

## Media release

# New WA Food Innovation Precinct to drive growth of high-quality value-added food products in Australia's West

Construction of the Western Australian Food Innovation Precinct has commenced, with an official 'turning of the sod' ceremony held on site on the morning of Thursday 20 May, and an industry launch of the precinct and accompanying Enterprise Support Program at the adjacent Bushfire Centre of Excellence in the afternoon.

Attendees at the morning's sod-turning included the Hon. Andrew Hastie MP, Assistant Minister for Defence and Federal Member for Canning; the Hon. Alannah MacTiernan, WA Minister for Regional Development, Agriculture and Food MLC; and Shire of Murray President Cr. David Bolt, along with contractors and key project stakeholders.

The Australian Government, through its Regional Growth Fund, has committed \$21,750,000 to the construction of the WA Food Innovation Precinct. The Precinct is located within Peel Business Park in Nambeelup, north of Perth, Western Australia. The Peel region is one of the CRC's collaborative agrifood hubs.

The Precinct will comprise a research and development facility, production building and innovation centre. By mid-2022, it will be open for business, housing agrifood R&D experts, innovative start-ups, business services related to trade and markets, and a one-stop common-use food technology facility.

The technology facility, backed by \$10 million from the WA State Government, will be equipped to develop, test and produce high-quality value added agrifood products. It will tackle three key challenges: the scaling up of agribusinesses; product creation and diversification through commercial research and development; and capturing a greater market share for Western Australian food and beverage products.

The Commonwealth-backed Future Food Systems CRC and its partners will work within the Precinct to provide R&D services to local industry and help drive growth in the WA food sector. Collaborative CRC projects slated for the food technology facility will involve world-leading scientists at Murdoch University and its Australian National Phenome Centre, WA Department of Primary Industry, Resources and Development, Peel Development Commission and producers of premium WA products including artichokes, truffles and wine.

While the Precinct is physically sited in Peel region, it will establish a 'hub-and-spokes' operational model, with digital infrastructure used to connect and engage with other agrifood regions.

An Expert in Residence program, supported by in-kind contributions from Peel Development Commission and \$49,500 from the Commonwealth, will be delivered through the precinct. Its focus will be on surmounting challenges to growth in the alternative protein industry.



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An Enterprise Support Program, currently open for applications, will assist agrifood industry scale-ups. The competitive grant program, a partnership between the Shire of Murray, DevelopmentWA and WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, is offering up to \$200K in dollar-matched funding for agribusinesses seeking to pursue business development, commercial research and development and innovation opportunities through the Precinct.

Economic modelling indicates that the WA Food Innovation Precinct could increase Western Australia's food and beverage sector output between one and three per cent in the first five years of operation. This equates to between 17 and 51 new food businesses delivering benefits to the state's economy, including growth in its food and beverage sector output by between \$110M and \$330M, an injection of between \$245M and \$737M in other economic sectors, direct job creation of between 169 and 506 jobs and indirect job creation of between 323 and 977 jobs.

## Quotes

"The WA Food Innovation Precinct can play a central role in growing the value of Western Australia's food industry. The Future Food Systems CRC will work with its Western Australian partners to deliver commercial research services within the precinct. This initiative is a great example of the innovative thinking and joint government investment needed across Australia to boost regional economies." – **Fiona Simson, Chair, Future Food Systems CRC**

"The WA Food Innovation Precinct is an exciting development for Murdoch University's Food Futures Institute. The University will work with growers and industry to develop truly translational science that has an impact. The high level of analytical capability Murdoch will establish at the WAFIP will enable the nutritional claims of produce to be tested, the provenance of food to be established and many other questions growers are asking about their produce to be answered. Murdoch has recently established a new degree in Food Science and Nutrition, which will locate students in the WAFIP facility. Murdoch is committed to this facility as a regional strategy to ensure quality science is delivered where it is needed." – **Professor Peter M Davies, Pro Vice Chancellor and Director, Food Futures Institute, Murdoch University**

"The Regional Growth Fund supports long-term economic growth and creates jobs in regions." – **Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, Michael McCormack**

"This precinct will be a game-changer for the WA food and beverage sector, creating better and more diverse products through research and development, and expanding WA's food and beverage market share both nationally and internationally. The precinct will be home to the McGowan Government's \$10 million Peel Food Technology Facility, which will help WA businesses to test and produce high-quality value-added food products. This is a great example of State, Federal and local government working with industry and universities to drive local jobs and local industry." – **Hon. Alannah MacTiernan, WA Government Minister for Regional Development**

"The Australian food and beverage sector is a major economic contributor, generating close to \$30 billion in export value and supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs. Building upon this base is vital for Australia's future sustainability and security and provides a growing opportunity to support Murray and other regional communities and expand our economies. Western Australia, however, trails behind other states in the total value of agricultural produce transformed into manufactured products for overseas markets. The Precinct will therefore focus on growing the state's capacity to manufacture more of its food product locally. It will also assist in building international demand for local brands among consumers willing to pay for quality, premium Western Australian products.



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The CRC Program supports industry-led collaborations between industry, researchers and the community. Further information about the CRC Program is available [here](#).

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“The Precinct will broaden Western Australia’s economic base by competitively positioning food and beverage product development and production, primarily for international markets. [It] will be a place where small-to-medium enterprises, research and development institutions, wider industry players including international agri-innovation firms and government entities can test, research and develop their products for market. [It] will explore the creation of a unique brand, trademark and relevant industry certification, which will draw activity to become the one-stop shop for the agri-food community in Western Australia.” – **Councillor David Bolt, President, Shire of Murray**

## More information

For information about WAFIP or the Enterprise Support Program, visit [www.murray.wa.gov.au/wafip](http://www.murray.wa.gov.au/wafip).  
For information about the Future Food Systems CRC, visit [www.futurefoodsystems.com.au](http://www.futurefoodsystems.com.au).

## About the Future Food Systems CRC

The Future Food Systems Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) is a national initiative funded as part of the Australian Government’s CRC Program and commenced in December 2019. Its goal is to broker industry-led collaborations between business, researchers and the community that improve the competitiveness, productivity and sustainability of Australia’s agrifood sector, especially in areas of competitive strength. CRC industry partners include large and small firms across farming, food manufacturing and technology services that share a vision for increasing Australia’s ability to value-add agrifood production and build scale in growth markets for trusted, healthy food and advanced precision-nutrition goods. For more information about the Future Food Systems CRC, its participants and its research, visit the CRC’s website [www.futurefoodsystems.com.au](http://www.futurefoodsystems.com.au)

## Media enquiries

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