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Fighting the good fight

2021 has undoubtedly been a big year for Fight Food Waste Ltd, the entity behind the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre and Stop Food Waste Australia. CEO **Dr Steven Lapidge** looks at some of the achievements

THE year started with the creation of Stop Food Waste Australia (SFWA) after a competitive tender process to develop a national food waste governance entity by the Federal Department of Agriculture, Waste and the Environment. The new division has four focus areas: a voluntary agreement; sector action plans; communication, engagement and partnering for impact; and monitoring and reporting.

In September, we launched the SFWA Strategic Plan, detailing how we will work with industry, government and food rescue sectors to help meet the federal government's goal of halving Australian food waste by 2030.

The first year of operations culminated with the 21 October launch of industry-focused voluntary commitment program, the Australian Food Pact, by federal environment minister Sussan Ley.

Modelled on similar proven overseas agreements such as the UK's Courtauld Commitment, the eight initial signatories included some of the biggest names in the Australian food industry: ARECO Pacific, Coles, Goodman Fielder, McCain Foods, Mars Australia, Mondelez Australia, Simplot Australia and Woolworths Group.

The response from industry to the pact has been heartening, and we aim to have a total of 25 signatories by the end of 2021, and 50 by mid-2022.

Another vital component of SWFA's activities are Sector Action Plans (SAPs) in which we work together with industry to target food waste 'hotspots'. We have already developed SAPs for the food cold chain and food rescue sectors, and work is under way on dairy and grains/bakery SAPs. Food service, horticulture and seafood SAPs are likely to commence in 2022.

The Fight Food Waste CRC

has also undergone significant change throughout 2021, with eight new members in the delivery team. Dedicated innovation managers in Queensland (Val Natanelov) and South Australia (Jonathan Middis) are tasked with working closely with respective government partners in each state.

Another highlight this year was working with KPMG and Foodbank Australia to deliver the landmark report, *A National Food Waste Tax Incentive: Boosting food relief through Australia's tax system*.

We continue to work with the Australian government on the next stages of this exciting and important project.

Food packaging was another area of focus for the CRC this year. We worked with the Australian Institute of Packaging and numerous industry partners to develop knowledge and expertise around Save Food Packaging. Through this collaboration, we began developing food packaging criteria and guidelines for the sector on elements including shelf-life extension, resealability, date labelling and packaging design.

We also worked with South Australian food and beverage businesses in the Sustainable Save Food Packaging project. This delivered tailored training to businesses with the aim of increasing industry's understanding of the relationship between packaging and food waste.

Households are the single biggest contributors to food waste in Australia, representing more than half of the annual \$36.6 billion cost to the economy. Much vital research was done through the Designing Effective Interventions to Reduce Household Food Waste project in determining the how,

AFP
8
FOUNDING SIGNATORIES TO AUSTRALIA'S FIRST VOLUNTARY FOOD PACT TO FIGHT FOOD WASTE.



collective determination to effect meaningful national change. We are looking forward to the working group formed from the summit advancing governance and funding frameworks in 2022.

On 17 and 18 November, we effectively conclude our busy year with our Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting. We issue a warm invitation to all of our participants and partners to attend – please check our website or email enquiries@fightfoodwastecrc.com.au for more information.

While 2021 was a full and productive year, we know there is still much more to do. We have commenced planning for the inaugural Stop Food Waste Australia summit in 2022, while taking note of the latest information and data contained in the FIAL National Food Waste Strategy Feasibility Study, launched in September.

That study indicates that we

can indeed halve food waste by 2030, “but it will require unprecedented action by governments, industry and the community”.

for-purpose sector partners to build upon the momentum created through our work in 2021, and help lead Australia further toward to achieving its food

“...we can indeed halve food waste by 2030, but it will require unprecedented action by governments, industry and the community.”

The numbers in the study are challenging but not insurmountable. In Australia, some 7.6 million tonnes of food is wasted each year (equivalent to filling the MCG to the brim 10 times over), with 17.5 million tonnes of CO2 emissions produced each year – all in a time when one in five Australians is experiencing food insecurity.

In a post-pandemic 2022, Fight Food Waste Ltd is ready to continue working with its industry, government and

waste goals – to halve food waste nationally by 2030 in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12.3.

The question is, what will you do in 2022 as a food or beverage business, and consumer, to play your part in achieving this important goal? For support or financial assistance in achieving your food waste reduction goals talk to the team at Fight Food Waste Ltd, which incorporates both the Fight Food Waste CRC and Stop Food Waste Australia. *

why and where food waste occurs in the Australian home.

This study led into the Nationwide Consumer Behaviour Change Campaign Summit held in October. Around 50 stakeholders from industry, government and for-purpose sectors agreed upon a course of action for a nationwide consumer food waste behaviour change campaign.

The participation of key stakeholders represented a considerable step forward in a



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