

SA co-operative scoops award at Australian Export Awards

25 November 2016: South Australian-based almond co-operative, Almondco Australia Ltd, was named the Australian Regional Exporter of the Year for the second time in five years at last night's 54th Australian Export Awards, hosted by Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Steven Ciobo in Brisbane.

The co-operative of 140 growers spread across SA, VIC and NSW was one of twelve national winners were selected from 81 finalists, who together generated \$12.3 billion in export earnings and employed 34,500 people.

Judges described Almondco Australia Ltd as a strong business with positive export growth prospects and "a strong advocate of the Australian agricultural industry". Almondco was the only co-operative out of the 12 winners.

Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM) CEO, Melina Morrison said "this is an important recognition of a great Australian business at a time when agricultural co-operatives are coming back into fashion.

"Co-operatives help farmers compete in global markets and improve returns to the farmgate and provide a way for smaller producers to unite to gain access to markets that favour larger players".

"By cutting out the middle guy, co-operatives ensure all the benefits flow back to the producers. This improves the level of reinvestment on the farm and strengthens the local economy since profits don't leak out of the region", added Ms Morrison.

The Federal Government has recognised the importance of co-operatives in a competitive agricultural economy with the recent investment \$14.9 million in a two year co-operative farm education program, Farming Together.

Almondco Australia Ltd processes and markets the crops of 85% of all almond growers in Australia and has grower members spread across SA, Victoria and NSW.

Almondco Managing director Brenton Woolston said the award was the result of a team effort for the 72 year old co-operative.

"To be recognised as one of the best operators in the country underlines the quality of people involved throughout our value chain", said Mr Woolston.

"More than one million tonnes of almonds are produced around the world every year, so to maintain a point of difference as a co-operative is very important."

MEDIA RELEASE

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“Our mission is maximise value for all stakeholders, from our smallest grower member through to the largest retail chain and we have always recognised that we must compete on something more than price and delivering for our members and customers remains our priority”, concluded Mr Woolston.

The Australian Export Awards is a national program that recognises and honours Australian companies engaged in international business who have achieved sustainable growth through innovation and commitment.

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Notes: Farming Together

About the BCCM

The Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM) is the national peak body representing Australian member owned businesses. Formed in 2013, the BCCM is led by the chief executives of Australia’s co-operative and mutual businesses in all sectors including agriculture, financial services, health insurance, retail, motoring services and human services. The BCCM works to promote the role of member-owned enterprises in the national economy. With an estimated 2000 co-operative and mutual businesses operating nationally representing a total of 14.8 million memberships, the BCCM highlights the contribution co-operatives and mutuals make to the economy and social development in Australia. www.bccm.coop.