

A photograph of three carrots with green tops, resting on a dark, weathered wooden surface. The carrots are arranged in a slightly overlapping manner, with the largest one in the center.

## Sustainable packaging to reduce food waste

### The challenge

In Australia, the 2025 National Packaging Targets are unknown or poorly understood by the food and beverage industry. Food South Australia know this through their day-to-day discussions with manufacturers and enquiries received about its various business and export growth programs.

There is a lack of understanding amongst the industry around packaging that can reduce or prevent food waste, optimise shelf-life and improve overall product storage. There is also a clear need to raise awareness amongst the industry about smart, intelligent packaging design and the impact innovation could have on creating a more efficient supply chain.

The overall role of packaging in reducing food waste needs to be discussed more openly in the industry. A better understanding of this will empower food and beverage businesses to drive change with packaging technologists, designers and engineers.

### Our plan

By connecting food businesses with the technical knowledge and experience of the Australian Institute of Packaging, this project will enhance their understanding of the relationship between packaging and food waste. The project participants will assess the key barriers and associated costs of changing packaging and equipment.

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This project provides industry with an opportunity to discuss issues around packaging materials with industry experts and will assist industry to understand where they should focus their efforts. The benefits to individual businesses from the project include the following:

- an increased understanding of how to address packaging challenges to achieve a reduction in waste, including considering portion control (especially for the elderly and disabled). Also to be discussed are use-by and best before dates, edible packaging, biodegradable packaging, as well as initiatives to maximise product storage and shelf life to reduce the amount of food discarded.
- an improved understanding of the critical design criteria of packaging to achieve a significant impact on food waste such as resealability, openability, and improvement of barrier packaging. Also, how to improve design to reduce warehouse and transport damages and losses, better use of active and intelligent packaging, and life cycle assessments of packaging.

- opportunities for collaboration amongst food manufacturers who are facing similar barriers with the same type of packaging and enable food businesses to work together to reduce food waste. This project will be a demonstration of best practice for other states and territories, with Food Innovation Australia Ltd aiming to take the course nationally.

Useful information will also be provided on the upskilling and training needs of industry to enable other Australian food manufacturers to adopt practices of minimising food waste through packaging.

### Timeline

February 2020 - December 2020

### Project leader

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Food South Australia

### Participants



[www.fightfoodwastecrc.com.au](http://www.fightfoodwastecrc.com.au)