Sense-T attracts international backing and $10 million for Tassie research
Pathways to Market project to deliver 26 highly-skilled jobs

As Europe reels from the horse meat scandal and Tasmania's oyster industry recovers from its recent troubles, food safety and security have never been higher on the agenda.

People want to know where their food comes from, how it was produced and if it is safe. A $10 million international research collaboration led by Tasmania's Sense-T, which is based at the University of Tasmania (UTAS), may provide the answers.

The Australian Research Council today announced that Sense-T's *Pathways to Market* project would receive $2.5 million funding under the Industrial Transformation Research Hub scheme. This adds to the $7.6 million Sense-T has already raised for the project from industry and research organisations.

As part of the five-year project, Sense-T will collect real-time data about the conditions under which food is produced, processed, transported, stored and sold. That information will be available to consumers, producers and distributors to verify and improve the quality of food products.

The project is supported by organisations in Australia and overseas (a list of project partners is below). There will be 26 full-time equivalent positions delivering the project, with the vast majority of workers based in Tasmania.

Vice-Chancellor of UTAS, Professor Peter Rathjen, said the project played to the strengths of the University and the State.

"The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture is ranked among the best in the world for this type of research and we recently announced a new Centre for Food Innovation in Launceston.

"Tasmania will be *the* place to come to pursue research in technology and sustainable development, food safety and agriculture. That research brings investment, highly skilled jobs and a head start for Tasmanian producers and businesses who will be the first to benefit from research."

The *Pathways to Market* project will initially focus on two food products and track their distribution through the supply chain and into Asia. Researchers will delve into what consumers want to know about where their food comes from and how it affects what they buy. This information will be available to producers, processors and distributors to help them bring new products to market.

The project also involves the development of low-cost sensors that can be embedded in packaging to help manage food throughout the supply chain. Researchers will create web and phone apps for businesses and consumers, making the results of research available to the community.

Sense-T Director Ros Harvey said the initiative would put Tasmanian research and skills at the very heart of global action to secure food supply to a growing population.

"By 2050, there will be nine billion people in the world. How to feed those people is an increasingly urgent question. The *Pathways to Market* project will help drive environmental sustainability, safety and innovation in food supply chains.

"It's unique because it will develop new techniques and technologies that measure the whole supply chain from paddock to plate. When that information is aggregated together, we can begin to develop ways to measure natural resources just like we measure finances."

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About Sense-T

Sense-T is the world's first economy-wide intelligent sensor network. Based in Tasmania, it combines advanced data analytics and modelling with real-time sensor data from across the state. Information will be available through easy-to-use apps to help businesses, governments and communities better manage their resources - to help them do more with less.

Sense-T is a partnership program between the University of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Government, CSIRO and IBM. It is also funded by the Australian Government through the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement. Sense-T establishes Tasmania as a centre for technology and research excellence, where shared data drives new approaches to social, environmental and economic sustainability that can be scaled cost-effectively elsewhere. Visit the Sense-T website at **www.sense-t.org.au** for more information.

About the Pathways to Market project

Benefits for Tasmania include:
- 26 FTE jobs and research positions in fields such as ICT, consumer choice modelling, food stability, environmental and business economics, vast majority based in Tasmania
- National and international investment
- Export of research outcomes and skills to the world
- Tasmanian producers and businesses first to benefit from research outcomes
- Tasmania as a centre of excellence and expertise in food safety and security, provenance and technology and sustainable development

The $10.1 million project will be led by Professor Mark Tamplin of the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture and delivered over five years:
- $2.5 million from the Australian Research Council through the Industrial Transformation Hub scheme
- $7.6 million from industry and research partners
- Industry partners: Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, Vale Institute of Technology in Brazil, Van Diemen's Land Company (Australia's biggest dairy producer) and Grey Innovation (Melbourne-based technology company)
- Research partners: UTAS, CSIRO, World Bank Group, Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Australian Bureau of Statistics, CenSoC (Centre for the Study of Choice) at University of Technology Sydney, and the National University Singapore working in collaboration with Tsinghua University In China and Keio University in Japan.

There are six work streams:
1) Research into food stability, traceability, logistics and environmental Impact, following two products through the domestic and Asian markets
2) Development of new commercial technologies, including sensors that can be embedded in packaging to track factors vital to food stability
3) Research into what consumers want to know about where their food comes from, their choices and how that affects their purchase behaviour
4) Methodologies to measure and value nature that can contribute to regional and national reports
5) Development of apps for businesses and consumers
6) New data visualisation tools that can support new shopping experiences for consumers, for example by presenting information about provenance and the conditions under which food is produced at the point of purchase