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LEADING INDUSTRY GROUP AUSTRALIAN ORGANIC ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD APPOINTMENTS AND GENERAL MANAGER

BERNADETTE FAVIS, FORMER CORPORATE LAWYER AND FOUNDER OF COCOLIFE, AND LEO WATLING, FOUNDER OF APPLES AND SAGE, JOIN BOARD OF DIRECTORS WITH SENIOR INDUSTRY LEADER NIKI FORD ANNOUNCED AS NEW GENERAL MANAGER

Australian Organic, the leading member-based, non-profit industry body responsible for ensuring organic standards in Australia are upheld, has announced three new appointments. Former corporate lawyer, Bernadette Favis, and organic wholefoods expert, Leo Watling, have both joined the Board of Directors, whilst Niki Ford, founder of consultancy Naturalis Advisory, has been appointed new General Manager.

Mr Watling, founder of retailer Apples and Sage, was voted in by Australian Organic members at the Annual General Meeting last November. The appointment of Ms Favis, who has experience in governance, and was the first Board appointed director to join, was a result of recent changes to the AOL constitution, aiming to increase the size of the Board and enable the appointments to fill any skills gaps. Ms Ford was appointed by the Board on December 18 as Australian Organic's new General Manager after a six-month period of consulting on key strategic marketing projects.

"We are very pleased to welcome the skill diversities and industry experience of these talented individuals to the Board and management team," says acting chairman of Australian Organic, Martin Meek. "Bernadette's legal background and entrepreneurial experience will be invaluable to Australian Organic moving forward. Her knowledge and drive, combined with Leo and Niki's strong commercial acumen, and vast retail knowledge, will see Australian Organic really hit its stride this year."

Ms Favis was a practicing corporate lawyer prior to starting Cocolife, a health food company which specialises in organic kitchen oils. She previously won the coveted 'Young Organic Leader' award at The Australian Organic Annual Awards for Excellence in 2016 and has been an advocate for the organic industry for many years having changed careers in support of her passion for organics.

"I'm really pleased to be able to share my skills as a director to help shape Australia's organic industry," she says. "The industry is growing year on year. So I'm looking forward to representing our members and working with stakeholders to ensure the necessary regulatory framework is in place to protect the integrity and long-term sustainability of the industry."

Mr Watling says he was delighted to be voted into his new director position by Australian Organic members adding, "With years of retail experience and a passion for organic food, I look forward to the contribution that I can make to the growth of the certified organic industry in Australia."

At the AGM members also called on the Board to ensure Australian Organic has the export, retail, legal and financial skills required to meet the rapid growth in the industry while continuing to support its members long term.

Ms Ford says the certified organic industry is rapidly growing into a sustainable and profitable opportunity for farmers, businesses and investors. "It's important to meet the needs of our members while also ensuring the engagement of the broader industry," she says. "Our program this year is committed to delivering information rich and industry relevant initiatives that support the growth and development of our industry both domestically and internationally."

The 2018 Market Report compiled by Australian Organic reveals that the nation's organic industry is worth a massive \$2.4billion. The total value of exports is now in excess of \$700 million per annum with exports growing more than 15 per cent annually (compound growth rate).

Currently, the area of land under certified organic management in Australia is 35million hectares – more than half of all certified land area on the earth.

With the appointment of Ms Favis and Mr Watling, Australian Organic's Board now consists of six directors, including Martin Meek as acting Chairman; Kim Morgan, founder of mOrganics; Quentin Kennedy, owner of Kialla Pure Foods and Andrew Monk, Chairman of Enervest and Murray River Organics.

For more information on Australian Organic please visit: <https://austorganic.com/>

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About Australian Organic:

Australian Organic is the leading industry body responsible for ensuring organic standards in Australia remain in the hands of the industry. Australian Organic established an organic certification scheme to independently verify that farmers and processors were producing in accord with those standards and introduced the leading organic certification 'Bud' logo. This symbol ensures the integrity of organic products in the marketplace for consumers. ACO, a separate legal entity to Australian Organic, is one of the certifying bodies licensed to use the 'Bud' logo.