

## MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 29 October 2018

### Unbelievable result: \$3.9m /tonne paid for New Season Baby Potatoes!



*L-R: Rod Knight (Thomas Foods International Fresh Produce), John Mitolo, Alex Mitolo (The Mitolo Group), Robbie Davis (Potatoes South Australia), Paul White (Zerella Fresh), Chris McDermott (Little Heroes Foundation)*

Everything about the Annual Potato Industry Dinner at the National Wine Centre of Australia, Adelaide on Friday night was exceptional! The industry and supporting stakeholders united in a way never seen before with the Exhibition Hall brought to a stand-still!

Every year, an auction of new season baby potatoes is held during the evening, with all proceeds donated to the Little Heroes Foundation, a charity dedicated to supporting children living with cancer and serious illness, and their families.

Mr Chris McDermott, Little Heroes Foundation Chairman and CEO talked of the work a little girl with a rare genetic disease who had passed away during the week. She had been in the care of the Foundation for the past eight years.

This auction, unique in Australia, led by Mr Tony Wetherall, SA Stud Stock Manager Elders Ltd, a Corporate Partner of the Association, resulted in a final bid of \$13,000 by Thomas Foods International-a new record. But it didn't end there!

Mr Paul White, GM Zerella Fresh approached the stage and spoke passionately about this little girl, who happened to be a family member. Quite spontaneously, The Mitolo Group and Zerella Fresh matched the generous bid of Thomas Foods and an astounding \$39,000 was raised! There were many in tears.

In addition to the baby potatoes, iron sculptures crafted by Rod and Ty Manning, were auctioned. This provided just over an additional \$6,000 to the Foundation making the total contribution of the night exceeding \$45,000.

Mr Chris McDermott said, “The night left me speechless and the generosity of the Potato Industry never ceases to amaze me. It was great to see competitors unite on the night to contribute such a big sum to South Australian children and their families who are facing very difficult times. Potatoes South Australia CEO Ms Robbie Davis has helped create this outstanding event and its growth in such a short time has been remarkable. LHF is honoured to be beneficiary once again and we can’t wait till next year.”

Ms Robbie Davis, CEO of Potatoes South Australia Incorporated, the peak industry body, said “It was wonderful to see such united, collaborative support for the most significant sector of horticulture at both a state and national level, and for our Charity, the Little Heroes Foundation.” Ms Davis also thanked returning Dinner Sponsor; Westpac Agribusiness and other corporate partners, Elders Ltd, Peats Soils and Garden Supplies, TriCal Australia and Prime Super. The wine was generously donated by Hazy Blur Wines and Mitolo Wines.

She also highlighted the Association’s strategic direction in order for it to remain relevant and value-adding to the stakeholders and members it represents. “The management of biosecurity, incorporation of cutting edge agronomic R&D and the commercialisation of product transformed from industry waste and loss are critical objectives for a sustainable industry”, she said.

Independent Chair, Dr Andrew MacDonald spoke to the guests about the Board’s composition and the valuable contribution, particularly in the development of the Association’s new Constitution, by Deputy Chair Ms Bianca Battistella, a partner at Piper Alderman. He also congratulated Ms Davis on her appointment to the Board of the new Fight Food Waste CRC.

The Dinner Menu cleverly created by the National Wine Centre’s Chef de Cuisine Steve Clark, featured a Roaming Entrée of canapes (many including specific potato varieties) and a Cheese Station of South Australian produce.

The Auction for the Little Heroes Foundation is held annually in Spring and it is evolving into an increasingly larger event. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> auction with total funds raised by Potatoes South Australia nearing \$100,000. The Industry is delighted to be associated with such a worthwhile cause.

All excess potatoes from the event were provided to families cared for by the Foundation.

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