



## MEDIA RELEASE

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# Organic certification groups merge

Organic certifying body Tasmanian Organic-dynamic Producers (TOP) is merging with Australia's largest organic certification body Australian Certified Organic (ACO).

The merger comes after the *Australian Organic Market Report* recently revealed the organic industry is worth \$1.7 billion and growing at 15% year on year.

TOP is an Australian Government accredited organic certification body with a 25-year history. ACO is owned by not for profit group Australian Organic.

CEO of Australian Organic, Paul Stadhams, says the merge is an exciting development in the organic industry, strengthening opportunities for organic farmers in Tasmania and it offers greater support for farmers wanting to switch to organics to take advantage of the industry's growth.

The development gives TOP clients the benefits associated with being part of large and innovative organisations such as Australian Organic and Australian Certified Organic.

Paul says, "ACO certification is recognised by over seven international markets and TOP clients wanting to export will benefit from having better access and support to ACO accreditation."

"The fact that TOP has chosen to join forces with Australian Certified Organic is recognition of the work we do to maintain the integrity of the organic industry and raise awareness about organic through campaigns such as the recent Australian Organic Awareness Month.

"We are about so much more than certification and that's something TOP clients will benefit from."

TOP will no longer be a certification body for organic goods and services; its certification will be carried out by ACO.

TOP will continue as an industry support group for organic producers in Tasmania and ACO will maintain an office in Tasmania and two auditors in the state.

The TOP logo will also remain.

Chair of TOP Rex Williams says, "Tasmanian shoppers will continue to see the familiarity of the TOP logo, ensuring traditional TOP standards and the state's unique profile."

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