



Australasian
Institute
of Packaging

foodpro 2026 wrap up

26-29 July 2026 | MCEC Melbourne





foodpro 2026 saw over 10,000 visitors

The 2026 edition of foodpro delivered record engagement across four days at MCEC, with 500+ exhibitors and more than 10,000 visitors on the show floor.

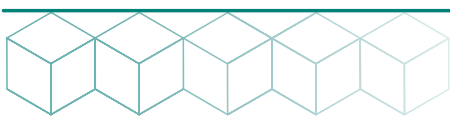
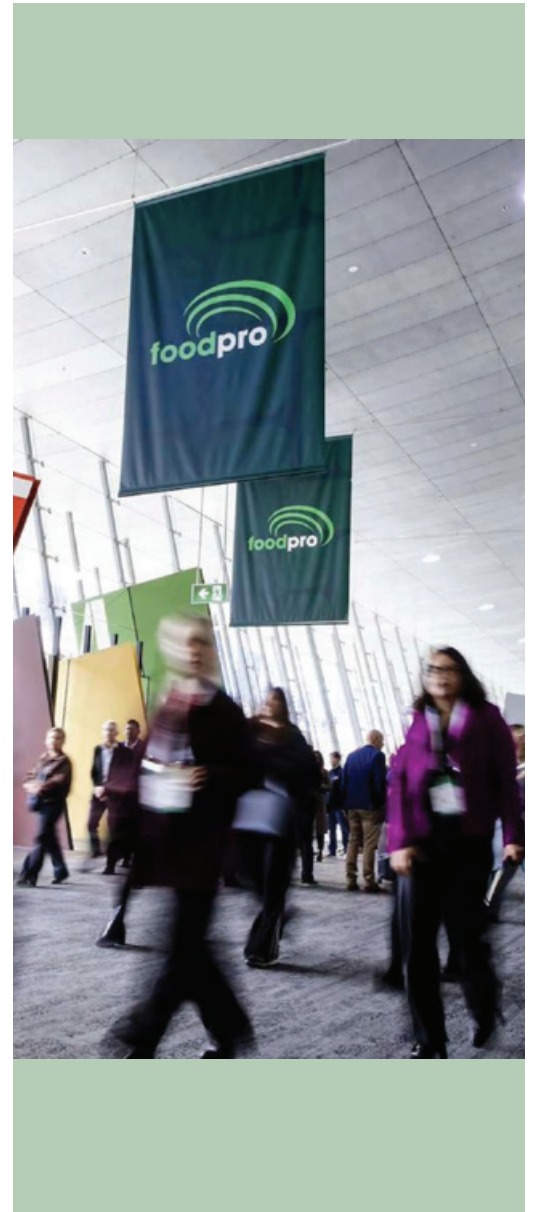
With one in five visitors returning across multiple days, foodpro 2026 recorded strong dwell time and repeat engagement, as attendees moved between live equipment demonstrations at the Demo Exchange, the Innovation Stage, the Business Lounge and Industry Hub feature area to evaluate technology, meet suppliers and build relationships that will shape purchasing decisions well beyond the show.

The show floor was further elevated by a program of co-located industry events, including the

Australasian Institute of Packaging's (AIP) two training courses, a packed room for the 4x packaging forums, the Australasian Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Awards showcase area inside foodpro, a walking tour of the show which saw over 50 people in attendance, a treasure hunt to find PIDA finalists and AIP Corporate Partners, the AIP stand and the AIP also held for the first time the 2026 PIDA Awards Gala Dinner alongside the show with a full room.

The AIP see foodpro as the pinnacle food and packaging tradeshow in Australia and would like to acknowledge Louise Brooks for strengthening this important partnership. The AIP looks forward to the 2029 edition of foodpro.







The AIP had a showcase of finalists from the 2026 round of the PIDA Australasian Packaging Innovation and Design Awards on display at foodpro. The AIP also showcased our PIDA student winners that were recently recognised in the WorldStar student awards and some of our WorldStar winners.

It was great to see the high numbers of visitors stopping by to learn more about Australia and New Zealand companies who are making significant step changes to their packaging designs. Thank you to the team at Diversified Australia who helped to design such a great PIDA showcase area and to all of the finalists who kindly provided samples for the display area.

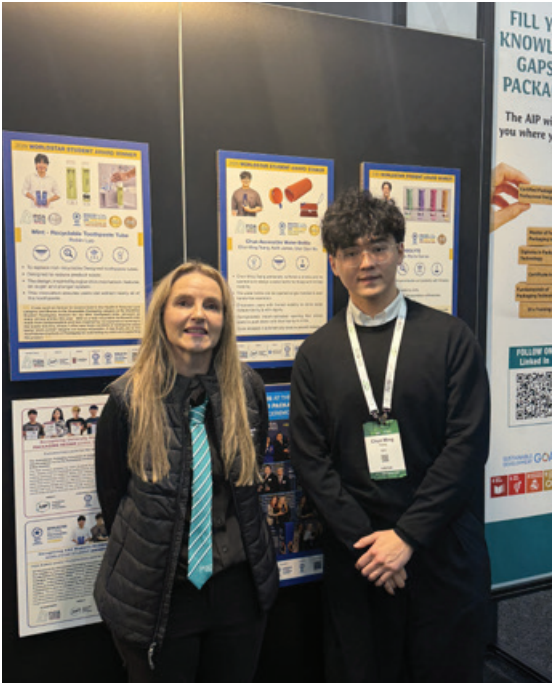


▲ 2026 PIDA Finalist: Caps & Closures.

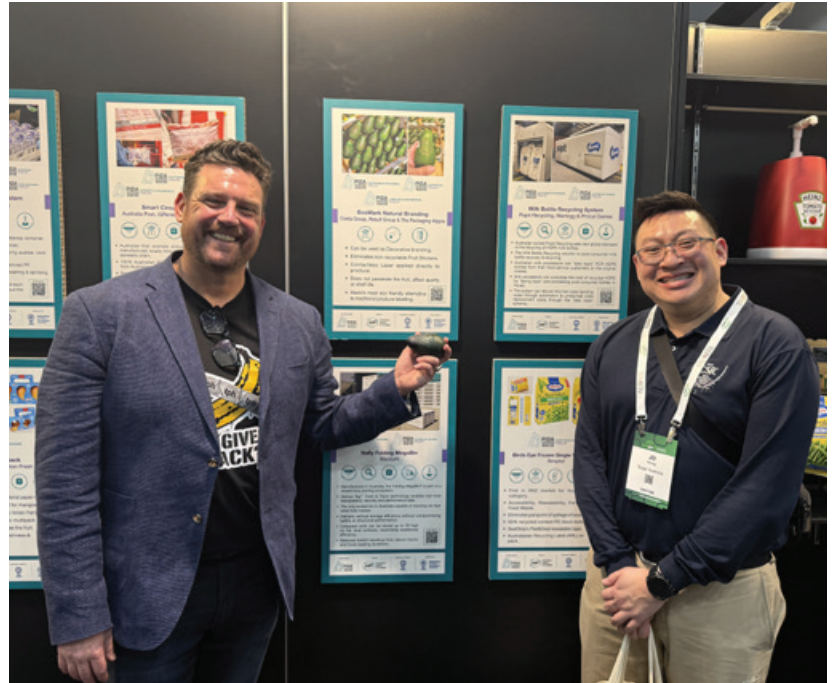


▲ 2026 PIDA Finalists: Sealed Air & Result Group.

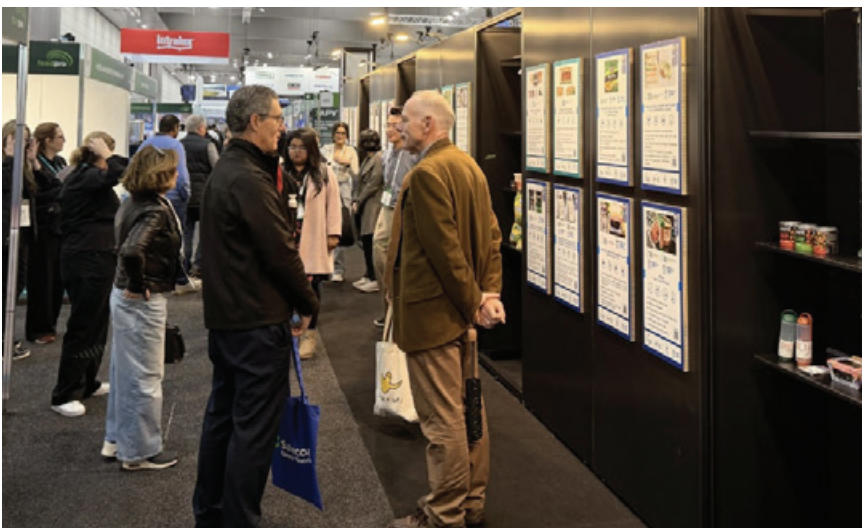




▲ Chun Ming Tsang took out the GOLD Accessible WorldStar STUDENT Award for his innovative water bottle.

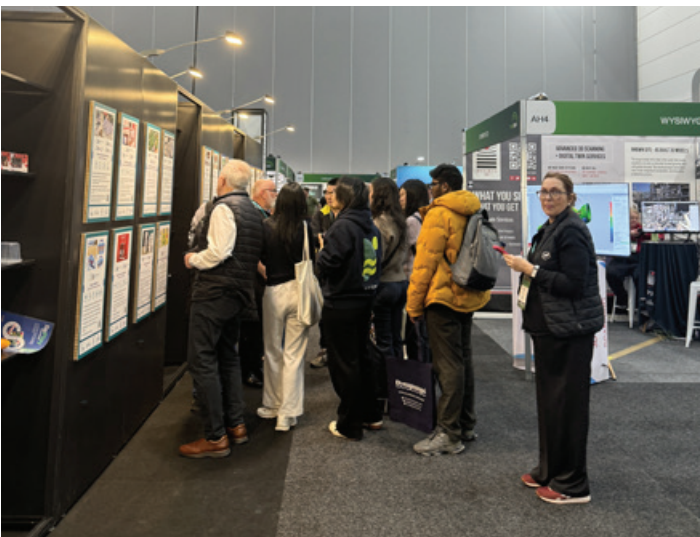


▲ 2026 PIDA Finalist: The Packaging Hippy.





▲ Informa Markets joined the AIP at foodpro.

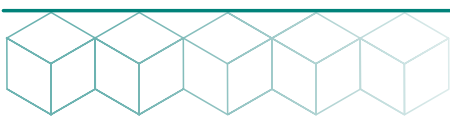


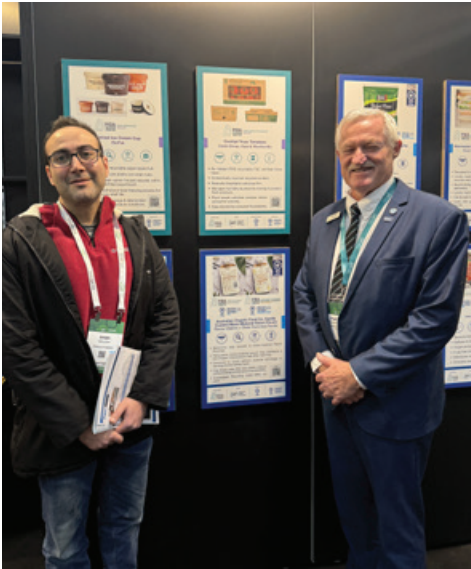


▲ The Hon. Colin Brooks MP, Minister for Industry & Advanced Manufacturing, Victoria visits the 2026 PIDA Showcase and the AIP.

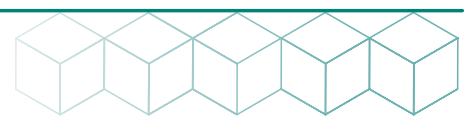


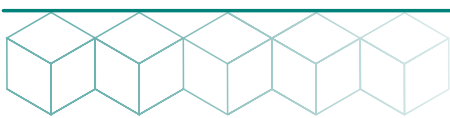
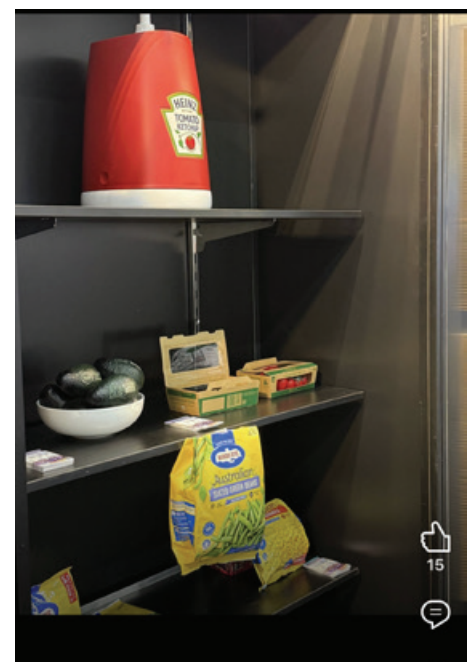
▲ 2026 PIDA Finalist: Result Group.





▲ 2026 PIDA Finalist: Bonson Packaging.



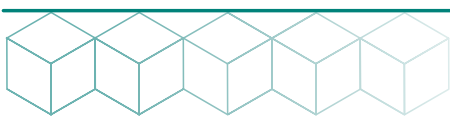
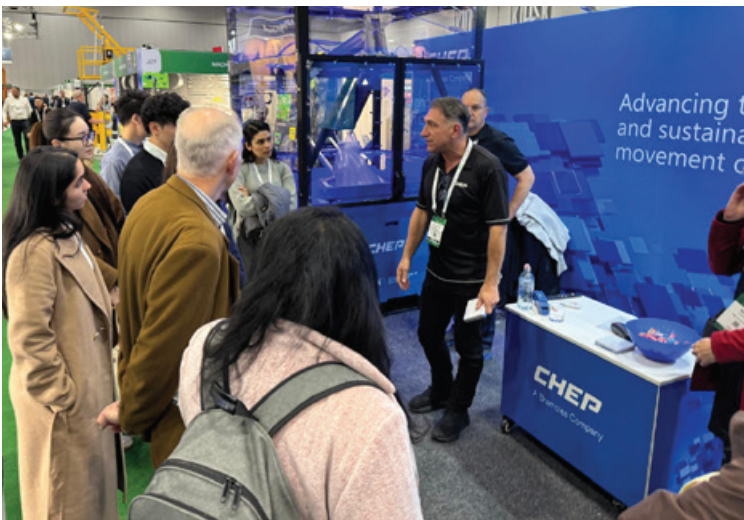


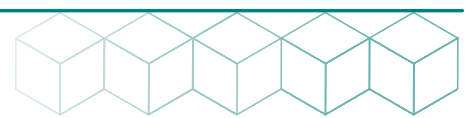
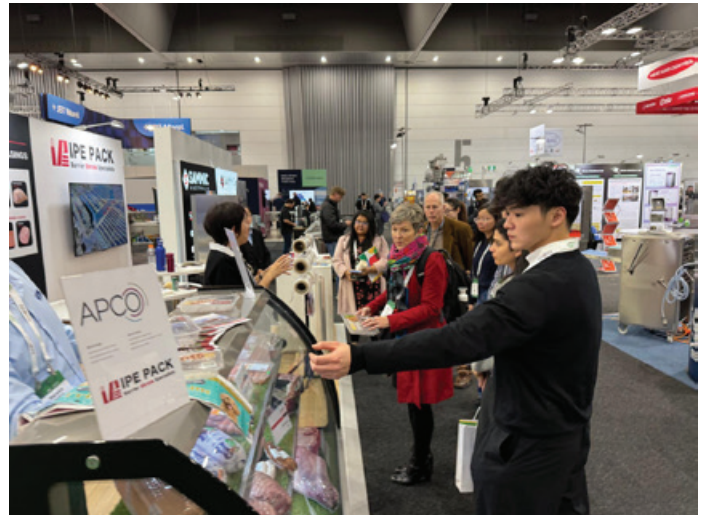


The AIP would like to thank all of our Members and Corporate Partners that participated in our first-ever walking tour at foodpro including Bunzl ANZ Processor & Industry, CHEP, FINEST, IPE Pack, MCC Label Asia Pacific, Pac Food Pty Ltd, Result Group, Sealed Air Corporation, WML Paperboard & Viscount.

Thank you for taking time to share your products and systems with over 50 walking tour members, including AIP Members and some of our University students, during foodpro. What a great way to finish the week. The AIP wanted to create a unique experience with our new walking tour concept and it was a huge success! We look forward to adding this to the key tradeshow that we partner with in the future.



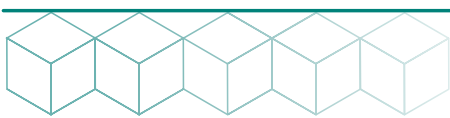






“This past week I had the opportunity to visit foodpro and learn first handed about the different opportunities and industries within my master’s program. With AIP Australasian Institute of Packaging treasure hunt, my peers and I were able to explore the expo more closely. It was a very eye opening and informative experience!”

Master of Food & Packaging Innovation student





Australasian
Institute
of Packaging



26-29 July 2026
MCEC Melbourne

foodpro Treasure Hunt

VISIT the AIP Stand
AH1 for a few hints

*Meet new people.
Network with AIP Corporate Partners.
See PIDA Award winning packaging.*

- ☐ **1** Find 2x AIP Corporate Partners that are exhibiting. Introduce yourself and take a photo with them.
- ☐ **2** Introduce yourself to 2x AIP Members you have never met. They may be visiting the show, exhibiting, or attending one of the 6x AIP educational events. Introduce yourself and then take a photo with them.
- ☐ **3** Find a WorldStar Packaging Award trophy or logo on an exhibitor stand. Take a photo with the trophy.
- ☐ **4** Find a Green PIDA trophy on an exhibitor's stand. Take a photo with the trophy.
- ☐ **5** Find the new AIP President and take a photo with them.
- ☐ **6** Visit the AIP stand and take a photo of yourself on the stand. Bonus points for encouraging other AIP Members to join the photo.
- ☐ **7** Find 4x AIP education team members and take photos with them. Bonus points if you can get 3x AIP Education team members in one photo with you.
- ☐ **8** Visit the 2026 Australasian Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) awards showcase and take a photo of yourself on the stand. Bonus points if you can find someone from one of the winning companies and take a photo with them.
- ☐ **9** Bonus points if you attend one AIP Packaging Panel discussion and take a photo of yourself at the event.
- ☐ **10** Find 2x exhibitors that are 2026 Australasian Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Award Finalists. Take a photo with the staff and the packaging that was a finalist.

Once completed please visit the AIP stand and provide the evidence. Each day the AIP will announce a new winner of the Treasure Hunt. Please tag the AIP on LinkedIn as well if you wish to share your Treasure Hunt journey.





Yesterday I had the opportunity to attend Foodpro 2026 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. It was inspiring to see how sustainability is becoming increasingly embedded in food processing and packaging innovation.

“A particular highlight was the guided tour organised by the AIP Australasian Institute of Packaging (AIP), which offered valuable insights into the latest packaging innovations showcased at FoodPro. Seeing practical examples of circular economy principles in action, from recyclable mono-material packaging and reusable container systems to digital traceability solutions and award-winning sustainable packaging designs, was especially inspiring.”

It was encouraging to see so many organisations focusing not only on improving recyclability, but also on reducing material use, designing for recovery, and exploring reusable packaging models. Events like FoodPro are a valuable reminder that achieving a circular economy requires collaboration across the entire value chain, manufacturers, packaging designers, recyclers, stewardship organisations, policymakers, and researchers all have an important role to play.

phD Candidate Monash University





AIP Packaging's future took the spotlight at foodpro 2026

The AIP's sessions on the Innovation Stage covered it all - from save-food packaging and date labelling, to recyclable fibre and sustainable design, right through to the rise of refillable, reusable and compostable solutions for hospitality.

"We don't have to wait for regulations, we should already be designing to those standards now"

Nerida Kelton, Vice President Sustainability & Save Food.

A huge thank you to our speakers for sharing their knowledge and expertise across these sessions.



▲ Fibre-focused panel (L-R): David Kilpatrick of Zipform Packaging; Ola Wicik of Opal; Mark Rohrlach of Detpak; and moderator Keith Chessell, of AIP.





Back from a great trip to Melbourne for client FY27 kick-offs, site visits, foodpro and the PIDA Australasian Packaging Innovation and Design Awards. It was great to contribute to one of AIP Australasian Institute of Packaging's panels with Saurabh Narula, Craig Walker and Devaki Rajendran MAIP, moderated by Ralph Moyle CPP FAIP, (AIP's latest Life Member Award winner- wit wool!). We covered recycle-ready materials, adhesives, sustainable packaging design- but the real theme was packaging's future is circular, and getting there takes collaboration, innovation and sustainability built into every part of the value chain, not bolted on afterwards- challenge the status quo and ask harder questions at the brief.

"It was great to talk with the many suppliers exhibiting, and celebrated some brilliant work at the PIDA Awards sharing the winning table with Australia Post, part of the team behind the Smart Circular Satchel developed in partnership with iQRenew, RollsPack and Signet, a true example of collaboration to unlock circular outcomes."

Pippa Corry MAIP







Food systems thinking, circularity and efficiency. foodpro 2026

- We know packaging is essential for protecting products, extending shelf life and maintaining quality through fit for purpose solutions - the focus is shifting to total system outcomes and the enormous opportunity to address the global food waste challenge.
- Innovation in fibre packaging is accelerating, in particular replacing hard to recycle materials. Ola Wicik talked to Opal EPS replacement innovation, which was recognised in the 2026 PIDA Australasian Packaging Innovation and Design Awards design AWARDS.

- The biggest opportunities continue lie in collaboration. Better outcomes will come from bringing retailers, brand owners, packaging manufacturers, material suppliers and equipment providers together earlier in the process.

“I appreciated the opportunity to connect with industry peers and customers this week. Thanks to the AIP Australasian Institute of Packaging for the showcase sessions bringing the value chain together.”

Minja Podvorac MAIP, OPAL





Honoured to represent McCormick, Australia at FoodPro 2026 in Melbourne as a panellist.

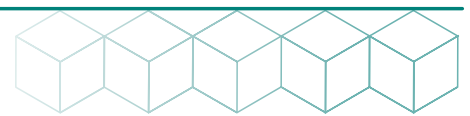
“It was a privilege to be part of such an important industry forum, sharing the stage with passionate professionals and thought leaders from across the food and packaging sectors.”

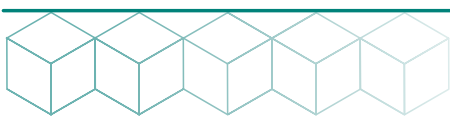
The discussion was a great reminder that the future of packaging will be shaped by purposeful innovation, sustainability, collaboration, and a shared commitment to creating solutions that deliver value for people, business, and the planet. A sincere thank you to Nerida Kelton FAIP and the AIP Australasian Institute of Packaging for the opportunity to contribute to the conversation. Great conversations do not just reflect the future, they help create it.”

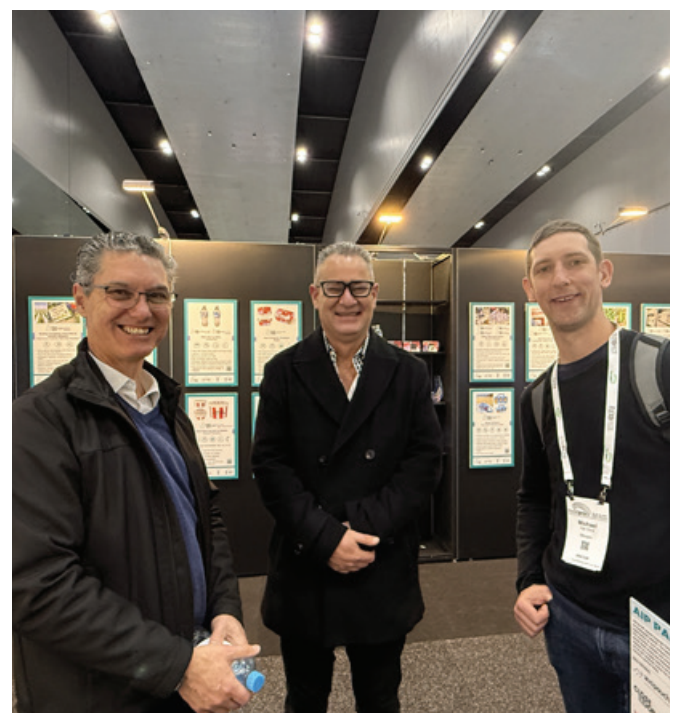
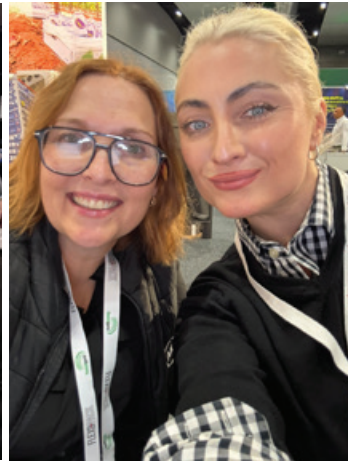
Saurabh Narula MAIP, CPP

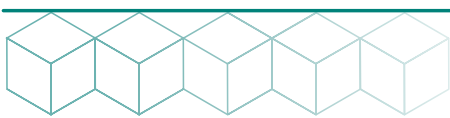


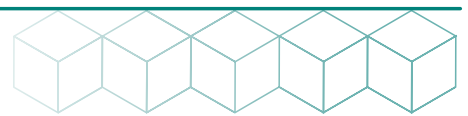


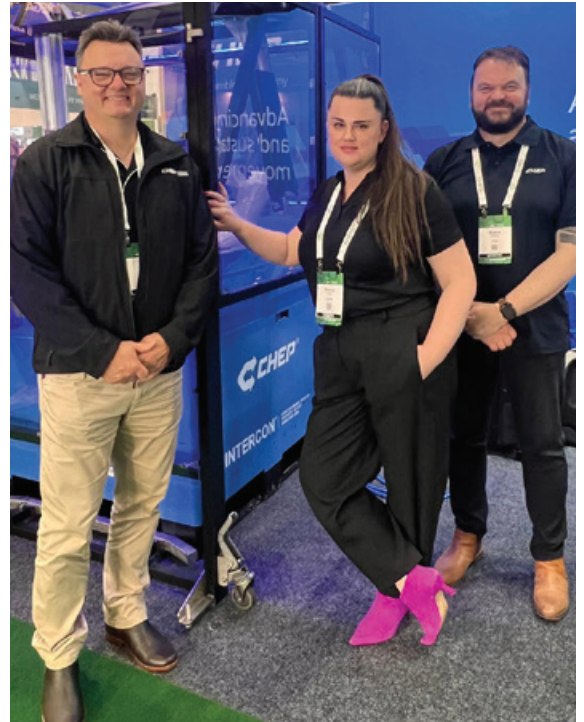






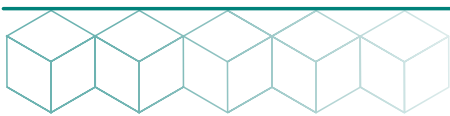


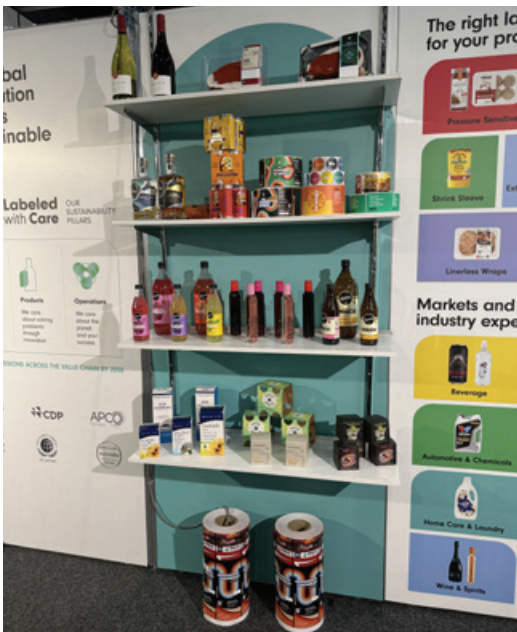


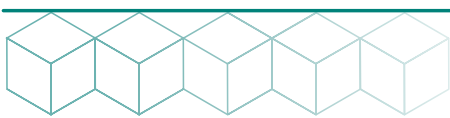


“Our team is always passionate about sharing our knowledge and helping advance the packaging industry. During Foodpro 2026, we were proud to partner with the Australian Institute of Packaging to participate in guided exhibition walking tours and panel discussions on the Innovation Stage.”

It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with industry professionals, discuss the latest innovations in food packaging, and share insights into how advanced barrier packaging solutions are helping improve food safety, extend shelf life, and reduce food waste. A big thank you to everyone who joined the sessions and visited us throughout the exhibition. We look forward to continuing the conversation and driving innovation together.
Warwick Armstrong MAIP, IPE Pack









"Right Choice of Label Enables Circular Packaging. On behalf of MCC Label Asia Pacific, we thank Nerida Kelton FAIP, Prof Pierre Pienaar, AIP Australasian Institute of Packaging once again for the opportunity to have MCC Label participate in foodpro Melbourne 2026."

"It was a privilege to share how labels play a critical role in enabling the recyclability and circularity of packaging with experienced panellists Saurabh Narula and Pippa Corry moderated by Ralph Moyle CPP FAIP. At MCC Label, we are committed to advancing circular packaging solutions.

Beyond designing labels that support recycling, we also provide innovative solutions that give used release liners a new life by repurposing them domestically in Australia, helping to divert waste from landfill and supporting a more circular economy.

We appreciate the opportunity to engage with industry leaders and brand owners, and look forward to work towards the Right Choice of Label Enables Circular Packaging."

Devaki Rajendren MAIP





Fibre innovation shifts from replacement to systems thinking

Replacing plastic is no longer the end goal for fibre packaging. At foodpro's Innovation Stage, panellists argued the next generation of fibre solutions will be defined by systems thinking – balancing product protection, automation, recyclability and commercial reality.

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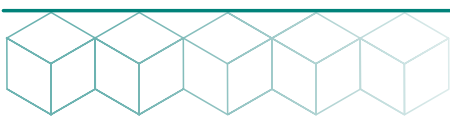
Fibre packaging innovation is evolving beyond the search for alternatives to plastic, with Australia's leading developers now focused on designing solutions that work across the entire packaging system.

That message emerged throughout an Australasian Institute of Packaging (AIP) panel discussion at foodpro, where moderator Keith Chessell guided a conversation exploring the opportunities and challenges shaping the future of fibre-based packaging.



▲ Mark Rohrlach and Keith Chessell discuss the value of involving packaging suppliers much earlier in the design process.

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Bringing together Mark Rohrlach, regional manager – Asia & Australasia at Detpak; Ola Wicik, packaging engineer at Opal; and David Kilpatrick, managing director of Zipform Packaging, the discussion highlighted how advances in fibre technology are increasingly being driven by collaboration across the supply chain rather than by materials innovation alone.

Throughout the session, Chessell returned to the importance of designing packaging as part of a broader system, challenging panellists to explain not only how their products perform, but how they integrate with existing production lines, logistics networks, recycling systems and consumer expectations.

That systems approach was evident across each of the innovations discussed.

For Detpak, fibre innovation in fresh produce has centred on helping growers reduce their reliance on plastic while maintaining the speed and efficiency of automated packing lines. Rohrlach said new solutions must meet sustainability expectations without compromising food protection or operational performance.

“The packaging development team has to deliver options that also survive the supply chain, survive all the existing filling lines, and also present the product that's going into it exceptionally well,” he said.

Detpak's fibre tomato punnet, developed in collaboration with Perfection Fresh, illustrates that philosophy. Rather than simply replacing an existing plastic pack, the project required modifications to automated equipment, multiple production trials and close collaboration between engineering teams before reaching supermarket shelves.



▲ Ola Wicik: Expectations are shifting beyond simple substitution.

“When you've got somebody that wants to make that change, it's a far easier journey because they're willing to accept those challenges as they come along. All part of the new product development journey,” Rohrlach said.

Opal's Arctic Shield insulated fibre carton reflects a similarly holistic approach. Originally developed as an alternative to expanded polystyrene for seafood and other cold chain applications, the latest generation has been redesigned to meet more demanding transport requirements, including longer cold chain performance and leak-proof construction.

Wicik said customer expectations had shifted beyond simple material substitution.

“We had to really reconsider the entire packaging system and redesign what we already had, but redesign it to be fit for purpose for those new restrictions,” she said.

Looking ahead, she suggested corrugated packaging's future will depend less on breakthrough materials than on smarter engineering, lightweighting and optimising packaging throughout the supply chain.

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▲ David Kilpatrick: Dry moulded fibre offers significant benefits.

"We don't want to make corrugated work harder. We want it to work a lot smarter," Wicik said.

The broader theme of collaboration also featured strongly throughout the discussion.

Wicik argued that packaging is too often considered at the end of product development, despite influencing manufacturing, automation, transport, retail handling and the consumer experience.

"The greatest success from our customers will be those who really understand that packaging is a part of their entire system, not just an afterthought," she said.

Chessell reinforced the point, drawing on decades of experience in packaging development to encourage brand owners to involve packaging suppliers much earlier in the design process. Better outcomes, he said, come when packaging, equipment and product development teams work together from the outset.

Innovation is also being driven by advances in fibre converting technologies. Kilpatrick outlined Zipform's work in linear forming and its recent partnership with PulPac to develop dry moulded fibre applications, including high-barrier meat trays without a separate plastic layer – technology PKN has previously reported on.

"Comparing dry moulded fibre to conventional wet moulding, Kilpatrick said,

"It offers a lot of benefits, but first and foremost, it's much less energy intensive and much less water-use intensive, and much faster... and it offers greater design flexibility."

Recyclability, recycled content and evolving PFAS requirements also featured prominently during the session, with panellists emphasising that sustainability outcomes depend on balancing fibre recovery, food safety, barrier performance and practical manufacturing considerations.

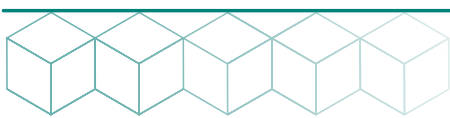
While the innovations showcased differed in application – from fresh produce and seafood to meat packaging and paper bottles – they shared a common direction.

The discussion made clear that fibre innovation is no longer about replacing one material with another. Future success will depend on designing packaging as part of a complete system that balances product performance, manufacturing efficiency, recyclability and commercial viability.



▲ Mark Rohrlach: New solutions must meet sustainability expectations without compromising food protection or operational performance.

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The AIP would like to thank our Platinum Plus Partner



for their support during all the foodpro & AIP events.

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2026 PIDA Awards dinner



foodpro Walking Tour



Treasure Hunt



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