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Campaign which championed industry nominated to win

Hort Innovation's *Hailstorm Heroes* campaign has been recognised as an industry champion with marketing manager Olivia Grey named a finalist for the 2019 PMA and Produce Plus *Marketer of the Year Award*.

All five finalists will be showcased in the winter edition of the Produce Plus Magazine, with the award presentation taking place at the 2019 Hort Connections Gala Dinner in Melbourne on June 26.

The campaign, a result of noteworthy collaboration across industry and stakeholders, helped to promote the sale of hail affected fruit in South Australia and the Northern Territory after extreme weather impacted around 85-90 per cent of South Australia's apples and pear crops in 2018.

The objective of the campaign was to generate consumer awareness and drive the retail purchase of hail affected fruit by urging consumers to overlook superficial marks on the exterior of the fruit, which did not affect the taste or texture of the fruit inside.

Specially marked Hailstorm Hero apple and pear packs were sold at Coles, Foodland, IGA and ALDI. Woolworths sold *Hailstorm Heroes* apples and pears as part of its "Odd Bunch" range, and the fruit was also sold in packs and loose at some independent grocers.

Ms Grey said the nomination cemented the important role that the campaign played in helping growers to recover after the significant losses they suffered.

"The Apple and pear industry in South Australia are still adding up the full cost of damages from the 2017/18 hailstorm but estimates place losses at around \$32 million," she said.

"The *Hailstorm Heroes* campaign helped mitigate some of that loss by supporting the sale of hail affected fruit to ensure a return for growers that was greater than alternative options, such as juicing - which has a lower return than the sale of whole fruit, or dumping the fruit altogether.

"The response to the campaign from growers, retailers, media and consumers has been overwhelmingly positive."

The public relations campaign achieved 106 media clips, reaching an audience of 4.5 million people, and included feature news segments during primetime segments on all three major TV networks.

The radio portion of the campaign resulted in over 250,000 impressions to listeners and social media achieved a reach of over 285,000 unique people in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Hort Innovation's *Harvest to Home* market analysis tool "Home Scan" has shown value sales for apples had grown +5.3 per cent, and value sales for pears had grown +13.7 per cent as a result of campaign success.

The *Hailstorm Heroes* campaign was delivered by Hort Innovation using apple and pear marketing levies, with assistance from the South Australian Apple and Pear Association, retailers, Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) and Brand South Australia. The agencies used to help execute this campaign were Ikon, Bite communications, D2C and Elevencom.

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