

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Timaru's food and beverage processors target reducing plastics and biowaste

Biowastes, plastics and personal protective equipment (PPE) will be the focus of waste reduction and repurposing by Timaru's food and beverage processors following the *Sustainable is Attainable* next steps collaboration event on 6 August in Timaru.

In May 2019, South Canterbury Food Processors and Manufacturers Business Connection Group launched *Sustainable is Attainable* to better manage their by-products and waste by working collaboratively as a sector. The project, coordinated by Venture Timaru, is the first of its kind in New Zealand and is unprecedented with so many companies being transparent about their by-products and waste.

Three University of Canterbury students, funded by Callaghan Innovation and hosted by DB Breweries and Barker's of Geraldine, spent the summer collating and researching the waste streams, including biowastes, plastics, and PPE from the participating companies.

At the *Sustainable is Attainable* next steps event participating companies and researchers, along with local and national stakeholders representing the entire value chain from farmers and growers, operators, processors, exporters, as well as potential funders, met to hear about the student research. They identified opportunities and discussed how they can support the local food and beverage processing sector to collaborate and implement waste solutions. The repurposing and reusing of waste materials produced in the region could be a significant step in the right direction to extend the life of the landfill and to gain more value from these waste streams, while moving South Canterbury towards a circular economy.

"It's great to hear the excitement from different companies within the same sector to tackle these issues. This information is typically so sensitive. I can't think of anywhere else in New Zealand where this is happening at such scale," says Nigel Davenport, Chief Executive at Venture Timaru.

"It is widely recognised that some of the key obstacles to getting value from waste streams are coordination problems and high transport costs. To overcome these problems at a local level, there may be an opportunity for companies to work together to reduce waste or add value to their respective waste streams. Some of the opportunities for collaboration identified in this project involve similar waste streams, while other opportunities create value by combining complementary waste streams." says Rebecca Hurrell, Institute Manager, Biomolecular Interaction Centre (BIC) at the University of Canterbury.

"The initial work has generated a wealth of potential opportunities to explore including generating fuel from biowaste; extracting functional ingredients for food, nutraceuticals and cosmetics; and high-value soil conditioners."

"By coming together as a collective, we have a much better understanding of the scale of our shared waste streams. We can leverage our knowledge to develop solutions that will have a positive impact on the wider community, which can ultimately be translated anywhere in the country. I believe collaboration is critical to driving sustainable outcomes and this approach is central to DB's Brewing a Better New Zealand sustainability programme," says Kim Haack, DB Draught Brewery Manager.

The next step is to prioritise these opportunities and establish their feasibility, both from a scientific and commercial perspective, and create a plan of short-term and long-term projects and improvements.

The Timaru District and the wider South Canterbury area has a rich, productive primary sector with food processing and manufacturing being the largest industry sector in South Canterbury, annually accounting for nearly \$2.5bn of exports, and employing 5,000 people. Existing and new players are attracted to the region because of its central South Island location, close proximity to raw product, availability of high-quality water, and access to the national and international markets via the thriving PrimePort. The diverse food and beverage sector produces everything from vegetables, fish, dairy, and meat through to sauces, honey, beer, vegetable juice, and pet food.

**ENDS**

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## Notes to Editors:

Twenty-two businesses in the food processing and manufacturing sector opted to be part of the Sustainable is Attainable research project. The students focused on biological wastes (biowastes) and non-biological wastes, including plastics. Tours were completed at each site, showing the entire production process and highlighting biowastes and by-products and incoming and outgoing packaging. From these tours, floor and process plans were produced for each site. The students collated data on the average amount of waste produced weekly, monthly or yearly (e.g. waste quantities by weight; frequency of bin or skip pickup) and the cost of disposal. For the biowastes investigation, three samples of at least 50 grams (dry weight) were taken of each biowaste stream for chemical analysis. A number of samples of non-biological wastes were also taken. Confidential reports were drafted and summaries shared with the companies, including some specific recommendations for individual companies where applicable.

The research team is coordinated by Rebecca Hurrell, Institute Manager, Biomolecular Interaction Centre (BIC) at University of Canterbury.

BIC is a multi-disciplinary research centre at University of Canterbury. Founded in 2007, it includes researchers from across Science and Engineering, and has a network that includes collaborators from many of New Zealand's Crown Research Institutes, universities and Callaghan Innovation. BIC also has a strong and increasing network of international collaborators.

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Venture Timaru (formerly Aoraki Development) is the economic development agency for the Timaru District and is a 100% owned Council Controlled Organisation of the Timaru District Council. A key priority of Venture Timaru is the promotion of inclusive growth and prosperity in the district and wider region via facilitating the attraction of new business, supporting existing business and assisting the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce.

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DB Breweries is an iconic New Zealand company that produces and sells a wide range of high quality beers, ciders and RTDs, including premium global brands such as Heineken, Tiger and Lagunitas; local favourites Tui and DB Export; and leading craft brands Monteith's, Tuatara and Black Dog. It also operates Drinkworks, which markets and distributes premium beer and cider in Australia, and has a direct interest in 21 licensed premises in Auckland through Joylab Hospitality Group, a joint venture with JAG Hospitality Group.

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