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## Brand Australia: Does Australian agriculture need a national brand?

This Summer 2014 edition of the *Farm Policy Journal* contains the winning entry and the leading contenders in the 2014 John Ralph Essay Competition conducted by the Australian Farm Institute. The topic for essays in this year's competition was: Does the Australian agricultural sector need a common national brand to promote its products in international and domestic markets?

The winning entry was submitted by David Thompson, a Communications Manager at the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment at the University of Western Sydney. David's essay explained how a unified national brand would benefit Australian agriculture. His approach involves extending the existing Restaurant Australia concept into tangible brand elements specifically for agriculture.

'With a core message of Restaurant Australia Ready produce: certified and assured to be worthy of the finest restaurants in the world. David argues that by focusing on the final food experience, the national brand captures the flavours of the entire Australian food story and places the emphasis on delivering quality right through until the end of the supply chain,' said Mick Keogh, Executive Director of the Australian Farm Institute.

'A common conclusion in many of the entries is that the Australian agricultural sector cannot assume that proximity to markets and historical good fortune is all the sector needs to attract and retain customers into the future.'

'In general, the essays emphasise the importance of careful planning when developing a branding strategy. The essays also make a point of backing-up the creation of any new brand with a control system that underpins the brand's ability in returning profits to farmers as well as other food and agriculture related businesses,' said Mr Keogh.

The Summer 2014 Journal includes a presentation on 'Building Brand Australia' by Craig Davis from the Institute's Australian Agricultural Roundtable Conference in 2013. Craig argues that discussion about 'Brand Australia' should be one of the most important conversations in the country - because many of the challenges faced by Australian agriculture reflect broader challenges for other business sectors, for the economy, and for Australia as a nation. Craig concludes by saying that we need the power of a great Australian brand to help us provide a brilliant answer to the question – why buy Australian? Essentially, this would involve a storytelling platform for all Australian agribusiness.

Contributors to the Summer 2014 *Farm Policy Journal* are:

- David Thompson, Communications Manager, Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment (HIE), University of Western Sydney
- Mitchell Hughes, Farmer
- Peter Elliott, Strategic Grains Market Analyst, Australian Export Grains Innovation Centre (AEGIC)
- Ruth Ahchow, Associate Director, Economics, Regulation and Policy, Ernst & Young
- Matthew Cawood, Journalist, Fairfax Agricultural Media
- Craig Davis, branding specialist, digital venturist, speaker and consultant on conscious capitalism, creativity and innovation

The Summer 2014 quarter *Farm Policy Journal* is available online at the Australian Farm Institute website [www.farminstitute.org.au](http://www.farminstitute.org.au) or by phoning (02) 9690 1388.

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