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Supercharged \$14.1M program to support nation's vegetable growers

Vegetable growers across Australia are set to benefit from the next generation of a national extension program aimed to boost productivity and deliver the latest research and development on-farm.

The new \$14.1M VegNET 3.0 program is being delivered through [Hort Innovation](#) using vegetable industry levies and funds from the Australian Government, and led by Australia's peak vegetable industry body [AUSVEG](#).

Hort Innovation Chief Executive Matt Brand said the initiative represents the single largest research and development investment in the vegetable growing sector's history, and it's anchored on best-practice and what the industry has identified as priorities.

"This supercharged 5-year extension initiative takes a collaborative, local focus, with Development Officers based in 10 growing regions across the country. Each region will receive tailored support that meets local challenges," he said.

"This network of experienced professionals will provide evidence-based tools and information in vital areas such as biosecurity, pest and disease management, soil and water management, the supply chain and protected cropping."

Mr Brand said the VegNET initiative complements Hort Innovation's dedicated [extension arm](#) which was created in 2019. He said it also builds on the foundation and momentum generated through previous VegNET programs.

AUSVEG CEO Michael Coote said that having a nationally-coordinated VegNET program will help ensure that growers all around Australia will have access to a consistent, industry-focused extension program that will put their needs first in their efforts to be productive, profitable and more competitive in an ever-increasingly global marketplace.

"VegNET is an important program for our industry," he said. "Australian vegetable growers are world-leaders in the production of high-quality, healthy vegetables and are constantly looking for new ways to innovate and grow more sustainably and develop their businesses".

"AUSVEG is well-placed to work with well-trained regional development officers, who are strongly supported, to deliver a high-performing, consistent and efficient VegNET program that will meet vegetable growers' needs."

Mr Coote said a strong extension network that connects growers with local, regional and international experts will be an important element to the industry's future success.

"While growers are facing significant issues with labour shortages, rising input costs and an increasingly volatile climate, the industry is well-placed to overcome these challenges and take advantage of the research and services on offer in Australia to improve its productivity and increase its value to help the agriculture sector meet its goal of \$100 billion by 2030," he said.

The VegNET regional development officers will be based in the following locations:



- New South Wales through the [Local Land Services NSW](#)
- Northern Territory through [NT Farmers](#)
- Queensland (Bowen-Gumlu and Far North Queensland) through [Bowen-Gumlu Growers Association](#)
- Queensland (Bundaberg) through [Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers](#)
- Queensland (SEQ including Lockyer Valley, Granite Belt and Darling Downs) through [Lockyer Valley Growers](#)
- South Australia through [AUSVEG SA](#)
- Tasmania through [RM Consulting Group](#)
- Victoria (Gippsland) through [Food and Fibre Gippsland](#)
- Victoria (Northern, Southern and Western) through [AUSVEG](#)
- Western Australia through [vegetablesWA](#)

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