

## Cairns Convention Centre to Host 1200 of the World's Leading Plant Molecular Biologists

The Cairns Convention Centre and a group of 60 plant scientists led by Associate Professor Joshua Mylne from the University of Western Australia have successfully secured the 2021 Congress of International Society for Plant Molecular Biology (IPMB). The Congress is a triennial meeting supported by IPMB and the American Society of Plant Biologists and is expected to attract over 1,200 of the world's leading plant molecular biologists and agricultural corporations. The Cairns Convention Centre's successful Australian bid was against strong competition from Canada and North America.

The Congress will focus on the importance of developing multidisciplinary approaches to face climate change, population increase and the pivotal roles that plant molecular biology will play in achieving efficient crop production systems.

"In the next few decades the world expects 2 billion more mouths to feed while our climate changes, so understanding how plant growth, development and crop yield respond to the environment has never been more important. This Congress will bring together over a thousand plant biologists from around the world who are making the latest discoveries on how genes, proteins, metabolism and physiology influence plant growth" said Dr Mylne.

The bid from fifty of Australia's leading plant scientists in academia, government and industry, included the Directors for CSIRO's Food and Agriculture Unit and the University of Queensland based, Queensland Alliance for Agricultural Food and Innovation. Industry-funded bodies whose activities are aligned with the Congress include Australia's Grains Research and Development Corporation and the Department of Primary Industry.

Plant science, increasingly underpinned by molecular biology approaches, contributes significantly to the agricultural sector. Nationally this sector provides 93% of domestic food supply, employs over 300,000 people and underpins \$155 billion of production or 12% of GDP. At present 77% of what is grown and produced in Australia is exported, earning \$45 billion annually. To reach Australia's 2030 goal of \$100 billion in exports, the industry will depend, in part, on a strong plant sciences research community in Australia.

Recognising the significance of the benefits the Congress will bring to Australia and Queensland, the bid was supported by the Business Events Australia National Bid Fund and the Tourism & Events Queensland Business Events Acquisition and Leveraging Fund.

The Queensland Government, via Tourism and Events Queensland, is proud to support the conference through the Business Events Acquisition and Leveraging Fund. Business events are vital to Queensland's tourism industry, attracting visitors and promoting our destinations to domestic and international visitors.

"The support and collaboration of the Cairns Convention Centre together with Federal and State Government backing was pivotal in helping us to secure this Congress, which will increase the international profile of our Australian scientists and deliver significant outcomes for the agricultural sector.

"Having won the bid, we now intend to expand the organising committee and scientific panels as well as seek engagement from scientists abroad and the plant biology community at large to ensure this Congress is a success," said Dr Mylne.

Ross Steele, General Manager, Cairns Convention Centre, said, "Attracting this event is a coup for Cairns and required significant collaboration between academia, government and industry which indicates how important the IPMB Congress is to Australia. Dr Mylne and the Convention Centre team's tenacity in helping to bring these elements together will deliver around \$6m in economic benefit to our region. More importantly, this event will have a positive impact on our agricultural community, which is Tropical North Queensland's second largest industry."

ENDS



CAIRNS CONVENTION CENTRE

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**A Queensland Government initiative operated by AEG Ogden**

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