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For immediate release

CSIRO joins Fruit & Vegetable Consortium to help health industry and supply chain increase fruit and veg intake

Australia's national science agency CSIRO is the latest member of the Fruit & Vegetable Consortium, with the research organisation joining leading health professionals and horticulture industry groups to boost fruit and vegetable intake.

The [Fruit & Vegetable Consortium](#) was formed in response to the alarmingly low rates of fruit and vegetable consumption in Australia. Just seven per cent of Australian adults, and five per cent of children, eat the recommended daily intake of vegetables and half of Australian adults, and two thirds of children, have an adequate daily intake of fruit.

CSIRO joins the Fruit & Vegetable Consortium along with other members Nutrition Australia, AUSVEG, the Cancer Council of Victoria, Heart Foundation, the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, Health and Wellbeing Queensland, Melbourne Market, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation, the Good Foundation, the Produce Marketing Association of Australia – New Zealand and VicHealth.

Consortium Chair and Nutrition Australia CEO Lucinda Hancock said that the increased support from the community in lifting consumption of fruits and vegetables showed that there was support for meaningful action in improving health and well-being outcomes for the community.

"The link between a healthy diet that incorporates fruits and vegetables and better health and well-being outcomes is well established, and it will take a coordinated, resourced effort across the entire food industry to boost consumption," said Ms Hancock.

"The job of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption is a critically important task that has been made more apparent in the last few months due to the pandemic. Declining rates of vegetable consumption are of great concern, with the average Australian eating around 13 kilograms fewer vegetables per year than 20 years ago – around half a serve per day."

"Boosting fruit and vegetable consumption is too much for a single person or organisation. This Consortium was established out of a common imperative to increase fruit and vegetable consumption with the aim of improving health outcomes for Australians and their families."

"We are happy to have CSIRO come on board as a member of the Consortium, as it brings with it important research and networks in the local and international research community that will ensure the Consortium has a wider range of expertise to draw upon," said Ms Hancock.

The Consortium has also signed up over 130 supporters on its website, which have committed to supporting the development of more effective marketing and promotional interventions. A key feature of the work of the Consortium is that it will be built on a solid foundation of behavioural science and focus on increasing people's enjoyment of eating vegetables. Through this approach, it plans to deliver significant long-term change to fruit and vegetable consumption.

CSIRO Nutrition and Health Research Director A/Prof Bev Muhlhausler said research continues to demonstrate the importance between a diet rich in fruit and vegetables and living a healthy well-balanced lifestyle.

“From helping to prevent major diseases including some cancers and cardiovascular diseases, to improving gastrointestinal health, it is important that we are all getting the recommended daily intake of fruits and vegetables,” said A/Prof Muhlhausler.

[The Consortium has outlined its vision](#) and for its first major project is developing a business case and prospectus for potential funders to outline the investment needed for a sustained, comprehensive behavioural change campaign for increasing vegetable consumption.

“Vegetable intake in Australia is particularly low, and CSIRO has been working for many years to understand the barriers and enablers to vegetable consumption. We are excited to join the Consortium to work alongside other experts and stakeholders towards the development of a campaign, underpinned by robust science, that can achieve a sustainable increase in Australians vegetable intakes.”

“We are hopeful that we can work with industry groups, sectors, farmers, philanthropists and others with a goal to fostering a healthier population to develop a business case for a substantial behaviour change campaign that will make a difference for generations of Australians,” said Ms Hancock.

“The importance of eating plenty of fruit and vegetables has never been more critical, so I urge everyone who has an interest in supporting the health of their families, friends and their communities to support the cause of the Fruit & Vegetable Consortium and see how you can help make a difference.”

For more information on the Fruit & Vegetable Consortium and to find out how you can help make a difference, visit thefvc.org.au.

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Fruit & Vegetable Consortium Members

