

Vow and FSANZ to participate in Food Frontier's AltProteins 23

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Food Frontier, independent alternative proteins think tank, is announcing it will host the CEO and co-founder of Vow Group Pty. Ltd., George Peppou and Dr Nick Fletcher, Principal Toxicologist and Risk Assessor at Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), as key speakers at its upcoming AltProteins 23 conference, taking place in Melbourne on October 4. The conference will play a central role in fostering dialogue at a decisive moment for the region's cultivated meat industry (also known as cultured meat). Vow's application to become the first-ever company to sell cultivated meat in ANZ is under review, and public consultation is expected to open before the conference.

After Vow applied to sell its quail product as a food ingredient in February 2023, FSANZ is faced with the challenge of balancing food safety with facilitating business growth and potentially igniting an entirely new consumer market in the region. As part of its review, it is expected to begin the public commentary stage by the end of September 2023.

Dr Simon Eassom, Food Frontier's Executive Director, says he hopes the public will get behind the application.

"To imagine that an Australian food tech company could be amongst the first to bring this protein option to our plates is very exciting.

"Alternative proteins can be part of the solution to Australia's declining export complexity, which we saw through Harvard Kennedy School's recent announcement that Australia's worldwide position had deteriorated significantly to 93rd in the world, due to a heavy reliance on exporting raw goods.

"China is making significant inroads investing in and scaling up cultivated meat production, as are a host of other countries. Vow is demonstrating food systems innovation and technical leadership and, if approval is granted, will propel Australia onto

the international stage as a trailblazer in the race to develop complementary solutions to the world's growing protein needs."

Globally, Singapore was the first to approve cultivated meat in 2020, and the US became second in June 2023.

Another major topic at AltProteins 23 is the immense potential for Australia and New Zealand to take a leading position in sustainable food production worldwide.

As a starting point, Australia has 25 plant-based meat companies and 14 start-ups in the broader cellular agriculture space, including two companies in ANZ working specifically on cultivated meat.

The region's alternative proteins industry will require more resources and infrastructure to lead globally while driving manufacturing capacity at home. Private and public investment, technological innovation, and government oversight must align to make the most of new opportunities in the field, and significant scaling up of new protein production methods is necessary.