

MEDIA RELEASE

17 August 2014

Media are welcome to attend and prearranged interviews are encouraged. Please contact:
Cathy Reade, Media Manager IHC2014 and Director, Public Affairs & Communication, Crawford Fund 0413575934

OLYMPICS OF HORTICULTURE OFF TO A TREMENDOUS START

Australian elected to chair the International Society for Horticultural Science on its 150th anniversary

Over 3000 delegates from more than 100 countries will attend the International Horticulture Congress (IHC2014) – the world premier horticulture event - in Brisbane from 17-22 August at the Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre.

The first news they'll hear is that Australian, Professor Rod Drew from Griffith University has been elected as the new President of the International Society for Horticultural Science – the first time an Australian has been elected to this prestigious position in the horticulture world.

“The so-called ‘Olympics of Horticulture’ in Brisbane this week is only held every four years and has been many years in the making. I feel so honoured to be selected by my international peers to run such an august international society.

‘But what’s even more special perhaps is that it has coincided with Australia managing such an incredible event as what we have planned for Brisbane this week.

He noted that IHC2014 includes the world’s leading experts in horticulture science to highlight issues related to the unique potential of horticulture in the world.

“We’re focusing on horticulture’s impact on sustaining lives, livelihoods and landscapes,” he said.

“Horticulture has always been fundamentally important to the world but as the world’s population increases it becomes increasingly important. So it’s really this feeding the world that is my passion for horticulture – feeding the hungry and malnourished.

“WHO estimates that more than a billion people go to bed hungry each night – I know the difference that horticulture could make for them and want to see that happen.”

Over 40 symposia will cover a wide range of topics on all aspects of horticulture, arboriculture, and indigenous, medicinal and aromatic plants.

International plenary speakers include:

- Em Prof Marc Van Montagu, World Food Prize Laureate (2013) and co-discoverer of the transformation technology used worldwide to produce genetically engineered plants.
- Dr Shenggen Fan, Director General of the leading food think-tank, International Food Policy Research Institute, who received the 2014 World Food Programme’s Hunger Hero Award.
- Dr Dyno Keatinge, Director General of the World Vegetable Centre.

In addition to presentations on particular fruits, vegetables, nuts and berries, more general issues include:

- Human health effects of fruits, vegetables, nuts and berries
- The future of indigenous vegetables and their role in the battle against malnutrition and disease
- Traditional and modern knowledge of medicinal and aromatic plants
- Plant breeding, molecular biology, functional & biofortified food and GMO in horticulture
- Mechanisation, precision horticulture and robotics
- Innovative plant protection and advances in postharvest S&T for horticulture
- Connections between nature, plants, landscapes and human health