

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 4 July 2025

Australian Plant Phenomics Network welcomes Professor Simon Maddocks to Board and thanks outgoing chair Dr Ron Sandland

The Australian Plant Phenomics Network (APPN) is pleased to announce the appointment of Emeritus Professor Simon Maddocks as Chair of its Board, following the retirement of outgoing Chair, Dr Ron Sandland AM FTSE.

Professor Michael Goodsite, University of Adelaide's Pro Vice Chancellor (Research Operations and Commercialisation) and APPN Lead Agent Board member, welcomed the appointment of Professor Maddocks, citing his

understanding of agricultural research, research infrastructure funding and strong industry connections as key assets for the Network.

"Professor Maddocks brings exceptional experience across government, university, research and industry, which are important for APPN as we continue to expand our reach, and infrastructure offering at our nine national nodes," said Professor Goodsite.

Professor Maddocks was Vice Chancellor of Charles Darwin University from 2014 to 2020 and prior to that a Professor of Animal Science and Director, Roseworthy Campus at the University of Adelaide. He has also been the Chief Scientist, Livestock & Farming Systems and Director, Science Partnerships with the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI).

"Professor Maddock's ability to align scientific capability with industry priorities will be critical in ensuring that APPN continues to deliver impact to the Australian agricultural research, farming and industry community. We look forward to his leadership."

Professor Maddocks commented that he is honoured to join the APPN Board and contribute to the next phase of growth.

"I look forward to working with the APPN Board, team and industry stakeholders and continuing to build on our national and international impact. We have an exciting time ahead - we are keen to ensure agricultural research infrastructure continues to be an important component of the National Research



Professor Simon Maddocks, Dr Ron Sandland and Mr Richard Dickmann

Infrastructure Roadmap, we will continue implement our national roll out of infrastructure across Australia and we will work to ultimately deliver improved crop varieties and management options to benefit Australian farmers.”

The Board also wishes to formally acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Dr Ron Sandland, who has chaired the APPN Steering Committee since 2018.

A distinguished research leader and former Deputy Chief Executive of CSIRO, Dr Sandland played a key role in shaping APPN’s strategic direction, vision, priorities and governance framework.

Under Dr Sandland’s leadership, APPN grew its national footprint from three to nine nodes.

“Dr Sandland was instrumental in driving the new national APPN model, which now includes nine nodes across Australia. He helped build our collaborative partnerships and was an advocate for innovation in phenotyping infrastructure, data management platforms and technologies to accelerate crop research outcomes for the benefit of Australian agriculture.

“Ron’s commitment to APPN and his strategic leadership has positioned the Network as a critical enabler of plant phenotyping innovation,” said Professor Goodsite.

“We sincerely thank him for his tireless service and vision.”

APPN is supported by the Australian Government’s National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS). It provides access to this world-leading plant phenomics infrastructure across all of mainland Australia’s major cropping environments.

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