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## News

### Avocado industry researchers receive Australia Day awards - 26/01/2008

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Avocados Australia and Australian avocado growers congratulate both Dr Tony Whiley and Mr Ken Pegg for their tireless and dedicated work for the avocado industry, which has been recognised in the Australia Day 2008 Honours List.

The Member of the Order of Australia has been awarded to both:

Mr Ken Pegg: For service to horticulture as a research scientist in the field of plant pathology, particularly disease management of tropical and subtropical fruit crops. Ken worked as Plant Pathologist at the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPI&F) from 1962 to 1973, then as Senior Principal Scientist from 1973 until his retirement in 2001. Currently, he is a QDPI&F Post Retirement Associate. He has worked and continues to work with the disease *Phytophthora cinnamoni*, and conducted early breakthrough research with positive impacts, particularly for the avocado industry.

He also worked with the disease *Fusarium*; leading plant breeding to the development of resistant cultivars, with positive impacts for the banana industry. He has authored numerous book chapters, refereed publications, non-refereed publications (extension) and conference papers.

Dr Tony Whiley: For service to horticulture as a research scientist, particularly through the development of disease resistant plants and improved growing, marketing and management practices in the avocado and mango industries.

Between 1968 and 2002, Tony worked as Research Horticulturalist, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries; contributing to the ginger industry and the breeding and development of the 'Calypso' mango and the avocado industry. He is currently an international consultant for the Chilean Avocado Industry. He has been a member of the Avocados Australia, Varieties Committee since 1979, and was a member of the Avocados Australia, Research and Development Committee between 2002 and 2005. Tony was also a Presenter at the World Avocado Congresses in 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999 and 2007. He is the editor and an author of the definitive world avocado text *The Avocado: Botany, Production and Uses*, 2002; published by CAB International UK and author/co-author, of over 240 technical, scientific papers and book chapters, 1974-2007.

In what have been parallel careers in avocado research, both Dr Whiley and Mr Pegg, originally working in the Queensland Department of Primary Industries, began in avocado research over 35 years ago and continue to support and mentor each other to this day.

Over the last six years, outside of the QDPI&F, both Dr Whiley and Mr Pegg have continued to focus their considerable avocado knowledge on ensuring the Australian industry has the ability to deliver higher quality avocados to Australian and international consumers, through disease management, rootstock improvement and the understanding of many aspects of what is a little understood tree crop.

"I can confidently say that our industry would not be worth over \$100 million per year and growing without the dedication of these two people", explained Mr Henry Kwaczynski Chair of Avocados Australia, "They both have been instrumental in allowing the Australian and international avocado industry to successfully grow enormously."

"They continue to work and have much more to give to our industry into the future" said Mr Kwaczynski.

"We have just completed an extensive round of avocado R&D Road Shows across the main Australian growing regions at which Dr Whiley and Mr Pegg presented and interacted with growers", explained Mr Antony Allen, CEO of Avocados Australia. "It was very obvious how highly avocado growers respect both men. They have earned growers respect through working hard for our industry."

"They both have been instrumental in growing the Australian industry over 20 fold in 35 years and contributing millions of dollars to the value of our industry and into regional communities across Australia", said Mr Allen, "Congratulations Ken and Tony. These awards are well deserved."

For further comment:

Henry Kwaczynski, Avocados Australia Chair on 0409 261 461 or 07 5442 1767

Antony Allen, Avocados Australia CEO on 0438 132 477 or 07 3391 2344

Avocados Australia Limited is the Peak Industry Body in Australia for Avocados. We are a "not for profit" membership based organisation. Our members are Avocado growers along with associated businesses and industry people.

Avocados Australia seeks to work with all parts of the chain from production through to the consumer. By working together we seek to continually improve the ability of growers to provide a healthy, profitable and safe product for all consumers. As part of this continual improvement we guide a "research & development" and "marketing and promotion" program for the Australian Avocado industry.

The Australian Avocado industry comprises 1200 growers across the country and produces 46,000 tonnes of Avocados each year worth \$AUD120 million at farm gate and \$420 million at retail level. Key growing areas are North, Central and Southeast Queensland, Northern and Central New South Wales, the Sunraysia or Tristate area (South Australia, Victoria and South Western New South Wales) and Western Australia.

For more information Media Resources or contact Avocados Australia at [ceo@avocado.org.au](mailto:ceo@avocado.org.au)

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