

Media Release

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The Grains Research Foundation Limited (GRFL) has rejected a decision by the Queensland Government to sack key grains research personnel and is calling for the decision to be reversed.

GRFL chairman Damien Scanlan said key wheat and barley scientists are believed to be among the group of almost fifty Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPIF) staff that have been targeted.

“These are the scientists that put bread on the table for Queenslanders every day,” he said.

“Many of them are household names to Queensland grain growers.”

“The grains industry is the food industry – they are one and the same.”

Mr Scanlan said the QDPIF Minister Tim Mulherin’s “Fresh Approach” initiative for grains had been exposed as a sham by these redundancies.

“He’s been caught out by his own spin doctors when he claims the staff will be redeployed rather than sacked,” he said.

“Grains researchers are such specialists in their fields they are virtually impossible to redeploy. Rather, they will be lost to Queensland.”

“This is unacceptable and GRFL calls on the Government to reverse the decision.”

In implementing the decision, the Queensland Government said that wheat and barley breeding and research were a “low priority” for the State but Mr Scanlan said the Government should let the people of Queensland decide whether bread and beer were a “low priority”.

He said wheat is the biggest single grains-based revenue earner for the State and is a core business for grains producers throughout Queensland as well as for grains handlers and processors.

“It’s unbelievable to think the State Government would jeopardise the economic viability of so many businesses by cutting the research that is needed to maintain the industry’s future,” he said.

“There is no doubt that the loss of staff from the grains research effort in Queensland will have a serious, detrimental impact on the economic output of the grains industry, not to mention the individuals involved.”

Mr Scanlan said the State Government had failed to consult or inform Queenslanders about these serious cuts.

“We only learned of the redundancies by information received from South Australia.”

“We have written to Minister Mulherin seeking urgent clarification of these matters.”

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For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

GRFL Chairman and GRFL’s spokesman Damien Scanlan
Ph: (07) 4675-1140

GRFL Media Officer Penelope Arthur
Ph: 07 4622-1072
Mob: 0427 029 258