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MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AGIC Australia 2023 Challenging Success - Maintaining Momentum

Following 3 years of record production and exports the Australian grain industry met in Melbourne at the Australian Grains Industry Conference (AGIC) on the **26th and 27th of July 2023** under the industry theme of *“Challenging Success, Maintaining Momentum”*.

“What a great occasion and an opportunity to reflect on the success of three concurrent record Australian crops and ensuring we focus on maintaining the positive industry momentum.” said Pat O’Shannassy, CEO of [Grain Trade Australia](#) which is the co-host of the popular conference alongside [Pulse Australia](#) and the [Australian Oilseeds’ Federation](#).

Andrew Goyder, Chair of Grain Trade Australia (GTA) agreed “Delegates joined AGIC Australia from across the globe, and enthusiastically to connected, networked and discussed the topical issues with colleagues, potential customers and suppliers. The opportunity to connect and communicate as an industry is so important in developing industry leadership and culture. This is how resilience and sustainability within an industry is fostered and achieved. I must congratulate the industry and the AGIC Australia coordinators for delivering this opportunity “ Mr Goyder said.

“The complexities of trade and the sheer volumes handled through the Australian supply chain in recent seasons has placed pressures on the grain industry. People have been working incredibly hard in keeping the supply chain moving at maximum capacity, so it’s great to be able to come together as an industry and to recognise the success of organisations and the people who have made it all happen,” said Mr Goyder. “The successive growth in the grain sector has created a strong platform for continued growth and investment to meet the increasing domestic and global food security needs.”

This sentiment was echoed throughout the content of the conference. Insights showed Australia is well positioned from an environmental, governance and sustainability perspective and is ably supported by industry, science based and government frameworks that provide confidence and ensure customers demands and expectations of a safe product and an orderly and trusted supply chain. Growth in the sector appears bright in the grain industry due to its resilience and demonstrated resourcefulness through the recent record production years.

Industry experts

Like previous years, AGIC produced an impressive line-up of local and international experts, including:

- **Senator the Hon. Murray Watt**, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry & Minister for Emergency Management
- **The Hon. Don Farrell**, Minister for Trade and Tourism
- **The Hon. David Littleproud**, MP, Leader of the Federal National Party, Shadow Minister for Agriculture
- **John Woods**, Chair GRDC
- **Marty Ruikka**, President & Principal, the ProExporter Network USA
- **Ken Erikson**, Senior Vice President, Head of Client Advisory and Development, S & P Global Commodity Insights
- **Tony Maher**, CEO, National Farmers Federation
- **Ben Macnamara, CEO**, CBH Group
- **Su McCluskey**, Special Representative, Australian Agriculture
- **Prof Richard Ekard**, University of Melbourne
- **Richard Heath**, Executive Director, Australian Farm Institute.
- **Brad Hogg**, Former Australian cricketer and National Ambassador of GPA's Farmer Mates Mental Health and Ambassador for Lifeline WA.
- **Zsolt Kocza**, Managing Director, Cargill Agricultural Supply Chain APAC, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand.
- **Dennis Richardson**, AC, Fmr Director General of ASIO, Ambassador to USA, Secretary DFAT and Secretary Dept of Defence

The insights

Some top insights included:

1. Agriculture Minister the Hon Murray Watt's opening address congratulating the agricultural industry, and in particular the grain sector, on its achievements and its contribution to the national economy. Minister Watt noted international trade and grain export markets are a key focus for Australia and unimpeded trade and efficient supply chains are critical to its success and to support Australia's capability to play its part in global food security.
2. Food security and Environmental Governance & Sustainability (ESG) was a strong focus of both international and local speakers. Key messages included the importance in meeting the customer, and community, expectations towards sustainable agriculture.
3. The Ukraine Ambassador to Australia Mr Vasyl Myroshnychenko joined the conference on the 2nd day via a virtual link and shared the challenges for the Ukrainian farmers, following the Russian invasion. The Ambassador discussed the impacts on the market and the risk to farmers of planting crops with uncertain market access. He described the recent attacks as Putin's 'hunger games', is a systemic act to destabilise Ukrainian agriculture to the benefit of Russian grain production. Whilst access to the market via land is possible the freight cost makes this route non sustainable Mr Myroshnychenko said
4. Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) and its impact on agriculture and trade was of interest to delegates and commented on by numerous speakers. Delegates heard from Su McCluskey, Special Representative, Australian Agriculture that ESG is being used by some countries as protectionist trade policy leading to pressure on our agricultural sector. An expert panel discussed the actions occurring within Australia to understand emissions at the

farm and post farm sectors and Australia has a good story to tell this area. Marketing of Australia's ESG credentials to the global market is a challenge industry needs to tackle and win.

5. Trade Minister the Hon. Don Farrell noted the relationship between diplomacy, politics and trade is becoming increasingly complex resulting from global tensions and extreme climate conditions. Mr Farrell said he was expecting the tariffs imposed by China on Australian Barley to be lifted soon.
6. The grain supply chain was a key discussion point, and it was noted the agricultural supply chain is becoming increasingly complex and more so since the impacts of Covid-19 and especially so in the transport sector. Delegates heard supply chains need to be resilient and reliable to support market needs and requirements whilst being able to deal with the climate driven peaks and redundancies in grain exports.
7. Mental health was also a topic with former Australian cricketer Brad Hogg providing some comedic insights into how to deal with the challenges life throws at you. Growth, self-belief and seeking support from family, friends and peers are some of the keys to turn things around.
8. Rural Infrastructure and the role of government and industry to strategically plan, invest capital and to seek operational efficiency created an interesting panel discussion. The impact of poor funding structures and the multitude of government jurisdictions was highlighted as a key blockage to efficiency within the supply chain. Whilst the market will deliver efficiency within the supply chain governments have a role to step in to steer and fill deficits.
9. CBH CEO Ben Macnamara provided an insight into CBH's whilst aspirational, achievable and sustainable goals for the WA supply chain. The challenge is to get the basic building blocks in place and then to innovate to ensure the aspirational goals can be achieved. Strategies for people, technology, sustainability and infrastructure are key to support these goals.
10. The role of industry stewardship of emerging technology across a number of sectors including plant breeding, grain assessment technology and information technology supported and enhanced through Artificial Intelligence was the subject of a panel discussion. Delegates heard these innovative changes will require frameworks and stewardship to ensure their arrival and implementation can create value and not discord.

Full **AGIC Australia 2023** Program details can be found [here](#). Delegates continue to have access to the recordings, sessions and information for 30 days.

Further information, access to AGIC session recordings, media comment and photos please contact:
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