

Media Release

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Grains Research Foundation Limited (GRFL) welcomes reform of the national grain grower advocacy model and acknowledges the vision of the Grains Council of Australia (GCA) in initiating the process.

GRFL Director and spokesman on the issue, Pete Mailler, said the regulatory environment around research and development (R&D) in the grains industry had become uncertain following GCA's increasing financial difficulties and possible closure, coupled with the current Productivity Commission Review into Research and Development Corporations.

Mr Mailler said the industry is experiencing a crisis of confidence in the R&D arena as GCA is the legislated representative organisation for the grains industry on consultation about levies and on the accountability of the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) to growers.

He said grower groups right around Australia are voicing concerns about GRDC's accountability to growers with some suggesting the industry should scrap the compulsory grower research levy.

"If growers reduce the amount of levy they pay then the co-contribution by the government reduces with it and there is a real risk of killing what is probably the best model for co-contribution for grains R&D in the world," he said.

"Most growers acknowledge that we need to maintain or increase our spending on R&D but they are questioning their contribution to the current system where there is no real sense of accountability or ownership."

GRFL has participated in industry discussions that propose a major change in grower advocacy with the establishment of a new national grain producers advocate funded and populated directly by grower memberships.

"Times of change present risks and opportunities," he said.

"The Australian grains industry has a real opportunity to move forward with a new advocacy model delivering renewed ownership and accountability."

"GRFL is committed to the establishment of a new national structure delivering real advocacy and accountability to stabilise the R&D environment and re-engage growers in the future of their industry."

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