

THE LAND

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Off the back of strong commodity prices and the current confidence within agriculture, specifically in northern NSW, Westpac is adding further support to assist local communities with an investment in people across the district.

Westpac agribusiness regional general manager in Northern NSW, Hank MacInnes, says innovation in agriculture continues to bring greater efficiencies to a high fixed cost business, which is driving confidence among customers and adding new opportunities to the ones that currently exist.

"Despite fluctuations in market prices and climatic conditions across the state, commodity prices remain strong, which is great for our local farmers and industries," he said. The bank made a recent hire, Tom Chatfield, who will be based at Tamworth and brings with him 15 years of banking experience. Tom's ag expertise, including a degree in Agricultural Science, will see him focus on the larger end of the scale farming and beyond farm gate businesses.

LOUIS Dreyfus Company (LDC) has announced the completion of the sale of its Australian fertilizer and inputs distribution business, Macrofert Australia Pty Ltd, to Landmark Operations Ltd, the Australian ag-retail business of Canada-based Nutrien Inc. The sale was first announced in December 2017 and remained subject to standard conditions. Macrofert Australia Pty Ltd distributes a full range of fertilizers and crop protection products in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria. LDC remains committed to Australia, where it has participated in the agricultural industry for over a century, retaining an active presence through its merchandising and processing activities.

WINE Australia has appointed creative agency R/GA Sydney to help raise the profile for premium Australian wine in China and the USA, as part of the federal government's \$50 million Export and Regional Wine Support Package. The new global marketing strategy starts in May when Australia is given "Country of Honour" status at Vinexpo Hong Kong, where our largest-ever showcase of 140 wine brands representing 35-plus regions will be represented. R/GA Sydney will design and deliver an integrated marketing program to drive growth in product sales and wine-related tourism from global markets. A key focus of the \$50m government package is growing wine exports and showcasing Australia's wine tourism experiences.

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