



A global gathering

Food waste, diversity and inclusion, and the need for a louder packaging 'voice' were just a few of the topics discussed by speakers at the 2018 AIP National Conference.

THE 2018 Australian Institute of Packaging (AIP) National Conference was a jam-packed two days of talks, entertainment and networking opportunities, all under the roof of the Marriott Resort in Queensland's iconic Surfers Paradise.

Spanning 2-3 May, the conference featured 60 speakers from 20 countries and attracted close to 300 visitors.

Of the speaker line-up, 24 came from overseas, in keeping with the theme of 'Packaging Globalisation'.

The event also attracted member countries from the World Packaging Organisation (WPO), with representatives heading to Australia to speak and participate. The PIDA and WorldStar Awards, held concurrently, involved 25 countries and 500 people. The AIP also hosted the international WorldStar Packaging Awards and the 2018 PIDA Awards (see p18), as well as the PKN + Food & Drink Business Women in Industry Breakfast Forum (see p16).

Five international editors from the International Packaging Press Organisation (IPPO) were guest speakers during the two days as well (see p14).

FOOD WASTE DISCONNECT TACKLED

One of the strongest themes to emerge at the conference was the challenge of food waste. A national collaboration to help bridge the gap between Australia's \$20 billion food waste problem and the 3.6 million people affected by food insecurity was outlined in the opening sessions on the first day.

Keynote presenter, Karli Verghese of RMIT University, shared new details about the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), which she described as "the most exciting thing that has happened in food waste in my life".

The CRC will comprise three research programs tackling three key problems: reducing food loss and waste throughout the supply chain; transforming unavoidable waste into valuable products; and engaging with industry and consumers to deliver change.

"Industry groups are going to be working with us on our different industry projects, and then we will be able to disseminate that out through the broader community through workshops, training courses, newsletters, and so on," Verghese said.

Keynote speaker and CEO of Foodbank Australia Brianna Casey told attendees that enough food is already produced globally to feed everyone.

"Just a quarter of what we waste globally would be enough to end world hunger," Casey said.

"We've got a pretty big incentive to do better than we are doing at moment, and the packaging industry is fundamental to getting it right.

"If you're not driven by the social impetus of why we need to reduce global food insecurity, let's look at the environmental

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ABOVE: Principal research fellow in the industrial design program at RMIT University, Karli Verghese.

cost, not to mention the economic cost. If food waste were a country, it would be the third largest emitter globally.”

Meanwhile, thousands of people in Australia are still missing out on food donations, according to Casey.

“This is my big challenge, this is what keeps me up at the moment. I have got 65,000 people a month nationally that I can’t get to because I haven’t got enough food and groceries. Our charities are telling us there are that many people being turned away because I can’t get them the food that I know is sitting out there in this big country of ours.”

In Australia, Casey said, one in five kids are food-insecure, and one in 10 kids in food-insecure homes go a whole day each week without eating at all. Moreover, the problem is increasing over time, and not just in traditionally disadvantaged areas.

According to Casey, taxation reforms are key.

“At the moment, if you’re a food and grocery company or you’re a farmer donating to Foodbank, you can claim a tax deduction on some of the costs of that food, but you can’t claim a tax deduction on the cost of transporting the food.” ■

COMBATING THE ‘PACKAGING IS BAD’ MINDSET

SEALED Air Australia’s food scientist Karl Deily believes the industry can do more to combat the belief that packaging is bad.

President of the packaging company’s \$2.7 billion food care division, Karl Deily has worked hard on designs which contribute to a more sustainable food industry, proving that packaging can, indeed, be very good.

As a keynote speaker at the AIP National Conference, held from 2-3 May in Queensland, he talked about top trends in food waste, food security and food safety.

“Packaging can play a significant role in reducing waste as well as driving towards a more sustainable solution,” he said.

“Highly engineered suspension packaging for products such as TVs can reduce damage and offer a sustainable alternative.

“There is also packaging which can mask brand names on e-commerce parcels and prevent thieves prowling front door-steps.”

One of Sealed Air’s developments is the Darfresh On Tray system, which enables denser packaging in shippers and a doubling of product shelf life.

The retail tray lid and tray skin program have resulted in zero skeletal waste.

He believes suppliers should also be thinking about using statements such as “this packaging uses fewer trucks” to draw attention to the value of sustainable packaging.

He cited Plantic Kuraray as a company which uses bio-derived, renewable resin for its meat packaging, showing examples from Coles.

“Innovating the packages as well as components to put on the package is vital,” Deily says.

Here are some other strategies for reducing food waste, according to Deily:

- Re-purposing 'ugly' fruit and veg in meal kits;
- Better temperature control and sustainability of meal kits by using wool as insulation (as in the WoolCool pack);
- Working to get more food per truck, driving better shipping economics;
- Better communication of best-before and use-by dates to avoid waste; and
- Industry consortiums getting the message out about technology and innovations around the materials they use for packaging.



Karl Deily (left) receives the Machinery & Equipment award for the CogniPRO Link, designed for the meat processing industry by Sealed Air Australia. He’s pictured here with APPMA chairperson Mark Dingley.



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