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New tech to sharpen traceability in horticulture

The horticulture industry is on the look out for emerging technologies that can be deployed to make it easier for growers to trace their produce along the supply chain to support maximum food safety and quality and support sustainability claims.

Supported by a \$471,000 grant from the Australian Government, the initiative is being led by Hort Innovation in partnership with key players within the horticulture supply chain such as Freshcare and Fresh Markets Australia.

This month, the Australian Government announced \$6 million in funding for innovative solutions through the Regulatory Technology Research and Insights Grant Round of the National Agriculture Traceability Grants Program.

The RegTech grants aim to help businesses and exporters meet regulatory requirements more efficiently, giving Australian agriculture a trade advantage.

Hort Innovation chief executive officer Brett Fifield said the funding would boost the horticulture sectors' efforts to enhance and protect their supply chains.

"Having robust traceability systems in place assures consumers and trading partners that Australia's produce is fresh and safe," Mr Fifield said.

"Australia is a world-leader when it comes to having trustworthy processes and systems in place, but this funding gives us the opportunity see what else is out there and identify technology that can both bolster our traceability systems, while also reducing costs for growers."

Freshcare chief executive officer Jane Siebum said she was looking forward to seeing what technology could be implemented in Australia to make growers lives easier.

"This project will see us identify 'regulatory technology' solutions that increase efficiency for growers and our industry as a whole," Ms Siebum said.

"The solutions identified through this work will be made available to the whole sector, so that, together, we can future proof Australia's horticulture industry."

National Farmers Federation Horticulture Council executive officer Richard Shannon said this program is a critical focus for horticultural businesses.

"This announcement marks the start of a collaborative approach within the horticulture sector to remove unnecessary red tape and also bolster the way we trace product claims throughout the supply chain," Mr Shannon said.

"It is great to see key players within the horticulture industry join forces in an effort to reduce duplication for growers and increase efficiency."