



5 January 2017

Dear Valued Member,

### New Year Organic Business Update

Please find an important brief new year's business update for you as an engaged and informed organic industry member.

Organic is certainly coming of age, with the listing in the past months of two leading organic companies in Murray River Organics and Bubs Australia on the ASX. We welcome the New Year ahead of us and trust it will be a great and prosperous year for your organic business, large medium or small.

These companies, like many of the success stories within our industry, have not got to where they are without considerable hard work, clever and considered strategy, and an openness to change where change has been required to adapt to new circumstances and opportunities.

Change has been the signature feature of success of your industry services group Australian Organic Ltd (AOL) since its inception close to 30 years ago as a for purpose, not for profit group. This change has delivered a practical certification services organisation, a world leading organic logo in the Bud, and ongoing growth and expansion in market opportunities for our members.

The latest changes, part of work in action over the past year, include the following at a governance and management level:

- **We welcome to the AOL board** Rick McDougall, long standing organic farmer and local government councillor, who replaces as an alternate, Peter Gall, who has played a key role on the board over the last four years of significant governance and structural change. We acknowledge and thank Peter for his tireless and selfless work during this time, particularly given the massive work commitments Peter has at his meat company Arcadian.
- **We welcome to the Australian Certified Organic board** Joe Siegel as an independent director, who joins Don Fraser, also an independent director who himself was appointed in July last year to strengthen our governance and compliance systems within ACO, while ensuring ACO remains a practical, services oriented group with world leading market access options via its accreditations. Both gentlemen come with considerable business management and governance experience, including in the organic sector in prior years.
- **Lastly we acknowledge and thank** departing AOL CEO Paul Stadhams who was appointed over 3.5 years ago to oversee significant changes directed by the board to the AOL group. Major leaps in governance and management have been made during this time, including a strengthening of the Constitution to deliver greater member representation, and a protection of that which we all have pride in: a practical and services oriented certification and market access group.

More of this is planned in 2017. Please stay tuned.

The AOL and ACO boards in the months ahead will be overseeing additions to the workforce of both organisations ensuring we capitalise on the gains made over the past years to efficiency in certification processing services, procedures and security of data management in the interests of members and clients. We will update you on these as they occur.

#### Other items to note for the organic business calendar ahead:

- 30th January in Canberra the Federal Agriculture Minister's office and key Departmental staff will meet for a second time with industry. We will again be representing our members at that forum, based on polling of our members we will continue to prosecute the cases as outlined in our AGM report. If you haven't seen that report, click [here](#). We welcome member input into this at any time.
- We have business networking events and meetings in cities and regions in the year ahead - please watch out for notifications of these to ensure you mingle with industry leaders while being informed of the latest, and best, industry data of relevance to your organic interests.

Receiving this communication puts you in a unique and leading organic business community - the largest network of Australian organic businesses, connected via the use of the most prevalent and popular organic Bud logo. We welcome your feedback at any time to continue to enhance and improve our services to you as an AOL member and as a client of ACO.

Yours in organics,

**Andrew Monk**  
Chairman  
Australian Organic

