout her time at university, she received awards from the University of Adelaide Faculty of Sciences for Outstanding Academic Achievement and was the Vice President of the Adelaide University Agricultural Student's Association. In addition to this, she was also a Peer Mentor for new students coming through the Agricultural Sciences Program, and was an Academic Co-Ordinator and tutor for students in the Agriculture, Viticulture and Veterinary Sciences Programs at residential college. Gemma grew up on a mixed farming property in the South-East of SA, and has a passion for soil health, and sustainability. Gemma began her career as a Technical Officer at Century Orchards before advancing to her current role as Technical Manager where she is responsible for various technical aspects of orchard production, including implementing field trials, and optimising production practices to improve profitability and sustainability. Gemma is currently involved in several trials which have a focus on sustainability including Biochar, Desalination, Enzyme Application, Nanobubbles and trials which utilise a plants natural frequency to improve productivity, and soil health, and reduce fertiliser, and water usage.

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## **Brittany Oswald - South Australian Research and Development Institute**

### **Phytophthora and Trunk Disease - Stage 2, 11.15AM DAY 2**

Brittany Oswald is a senior research officer at the South Australian Research and Development Institute, where she has been researching almond trunk and root diseases for 6 years, helping growers better manage their crops. She graduated as a Bachelor of Agricultural Science with 1st class Honours in Advanced Plant Science at the University of Adelaide and is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Queensland investigating the prevalence and pathogen epidemiology of Phytophthora and trunk diseases. Brittany is passionate about her research to advance knowledge that will help almond growers manage trunk and root diseases.

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## **Nathan Payne - Agfield Services**

### **Panel Where to Now for Monterey - Stage 2, 4.45PM DAY 1**

### **Panel The Big Question What Do I Plant? - Stage 1, 11.15AM DAY 2**

Nathan is the managing director of AgField Services, a business he established in 2012 that provides almond development, management and contracting services to nearly 2,000 hectares of almond orchards in the Riverina. Nathan has over 25 years of experience in agriculture, including a 15 year tenure with Rural Funds Management (RFM). During this time Nathan gained a foundation in corporate agriculture and was involved in asset management, acquisition and horticultural developments primarily within the Riverina. With a particular passion for redevelopment of land assets to higher value crops, Nathan established AgField Services and now leads the AgField team, setting the company's direction and business strategy.

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Raf Peeters - Qcify**

### **Keeping and Eye on Quality - Qcify give a global perspective- Stage 1, 4.00PM DAY 1**

Raf Peeters, CEO of Qcify, has significantly impacted the treenut industry with innovative solutions in AI and computer vision. Under his leadership, Qcify's cutting-edge equipment has revolutionized quality control processes, ensuring superior product standards. The data collected by Qcify machines is now instrumental in advancing industry practices, contributing to enhanced efficiency and sustainability. Raf's vision and expertise have positioned Qcify as a leader in the sector, driving technological progress and setting new benchmarks for the global treenut industry.

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## **Peter Reynolds - Yenda Producers**

### **Panel Where to Now for Monterey - Stage 2, 4.45PM DAY 1**

Peter Reynolds: Peter has more than 30 years of experience in cropping in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and is a former AgriFood Skills Australia fellow. He has been actively involved in the expansion of the almond industry within the Riverina through his consultancy work and is widely regarded for his expertise in adopting, adapting and implementing locally focused crop management techniques in a range of different soil and climatic conditions'

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## **Dr Sebastian Saa - Almond Board of California**

### **Panel The Big Question What Do I Plant? - Stage 1, 11.15AM DAY 2**

### **Ask the Experts On the Couch with Key Note Speakers - Stage 1, 1.30PM DAY 2**

Sebastian Saa is a highly experienced plant scientist with a PhD specializing in fruit tree nutrition and management. Over the past 15 years, he has been dedicated to designing and executing experimental trials and translating findings into actionable grower management material. While his primary expertise lies in almonds, Sebastian also possesses extensive experience with walnuts, table grapes, cherries, and other major deciduous fruit trees, including irrigation practices. During his six-year tenure at the Almond Board of California, Sebastian successfully identified and prioritized research programs aimed at improving almond production. Serving as the primary liaison with the outreach team and research partners, he played a crucial role in initiating, evaluating, and translating research knowledge to benefit the almond industry. His efforts have led to higher yields and reduced input costs for growers. Sebastian has a proven track record of driving positive change with high impact, such as developing and implementing nutrient, rootstock, and salinity management guidelines for California's main specialty crops. In addition to his technical expertise, Sebastian possesses strong verbal and written communication skills, excellent planning and organizational abilities, and is an effective team leader. He is also a member of the California Department of Food and Agriculture committee for the Fertilizer Education Program (CDFA-FREP).



# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Sumit Saran - India**

### **Taking Aussie Almonds to the World- Stage 1, 1.45PM DAY 1**

Sumit Saran has more than 20 years of experience in managing and implementing launch and promotion of various international food products in India. At present, Sumit Saran is Director of SS Associates, an international food marketing consulting firm based in Delhi NCR, India. The firm is involved in marketing of high value foods from many parts of the world in India. Specifically, from the US, SS Associates currently represents and markets Washington Apples, USA Pears, American Pistachios, US Cranberries, Northwest Cherries and American Pecans in the high growth Indian market. He has been recently appointed the India market representative for Australian almonds. Before this, from 2014-2018, Sumit Saran was the Head of International Foods at Future Group, one of India's largest retailers at that time. His responsibilities included setting up distribution channels for imported foods, establishing international tie-ups and handling international food promotions across the various retail formats that Future Group owned and operated.

Mr. Saran holds a Master's degree in International relations (specializing in international food business) and has been specially trained in the United States in management and dissemination of agribusiness information.



## **Brendan Sidhu - Century Orchards,**

### **Panel The Big Question What Do I Plant? - Stage 1, 11.15AM DAY 2**

Brendan Sidhu is CEO of Century Orchards, a large almond orchard based in the Riverland, South Australia and Managing Director of Laragon Almond Processors based at Lindsay Point in Victoria.

Brendan has been involved in the Australian almond industry since 1983, holding positions as both Secretary and Chair of the Riverland region of the Australian Almond Growers' Association (AAGA). In 2007, Brendan was appointed to the ABA Board, holding the position of Chairman from 2009 – 2012. He has been a member of the Australian Almond Industry Advisory Committee (IAC), the Remuneration Committee, the Conference Committee and is the Chair of the Market Development and Almond Centre of Excellence Committees. Brendan also sits on the Hort Innovation Almond Strategic Advisory Panel and has recently been appointed as Chairman of the Australian Nut Industry Council (ANIC). Brendan holds an Advanced Diploma in Horticulture and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



## **Brian Slater - Australian Farming Services**

### **Carpophilus Is There a Silver Buller? - Stage 2 11.45AM DAY 2**

My involvement with almonds started in 2006 as an agronomist with Timbercorp

In 2009 I took on the role of agronomist at Macquarie Bank's almond orchard near Robinvale. Over the 14 years at the orchard and a change of ownership, I worked my way up to the Orchard Managers positions, as well as also overseeing AustOn's Renmark orchard. Looking for a change (back) in direction, in April 2023 I took on the role of Agronomist with Australian Farming Services, to assist the orchard management team in maximising production and efficiency across over 4,350 hectares of almonds. With almonds, you never stop learning.

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Luke Stoeckel - Cannonball Almonds**

### **Panel The Big Question What Do I Plant? - Stage 1, 11.15AM DAY 2**

ABA Director, Riverland region representative.

Luke grew up on his family's almond and broadacre farm near Renmark in South Australia and is now Managing Director of Cannonball Almonds. He oversees the operations and development of the Almond and Broadacre enterprises at Bunyip Reach. In 2009 Luke completed a Bachelor of Science (Petroleum Geology) degree from Adelaide University and worked internationally as an Engineer in the Oil Industry before returning home in 2014. Since returning home Luke has developed Cannonball Almonds which is planted with 75% Australian National Almond Breeding Program varieties. Luke also sits on the South Australian Murray Irrigators Committee.

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## **Len Tesoriero - Crop Doc Consulting Pty Ltd.**

### **Panel Where to Now for Monterey - Stage 2, 4.45PM DAY 1**

After a career as a Plant Pathologist with the NSW Department of Primary Industries Len retired in 2018 and established the consulting firm Crop Doc Consulting Pty Ltd. He also maintains a role with NSW DPIRD as a Visiting Scientist contributing to disease surveillance and mentoring younger plant pathologists. Over the past 6 years he has conducted research on diseases of almonds, pistachios, olives and vegetables. His current focus for the almond industry is to understand the pathology and identify successful preventative and management strategies for Monterey decline.

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## **Paul Thompson - Lower Murrumbidgee Water**

### **Take Home Messages. What's Next? - Stage 1, 2.30 DAY 2**

Paul Thompson is a prominent figure in the agribusiness sector, currently serving as a Director at Lower Murrumbidgee Water. He was the CEO and Managing Director of Select Harvests from July 2012 to March 2023. During his tenure, he led the company to become one of the world's leading fully integrated almond agribusinesses. Paul has extensive experience in FMCG, industrial B2B, and agribusiness sectors. He has a strong knowledge of corporate governance, capital markets, and international commodity trading. He has also been a Board Member of the Almond Board of Australia, the Australian Food and Grocery Council, and the Australian Industry Group. Paul is known for his collaborative and inclusive leadership style and his innovative thinking. He believes in the importance of a common purpose, recognition, and ongoing communication.

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## **Nick Walker - Cowanna Almond Harvesting**

### **Panel Saving Money in Repairs and Maintenance - Stage 1, 9.45AM DAY 2**

Began in the almond industry in 2011 as a qualified diesel mechanic at an almond orchard in the Robinvale area working on pre-season maintenance and harvest breakdowns. Started working for Cowanna Almond Harvesting in 2014 and ran the maintenance division until 2021.

Since then, have been working with growers for Cowanna Almond Harvesting as a customer relations manager assisting growers in any harvest machinery needs such as maintenance requirements, machinery set ups and operator training.



# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## **Michael Ward - SHV**

### **Panel Stockpile Management Protecting your Crop - Stage 2, 1.45PM DAY 1**

Michael is the South Australian Regional Operations Manager for Select Harvests and holds over 16 years of experience in the almond industry. From technical analysis to orchard operations, Michael's extensive knowledge has driven management, technical and operational improvements beyond most professions in the horticultural industry. Michael is proactive in safety and leadership programs across many different aspects of almond operations and is passionate about helping develop and grow the leaders of tomorrow. With the vision for continuous improvement, he is also a valuable member of the Almond Board of Australia (ABA) Pollination Committee, ABA Experimental Orchard Committee and the GrowSmart Training Committee.



## **Michael Waring - MWT Foods Pty Ltd**

### **Global Nut Supply Demand Snapshot - Stage 1, 2.15PM, DAY 1**

Michael is Chairman of the International Nut and Dried Fruit Foundation (INC), founded in 1983 in Reus, Spain. INC is the global umbrella organisation for the nut and dried fruit industry, promoting sustainable growth and health benefits. Recognized by international bodies like Codex Alimentarius, FAO, WHO, and UNECE, INC has over 900 members from 85 countries, representing more than 85% of the sector's trade. Michael co-founded and chairs Nuts for Life Australia, and has served as vice-chair and board member of the Australian Macadamia Peak Industry Body. He is also Chairman and Managing Director at Waring Group and MWT Group, and Chairman of Laurel Foods USA.



## **Tonya Wiechel - Agriculture Victoria**

### **Managing Hull Rot - Stage 2, 10.45AM DAY 2**

Tonya is a plant pathologist with Agriculture Victoria based at AgriBio in Melbourne and has experience in researching foliar and soilborne disease of horticultural crops including grapevine, potato and almond. She has achievements in understanding the biology of horticultural pathogens and identification of novel treatments to manage plant disease. Tonya has successfully co supervised to completion 2 PhD and 2 Masters students. She is a scientist on the project AL16005: An Integrated Disease Management Programme for the Australian Almond Industry with funding from Agriculture Victoria, SARDI and Hort Innovation. Tonya will provide an overview of team's investigations into hull rot.



## **Mel Wyness - Brand MO**

### **Taking Aussie Almonds to the World- Stage 1, 1.45PM DAY 1**

Melissa Wyness is a highly accomplished Marketing Executive with over 20 years of proven success in driving communications strategies, consumer engagement, and partnership development across various industries. Her extensive experience in both creative and commercial production has resulted in numerous successful campaigns for leading brands and organisations including Nova Entertainment and Coca-Cola GB & Ireland. Through growing up in the Riverland, South Australia, Mel was afforded lived experience in the horticultural sector and is driven to support communities in regional Australia. She actively contributes to various boards and committees and is passionate about mentoring the next generation of marketers.

**Thank you to all the speakers and panelists for sharing their invaluable knowledge and expertise.**



Solutions for human progress



Better yield and crackout percentage in almonds with

**Ultrasoline**  
**K Plus**

## Improved Almond Yields in Australia and California with SQM Potassium Nitrate + Iodine (Ultrasol<sup>®</sup>ine K Plus) and SQM Potassium Nitrate

SQM presents the notable outcomes from almond trials conducted in both Australia and California, highlighting substantial yield enhancements through innovative treatment methods.

### Australia Trial Results (February 2024)

In February 2024, the Australian trial demonstrated significant yield improvements. The treatments tested included Potassium Nitrate + Iodine (Ultrasol<sup>®</sup>ine K Plus), Potassium Nitrate, and the grower's standard. The results were as follows:

Treatment	Kernel Yield (kg/tree)	100 Kernel Weight (g)	Crackout (%)	Kernel Yield (T/ha)
Potassium Nitrate + Iodine (Ultrasol <sup>®</sup> ine K Plus)	17.17	111	30.9	4.74
Potassium Nitrate	16.89	114	29.6	4.66
Grower: Potassium Carbonate + UAN Space for new add	15.35	113	28.6	4.24



### California Trial Results (2014-2021)

Conducted by Dr. Patrick Brown at the University of California-Davis, this study evaluated various potassium fertilizer regimes, including SOP, PTS, KCl, and SQM Potassium Nitrate. Over three years, significant yield gains were observed with SQM Potassium Nitrate:

- SQM Potassium Nitrate (84 kg K/ha+30 kg N-NO<sub>3</sub>/ha), applied frequently with fann-jet sprinklers over an SOP banded base dressing of 140 kg K/ha, increased yields with 22% (1.5 MT/ha, 3 yr cumulative yield), compared to the same amount of K applied with PTS + UAN. This same treatment, compared to fertigation with SOP+UAN. resulted in +1.2 MT/ha extra yield (17%).
- \* These results were explained by the unique combination of potassium and 100% nitric nitrogen in SQM Potassium Nitrate, avoiding the unfavourable amounts of N-NH<sub>4</sub> and sulphur in the other treatment combinations.
- Yield increases were statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.
- Additionally, SQM Potassium Nitrate minimized salinity build-up, which is crucial for almond trees sensitive to root zone salinity.

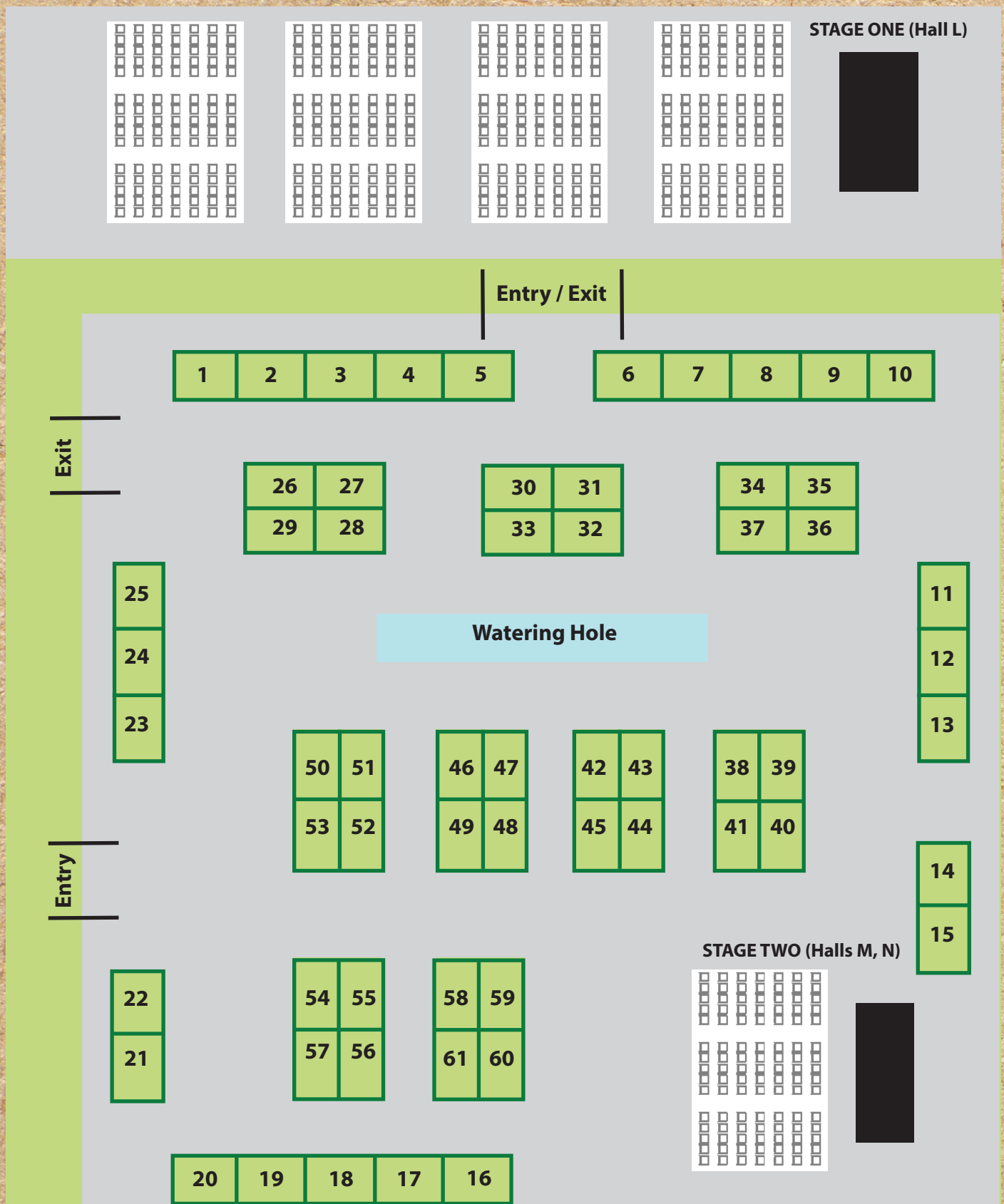


### Conclusion

These trials underscore the effectiveness of SQM's innovative potassium nitrate-based treatments in significantly boosting almond yields. With consistent success across different environments, these solutions offer promising benefits for almond growers aiming to enhance productivity and crop quality.

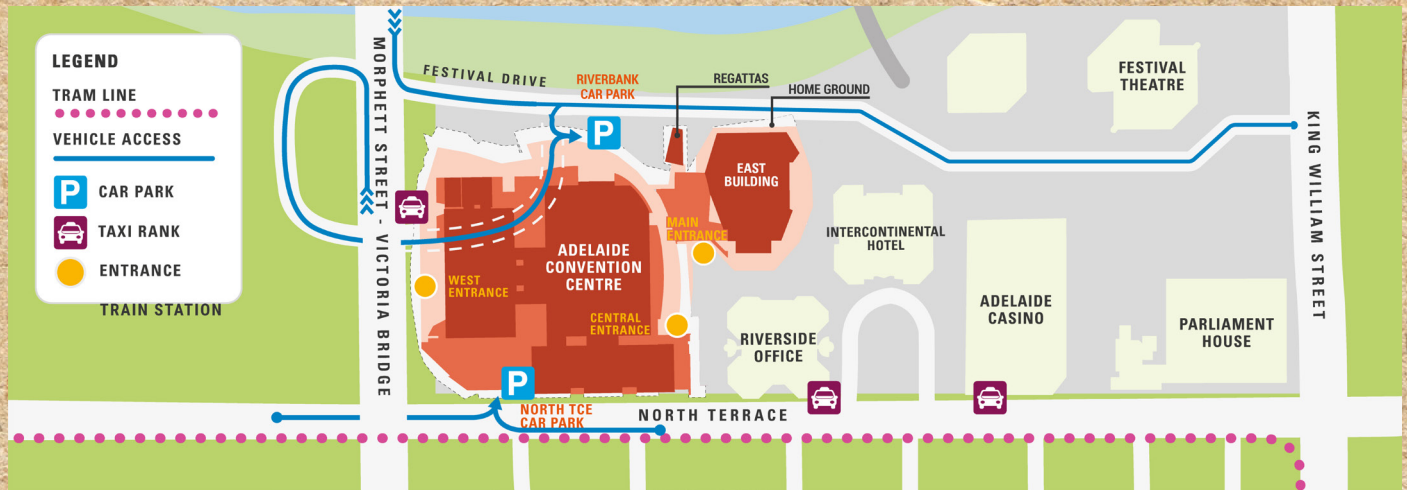


# CONFERENCE FLOOR LAYOUT





# CONFERENCE BUILDING MAP



## MAP KEY

- |                                  |                                 |                                   |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Fieldin                       | 18. Almond Board Of Australia   | 36. Agspec Australia Pty Ltd      |
| 2. Dual Chetate Fertilizer       | 19. Hort Innovation             | 37. Omnia Specialities Australia  |
| 3. Jackrabbit                    | 20. Satake Australia P/L        | 38. Growers Services              |
| 4. Inform Ag                     | 21. Exact Corporation           | 39. Orchard-Rite                  |
| 5. 7 Worlds Ag                   | 22. Alvan Blanch Australia      | 40. Sjb Ag-nutri                  |
| 6. Australian Frost Fans         | 23. Gallard Group               | 41. Weiss McNair                  |
| 7. Beehero                       | 24. Insero                      | 42. Arborgreen                    |
| 8. Orchard Machinery Corporation | 25. Air-o-fan                   | 43. Motion                        |
| 9. Factree                       | 26. Adama Australia Pty Limited | 44. Motion                        |
| 10. Waterfind                    | 27. Tayper Enterprises Pty Ltd  | 45. Spraygro Liquid Fertilizers   |
| 11. Schedule-it Pty Ltd          | 28. Stroller                    | 46. Nu-Edge Solutions Australia   |
| 12. CeresAI                      | 29. Stroller                    | 47. Nu-Edge Solutions Australia   |
| 13. Rivulis                      | 30. Muirs                       | 48. Zadco For Quality Gro Pty Ltd |
| 14. AquaBoostAG                  | 31. Muirs                       | 49. Onside                        |
| 15. Pellenc                      | 32. Haifa Australia             | 50. Genera Fumigation Pty Ltd     |
| 16. Bee Friendly Farming         | 33. Haifa Australia             | 51. SWAN Systems                  |
| 17. Croplands Equipment Pty Ltd  | 34. Mossmont Nurseries Pty Ltd  | 52. WiseConn                      |
|                                  | 35. Pickles Auctions            | 53. BASF                          |



# A flour so fluffy, its NUTS!



Nut flours are highly sought after as a gluten-free plant-based protein baking substitute, and becoming more so. But most known products in this space are limited in their application because of coarse texture and high fat content.

The fine, fluffy flour properties that chefs and bakers dream of to expand the scope of their culinary invention have not been available.

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