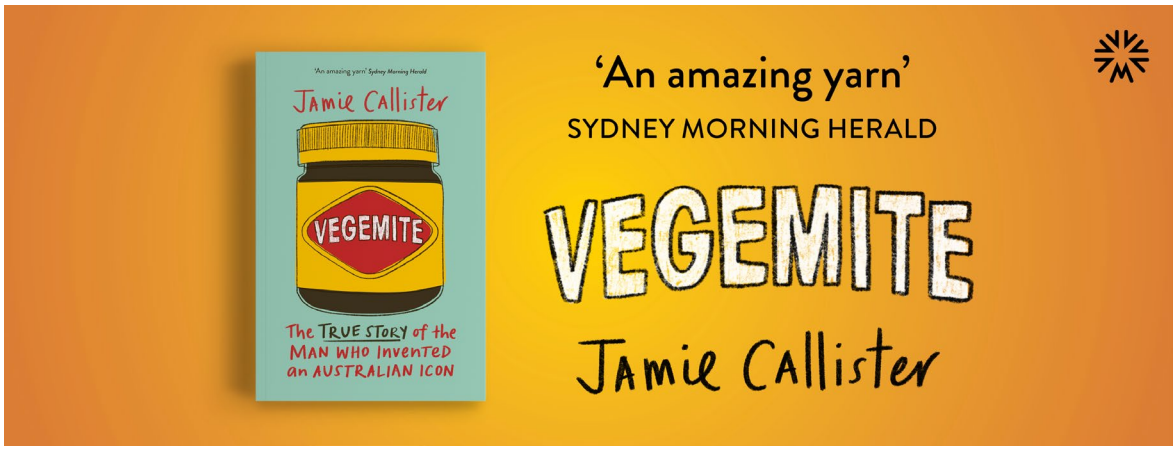

MEDIA RELEASE

2 MAY 2023

SPREADING THE VEGEMITE STORY

- Author, speaker and storyteller Jamie Callister tells the story of Vegemite's invention in the centennial edition of *Vegemite: The True Story of the Man Who Invented an Australian Icon* (Murdoch Books 2023).
- Everyone knows Vegemite but few know how it was invented.
- Jamie Callister launched the book at Beaufort, a Victorian regional town near Chute, where his grandfather was born. Beaufort is also home to the Cyril Callister Foundation Museum.
- Jamie and Pyrenees Shire Mayor Cr Ron Eason unveil a new sign which will be erected on the outskirts of the town of Beaufort recognising Cyril Callister's legacy and the region's unique claim to fame.

Everyone knows Vegemite but no one knows how it was created, Jamie Callister said at the launch of the centennial edition *Vegemite: The True Story of the Man Who Invented an Australian Icon* (Murdoch Books 2023).

And in 2023, 100 years after his grandfather Cyril Callister a great Australian scientist invented the black spread, Callister is keen to spread the Australian story.

"Whether you love it or hate it's not just my story, it's very much our story," Callister said.

Vegemite shares the inspirational story of Cyril Callister the man who invented what would become an Australian icon along with the story of its rocky road to acceptance. Spanning the Gold Rush, the Depression and the Polio epidemic, it opens a window on the evolution of modern Australia.

Callister launched the book at Beaufort, a Victorian regional town near Chute, where his grandfather was born. Beaufort is also home to the Cyril Callister Foundation Museum.

He also unveiled a new sign with the Pyrenees Shire Mayor Cr Ron Eason which will be erected on the outskirts of the town of Beaufort recognising his grandfather's legacy and the region's unique claim to fame.

“I think my grandfather would be so proud to see his story recognised at the town where it all started,” Callister said.

“He came from humble beginnings, it was a tough start as one of nine children. His mother died when he was young leaving his father to bring up the family.

“They had little money but his father a schoolteacher valued education and it was fortunate Cyril won scholarships firstly to Grenville College, now Federation University, and later to Melbourne University to study science.”

Pyrenees Shire Mayor Cr Ron Eason congratulated Jamie on highlighting this fascinating slice of local history.

“Jamie has done a fantastic job bringing this little-known story to light,” said Cr Eason. “It’s wonderful to be able to recognise the history of our area. Cyrill Callister has not only left a lasting legacy, but has given Australians something uniquely ours that is recognised around the world and loved by many as part of their morning ritual, and it all started right here in the Pyrenees.”

Callister said his grandfather’s determination and perseverance contributed to Vegemite reaching its 100-year milestone.

“When my grandfather first invented it, it was particularly unpopular and at one time they changed the name to Parwill … a corny play on words … if Marmite, Parwill,” Callister said.

“For years more jars were coming back to the factory than were going out. The public just couldn’t stomach it and the head salesman didn’t help – he hated the stuff.”

Cyril Callister MUSEUM

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Cyril Callister FOUNDATION

Pyrenees Shire Council

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Callister said Vegemite already had a place in Australian households however he hoped Australians would soon know its story, its place in history and its inventor.

ENDS

Further inquiries:
Libby Callister
libby@callistermedia.com.au
M: 0418 151 685

Lisa Simmons
lisa@callistermedia.com.au
M: 0407 744 655

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