

Media Release

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The Grains Research Foundation Limited (GRFL) has called on Queensland Opposition Leader, Campbell Newman, and Premier Anna Bligh to endorse an exciting, new model for Queensland grains research.

The solution includes the establishment of a Queensland Grains Research Institute - a stand-alone body made up of elected growers and independent directors.

The model was developed by GRFL after widespread consultation, both within and outside the Queensland grains industry, and aims to reverse the decline seen in grains research over recent decades.

GRFL Chairman Damien Scanlan said the model, which has the full support of AgForce Grains, had already been released to Premier Anna Bligh and Opposition Leader, Campbell Newman.

“We would now like to see, during the election campaign, clarification from both leaders, of their position on the proposed model,” Mr Scanlan said.

“We would also encourage feedback from the wider grains industry and comment from local government candidates.”

Queensland grain growers directly contribute around \$1billion annually towards the State’s economy but Mr Scanlan said this contribution was in jeopardy because of a declining grains research budget.

He said the grains industry urgently required research expansion, not contraction.

“Queensland grain growers and others in the industry have been dismayed at the ever diminishing research effort currently managed by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries,” he said.

“Recent Government reviews, such as Grains 2020, have only focused on trying to survive on less research funding and resources.”

“Now is the time to adopt a whole new approach to grains research – an approach that engages grain growers as owners of the research business in partnership with government.”

Mr Scanlan said handing the responsibility for grains research back to growers would deliver numerous benefits.

“The Institute would better target investment in priority research and development (R&D) due to its close interface with growers,” he said.

“That close relationship with growers would also achieve a faster rate of new technology adoption.”

The Institute would be funded by recurrent funding from the State Government, from external agencies such as GRDC, income received as a result of operations, intellectual property, produce branding and income earned on assets.

It would be established with assets such as the Hermitage Research Station and the Leslie Research Centre and the assets of the GRFL.

Private equity may also be sought through capital raising directed at, but not limited to, Institute members.

Mr Scanlan said Queensland sugar cane growers had successfully implemented a similar research model.

“BSES Ltd has demonstrated the capacity of the sugar cane industry in Queensland to successfully manage its own R&D activities based on a model that is very similar,” he said.

“GRFL is only too willing to discuss this proposal with individuals or groups from within the grains industry.”

Details of the proposed model can be viewed at www.grf.org.au

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Image: GRFL Chairman, Damien Scanlan

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