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Turning wine industry waste into premium products

The clean and green by-products of the Australian wine industry are ripe for upcycling, and that's exactly what's happening in a new initiative from Swisse Wellness, the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) and Swinburne University of Technology.

As part of its sustainability commitment, Swisse is working with the Fight Food Waste CRC to transform surplus Australian fruit and vegetables streams, such as grape marc (skins and seeds) from the wine industry, into tomorrow's nutraceutical ingredients.

Nick Mann, the Swisse CEO said that this project will enable Swisse to source premium Australian grape seed extract from the 2020 vintage to go into local and export markets across Asia.

"From a Swisse perspective, this is a great opportunity to continue to deliver premium products, via an improved process. To make a considered shift to sourcing our ingredients through a process which is aligned with our organisational sustainability principles and thereby having a positive impact on the environment, is a step in the right direction for Swisse and the supplement industry.

"We are really excited that this ultra-premium grapeseed extract will come from the grape seeds leftover from wine production in the growing regions of Yarra Valley and the Mornington and Bellarine Peninsulas. Additionally, as a Victorian born and bred brand, it is a nice link to other local industry and to local agriculture" he said.

"Creating a new ultra-premium tier in the market, using locally grown and processed ingredients will help further grow the category, whilst also benefiting the environment. This is a highly sought-after ingredient in the Australian nutraceutical industry with health benefits including collagen formation, skin health, and antioxidant activity" said Mr Mann.

"Our Swisse team sources the most nutrient-rich ingredients available world-wide, such as blood oranges from the foot of Mt Etna in Sicily and cranberries from Cape Cod, and we have an unwavering commitment to quality, safety and effectiveness."

Swinburne University is the research partner for this project, with Project Leader Professor Enzo Palombo aiming to utilise 250 tonnes of Victorian grape marc from this vintage in the production of grape seed extract for Swisse.

"We've done laboratory validation, technical feasibility and yield optimisation, therefore the next stage of commercialisation is establishing a pilot plant capable of producing the required quantity and purity of grape seed extract for Swisse, he said.

"Together with our industry collaborators, Viridi Innovation and Austeng, we will work towards producing fully traceable Australian grape seed extract for Swisse this season to go into their premium product."

CEO of the Fight Food Waste CRC Dr Steven Lapidge said that this project has always been the "low-hanging fruit" of industry waste transformation, pun intended, however it is not a simple project and it will only be delivered through collaboration.

"Through investing in research and development we will deliver new high-value commercial opportunities for the participants of this project while at the same time fighting food waste in Australia."

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The Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre was launched in July 2018, and brings together industry, research and the community to capitalise on Australia's food waste opportunities. Winning this fight will save Australia \$20 billion per annum in food waste. Through its three research and development programs, the Fight Food Waste CRC will REDUCE food waste across the supply chain, TRANSFORM unavoidable waste into innovative products, and ENGAGE with industry and consumers to deliver behavioural change. The Centre is co-funded by the Australian Government's Department of Industry, Science, Energy & Resources CRC Program that supports industry-led collaborations between industry, researchers and the community.

Swisse Wellness is a premium health and wellness powerhouse, established in Australia in 1969. Swisse's range of vitamins, supplements and skincare are used by millions around the world to enhance their health, wellbeing and happiness, and celebrate life every day. Swisse is rapidly growing internationally and is now available in 12 countries. Swisse's parent company is H&H Group, a global nutrition and wellness company, dynamic and ambitious in its mission to inspire wellness and make millions of people healthier and happier, while contributing positively to the needs of society and the planet.

[HH's 2019 Sustainability Report](#) was launched to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange on Friday May 8th 2020.

Swinburne University of Technology has an international reputation for quality research that connects science and technology with business and the community. Its standing in prestigious world academic ranking lists reflects its commitment to high-quality teaching and research and graduate outcomes. Swinburne is a critical research partner that will provide analytical services to the project.

Viridi Innovations Pty Ltd is an innovative start-up company that has developed (in close collaboration with Swinburne University of Technology) a novel procedure to extract polyphenols from grape seeds. The successful rolling out of their technology with an industrial scale pilot plant will validate their "waste to value" process that will allow for on-site processing of solid wine waste to produce polyphenols which are high in compounds with widely researched health benefits.