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Huge glasshouse opens in Guyra

Costa Group to expand facility in future

Top of the Range Tomatoes, a Costa Group company, has opened Australia's largest glasshouse in the northern NSW town of Guyra.

The glasshouse is home to Top of the Range's blush brand of premium truss tomatoes, and will see the production of 2.6 million kilograms of tomatoes a year.

The cutting edge, thermally efficient facility spans five hectares, or 12 acres, under a single roof. Despite its already significant size, the current glasshouse is just the first stage of a three-stage development that will eventually see the facility grow to 20ha (48 acres) and produce 10.4 million kilograms of tomatoes a year, creating about 250 local jobs.

Costa Group's executive chairman, Frank

Costa, said the intention with blush was to deliver a premium quality, best tasting, vine ripened tomato with year-round consistency. To do this, the country's most advanced glasshouse had to be developed, he said.

With an abundance of natural light and the country's lowest incidence of 30 degree-plus days, Guyra, on the northern tablelands, provides the optimum environment for producing consistently outstanding vine-ripened truss tomatoes, according to the company.

Costa said the blush glasshouse grew the tomatoes in a naturally recyclable medium, peat moss. It was also highly water efficient, requiring 90% less water than standard field tomatoes. **FOODweek**