

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo: Monday, 12 August 2019

Media are welcome to attend. Interviews can be prearranged for Monday, 12 August
Embargoed media releases will be available [here](#) and the full program is [online](#).

FOODCUBES FOR FOOD SECURITY

A small, private Melbourne-based business is showing how Australian innovation in urban food production - gardens being grown in urban car parks and roofs in Australia - can assist Pacific communities where poor soils, water scarcity and sea level rise threatens food and nutrition security.

Marc Noyce, CEO of Biofilta Pty Ltd, is presenting on climate resilient food growing systems at the 2019 Crawford Fund annual conference, titled *Weathering the 'Perfect Storm': Addressing the Agriculture, Energy, Water, Climate Change Nexus*. The conference is being held in Parliament House, Canberra on 13 August with international and Australian specialists discussing strategies needed to provide water, energy and food in a sustainable and equitable way in the face of climate change impacts.

In a case study on work underway in the tiny island archipelago of Tuvalu, he will explain the impact of their Foodwall system, and the potential of a new Foodcube system made from Australian recycled food grade plastic that was destined for landfill.

"Tuvalu is at the forefront of climate change. At an average elevation above sea level of 1.8 metres, it is already inundated during king tides; the soil is extremely alkaline and salty; they rely on rain for crops and the soil holds little moisture. These challenges are having knock on effects on food security, health and nutrition," said Mr Noyce, whose company was selected in 2017 from a global search of 280 applications across 74 Countries by LAUNCH FOOD, and innovation program funded by DFAT and USAid.

"Our innovative, yet simple to operate food growing technology addresses all these issues and show that a sealed food growing system can work in environments challenged by water availability, space constraints and the lack of robust technology - similar to urban landscapes found across the world," he said.

"Our systems in Tuvalu are raised so there is no risk of saltwater inundation and they're extremely water efficient, using only a fraction of the water needed in conventional agriculture. We are working with the island's green waste treatment facility and experts from around the world to create local composted material to use as a soil blend that has an appropriate ph. balance and nutrients from local sources."

"Having a system that has been proven to grow food at the household level and to now move to implement the larger scaled community Foodcube system is really exciting. The new Foodcube provides 1m² of growing area per module, can be connected together to form large farms and can grow up to 30kg of fresh food per year per module."

"We hope to expand our solutions to help communities in Tuvalu and elsewhere provide food, create an income source and raise nutrition levels," he concluded.