



INNOVATION CONNECTIONS

SuperCool Asia Pacific – innovation to save food waste

Customer Story

Family business is probing the food wastage issue

Mark Mitchell and his SuperCool team are on the verge of finding one solution to a world-wide problem: food wastage. As a result, he can't speak enough of the importance of research and development in the field.

SuperCool Asia Pacific is an industry leader in refrigeration and air conditioning. However, Mark concedes he had dropped the ball on the ideas he had running through his head to expand the business. It took involvement from several areas of the Australian Government's [Entrepreneurs' Programme](#) (the Programme) before Mark realised how valuable his type of business is to Australia. His dream to help reduce food wastage in the cold chain of food transport and storage was back on his must-do list.

Mark went to a seminar to listen to a session on foreign exchange rates. Due to extra time, he stayed to listen to the next speaker, talking about Australian Government funding initiatives.

"I left my business card because I thought I could, potentially, be interested in some of the programmes. I had all these [business] ideas in my head but not all of the money we needed to develop them. That talk about funding was the spark."

MARK MITCHELL, OWNER,
SUPERCool ASIA PACIFIC



Dr Hanan H Hamid, Research Fellow at the School of Engineering, Griffith University, with SuperCool's thermal sensor project, that can mimic the temperature of food products.

Mark said his company's involvement in the Programme was a good exercise on two fronts. Business Adviser, Mark Goldsmith, and Innovation Facilitator, David Martin, got SuperCool on track with a Business Evaluation and connections to Griffith University through an Innovation Connections facilitation.

"The initial analysis of our business by Mark [Goldsmith] was magnificent. We had, for three or four years, been meaning to update our own business plan but for many reasons you never seem to have the time to get to it. I now use Mark's evaluation and plan as my bible. He was incredible."

"David [Martin] was the next person to walk through our door and want to work with us. He found six universities that wanted to research and develop our project and he helped us settle on Griffith. They were all good but David could see things that I couldn't see and the rest is history."

SuperCool and Griffith University are collaborating on a project due for completion in early 2017 to produce a probe that will determine the thermal properties of food in refrigerated transport and cold storage. SuperCool will own the eventual licence but could not have reached this point without the research team at Griffith University.

“One of the more difficult aspects of the project is the mathematical formulas behind the software and simulation capabilities. The thermal behaviour of food changes for many different reasons and the mathematics behind this has been very complex,” Mark Mitchell said.

“Griffith University researchers have been tremendous to work with. Our relationship is so strong now we could work together on many different projects in the future.”

Food wastage costs Australia about \$6 billion each year. SuperCool's probe will remove some inefficiencies with current cold chain temperature monitoring procedures. It will eliminate time-consuming human involvements, such as a truck driver having to manually insert probes into food in various locations of a load.

SuperCool's Innovations Connections funding was for \$40,000 – matched by SuperCool dollar for dollar. The business also accessed a Business Growth Grant for more than \$11,000, to send Mark's son Jon to The University of Queensland's Business School 'Owner Managers Program', to allow Mark more time to focus on innovation and the strategic positioning of SuperCool.

Visit [SuperCool Asia Pacific](#).

Entrepreneurs' Programme

The Entrepreneurs' Programme is the Australian Government's flagship initiative driving growth and competitiveness for small and medium businesses.

The Innovation Connections service offered by the Programme, supports businesses to collaborate with the research sector to develop new ideas and address knowledge and technology gaps that prevent business growth.

Following the facilitated service your Innovation Facilitator can also help your business access up to 12 months of financial assistance with a matched grant of up to \$50,000 to undertake an identified research project.

Check your eligibility by visiting the [Entrepreneurs' Programme](#) or call **13 28 46**.