

# Industry unites in a \$36.6 billion food waste challenge

**A** new Australian-first plan to tackle food waste across the food cold chain sector has been released by leading national food waste agency Stop Food Waste Australia (SFWA).

The Food Cold Chain Sector Action Plan (SAP) has been co-designed and developed with Australia's peak cold chain body, the Australian Food Cold Chain Council.

The plan aims to reduce food waste from "gate to plate," helping Australia in its stated goal of halving its food waste by 2030. Food Cold Chain is Stop Food Waste Australia's first Sector Action Plan, with others including Food Rescue underway.

"Australia is a big country and there's an incredible amount of work that goes into keeping food at the required temperatures as it travels across often vast

distances," said SFWA chief operating officer Mark Barthel. "We know that more than 23 million tonnes of produce pass along Australia's food cold chain each year, worth \$42 billion at farm gate value.

"The Food Cold Chain Sector Action Plan is a partnership between Stop Food Waste Australia and industry – it will allow us to collaborate and identify food waste 'hotspots' in the cold chain, while taking action to reduce their impacts, improve cold chain integrity and help industry to reduce costs."

Stop Food Waste Australia chief executive officer Dr Steven Lapidge says food waste is a challenge too large for any one organisation to tackle alone.

"Food waste costs the Australian economy nearly \$37 billion a year," he said.

"The Food Cold Chain SAP is an

excellent example of how Stop Food Waste Australia works with industry to find solutions to food waste problems which have flow-on benefits for not only industry, but for the environment and consumers as well."

The Food Cold Chain Sector Action Plan focuses on raising awareness, developing skills and supporting innovation across the breadth of cold chain actors.

Programs such as the Cold Food Code and Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Benchmarking initiatives provide a structured approach to improving the performance of the cold chain and reducing food waste.

"More than 50 per cent of food categories can be extended by the cold chain," Mark Mitchell, chair of Australian Food Cold Chain Council says. **F**