



Australian Organic *Connect*

Christmas Marketing Ideas for Small Businesses

The festive season is upon us, so it is time to take advantage of the different types of marketing strategies you can implement.

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Why Certify?

Choosing to become certified organic is no small decision. We've addressed some common questions that operators have before making the switch.

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Organic on a Budget

With cost-of-living being a timely topic of conversation, we look at some tips for organic consumption that won't break the budget.

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Organic Operators in Focus

There is no shortage of innovation in the certified organic sector, including these three operators who have overcome challenges to find their niche.

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FRONT COVER: Robert Bauer's Produce Farm, 2 November 2023

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A Note from the CEO

Welcome to the Summer 2023 Issue

Welcome to the Summer edition of Australian Organic Connect.

This issue is our last for 2023, an eventful year for the Australian organic sector marked by highs and lows. While the year started on a disappointing note with the federal government opting against introducing domestic regulation for organics in March, the months that followed brought some exciting developments for our industry's future.

The Organic Development Group (ODG) was formed in the wake of the government's March decision, with all of Australia's key industry groups and certification bodies coming together to create a united voice for the sector. The ODG is a voluntary group with representation from 11 industry organisations including all certification, industry groups and associations. The large percentage of the work that is undertaken by this group is resourced and funded by Australian Organic Limited members and Industry Development Levy funds. AOL is extremely thankful for all its members and Bud licencees for the ongoing support, for without such funding this important work could not be done.

Since my last message, our annual Australian Organic Awareness Month consumer campaign was held in September. This year's campaign was a massive success, headlined by the inaugural Parliamentary Friends of Organic BBQ in the courtyards of Parliament House where organic operators from across the country were able to network and highlight the state of the industry with parliamentarians. The event had a fantastic turnout and was such a success that a commitment was made to host a Parliament House BBQ annually to keep up the positive dialogue.

In this issue of Australian Organic Connect, we share some Christmas features around organic marketing and opportunities, as well as delving deeper into the value of certification and aspects you might like to consider before making the switch. We also share stories from leading certified organic operators across the nation.

Thank you as ever for supporting organics in Australia, and I look forward to connecting in the New Year.

Niki Ford

Chief Executive Officer,
Australian Organic Limited



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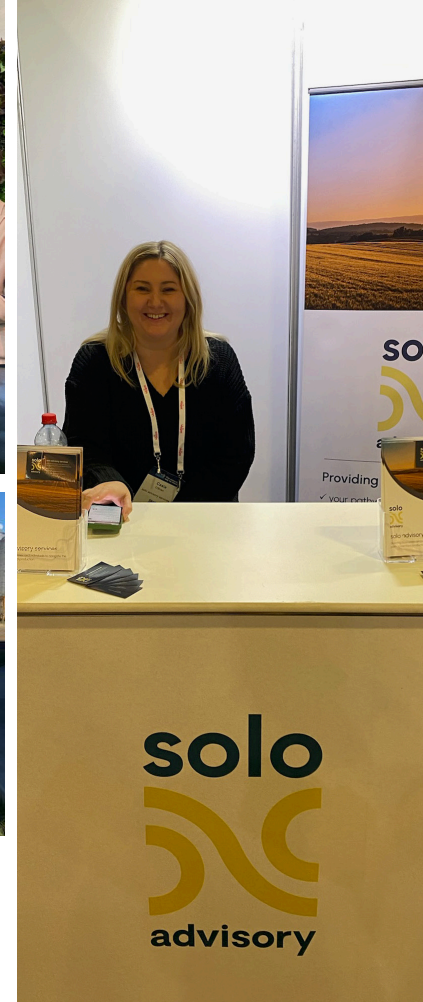
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Australian Organic Limited (AOL) is the peak industry body engaging with government and industry to promote the commercial and social interests of those who are certified and protect the integrity of the sector against fraud and misleading organics.

AOL has been at the foundation of organics since 1987 and is identified by the most recognised mark in Australia, the Australian Certified Organic 'Bud' logo. This trademark signals the highest of integrity and is recognised by 64 per cent of Australian consumers.



2023 at AOL

As you may already be aware, 2023 was a challenging but exciting year for the sector and those who work within it. The year really highlighted the strength and resilience of the certified organic industry within Australia, with the sector unifying to work towards a common goal. Thanks to everyone who has supported the broader organic industry (and AOL specifically) across the past twelve months. We look forward to seeing what the future holds!



Australian Organic

Awareness Month 2023

Another Australian Organic Awareness Month (AOAM) is in the books, with our September 2023 campaign built around a theme of **Why Organic?** The month was all about explaining why certified organic can be the better option for you, for animals and for the environment.

These benefits were covered across four weekly topics, covering everything from how certified organic never uses toxic chemicals or pesticides, to how animals under certified organic production must be allowed to range freely.



We were also thrilled to work with rugby league legend **Anthony Minichiello**, who shared his story about how organics and wholefood nutrition helped turn around his career after years of persistent injuries. Our campaign video showed 'Mini' returning to his family farm in south-west Sydney to talk about his upbringing and philosophies on the importance of nutrition. The centrepiece of our 2023 campaign was an

organic BBQ in the courtyards of Parliament House. With the organic industry in Australia still actively seeking a mandatory domestic standard for the term 'organic', a cross-political parliamentary friendship group has been established to move the agenda forward and build connections between government and industry.

The BBQ was a fantastic success, with organic operators from across the country mingling with parliamentarians including Minister for Agriculture Senator Murray Watt, Leader of the Nationals David Littleproud MP, and many others.

The friendship group is co-chaired by Liberal MP Aaron Violi and Labor MP Dan Repacholi, and a commitment has been made to host this BBQ every year as a lead-in to Awareness Month.

Thanks to everyone who got involved this September to help spread the word!



why organic?

Board and Staff Updates

There have been some changes to the Australian Organic Limited Board following the 2023 Annual General Meeting, with long-serving Directors Mike Brown and Bernadette Favis retiring from their positions after outstanding contributions to the broader industry.

Mike has been a Director since 2020, and Chairman of the Board since our 2022 AGM. A highly experienced organic winemaker, Mike's energy and passion for organics helped connect the industry and drive new collaboration during his tenure.

Bernadette was appointed to the Board in 2019 as an organic health food founder with a background as a corporate lawyer. Among many achievements, she orchestrated a review of the AOL Constitution and helped mould it into a fit-for-purpose document that will serve the business in the years ahead. We'd like to thank Mike and Bernie for their time and commitment to the help grow the Australian organic industry.

Two new Directors joined the Board following successful votes at the 2023 AOL AGM, and we'd like to congratulate Ben Bateup and Sharon Markulin on their appointments.

Ben is an experienced professional in the organic meat sector, hailing from the Hewitt/Arcadian organisation where he is part of the key operational management and strategic execution team. He possesses extensive knowledge of Australian protein supply chains from paddock to plate, including domestic and export channels.

Sharon brings decades of experience as a finance professional to the AOL Board, with focus areas including strategic planning, risk management and financial control. A keen organic advocate, Sharon was the chief financial and operating officer at organic agricultural technology company, Green Camel, where she grew the business significantly.

We'd like to welcome Ben and Sharon to the AOL Board and look forward to their valued contributions in the years to come.



Mike Brown



Ben Bateup



Bernadette Favis



Sharon Markulin

in 2023

This year, AOL saw four new staff members come on board; Alex, Kris, Sarah and Tonya. All have been great assets to the team, bringing new ideas and a fresh perspective on different areas of the business. See below to find out a little more about each of them!



Alex joined AOL in January 2023 as an intern before eventually progressing to the role of Research Officer in September, mainly providing support to the Technical & Research Manager. Armed with degrees in Agribusiness and Wildlife Science (coupled with some background in Psychology) she brings a unique perspective that enriches her contributions to AOL.

Kris joined AOL in August 2023 as Operations Manager, bringing a wealth of management experience around supply chains, business strategy, budget control and client liaison. At AOL, his responsibilities include team management and driving improved outcomes for AOL's growing member base.



Sarah joined AOL in September 2023 as Marketing Manager, coming from an agency background in advertising & marketing. Her focus is on contributing to brand visibility and fostering interactions with our consumers and members. With experience in leading marketing teams, Sarah brings a practical approach to achieving positive results for the organisation.

Tonya joined AOL in April 2023 as the Executive Assistant to CEO Niki Ford. Tonya brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of providing high-level support to C-suite executives. Tonya possesses a keen eye for detail, exceptional organisational skills, and a dedication to enhancing operational efficiency to the company.





our future growing together

2024

australian organic conference

On behalf of the organic industry, we would like to welcome you to Melbourne for the Australian Organic Conference 2024, a two day event based around a theme of 'Our Future: Growing Together'.

When: March 7-8 2024

Where: Pullman Melbourne on the Park
East Melbourne, Victoria

If you are interested in getting involved with 'Our Future: Growing Together' as a sponsor, click the link below to reach out to our team and find out more.

[Become a Sponsor](#)

For more information, please email marketing@austorganic.com.



2024 Industry Awards

We are now accepting submissions for the 9th edition of the Australian Organic Industry Awards, with winners to be announced in Melbourne on 8 March 2024.

Our Awards program is all about showcasing the products, individuals, brands and businesses that are moving the organic sector forward. Entries are open across eight individual and industry categories, with a Chairman's Award and Hall of Fame recipient also to be unveiled.

Applications Open: Wednesday 29 November 2023

Applications Close: Wednesday 17 January 2024

Finalists Announced: Monday 12 February 2024

Winners Announced: Friday 8 March 2024

If you'd like to put yourself or your business forward, click the 'Apply Now' button below to complete your application before 17 January 2024. Applications are free for AOL members. Make sure you download an Entry Pack first to learn more about the categories and what the judging panel is looking for as part of your submission.

[Apply Now](#)



Attention Organic Growers and Producers

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Performance Feed's Organic Supplement Key to Carbon Reduction for Cattle Producers
Cattle producers looking to reduce the methane output of their livestock should look no further than Performance Feeds' organic nutritional supplement OrganiPro®.

With the Australian Red Meat and Livestock Industry's Carbon Neutral target set for 2030, it's becoming increasingly important for producers to implement practices into their livestock programs that will help to reduce methane output. Performance Feeds', OrganiPro® is an organic mineral supplement designed to; boost frame and bone growth, boost productivity, boost feed efficiency, and reduce methane output in livestock.

"We've seen fantastic results since OrganiPro® was released onto the market, and we're pleased to offer supplements that aid in the reduction of methane output, while also improving production and profitability for producers," says Performance Feeds National Sales Manager, Peter Cush.

Certified by Australian Organic, OrganiPro® is a highly palatable, loose lick nutritional supplement

that has been designed to boost livestock production systems and contains key ingredients to achieve this. Agolin® is a key ingredient that has been included in the OrganiPro® formula to aid in the reduction of methane output in grazing cattle year-round by optimising the function of the rumen. Agolin® will also improve feed efficiency and weight gain when supplemented to cattle.

Australian Organic has certified OrganiPro® as a 'Certified Allowed Input' that can be used on properties certified to the National Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce Standards. OrganiPro® has also been assessed and found compliant with the USDA National Organic Program and NOP.

To find out more about OrganiPro®, contact your local Territory Manager or visit; www.performancefeeds.com.au/products/organipro/



Christmas **Countdown**

Christmas is just a few short weeks away, but it's not too late to implement some festive marketing strategies and tactics to increase your engagement and reach! Read on for some simple strategies that you can adopt to connect with your target audience this holiday season.

Christmas Marketing Ideas For Small Businesses

Christmas giveaway

Social media giveaways are a fun and engaging technique to gain attention for your products and services and increase your online reach. Consider setting pre-requisites for entry such as tagging friends, 'liking' the post, following your social media channel, etc. These measures can help broaden your reach and gain new attention while people are in the market for Christmas goodies.

Not only this, but the winner may become a return customer, while individuals who didn't win but simply learned about your product from your giveaway may become first time customers.

Send a digital holiday card

You can thank your loyal customers by providing them an exclusive deal for the Christmas period. Highlighting that you are thankful for their loyalty over the last year and giving them something in return to continue the relationship into the New Year may be a valuable endeavour.

Create a gift guide

If you are an e-commerce business, one of the best things you can do for your consumers is create a gift guide. Having all your products that could be potential gifts in one spot creates a level of ease for the shopper who may then be more likely to purchase a product (or several) from you.

How many times have you gone onto a website to start your Christmas shopping and have no idea where to begin? Creating an organic gift guide can help to mitigate that problem this December.

Festive quiz

Okay, this one may take you a little longer, but might be worth it! Creating a quiz is a fun and engaging way to get consumers involved with your business, gain new subscribers and create healthy online dialogue about your products or your organic industry sector.



Promote gift cards

Maybe you don't have a wide variety of possible gifts to make a complete guide, but what you can do is offer and promote a gift card. There is always a market for last-minute shoppers who give gift cards, and it could pay to make yours easy and accessible. If you have them, it's worth leveraging your website, email and social media platforms to make prospective shoppers aware of the options available.

Partner with a charity

'Tis the season to give, and those that can afford it are more inclined to give to charities at this time of the year. Brand values are increasingly important, especially among consumers in the organic space who are traditionally more engaged on such issues.

The [Australian Organic Market Report 2023](#) included a study of Australian food shoppers, finding that 78 per cent of all consumers consider brand values when making a purchase, while 83 per cent are concerned about environmental issues (plastic waste, toxic chemicals, etc.). Partnering with or contributing to a suitable charity can strengthen your brand values while helping make a positive impact this festive season.

Your Organic Christmas Gift Guide

If you're stuck for gift ideas this holiday season, certified organic products could be the thoughtful and sustainable choice you're looking for.

Whether shopping for the environmentally-conscious, the health-conscious, or the nature lover in your life, this Organic Gift Guide is filled with eco-friendly products they'll love. You'll feel good too knowing your gift is helping make a lasting, positive impact on the planet!

All of the products listed below are certified organic.

Cosmetics

[Mukti Organics'](#) Botanique Body Wash and Body Lotion are suitable for the hands and body, leaving skin feeling hydrated and refreshed with all-natural ingredients including botanical extracts.

For a restorative lip balm that relieves dry, rough skin, check out the Flora Fix Balm from [The Beauty Chef](#), with camellia and rosehip oil, vitamin E and bio-fermented coconut.

The entire award-winning range of skincare and aromatherapy from [Synthesis Organics](#) is certified organic, utilising natural, vegan and renewable ingredients from organic and biodynamic farms.



Drinks

[Bun Coffee](#) has launched its Christmas Blend, hand roasted in Byron Bay with beans from some of the world's top producers of fine coffee.

[Frank n Al Chai](#) has a range of vegan, caffeine-free products, including a four-pack of Nitrogen infused Black Chai cans for a spicy, refreshing drink on the go.



No need to decide with this tasting pack from [Antipodes](#) Gin, featuring their core range of Original Gin, Pink Gin, Vodka and Espresso Liqueur.

For the wine lover in your life, you can buy red, white and sparkling varietals online from a range of leading certified organic producers, including Gemtree Wines and Angove Family Winemakers.

Homewares

Make it personal with a custom printed tea towel or tote bag from [Organic Print Studio](#), made from ethically-sourced organic cotton.

[Happy Flame](#) makes handcrafted beeswax candles from only the happiest bees – pasture-fed by second and third generation organic beekeepers. Check out their range of Christmas candles for a perfect holiday centrepiece.



Supplements

The natural choice for health and fitness lovers, the full range of powders and shakes from [Proganics](#) contain only sustainably-farmed ingredients.

There's plenty of certified organic products to choose from at [Tropeaka](#), including protein, collagen and acai powder, energy bars, and the best-selling Body Bloom health and beauty powder.

Treats

Guilt-free chocolate? It's possible with [Alter Eco](#). All their products are certified organic, grown by small-scale, fair trade farmers utilising regenerative agriculture principles.

The delicious [Kelty Farm](#) Organic Christmas Puddings are handmade from the traditional Kelty family recipe, including their own beef suet, and cooked in floured calico wrapping.

Australia's only certified organic stock concentrates stockist, [Urban Forager](#), not only produces stocks and broths, but a range of vegan and preservative-free jams and chutneys sure to be hit on tables this Christmas.



For more gift ideas and delicious Christmas recipes, head to the Bud Organic Club website.



Festive Recipes

Potato Salad



Ingredients

1kg Organic Potatoes
2 Organic Celery stalks, diced
1/2 Cup Diced Red Onions
2 Tbsp Capers
4 Red Radishes, halved and thinly sliced, reserve some for garnish
1/3 Cup Chopped Chives, reserve some for garnish
2 to 4 Tbsp Fresh Dill, optional
1/4 Tsp celery seed, optional

Dressing:

3/4 Cup Greek Yoghurt
1/4 Cup Mayonnaise
2 Tbsp Dijon Mustard
2 Tbsp Lemon Juice
1 1/2 Tbsps Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
3 Garlic Cloves, minced
1 Tsp sea salt
1/4 Tsp Turmeric, optional, for colour
Freshly Ground Black Pepper, to taste

Method

1. Place the potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold water by about an inch. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, until fork-tender, about 10 minutes. Drain the potatoes, set aside to cool to room temperature, then transfer to a large bowl.
2. Make the dressing: In a medium bowl, whisk together the yogurt, mayo, mustard, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, salt, turmeric, if using, and several grinds of pepper.

Note: this will taste strong and salty at this step; it'll balance once it's mixed with the potatoes.

3. Pour the dressing over the potatoes and stir to coat. Stir in the celery, red onions, capers, radishes, chives, and dill and celery seed, if using. Season to taste and garnish with the reserved radishes and chives.

Pavlova with Berries



Ingredients:

5 Organic Egg Whites
1 Cup Organic Caster Sugar
1 Tbsp Corn Flour
1 Tsp White Vinegar
1/4 Tsp Vanilla Extract

Toppings:

Organic Mixed Berries (fresh or frozen)
Vanilla Yoghurt

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 150 C.
2. Put your egg whites into a bowl and whisk until soft peaks form.
3. Continue to whisk whilst slowly adding in your sugar, until firm peaks form and the mixture is glossy.
4. Sift in your cornflour and add in vinegar and vanilla extract, fold these ingredients into the mixture.
5. Transfer mixture to a lined tray in small portions and create a divet in the shape of a circle in the top.
6. Cook for 1 1/2 hours, then turn the oven off, crack the door open and leave pavlovas to completely cool.
7. Once cool, enjoy with yoghurt and berries of choice.

How to Buy O

Living on

Reduce food waste

This isn't just a way to eat organic on a budget, but also a way to reduce your impact on the environment as Australians are wasting around 3.1 million tonnes of food each year. While this is a complex issue with many contributing factors, we all have the ability to reduce our own food waste and save money in the process. Planning meals and carefully considering how to store your food properly can cut down on spoilage and give you better control over your food budget.

Eat seasonal and local

Ever wonder why you can buy produce in the supermarket that is not in season? Sometimes those fruits and veggies are shipped from international markets, often travelling days to be readily available at a high price point. Eating in-season organic produce not only means that it will be fresh and you'll be supporting local growers, but it will also be much more reasonably priced.

With the cost-of-living a timely topic of conversation, it's an ideal time to discover an ideal time to discover money while shopping. A secret that shopping can be pricier in some areas, the gap may be closed through research. Check out the [Spring edition](#) to learn more about recent independent

To give a helping hand on your journey in 2024, we've compiled methods you can apply to your weekly organic

Grow your own

Okay, so we know this one is the most rewarding! Growing your own herbs in a small or large space is a project that pays for itself. Can you get to pick your very own ripe strawberries? Use your freshly grown herbs as a natural fertiliser and gardening supplies. Make sure that you're growing the

Organic When

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Cook at home

Taking on meal planning means that you spend less time during the week coming up with dinner ideas, and also allows you to save leftovers for lunch the next day. Ordering from takeaway services or going out for meals can add up to a hefty food bill if you're not careful. It's not always easy planning in advance when life gets in the way, but it's a great method to utilise fresh and sustainable organic ingredients.

Shop around

Not all organic brands are priced equally, and there are many reasons for this. You may have noticed that the major supermarkets have launched their own-brand certified organic ranges which can be an accessible entry point for new organic shoppers. There are other sources that price organic competitively such as your local markets, fruit and veg stores, Aldi and organic delivery boxes. Simply shop around a bit and you should be able to find products and prices that work for you!

Wine Pairings for

For many, it wouldn't be an Australian Christmas without a delicious wine pairing. Thankfully we live in a country with a wonderful array of organic and biodynamic wines to enjoy responsibly.

The following wines took home awards at the [2023 Australian Organic Wine Awards](#). We have listed some pairing ideas that may be the perfect complement to your Christmas plans.

Beginning with breakfast

In our book, there is only one drink you can perfectly pair with a Christmas breakfast, and that is a mimosa! When joined with a light and sweet breakfast like pastries, pancakes and fresh organic fruit, a mimosa



can kick your Christmas day off in a magical fashion.

Consider the sparkling [Crémant Silver Lining 2021](#) from Stormflower Vineyard in the Margaret River when making your mimosas. The sparkling wine contains aromas of delicate pear and fruit salad and is made from 100% Chenin Blanc grapes.

Charming charcuterie

Before lunch or dinner starts, putting out a little charcuterie board is always a winner. You might want to think about adding some wine glasses

and opting for a rosé to pair with your cheese and crackers. Something light and sweet will be the perfect addition to what we are sure is a very aesthetically pleasing offering.

We would suggest the [Hill-Smith Family Estates 2022 Wildly Organic Rosé](#) from South Australia as a suitable choice. This rosé is a refreshing way to prepare you and your guests for the upcoming meal. With strong pomegranate and fresh strawberries flavours, plus hints of passionfruit, the Hill-Smith Family drop is a light complement to your charcuterie.

Seafood station

Living in Australia will most likely mean that your Christmas day will be better without the oven making the whole house hot. This is one reason why seafood is such a popular Australian choice for lunch or dinner. A dry and crisp white wine is a great option for any type of seafood you desire, whether



r the Festive Season

that be smoked salmon, oysters, or the classic prawn.

The [Voyager Estate Sauvignon Blanc Semillon](#) is a crisp Margaret River drop that comes with zesty lime and passionfruit notes, as well as subtle florals and lemon pith.

Traditional tasters

Do you and your family brave the heat of the oven on Christmas day and have a more traditional style meal with a glazed ham and roast vegetables? You may prefer to opt for a red wine that is mid-weight and screams Christmas - a Shiraz perhaps?

The [Butterfly Kiss Shiraz from Zilzie Wines](#) holds delicious hints of dark berries, rhubarb, raspberries and anise. As a Gold Medal Winner for the Organic Wine Awards, it may become your new favourite for Christmas time ... or anytime really.

Delectable desserts

It's time for everybody's favourite part of the Christmas meal, dessert! If you're pulling out a bottle as a dessert pairing, the [Lark Hill 'Estate' Ley-Line Riesling](#) features intense and balanced fruit for a delicious treat to end the day. Pair this with a traditional Christmas dessert such as pavlova or trifle to round out your Christmas in style.

2024 Wine Awards

The Australian Organic Wine Awards is all about celebrating the beautiful creations of certified organic and biodynamic winemakers across Australia. Check out our [webpage](#) for a full list of all the wines that took home prizes at the most recent edition of our Awards.



ITALIAN REDS



SHIRAZ & HEAVY



Leave the 'Hustle & Bustle' and Enter *Serenity* with these *Sustainable Getaways*



December is that time of the year when you just want to escape to a new location to decompress; somewhere slower, sunnier or quieter to relax and recharge. Instead of doing all the hard work to look through different accommodations, we have put in the time for you by listing options that are [ECO Certified](#). This means that they have all been verified by a recognised eco-tourism program to be

"...backed by a strong, well managed commitment to sustainable practices and providing high-quality nature-based tourism experiences."

From hotels and retreats to glamping and camping, there is a different accommodation option to suit everyone's idea of a relaxing getaway. ECO Certification means the sites are assessed across their impact on the environment, social and economic sustainability, and held to a standard to ensure the environment is not negatively impacted.

The tourism industry impacts our environment in ways we may not even think of, from water and power usage to waste output and local community/wildlife factors. These businesses ensure they minimise negative outputs while still giving you the best holiday possible.

With places all over Australia, there is plenty to choose from. We have picked a few of our favourites to get you started on your hunt to find the perfect getaway.

Kingfisher Bay Resort

Just a 4-hour drive from Brisbane on K'Gari (formally known as Fraser Island), this central resort allows you and your friends or family to explore the World Heritage listed island during the day and come back to relax at night. The resort works hard to minimise waste, reduce energy use and continually improve on their efforts to keep the resort sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Billabong Retreat

Only a 1 hour drive from Sydney, this retreat offers a wide range of perks such as organic meals, yoga and meditation sessions, wellness treatments and more. The site is self-sufficient for water and maintains a focus on reducing waste and utilising as many recycled materials as possible.

Margaret River Retreat

Not a camper, but want to get a taste for it? Western Australia's hidden gem in the Margaret River Region is a glamping retreat for the traveller who still likes a few creature comforts. With organic cotton linens, a self-sufficient water source and locally and sustainably sourced products, this retreat keeps sustainability at the forefront of its values.

Aquila Eco Lodges

Hidden away near Ballarat, Victoria, these secluded modern-day treehouse lodges give you peace and privacy; it's just you and nature. Focusing on their impact around energy, water, waste, and community, Aquila makes sure that you can have the most enjoyable experience without negatively impacting your surrounding environment.



Using Technology to Certification

LYNDAVALE Cattle Co is a fourth-generation family owned and operated business, producing grass fed, certified organic and EU-accredited beef spanning three stations and 7,250km² in Central Australia.

The Stanes family has a strong ethical approach to managing both the land and livestock, with a focus on sustainable stocking rates across the three properties - Lyndavale Station, Mount Ebenezer Station and De Rose Hill Station - and allowing their Angus Charolais cross herd to be fattened in an environment with low rainfall. In addition to their certified organic properties, they also own and operate several farms in South Australia.

Maintaining organic certification requires keeping records and data to meet audit requirements, which Lyndavale Cattle Co Manager, South Australia Operations, Lily Stanes said was historically tedious.

"In the past we relied mostly on spreadsheets and diary records to satisfy traceability requirements, which was time consuming to keep updated," Ms Stanes said.

"We have always been good at collecting livestock data, however the move to Black Box has certainly saved a lot of time when it comes to preparing for organic audits for each property."

Black Box Co uses individual animal data to provide beef businesses with key insights for use in decision making and to improve record-keeping, which can be easily accessed for compliance purposes.

Black Box co-founder and CEO, Shannon Speight, said each animal's National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) tag is scanned and data collected when stock are held in a crush for routine husbandry treatments.

"This is called crush-side data and includes key metrics such as weight, breed and pregnancy status," Ms Speight said.

"There are several systems available in the market that either collect the data, which is exported and uploaded to Black Box for processing, or via an integration that allows for automatic data transfer.

"This data then surfaces into an easy to use and navigate dashboard that provides beef producers with key insights into the performance of their herd by each individual animal."

Set up is paying dividends

Having the infrastructure and systems in place to collect the data has taken a few years for the Stanes family, however, Lily said they have been supported all the way by the team at Black Box.

"We purchased TruTest indicators, readers and weigh bars for the main trucking yards at each property," she said.

"With the help of the Black Box team, we then developed systems to collect data and input it into Black Box, including weaner induction information, carcass feedback sheets and NLIS transfers.

"We have also found Black Box is a great tool to involve employees with as it helps them to understand the bigger picture of what we're trying to achieve.

"By capturing all our livestock data on the one platform, we're all learning a lot about our herd ourselves, and have a better understanding of average daily weight gains, as well as dressing percentages for each animal class."

Gaining insights into productivity and profitability. A key benefit from using Black Box is it's not limited to data at the farm-gate. Producers can access information about their stock through the supply chain, allowing them to gain insights into the production system and make better and more informed decisions.

For certified organic cattle, this means producers can access carcass data on individual animals from processors - data that had not previously been used by the Stanes family.

"For two-and-a-half years, we have been inducting all our weaner stock into Black Box, and are now starting to see carcass results, which is very exciting," Ms Stanes said.

"While we are a few years away yet, I'm looking forward to the time when our entire herd has been inducted and is active on Black Box.

"This will allow us to easily track cattle numbers across properties and provide a tool to assist with forecasting income for budgeting purposes."

Using the filter tool within Black Box has been a

Fast-Track Organic ion Audits

game-changer for Lyndavale Cattle Co, increasing the business' income because more informed decisions can now be made when booking in cattle.

"We can now easily filter between abattoirs, properties, and sex to give us a better understanding of the prices received for each type and class of animal for different abattoirs," Ms Stanes said.

"Traditionally, this information is not often marketed well by abattoirs, and it can be difficult to decipher complicated price grids."

Ms Stanes said the Lyndavale teams were using Black Box to guide decisions regarding sales.

"Specifically, this year we used the predictor table to ascertain how many steers would be finished this year so that we could book space in abattoirs.

"We weighed a sample size, as our older animals are not yet inducted into Blackbox, then viewed these animals on the Growing Management Dashboard.

"We were able to use the predictor table to view the number of head that will likely be more than our ideal turnoff weight by the end of the year and convert this to a percentage of the sample size.

"This was then extrapolated over all the steers in the same age category, based on an average daily weight gain.

"Black Box has definitely given us the potential to increase profitability in our business as it's improving our ability to collect, collate and interpret data."

The future looks bright with Black Box. Having the records and data readily available for organic certification remains a key motivator for Lyndavale, and Ms Stanes said Black Box is now used to assist with compliance for all their organic certifications and some of their European Union Cattle Accreditation Scheme (EUCAS) certifications, particularly relating to animal traceability requirements.

"I now only need to log into Black Box during an audit and all the records are there, readily available for the auditor to view," she said.

"The ability to search for individual animals and view their lifetime data has made compliance with traceability requirements very easy, and I'm able to demonstrate an animal's history, from weaning induction data, treatment records and movement and transfers all the way through to carcass results.

"During a recent audit, the auditor was very impressed with our ability to trace back an animal's lifetime history and even asked if he could recommend Black Box to other producers he's audited."

As a requirement of the EUCAS accreditation, producers are required to provide a PIC reconciliation, or an annual stocktake of all electronic NLIS devices on a property.

"Once our entire herd is active on the system, I'm confident we'll be able to use Black Box in the future for all of our EUCAS audits as well," Ms Stanes said.

"This will make annual PIC reconciliations simple, as we'll be able to view active tags on each PIC at any given time."

For more information on how Black Box can change your audit processes and drive performance in your operation please reach out to the team.

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Why Certify?

Challenges and Opportunities in Organic Certification

Choosing to become certified organic is no small decision. Getting your business or products ticked off may require significant changes to your production or processing techniques. There is also careful planning and paperwork required, with businesses needing to submit an Organic Management Plan (OMP) and comprehend the full scope of certification requirements before getting started.

In short, by becoming certified you're making a long-term commitment to the industry's growth and integrity. You're choosing to support a robust third-party certification system that guarantees consumers are purchasing products that are truly organic. As a member-owned industry body, AOL receives a host of common questions around the certification prospect, some of which we have listed and addressed below.



Q. Is certification worth the financial burden for small businesses?

A. Ultimately this depends on the scope and nature of your business, but choosing to become certified is a vote of confidence in Australian organics that makes the whole industry stronger. While Australia's organic industry is robust in many ways, we have fallen behind the rest of the world from a legislative perspective as one of the few developed countries without domestic regulation controlling use of the term 'organic'. The Australian sector is working very hard to address this long-term issue, which is currently impacting export potential and consumer confidence. There is a strong chance that domestic regulation for organics will be enacted in the near future, and if you decide to transition to certified organics now you may be ahead of the curve when a mandatory standard is put in place.

Q. Are consumers really deterred from buying organic products that aren't certified?

A. Data from the [Australian Organic Market Report 2023](#) demonstrates how important certification marks are for organic consumers. 77% of organic shoppers are aware of certification marks (up from 59% in 2019), while 75% of organic shoppers are 'regular' users of pack and/or shelf information when purchasing. 58% of organic shoppers check for a 'certification logo on the label'. The industry has placed a strong focus on educating consumers around the importance of certification, and this shows that the effort is paying off. The 2023 Market Report also found that 83% of all surveyed

food shoppers (not just organic consumers) are concerned about environmental issues (eg. plastic waste, toxic chemicals). Broad culture change is driving preference for organic products, and this shows no signs of abating.

Q. I'm a grower considering making the switch to certified organic production. Will this change actually boost my earning potential?

A. The Rodale Institute have collected data measuring differences in soil health, crop yields, energy efficiency, water use/contamination and nutrient density of crops grown in organic and non-organic systems managed with different levels of tillage for nearly 40 years. The organic systems had a significantly increased earning potential compared to non-organic systems. Though organic systems may initially require time to build up soil health and quality, once this is established and managed correctly, organic systems require fewer off-farm inputs, have comparable or higher yields to non-organic farms, and can be sold for a premium. For more information, check out the [Rodale Institute website here](#).

Scaling for Organic Retail

Lightswitch Consulting's FMCO

Lightswitch Consulting is all about connecting your businesses to growth. One such business they have worked with is Kialla Pure Foods, a privately owned manufacturer and certified organic pioneer based in Toowoomba, Queensland.

In 2019, Kialla had a thriving business supplying a range of flours and grains to the wholesale and commercial trade. Kialla also had a selection of retail products, which were ranged in a number of independent grocery stores around Australia, supported by a fragmented legacy distributor network. With continued consumer momentum behind health and wellness trends, Kialla realised they had an opportunity to lead category growth and secure penetration into mainstream grocery.



il Businesses

& Accelerator

How Lightswitch Helped

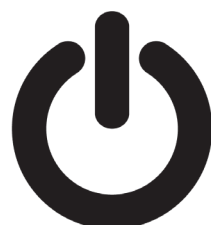
Kialla chose **Lightswitch Consulting's FMCG Accelerator** as the best solution to scale their business. Their Retail Engagement solution helped Kialla to clearly identify the category opportunities which their portfolio and innovation were uniquely suited to meet. Lightswitch worked with Kialla, and retail category buyers in the major retailers, to validate the opportunities that had been observed and ensure growth strategies were relevant and engaging.

The Lightswitch team then worked with Kialla to build the listing proposals for the category reviews, enabling Kialla to create a compelling proposition for listing a branded range of SKUs. As part of preparing for the category reviews, the Lightswitch Digital Marketing team also helped Kialla build a Digital Retail Marketing Strategy. This strategy was designed not only to raise brand awareness with the target audience, but it also took prospective brand shoppers through an omni-channel path-to-purchase, resulting in trial once on shelf.



Last but by no means least, Lightswitch got the Kialla Category Review proposals in front of the right category buyers across Coles and Woolworths, at the right time. In total, Lightswitch and Kialla presented Kialla branded retail offers to 8 category buyers across 4 grocery categories in Coles and Woolworths, over a period of 18 months.

Working together, Lightswitch helped Kialla successfully secure listings for over **22 new products** in **4 different categories**. They achieved in excess of **6,000 distribution points** across Coles and Woolworths, helping Kialla to kickstart their strategy to grow their brand in the mainstream retail grocery channel in Australia. Click here to find out more about the bespoke solutions offered by [Lightswitch Consulting](#).



Lightswitch
Consulting

Quick Guide to Organic Certification

Don't get us wrong – attaining organic certification itself isn't a quick process. There are rigorous requirements in place to ensure the integrity of organics is never compromised. We have compiled five important points to consider if you are preparing to navigate the path to certified organic production. You may also wish to secure the services of an organic consultant (such as [solo advisory](#)) to understand more about your unique situation.

Research

While the concept of organic is a simple one, there is a lot to learn if you wish to excel in your field. Extensive documentation is available for free to anyone who wants to learn more about organic requirements, including the Australian Certified Organic Standard which can be downloaded [here](#).

Transition Periods

Depending on past chemical usage and history, it can take 1-3 years for a producer to become certified organic. For processors the road to certification is much shorter, with this process typically taking less than 3 months from document lodging.

Support Network

If you take the time to attend organic conferences, networking event and forums you will create important relationships for the future. Liaising with other certified operators or having a good mentor/consultant can set you on the right path early on and help keep your organic practices viable long-term.

Talk to a Certifier

One of the most practical first steps is to request an information pack from a certifier for your type of operation. This can help you gain a deeper understanding of the work that lays ahead. There are five approved certification bodies (CBs) that can be found on the [Department of Agriculture website](#).

Paperwork Requirements

The most important part of your application for certification will be an Organic Management Plan (OMP). The OMP details how you will proactively manage your operation to ensure it remains compliant to the relevant standard. This is a crucial first step on your path to certification, so it is important that you provide the right level of detail for assessment.



solo advisory



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Organic Operators in Focus

Summer is upon us, which means many organic growing seasons are in full swing. With an El Nino event scheduled to persist throughout the summer months, here's hoping the farming conditions remain favourable for operators across the country.

In this issue, we have profiled three innovative organic enterprises, including a local macadamia nut growing collective on the New South Wales Mid North Coast. We also profile a vertically integrated grower, producer and global wholesaler of Australian essential oils, as well as a family-owned microgreens farm that has rebuilt its Lismore operation following the devastating floods of early 2022.

CR & JE Higgins

An Organic Macadamia Collective in the Nambucca Valley

Forward thinking and community involvement are often key themes of organic businesses in Australia, and AOL Member Charles Higgins is a great example of these concepts. Charles is part of an expanding local co-operative in the Nambucca Valley region on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales, where he and four other growers produce certified organic macadamias for the Australian market.

Charles has 12 hectares of macadamia trees on his property. The decision to switch to organic came at a time when world pricing for macadamias was volatile, and the local Nambucca Valley growers wanted to establish a point of difference. Not only was there a financial opportunity (due to organic price premiums and conventional fertiliser costs rising) but there was a chance to improve the health of their land in the long term. The group of five growers all became certified by 2012, establishing the first organic macadamia processing plant.

Fast forward to 2023, and there are plans for the co-operative's output to double or treble in the years ahead, with other growers keen to get involved. Current growing locations stretch from Taree to Coffs Harbour, with the sub-tropical climate and lack of persistent pest issues making the Mid North Coast a suitable home for macadamias.



Their organic processing takes place at the [Nambucca Macnuts](#) factory, where they average 100 tonnes of macadamias per year. Charles believes there is capacity for production to expand to 250 tonnes per year with the right storage solutions. The team has even invested in a new packaging machine to support custom packaging designs for buyers.

When transitioning to organic more than 10 years ago, Charles experienced lower crop yield at first before finding an organic blood and bone combination to be the most suitable input. Kelp is also used as a natural fungicide and growth promoter with compost used in October to February during the lead up to harvesting.

The biggest challenge Charles had in transitioning to organic was the change in mindset. While non-organic agriculture is often about reacting to problems as they happen, organic is much more proactive. There's a need to think 3 to 6 months ahead, understanding the problems that may present and having a remedy on-hand in case they do. Plants often need to be given a chance to naturally protect themselves and build resilience.

As for expanding the Nambucca Valley grower's collective, Charles is getting plenty of enquiries from non-organic growers who are intrigued about making an organic transition. Macadamias are predominantly a domestic product, and as such are not dictated by world pricing or supermarket prices. Despite this, there is significant demand for organic macadamias in the Japanese market, which is an interesting prospect for the years ahead.

For Charles, who has been invited interstate to speak at field days, passing on his knowledge about organic macadamias is very important. "The more I share about my story, the more I get back. The sooner we can get everyone to be ahead, the faster we can travel together."

The collective's macadamia nuts can be found and can also purchase their nuts and associated products on the [Nambucca Macnuts website](#), or email nambucca@macnuts.com.au to find out more.

Five Sixty Farms

Certified Organic Microgreens and Edible Flowers



[Five Sixty Farms](#) is a family-owned organic microgreen farm located south of Lismore. The certified business is dedicated to producing the freshest and highest quality microgreens using sustainable farming practices.

For those who don't know, microgreens are young plants that are harvested when they are only a few inches tall, just after they have developed their first true leaves.

These young plants are packed with nutrients and have a 60% to 80% higher concentration of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants than their fully grown counterparts. Microgreens are used as a garnish, added to salads, sandwiches, and smoothies, or eaten as a snack. There are more than 20 different varieties of microgreens grown seasonally at Five Sixty Farms, as well as a range of other vegetables and leafy greens.

Pepe Fassos and his family operate Five Sixty Farms, mostly selling to local restaurants and independent retailers in the Northern Rivers region, including Ballina and Byron Bay. The business has always been operated according to organic principles, with the decision made last year to become certified organic to support integrity in the industry.

Microgreens have a very short growing window; from seed to harvest, the growing phase does not exceed two weeks. Microgreens and edible flowers are nurtured by hand in a purpose-built greenhouse.

Using healthy soil and compost, the seeds are planted with care and watered using rainwater only.

The farm was heavily impacted by the devastating flooding event that hit the Northern Rivers region in early 2022. The Fassos family live onsite in a well-raised home, where floodwaters rose to half of the second-story windows. The family was rescued from their roof after 12 hours of fear, but their greenhouse and all crops were completely washed away.

It took three to four months to rebuild, thanks to help from grants and significant support from the local community, with many people banding together to help operations get back on their feet.

You can connect with Pepe and the Five Sixty team at farmers markets in the Northern NSW region, including the Byron Farmers Market on Thursdays, Bangalow Market on Saturday and the Ballina Farmers Market on Sundays.

Make sure you visit the [Five Sixty Farms website](#) to learn more about microgreens and the farm's growing processes. You can also follow the operation on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#), with plenty of informative content on offer.

Down Under Enterprises

Pure Australian Essential Oils

[Down Under Enterprises](#) is a vertically integrated grower, producer and global wholesale supplier of pure Australian Essential Oils and native botanical ingredients.

Products are sourced from their New South Wales farm Buhlambar, which lives in the heart of the traditional home of the Aboriginal Bundjalung people (in Bundjalung language, Buhlambar means 'Home of Tea Tree'). Other small growers also contribute to the Down Under business.

[Wholesale essential oils](#) and botanicals on offer include Tea Tree, Lemon Myrtle, Sandalwood, Eucalyptus and more. Founded by a 6th generation Australian farmer, the business has kept sustainability as a core value since it was founded in 2001. Down Under Enterprises became certified organic as a processor in 2017, allowing then to handle final stages of product creation at their facilities for various organic customers across Australia.

Down Under's sustainability ethos goes beyond just regenerative farming practices; they are also dedicated to worker rights, supply chain ethics and good corporate governance. This is demonstrated

by their attainment of [Certified B Corp status](#), having significantly surpassed the metrics required for certification. This accolade is a first for Australian cosmetic raw material suppliers. Down Under has also been awarded EcoVadis Platinum status for 2021, 2022 and 2023, a mark of their commitment to sustainability. More information about the traceability efforts of Down Under Enterprises can be found [here](#).

The business considers the global certified organic system as very important for integrity and consumer trust. As consumers pay a premium for certified organic, end-to-end traceability is integral and companies must be held to account regarding their organic practices. There is a substantial consumer demand for organic essential oil and botanical products, with the business exporting to markets including the United States and Europe.

To find out more about Down Under Enterprises and their wholesale services, feel free to reach out via the [Contact Us](#) page on their website. A useful [Applications selector](#) is also available for prospective customers looking to find their next Australian hero ingredient.



Welcome to our new members!

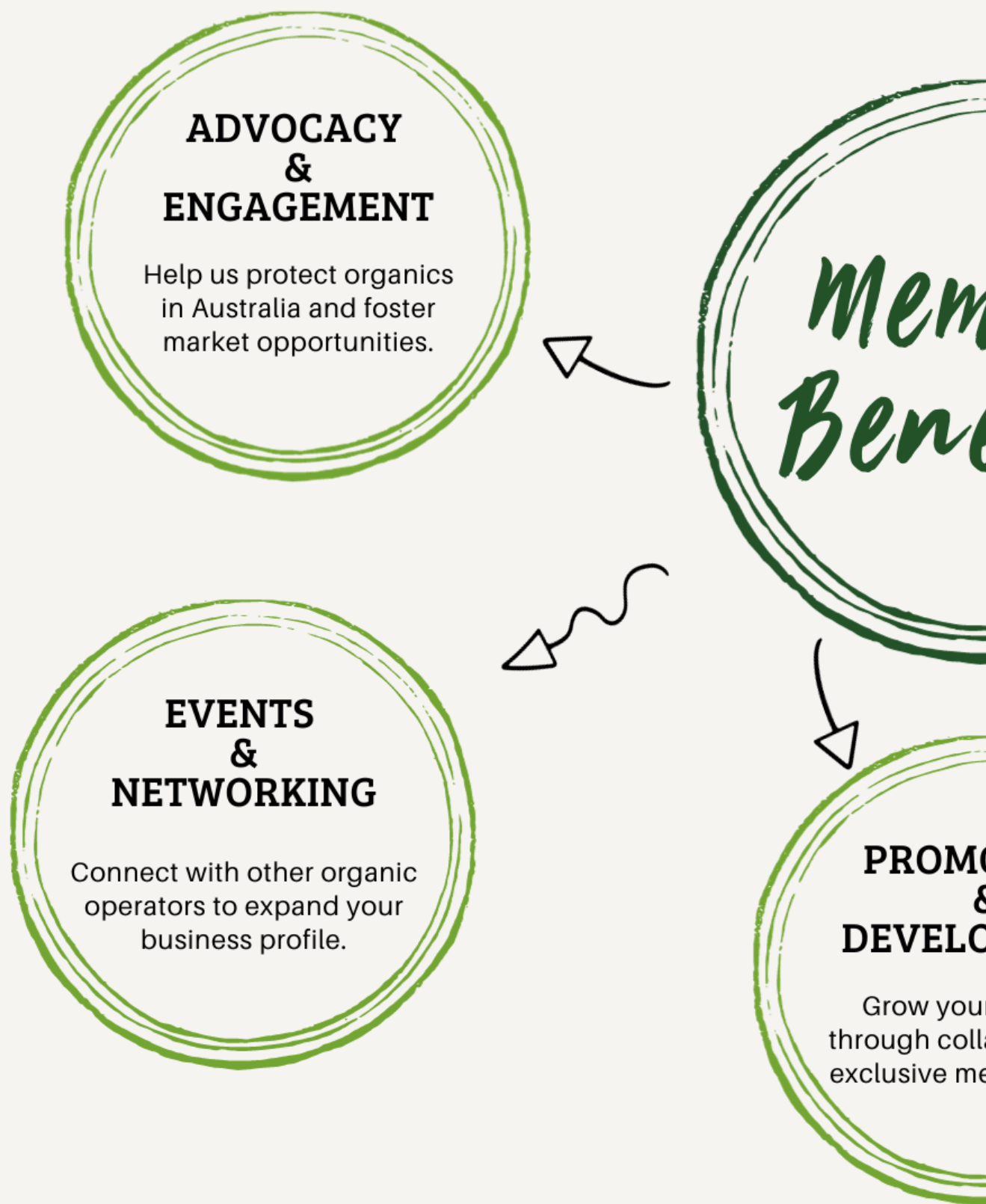
We are pleased to announce that 28 companies became new AOL Members between October 2023 and December of this year! We look forward to working together to safeguard the future of Australian organics.

To learn more about the benefits of AOL membership, please refer to pages 38 and 41.

See below for a summary of our new members!

Business name	Type	Location	Website
African Pacific (Vanuatu) Ltd	Coconut products	SA	-
AL & GG Creighton	Horticulture Producer	NSW	-
Alchemy Sda Pty Ltd	Non Alcoholic Beverage	QLD	https://alchemycordial.com.au/
Amyson Pty Ltd	Tofu & Baby food products	NSW	-
Astragrace Corp Pty Ltd	Honey Products	NSW	https://www.astragrace.com/
Auscode Worldwide Limited	Essential Oils	Hong Kong	-
Australian Rainforest Honey Pty Ltd	Beekeeping	NSW	-
Cocout Revolution	Coconut Oil	VIC	https://www.coconutrevolution.com.au/
CQ Organics	Livestock producer	QLD	https://cqorganics.com.au/
HS & D Barlow	Vegetable Grower	QLD	-
Hyfeed Holdings Pty Ltd	Livestock feeds & supplements	QLD	https://www.hyfeed.com.au/
JB, RJ & PJ McMahon	Fruits grower	QLD	-
Kingston Avocado and TW Klingbiel	Horticulture	SA	-
Mukti Organics	Cosmetic Products	NSW	https://www.muktiorganics.com/
NAP Naturally Australian Products Pty Ltd	Essential Oils	NSW	https://www.napproducts.com/
Nerada Tea Estates Pty Ltd	Tea grower	QLD	http://www.cowlingscherries.com/

Business name	Type	Location	Website
Ronald W Bartley	Horticulture	NSW	-
Roots Organic	Herbs & Spices	QLD	-
Ross, Bev & Dominic Moodie	Horticulture Grower	NSW	-
SM & KE Reddan and SR & EM Grummitt	Livestock Producer	QLD	-
Specialty Coffee Projects Pty Ltd	Coffee Roasting Services	QLD	-
The Beauty Chef	Cosmetic	NSW	https://thebeautychef.com/
The Trustee for GA & CD Burnham Faily Trust	Livestock producer	QLD	https://www.bonniedoone.com.au/
TK Elliott	Grain producer	QLD	-
Torgerly Pty Ltd	Horticulture & Livestock producer	NSW	-
Unicorn Specialty Foods Pty Ltd	Mamia Baby Food	QLD	https://www.unicorns.com.au/
Vrindavan Natural Body Care	Skin care Products	NSW	https://vrindavanbodycare.com/
Woodshied	Certified Timber Producer	QLD	www.woodshield.com.au



If you would like to become an Australian Organic Limited member or upgrade your membership, please contact our membership team.

Contact Marie Deletoille | E: marie.deletoille@australianorganic.com.au



member, or have any questions regarding your current or potential membership, contact our Membership Executive Marie.

Why Join Australian Organic Limited?

Together we are stronger

AOL has united a growing community of certified organic operators. Together, we work to promote and protect the maturing organic sector. We have been representing our members for 35 years and we invite you to join us to have your say in shaping the future of the organic industry. When you join Australian Organic Limited, we provide you with:

- A direct voice to government to address our industry's greatest challenges and opportunities
- Industry research and resources to help position your business for success
- Marketing support through industry awareness & promotional campaigns

By becoming a voting member of Australian Organic Limited, you help to shape the future of the organic industry through your contribution at our Annual General Meeting.

What are the benefits of becoming a member?

As a member of this dynamic industry you will receive exclusive access to the below benefits, and so much more.



Australian Organic Market Report

Complimentary copy of the most recent Australian Organic Market Report to develop your business strategy.



Marketing & Sponsorship Opportunities

Access to discounted marketing and sponsorship opportunities, including a complimentary member profile published on our website.



Australian Organic Awareness Month

Exclusive discounts to be a part of Australia's largest campaign celebrating certified organic products every September.



Monthly Member & CEO Update

Access the most recent industry news and updates relevant to the organic industry, including a regular email from our CEO.



Industry Awards & Wine Awards

Discounted submission to the highly respected Industry Awards and Wine Awards, as well as discounted tickets to attend the events.



Conference, Forums & Networking Events

Access to discounted tickets for events to educate and connect the industry, foster growth and innovation.



Exclusive member portal

Access to a range of resources, publications and webinar recordings.



The Australian Certified Organic Bud certification logo

is the most recognised organic trust mark amongst Australian shoppers and has been so for over a decade.

How do we use our member funds?

We are working for you

Australian Organic Limited continues to invest Industry Development Levys (IDLs) and membership fees through progressing the organic industry by the following key activities:

- **Government Advocacy:** AOL continually advocates on behalf of the certified organic industry by working with government on key industry issues such as organic domestic regulation, market access, biosecurity and relevant industry matters.
- **Promote Consumer Awareness:** AOL continues to educate consumers on the benefits of organic and the importance of checking for certification marks through the Bud Organic Club website, newsletter and social media platforms. AOL has also established **Australian Organic Awareness Month**, the nation's largest campaign to promote the benefits of organic produce.
- **Engage with Federal & State Government:** AOL continues to develop relationships with Ministers, Departments and key industry partners such as the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) and the Australian Food & Grocery Council (AFGC).
- **Research & Development:** AOL, through the strategic direction of our Board and advisory committees, engage key research and industry bodies to work towards establishing further organic oriented Australian agricultural research.
- **Provide Market Analysis:** AOL invests in consumer and commercial research by supplying data and information to support trade negotiations.
- **Lobby ACCC on "fake organic" products:** AOL works with the ACCC on misleading claims and has successfully negotiated the inclusion of the National Standard for Organic & Biodynamic Produce on the ACCC website and has been appointed a position on the ACCC Agricultural Consultative Committee.
- **Assist Organic Importers:** AOL has driven significant outcomes for organic importers regarding mandatory biosecurity changes relating to seeds and khapra beetle through fostering strong relationships with federal and state Biosecurity teams.
- **Support Export Opportunities:** AOL contributes on export by providing the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade input into Free Trade Agreements, collaborating with international industry counterparts and maintaining an export website **Trade Organic** and masterclass program that provides resources on organic exports and international markets.
- **Educate New Generations:** AOL manages the Australian Organic Schools Program to encourage learning about organic principles and practices in Australian schools.

Membership Structure & Fees

Ordinary Certified

\$275 incl. GST per year*

ACOS Operators licensed to the Bud; includes AGM voting rights.

Associate Non-Voting

\$550 incl. GST per year

For any business, organisation or individual.

Associate Voting

\$1,800 incl. GST per year

For any business, organisation or individual, includes AGM voting rights.

**Certified organic operators who are licensed to the Bud and pay Industry Development Levies receive Ordinary Certified Membership at no additional cost.*

If this applies to you, [CLICK HERE](#) to activate your free membership.

Contact Membership | E: membership@austorganic.com | T: 07 3350 5716



35%

of shoppers who bought organic products increased their household budget spent on organic from 2021 to 2022¹.



77%

of organic shoppers are aware of certification marks (up from 59% in 2019)².

^{1,2} Australian Organic Market Report 2023.



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