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Heavyweight advocacy group formed for the Australian food cold chain

Australia's first advocacy group to improve compliance and standards in the handling of food at all levels of the cold chain has been established at a ground-breaking meeting in Queensland.

The inaugural session of the Australian Food Cold Chain Council (AFCCC) on 7 August 2017, brought together an impressive cross section of the heavyweights in manufacturing, food transport, refrigeration and cold chain services.

Against a mounting background of community pressure about the costs and environmental damage of food wastage, this new Council sees itself as an important part of the solution, encouraging innovation, compliance, waste reduction and safety across the Australian food cold chain.

Interim chair Mr Mark Mitchell, a leading cold chain service provider with a cold chain research and validation facility in Queensland said, 'The new Council is not about promoting an industry – we want to change the industry for the better.'

'One of our priorities will be to apply whatever pressure is needed in industry and in government to make sure the existing Australian standards for cold chain food handling are properly followed,' he added.

'There's lots of rhetoric in government programs, associations and among food handlers and suppliers about commitments to food waste reduction and cold chain compliance, but little, if nothing, is being done at any level about improving the cold chain, and ensuring that standards are followed. Australia's track record in efficient cold food handling, from farm to plate, is far from perfect,' Mr Mitchell said.

The interim directors of AFCCC are:

Stephen Elford	General Manager Australia New Zealand, Carrier Transicold
Mark Mitchell	Managing Director, SuperCool Australia Pacific Pty Ltd
Peter Lawrence	Technical Director ANZ, Thermo King
Kyle Hawker	Transport Manager, Simplot Australia
Adam Wade	National Transport Leader, Lion
Kevin Manfield	General Manager Products & Markets, MaxiTRANS Australia Pty Ltd

PLUS a nominated person representing the transport industry

Food waste is a massive problem for Australia. On average, Australians waste 860 kg of food per person annually. It's not just the food, but this means that all inputs into food production like the water, soil and energy are also wasted. On top of that, it means less food available to feed the hungry.

It's estimated that 5 per cent or more of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions come from food wastage.

'Australian industry', Mr Mitchell said, 'is well placed to attack this issue. Performance across the cold food chain can be improved with better equipment and handling processes as well as with improved monitoring and assessment to determine where the weaknesses lie.'

In investigating the food cold chain in Europe, Deloitte estimated that for every unit of energy and dollar invested in expanding the food cold chain the return to investors was ten-fold.

'As an industry, as a society, we simply cannot afford to waste such an opportunity,' Mr Mitchell said.

The AFCCC believes that Australian industry has the tools, technologies and workforce that can reduce food waste by improving the cold food chain.

It is in that spirit that these leading companies have signed up as inaugural members of the AFCCC.

The new advocacy group's first priorities will be contributing to both the development of the National Food Waste Strategy and becoming part of the CRC designed to address food waste and fraud.

Those interested in joining the AFCCC or learning more about it, can email AustralianColdChain@gmail.com.

ENDS

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