AUSTRALIAN AGTECH DELEGATION

CALIFORNIA AND MIDWEST

18-29 MARCH 2019
FOREWORD

Australia has captured the world’s attention with its pioneering efforts in agriculture and food production, delivering savvy solutions to global challenges.

Building on this strong record of innovation, the country is emerging as a hub for Agriculture 4.0 – the next generation of technologies set to revolutionise the agriculture and food sector.

Australian developments in robotics, remote sensing and machine learning, as well as bioscience, novel farming techniques, packaging and food innovation and processing, are driving disruption across the global food supply chain.

With this in mind Austrade is delighted to present the following organisations, representing the strengths and strong relationships between farmers, industry and research institutions, driving innovation and collaboration in Australia.

Austrade is committed to continuing to build on the success of Australian companies in the US, the latest innovations and creating the platforms to introduce producers to solutions which can improve the productivity, profitability and sustainability of their operations.

We welcome you to connect with all of our delegation and look forward to the opportunity to work with you in the future.

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General Manager, The Americas

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*California tour only
Agersens

Twitter: @agersens_aus
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Facebook: facebook.com/Agersens

Company profile

Based in Melbourne, Agersens is an agri-tech startup company developing the world’s first virtual shepherd. This IoT system will connect each animal to the internet and enable farmers to fence, move and monitor their livestock using their smartphone or tablet. Called “eShepherd”, this system will enable beef and dairy farmers to automate the grazing control of their animals - enabling farmers to increase scale while cutting costs to improve farm profitability, productivity and sustainability. eShepherd will improve the health and welfare of livestock, provide a wildlife friendly, flood and fire proof method for preventing cattle from polluting rivers, damaging our land through overgrazing.

Unique value-add

Unique, world first, new technology product based on technology licensed from CSIRO.
Ian Reilly
Founder and CEO
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Biography

Ian Reilly is an engineer and entrepreneur with more than 25 years’ experience developing new technology products for global markets. Beginning in the defence and aerospace industry, Ian has deep experience developing medical devices, consumer and industrial products, for companies ranging from tech start-ups globally to some of the world’s largest companies and most recognised brands. Ian founded Agersens in 2014 to revolutionise livestock farming globally by launching eShepherd – an automated grazing control tool that enables livestock farmers to improve the productivity, profitability and sustainability of their operations.
Company profile

AgriFutures Australia is dedicated to growing the future of Australian agriculture and long-term prosperity of rural industries and communities through research, leadership, investment and support.

Unique value-add

AgriFutures Australia is a Research and Development Corporation that has taken a leadership position to help mature the agrifood tech ecosystem of Australia by developing evokeAG. evokeAG is Australia’s largest agrifood tech event designed to showcase, inspire, connect and power growth and opportunity for people involved in food and agriculture in Australia, New Zealand and Asia Pacific. evokeAG 2020 will take place on 18-19 February 2020, Melbourne, Australia.
John Harvey

Managing Director

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Biography

John Harvey joined AgriFutures Australia in May 2016 as Managing Director. He accepted the challenge to set a new, more commercial direction for the organisation. Prior to this appointment, John was MD at Grains Research & Development Corporation.
Company profile

Aware Water Group is a private investment company focused on opportunities in water and agriculture. The company and its shareholders owns land and water assets in Australia’s Murray Darling Basin and are implementing a strategy to manage water to its highest economic value though investment in technology, infrastructure and land use change.

Unique value-add

Focus on the value of water, as a relatively finite resource, leads the investment strategy and the allocation of capital to locations, crop types, technologies and production models that maximise this resource.
Mr Robertson Brooks  
General Manager  
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Biography

Robertson is General Manager of Aware Water Group with over a decade of experience investing and managing water assets in one of the world's leading water markets, Australia's Murray Darling Basin. This experience has focused his attention on the impact climate and water security has on the sustainability and economics of Australian agriculture.

Prior to joining Aware Water Group, Robertson was the Australian Regional Director for a specialist US based water investment firm, Summit Global Management, LLC where he was responsible for all investment and management activities on a water asset portfolio.

Robertson received degrees in law and commerce from University of Queensland.
Company profile

Blue River Group is an impact investment services firm and is very active in the agri & food markets with a key focus on food security, reducing food waste, sustainable food & fibre production & investing in regionally based businesses. Blue River Group has an investment arm (focussed on agri & food assets in regional Australia) and an innovation arm, the Bridge Hub (focussed on agri & food tech).

Bridge Hub’s key point of differentiation is a focus on creating international partnerships with leading organisations in Israel and other global innovation ecosystems. We leverage these partnerships to identify, test and commercialise ideas and technologies of Australian researchers and entrepreneurs to create a pipeline of Australian agri & food tech companies that can scale on a global basis. We partner with agrifood tech start ups from idea to IPO.

Unique value-add

Using deep global linkages & relationships to help drive the commercialisation outcomes of Australian agri & food tech companies.

Providing test bed services in Australia for offshore start ups across the agrifood supply chain which is a unique offering in the market and creates an opportunity for Australia to be a global test pad, landing pad & launch pad.
Mr Craig Shapiro  
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Biography

Craig has more than 30 years of business experience spanning the worlds of finance, investments & innovation. Craig spent 22 years at Macquarie Group where he was the Global Group Treasurer & Executive Director. He retired from Macquarie in 2012 and in 2015 co-founded Blue River Group in 2015, an impact investment services firm. In addition to overseeing the principal investment activities of Blue River, Craig is a co-founder of the Bridge Hub, which is a regionally based, globally connected, whole of life cycle innovation hub for the Australian and Global Agrifood Tech Industry. Bridge Hub identifies, tests and commercialises the ideas and technologies of Australian researchers and entrepreneurs for the benefit of farmers and consumers. It is headquartered in Wagga Wagga with offices in Sydney and Israel.
Digital Ag Collective

Company profile

The Digital Ag Collective (DAC) is newly established farmer-driven non-for-profit organisation which is focused on finding innovative ways of organising and integrating farm data and derive from it valuable business intelligence and analytics. The group are strongly driven to use their collective knowledge base, experience and networks in partnership with technology providers to develop and support data integration and business intelligence services ‘by farmers for farmers’. This group are still in their infancy but are working towards developing partnerships.

Unique value-add

Kelly (and other members of the DAC) bring experience as both a Farmers and Agricultural Scientists in developing the DAC concept.
Biography

Dr Kelly Pearce is a Grain and Prime Lamb Producer from Yealering in Western Australia along with her young family. Kelly has had a 17-year career in Agricultural Research and continues to coordinate a number of regional science and innovation projects. Kelly is currently a Director of Farmers Mutual Limited, a 2012 Nuffield Scholar and Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Kelly also recently moved from Chair to Director of the Grower Group Alliance in WA which is a farmer-driven organisation that connects WA grower groups, research organisations and agribusiness networks across Australia and facilitates networking, capacity building and advocacy on behalf of groups.
Escavox gives a voice to perishable products in retail food supply chains to support better decision making, reduce rejections and waste, and improve food safety. Its solution automatically collects the most essential data about the product, starting on-farm and continuing through to the end consumer. This unprecedented supply chain visibility allows areas of waste and inefficiency to be identified and understood so they can be targeted. The Escavox solution is low cost and easy use.

Escavox’s customers include Woolworths, Australia’s largest supermarket chain, where we have a significant pilot agreement to deploy our solution; and Costas, Australia’s largest grower, packer and marketer of fresh produce. Escavox is also engaged with a number of the leading Australian R&D agencies to support R&D.

Escavox’s team members hail from diverse and successful backgrounds and each brings complementary experience, skills and networks. It covers: retail supply chain, banking technology, IoT technology, industry knowledge, production, marketing and R&D.

Unique value-add

Every carton that moves through the supply chain has a unique journey; this journey cannot necessarily be predicted. Any deviation from ideal conditions or time accelerates the deterioration of the product. Hence cost saving actions cannot be made because the data does not exist. As a result, poor product can reach the retail shelf; recalls and food safety implications cannot be easily handled and excess inventory is held throughout the chain. The Escavox solution solves this problem.
Mr Luke Wood
Chief Executive Officer
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Biography

Luke Wood has held executive level roles in supply chain management, designing & deploying emerging technology to remove waste from supply chains ranging from retail warehouse systems to oil field asset control, founder & GM of an IoT company operating in oil industry supply chains in the USA, most recently Head of Supply Chain Technology & Innovation at Woolworths. Executive Council Member - IOT Australia Association.
Company profile

Farmerbot is part of the IOT of Agriculture. It provides remote water management and on farm solutions for anything within 100 metres of a water tank. Farmerbot’s core product offerings are operating on some of the biggest cattle and sheep properties in Australia monitoring water levels, flow, pressure, pumps and electric fences. It uses the data its sensors generate to make better management decisions which will lead to predictive analytics and resource allocations. Farmerbot saves farmers money, support better management decisions and provide peace of mind.

Unique value-add

Simple, easy to install technology that informs farmers precisely about their entire water resources and ecosystem. Farmerbot’s AI and predictive analytics will change rural operations and water management the world over.
Mr Andrew Coppin
Managing Director
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LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/coppo888

Biography

Having grown up in a rural Australia, Andrew went on to spend 25 years in senior executive roles in capital markets and financial services companies. Six years ago, he left corporate life and started investing in and assisting early stage technology companies with a focus on IoT and Agritech. Andrew is a third time Founder and is passionate about technology that makes the world a better place and creates win / win outcomes for people and industry. Andrew’s vision is to make global agri water consumption more efficient and contribute to sustainability, productivity and food security.
Company profile

Farmscan Ag has a 40+ year heritage of developing and manufacturing first-in-class AgTech solutions for GNSS guidance, control, mapping, monitoring, IoT and mobile solutions across autosteer, sowing, spraying, spreading, batching and irrigation systems.

Farmscan Ag offers a complete technology suite and product range supplied to large and small OEMs, distributors, and end-users.

Unique value-add

Fully independent and open technology supplier of complete or modular solutions, with customization capability and without lock-in vertical integration. Flexibility to collaborate and achieve cost reductions, capability increases, and technology transfers.
Mr Jason Stone  
BEng MEng  
**Director and R&D Manager**  
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+61 7 4602 4150

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**Biography**

Over 25 years Jason has worked to develop and enhance numerous agricultural and environmental technologies including weather monitoring systems, mechanical, vision and GNSS guidance systems, monitoring and precision control systems for yield, sowing, spreading, spraying and irrigation.

Through ownership of businesses across multiple market segments he has achieved a unique understanding of the requirements to deliver technology from concept through development, manufacturing, sales, training, support and refinement.
Company profile

FluroSat is a crop health monitoring startup, which offers digital tools to make agronomic decisions more precise and profitable. FluroSense and ProductionWise are farm management and decision support platforms developed by the FluroSat team that have world-class tools for crop stress identification, advance climatics and yield-based nutrient analysis to guide the agronomist/farmer to reduce costs and improve yields.

Unique value-add

Science-background and backing, adaptive user-driven product development approach, the ability to offer B2E API-based analytics in addition to B2B user-facing software platform.
Ms Anastasia Volkova
CEO
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Biography

Anastasia is an aeronautical engineer with a PhD in autonomous drone navigation. She has experience ranging from projects with the NASA robots onboard International Space Station to managing 370 person team for UEFA. Anastasia is a 2017 Amelia Earhart Fellow and she was named a 2018 Woman Creating Change by NSW/ACT (Australian Capital Territory and NSW) Young Achiever Award, recognised for her commitment to advancing the application of aerospace engineering. Her passion for the real-world application has found expression in an agtech startup, FluroSat, which is closing the gap between the application of remote sensing technology in precision agriculture and the insights available in the field.
Company profile

The Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) is one of the world’s leading grains research organisations. GRDC’s purpose is to invest in research, development and extension to create enduring profitability for Australian grain growers. GRDC invests approximately AU$200m annually with the public and private sector across a diverse portfolio, including but not limited to: plant pre-breeding and phenotyping platforms; agronomy, farming systems and crop protection; sensing technologies, modelling and data analytics; agri-engineering and robotics. GRDC is also the cornerstone investor in GrainInnovate – a AU$50m fund that invests in startups to help drive the future profitability and sustainability of Australia’s grain growers.

Unique value-add

GRDC is uniquely positioned to invest in the foundational science required to enable Australian grain growers access to new knowledge, tools and technologies, often via delivery mechanisms involving the commercial sector. GRDC has a strong mix of skills in research, development, commercialisation and extension, and has widespread connections to leading Australian grain growers, research institutions, service providers and industry representative groups across the entire value chain.
Dr Fernando Felquer
Business Development and Commercialisation Manager
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Biography

Dr Felquer manages the commercialisation of R&D outputs as well as GRDC’s Business Development and Innovation activities, including management of the recently launched GrainInnovate Agtech VC fund. Prior to GRDC he has held various positions in commercialisation and innovation management in a variety of fields, including biomedical and remote sensing.

Mr Liam Ryan
Manager Transformational Technologies
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Biography

Mr Ryan manages a portfolio of research projects oriented around on-farm applications of precision and digital agriculture, automation, robotics and weather and climate. His previous experience traverses applied R&D, grower extension and adoption frameworks and aspects of plant phenotyping.
Company profile

MALDI-ID is a team with a no-nonsense approach to sustainability. MALDI-ID aims to support better use of our resources and take care of our planet. Through a coordinated program of management and research, and in partnership with industry, government, farmers and clinicians, MALDI-ID provides science and management to improve bacterial identification. Its initial service, RHIZO-ID, originated from research done at Murdoch University (Australia) and Mabritec AG (Switzerland). Farmers would often ask the question "which type of rhizobia are in my legume root nodules and are they the right ones?". Isolating and identifying bacteria using traditional diagnostics is a tedious, time-consuming and expensive job, especially when starting from a legume root nodule. Therefore, MALDI-ID investigated new approaches to identify root nodule bacteria rapidly and accurately using mass spectrometry and genetic sequencing. This led to the establishment of the RHIZO-ID service for sustainable agriculture.

Unique value-add

The first ever rhizobia identification service commercially available. This allows improvement of legume crops and pastures.
Dr Sofie De Meyer
Director
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P: +61 451 505 456
+61 8 9360 2439

Biography

Dr De Meyer is a biochemist and internationally recognised expert in legume microbiology with 6+ years leading research projects within Universities and Research Centres, both in Australia and overseas. She graduated with a PhD in Biotechnology and Biochemistry from Ghent University (Belgium) in 2011 and then moved to Australia to establish a research career at Murdoch University in the agricultural industry. When faced with re-occurring questions about rhizobia identification she investigated alternative technologies and developed a rhizobia identification service. This presented an ideal step change towards commercialisation and hence she founded MALDIID Pty Ltd in 2017, a root nodule bacteria identification service for farmers and institutes. Growing up in an entrepreneurial family she always had the mindset of making things work no matter how hard you have to work for it.
Company profile

Monash is home to over 77,000 students and 17,000 staff Australia’s most innovative University (Reuters) Monash is amongst the world’s leading institutions. The global presence and key partnerships allow students and staff opportunities for global mobility and connectivity with leading global experts in their fields. Across the 10 faculties there is a culture of multidisciplinary collaborations and learning opportunities which our Food Innovation and AgTech LaunchPad teams draw on to bring value across the food and agriculture value chain.

Unique value-add

It is a partnership approach that provides a platform for industry, academia and government to test solutions and generate viability of Agtech in Australia through demonstration and collaboration. Monash is Australia's largest University with a global footprint and strong track record in developing robust technology solutions. Monash provides a fertile ground for collaboration, engaging with the next generation of professionals and developing new solutions for market problems.
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Industry Partnerships Manager
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Biography

Emma identifies and develops multi-disciplinary strategic partnership opportunities across Monash University to grow new and emerging market sectors. In her role as an Industry Partnership Manager, Emma’s focus lies in agtech, energy and sustainable communities. Prior to joining the Industry Partnerships team, Emma has worked in the energy, property and social enterprise sectors, focussing on partnership development and strategy. Emma is also a Monash alumnus, having completed a double degree in Arts and Mechanical Engineering, before returning to complete the Master of Sustainability.
Nexgen Plants

Web: nexgenplants.com  
LinkedIn:  
linkedin.com/company/nexgen-plants-pty-ltd

Company profile

‘Healthy Plants, Healthy People, Living Planet’

Nexgen Plants’ goal is to develop plants for future generations. It focusses its innovation to develop plants and plant-based products for food, health and environment.

Nexgen Plants power plants with their own DNA to enhance genetic diversity that can solve some challenges of agriculture while preserving the environment. Nexgen Plants can apply its technology to develop novel bioproducts across industry sectors. Nexgen Plants is now expanding its expertise to offer Integrated Plant Health Solutions.

Unique value-add

Nexgen is an Australian biotech company commercialising virus resistance and trait introduction technology in crops.
Philippe Herve
CEO
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P: +61 7 3365 4037

Biography

In his role with the company, Philippe brings more than 20 years of industry experience with the agricultural sector. Philippe has a broad international experience working with several start-up companies and was formerly the Global Head of Alliance Management with Bayer Cropscience. Philippe holds a PhD from the University of Toulouse (France).
ProAgni

Twitter: @ProAgni_AIF
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/proagni

Company profile

ProAgni is an Australian company that uses innovative, patent pending technology to produce antibiotic-free sheep and cattle feed. Its products and systems replace everyday use of ingested antibiotics in healthy animals.

ProAgni feed supplements have been shown to improve farm efficiency without the use of antibiotics. Its products optimise digestion, supporting healthy animals which in turn emit less greenhouse gas.

ProAgni’s products require less feed, less water and less time to grow animals to market weight and, the producers who farm those animals have benefited from substantial increases in feed efficiency and average daily weight gain.

To date, over half a million animals have benefitted from ProAgni products with lower morbidity and mortality rates.

Unique value-add

ProAgni antibiotic-free sheep and cattle feed supplements increase returns for producers whilst lessening greenhouse gas emissions. ProAgni measures not only the economic impact, but the social and environmental impact of its feeding management systems.

ProAgni is pioneering the use of shelf stable probiotics in animal feed and, ProAgni in-market products are free of all antibiotics, including ionophores.
Mr Warren Lee
Director
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P: +61 404 097 986

Biography

Warren has been an M&A lawyer at Freehills, a senior investment banker at Grant Samuel and the CEO of Australia’s first listed pure play internet company.

Along the way he has played leading roles in a number of start-ups including Foxtel, where he was the company’s 6th employee.

He is a creative thinker and problem solver with firm foundations in compliance, governance and the realities of execution in the real world.

Warren holds a Ba. LLB, Law, Philosophy (Hons) from the University of Sydney and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.
thingc Robotics

Twitter: @thingc_co
Web: thingc.co
Facebook: facebook.com/thingc/

Company profile

thingc is automating agriculture with Artificial Intelligence-powered Robotics. Its initial prototype was developed at the HAX accelerator (Shenzhen, China). Testing commenced in the field with its Australian farming partners in 2018.

thingc Robotics has partnered with BASF Performance Materials to produce its field-ready pre-production prototype for real-world field trials in 2019.

thingc’s farm robots are small, lightweight machines that work autonomously in the field, dramatically improving operational efficiency and improving quality. Its first product is an automated weeding robot for the organic horticulture industry, where the cost of labor is rapidly becoming a significant burden.

Unique value-add

thingc’s unique tool interchange system allows its machines to be readily adapted to various farming functions. Coupled with its 100% electric drive system, there is currently no commercially available equivalent in the market.
Mr Cameron Leeson
Founder, CEO
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Biography

Cameron was inspired by his childhood in regional Australia to seek opportunities within agriculture, where he could apply his mechanical & technical capabilities.

Starting with farmer discussions, Cameron co-founded thingc Robotics after discovering a real appetite in the market for a robust farm automation solution.
Company profile

The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) is a research institute at the University of Tasmania specialising in impact-driven research to support prosperous, innovative and sustainable agriculture and food sectors, and a healthy bioeconomy that supports communities.

The formation of TIA as a specialised institute for agriculture and food research, development, extension and education has gained national and international recognition.

Unique value-add

TIA’s point of difference as an academic institution is its strong industry partnerships. TIA has a diverse research portfolio (A$70 million) that is dominated by industry-relevant research. TIA has globally unique capabilities that contrast its geographic remoteness but reflect its strong relationship with government and industry-facing research portfolios.
Biography

Dr Fiona Kerslake is a cool climate viticulture, oenology and cider researcher at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA), which is located at the University of Tasmania. She is also the Horticulture Centre Leader at TIA, a portfolio which encompasses not only perennial horticulture, but also rotational and annual crops.

Fiona’s research interests are in Pinot noir and sparkling wine viticulture and oenology, across the areas of wine production efficiency, objective measures of quality, provenance and yield regulation. She has also transferred some of her sparkling winemaking research outcomes to help support and develop the burgeoning Tasmanian craft cider industry.
Contact Austrade for further information and support

The Australian Trade and Investment Commission – Austrade – contributes to Australia's economic prosperity by helping Australian businesses, education institutions, tourism operators, governments and citizens as they:

- develop international markets
- win productive foreign direct investment
- promote international education
- strengthen Australia's tourism industry
- seek consular and passport services.

Austrade helps companies around the world to identify and take up investment opportunities in Australia as well as to source Australian goods and services. Our assistance includes:

- providing insight on Australian capabilities
- identifying potential investment projects and strategic alliance partners
- helping you identify and contact Australian suppliers.
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