



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Industry body championing change to drive future of organics in Australia**

**20 November 2017** - Australia's largest and most recognised industry powerhouse for organics, Australian Organic Ltd (AOL), has today announced a new structure within the organics industry – marking one of the most significant events in the organisation's 30-year history.

AOL has restructured its operations to become a stand-alone, member owned, not for profit industry services group. The new structure will enable the industry to more effectively lobby for domestic legislation and have greater and simpler access to international markets for organic exporters.

In addition, Australian consumers will be guaranteed increased ACCC action on questionable organic claims and promised integrity and trust within the industry.

Through a national democratic process last Friday, members and industry leaders casted their vote at the Australian Organic Annual General Meeting – and it was an unopposed “yes” to move forward.

This work is consistent with AOL's contribution to the significant work and ongoing consultation initially instigated by the former Federal Minister for Agriculture the Hon. Barnaby Joyce and his office to identify future pathways to grow the organics industry in Australia.

This new pathway and what it represents is strongly supported by former Senator Nick Xenophon and current Senator Rex Patrick.

“In liaising with Australian Organic over the years, we understand there to be two major issues that remain unresolved for industry members. One is the absence of domestic legislation, which would fully protect the organic attribution claims of legitimate, industry standard-abiding business people who invest in building up their own organic brands and business. The second, is the effective enforcement of claims that are patently not in compliance with the nationally agreed, clearly articulated organic standard,” said Xenophon.

A national survey conducted last year, revealed that organic food has a firm foothold in Aussie shopping baskets, with more than two out of three households purchasing organic products in the last year.

Furthermore, earlier this year, the Australian Organic Market Report revealed Australia officially holds the largest amount of organically managed farmland in the world at 53%, however, this is still not enough to meet growing demand locally.

“The launch of the new structure allows us to collaborate, support and represent the industry more broadly. We are working to ensure we are unified under one national standard, which means we will be a stronger voice to lobby government and we will continue to maintain our strong focus on education and protection of the industry.

Australians can look forward to the opportunities this restructure will deliver to them, and to the industry as a whole, over the decade ahead,” said newly appointed General Manager of Australian Organic Group, Emily Arnold.



Another integral component in the restructure is the representation of the Bud Logo – the oldest Australian organic certification mark in the country that guarantees a product is truly organic.

As a result of this industry change, it will enable all organic certification services to access the Bud via approved and licensed certification agencies.

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#### **About Australian Organic Ltd. (AO)**

Australian Organic has played a major role in the organic industry since 1987. It is Australia's member owned, not-for-profit, industry services group.

The Australian Organic Market Report is a highly respected annual publication commissioned by Australian Organic Ltd. that tracks trends in the Australian organic marketplace. This year's Report incorporates independent research by University of New England, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Mobium Group and other sources.

[www.austorganic.com](http://www.austorganic.com)

#### **KEY POINTS:**

- Recent restructure of peak organisation to become two separate industry bodies (AOL and ACO)
- Enables AOL to develop an industry strategy, establish a strong position and become the influential voice from both an industry and consumer perspective
- The Bud Logo can be found on the overwhelming majority of certified organic products sold in Australia (over 80% of the market) and is the most recognised organic certification mark by consumers

<sup>1</sup> Mobium Group's organic survey has tracked the attitudes of Australian consumers toward organic products in five public opinion polls in 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016. In the survey referenced in this report. In the latest survey, the primary grocery shopper in 1,024 households were polled over a week in June 2016. Roughly half of respondents were female and half were male, spread across all states, with a range of age groups and income profiles. About a third of those surveyed had children under 16 years living at home and 41% had attained or were attaining a university degree. For the statistically minded, the sample reliability at a total survey level was 95% (+/-3.1%), which shows a high degree of reliability.