

MEDIA RELEASE
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India & Australia deal: A shot in the arm for crop production

The grower-owned Research and Development Corporation, Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort innovation), has signed an historic \$6 million co-operative research deal with the Indian Government as it moves to strengthen the nation's crop output.

The agreement was finalised after Hort Innovation and subsidiary company, Biotechnology Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in which both parties seeking to invest \$1 million investment each year, for three years. Hort Innovation CEO John Lloyd said the MoU outlined a joint commitment to conduct research into strengthening both nations' horticulture products.

"In recent years advancements in plant biology research have increased exponentially with state-of-the-art technologies teaching us more about how to improve our crops to get larger, higher quality yields," he said.

"We are going to work with BIRAC, and key research providers both in Australia and India, to take that research to the next level. The aim is to bring our growers practical tools to streamline their approaches to areas such as advanced breeding, pest and disease management and biosecurity protocols."

Mr Lloyd said the research will aim to bolster apple, banana, mango, table grape and vegetable crops, however the intelligence gained will likely benefit other areas of horticulture. He said the research will include plant genomics, marker-assisted breeding, new cultivar development, tree architecture and orchard density research.

He said the agreement marks the culmination of several months of talks with a country that has an esteemed reputation in the areas of innovation and technology.

"To say we are excited by this research MoU is an understatement," Mr Lloyd said. "India is one of the world's biggest horticulture producers, and its commitment to agriculture technology is second to none.

"This agreement will allow us to combine some of India's leading research minds with those of some of Australia's top researchers to provide benefits to Australian horticulture for years to come".

Currently, Hort Innovation, industry representatives, the Australian Government and the Indian Government are working together to scope the research strategy. Mr Lloyd said Hort Innovation will be calling for Expressions of Interest from potential research partners and co-investors later this year.

Horticulture Innovation Australia delivers more than \$100 million in research, development and marketing activities across the horticulture industry each year with funding from the Australian Government, grower levies and other sources.

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