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The newly endorsed chairman of the Grains Research Foundation Limited (GRFL) has challenged the leaders of conventional grower groups to better engage with the industry at the inaugural Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the GRFL in Toowoomba on Monday.

GRFL is a not-for-profit incorporated company that was established in December 2006 to replace the Grain Research Foundation (GRF).

The GRFL members elected two grower directors to the board this week, Peter Mailler and David Lund, while Mark Sowerby was appointed by the board as an independent director.

The new board members join GRFL chairman and Goondiwindi district grain grower Damien Scanlan, Dalby grain and cotton producer Wayne Newton, agribusiness specialist John Moloney and the University of Queensland's School of Land, Crop and Food Sciences Principal Prof Kaye Basford.

Mr Scanlan said the GRFL now had a full board of seven directors who would move immediately to implement their Strategic Plan which aims to facilitate a targeted approach to research and development extension (RDE) in the northern grains region.

"The Foundation can be truly considered to be in its infancy but this infancy will grow rapidly with the input, talent, youth and enthusiasm of the new board," he said.

"The grains industry in Australia is in a turbulent state at the moment and we feel it is time for some dynamic leadership to meet the challenges of the future head on."

Mr Scanlan said some of the key issues facing the industry include climate change, carbon sequestration and the global shift in the perception of grain as not only a food source but an important energy source as well.

"The price of grain in the future will relate to the cost of energy and requires a complete shift in research and development thinking in the grains industry," he said.

"This shift, combined with climate change and carbon sequestration opportunities requires a dynamic approach to research. This will have encouraging flow on benefits for growers."

Mr Scanlan said the GRFL intends to forge closer links between the Research Advisory Committees (RACs) of both Queensland and NSW.

He said the board is committed to helping these groups work together and is passionate about developing talented young growers and supporting them in positions of influence within the RDE industry.

“The RACs have an impressive track record of prioritising research in the grains industry and in part some of the success can be attributed to the youthful blend of enthusiasm and the wisdom of established operators,” he said.

Mr Scanlan said the GRFL board is looking forward to working with other grower groups, research organisations and policy makers on issues related to grains research and development.

“The grains industry has the potential to return to serious profitability,” he said.

“How quickly it does this will be determined by the research and development priorities and the vision that growers share and establish in the nation’s conscience.”

Further information on the GRFL and membership forms can be downloaded from the GRFL website at www.grf.org.au

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