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Leading Harvest Australian Pilot participant testimonials

In partnership with Mutual Trust, Leading Harvest facilitates a pilot program to implement its world-leading sustainability standard, partnering with organisations representing more than 420,000 hectares of farming across Australia

Leading Harvest provides farmers and agriculture customers with a universal certification through its unique '[Farmland Management Standard](#)', which standardizes sustainability verification and reporting across the industry. The Australian program already includes inaugural participants with more than 420,000 hectares, who will establish a 'Farmland Management Standard' unique to Australia with the potential for large scale growth and impact.

Here are some testimonials provided by the Australian pilot program participants:

Jim McKay, Managing Director of Warakirri Asset Management said:

“Warakirri have a long and proud history of operating our business and investments in line with global best practice, with a particular focus on our people and long-term sustainability. Our long-term experience in the agricultural industry has taught us that agricultural investments committed to environmental sustainability, positive social impact and responsible management, produce higher and more sustainable long-term returns. We are delighted to partner with Leading Harvest on the Australian pilot program, an important initiative to develop a tailored, independently audited Sustainability Standard for the Australian Agricultural industry and to advocate for change on matters that are important to our investors.”

Warakirri Asset Management represent several funds including Warakirri Cropping, Daybreak Cropping, Warakirri Diversified Agriculture Fund, and Warakirri Farmland Fund. The portfolios of these funds are majority represented by row crop, open land horticulture and permanent crops, in 5 states.

Brian J. Kernohan, Chief Sustainability Officer, Private Markets at Manulife Investment Management said:

“Six years ago we saw two trends emerging. The first was that our investors were becoming more committed to sustainability objectives and were demanding action and assurance by asset managers like us. The second was that consumers were demanding sustainably grown food and the supply chain was reacting. Our commitment to our values and clients along with the reality that the food system supply chains start with growers compelled us to look for a credible, scalable, and

practical way to provide our clients and end consumers assurance that our farming practices were sustainable in all aspects of environmental, social and governance matters.

Manulife Investment Management was an early adopter of Leading Harvest in the United States and we are thrilled to see it being tested in Australia. Leading Harvest was intentionally designed in a way that was focused on adaptability for farmers regardless of their operation size, the crops they grow and where they grow them. Combining this flexibility with third-party auditing to provide credible assurance that the intended outcomes are being met are consistent with our stewardship values and client expectations.”

Manulife Investment Management’s agriculture portfolio in Australia is mainly comprised of almond, premium winegrape, cotton and cereal production in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

Cullen Gunn, CEO of Kilter Rural said:

“Kilter has always provided extensive reporting on natural capital however we are excited to participate in the Leading Harvest initiative as we believe the development of a broadly accepted framework of guiding principles will encourage new investment in genuine sustainable farming practices.”

Kilter Rural’s agriculture portfolio in Australia is concentrated in Victoria, and is comprised of tomato, cereals and soybean production.

Ross Burling, Chief Executive Officer of Stahmann Webster, a participant in Australia’s pilot program, said:

“Stahmann Webster is enthusiastic to be part of the Leading Harvest pilot. As Australia’s largest diversified nut platform, we are uniquely aware that the issues of sustainability, efficiency, and supply chain predictability have never been more important than they are now. As such, our ‘gate to plate’ strategy is anchored around principles of sustainable management, and we are excited now to work alongside Leading Harvest to help scale outcomes across the sector.”

Stahmann Webster is Australia’s oldest nut producer, with a history stretching back to Tasmania in 1831. Today it is Australia’s largest diversified nut platform, with orchards in Queensland, NSW and Tasmania producing world-class walnuts, pecans, macadamias and almonds. PSP Investments is a joint venture partner in Stahmann Webster.

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About Leading Harvest: Leading Harvest is a nonprofit organisation committed to increasing adoption of sustainability practices in agriculture. It was formally organized in 2020 by and for all stakeholders across the agricultural value chain—from farmland owners to companies to communities. The organisation provides assurance programs comprised of standards, audit procedures, training and education, and reporting and claim offerings that are optimized for flexibility, scalability, and impact.