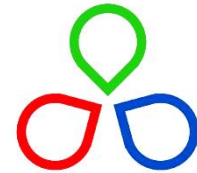


# AUSTRALIAN FARM INSTITUTE MEDIA RELEASE



20 April 2018

## Changing of the guard at the Australian Farm Institute

The Board of the Australian Farm Institute (AFI) has today announced that founding Executive Director Mick Keogh has resigned from the position, effective 29th May 2018.

Mr Keogh will leave the AFI to take up a full-time role as a Commissioner of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, with a focus on agricultural and small business issues. Mr Keogh has been working with the ACCC in a part-time capacity since his appointment as the inaugural agricultural commissioner in February 2016.

The Board has appointed AFI General Manager Research Richard Heath as the new Executive Director.

"The Board expresses its thanks to Mick for his leadership of the Institute over the past almost 15 years, and wishes him well in his new role," said AFI Board Chair, David Anthony.

"Under Mick's leadership, the Institute has developed a strong reputation for credible and principled policy advice in agriculture. Mick has nurtured the organisation from its inception through to its current position as the only independent Australian think tank specialising in agriculture."

The non-profit AFI was established in December 2003 to conduct independent research into public policy issues impacting on the Australian farm sector, and to promote policy solutions that maximise the economic and social wellbeing of farmers. Despite its relatively short history, Institute research outcomes have been influential in developing new approaches on a range of agricultural issues by governments.

"Mick has not only managed to keep the AFI afloat financially but also to recruit some talented staff to expand the AFI's endeavours," Mr Anthony said.

"The work undertaken by the Institute under Mick's tenure has led to the development of policies benefitting agriculture in areas such as carbon farming and the adoption of digital technology in agriculture. As well, research in a variety of policy areas - including trade, competition policy and genetic modification - has supported important debates in these areas."

Incoming Executive Director Mr Heath has been General Manager Research of the Institute since February 2016, responsible for coordinating the Institute's research agenda. He is also a Director of the Grains Research and Development Corporation and has been a Director of Nuffield Australia Farming Scholars. Prior to joining the AFI, he was Associate Professor of Agronomy and Farm Management for the University of Sydney, owned an agricultural technology consulting business, and was responsible for the cropping operations on the family farm on the NSW Liverpool Plains.

"Richard has already demonstrated his strong leadership credentials," Mr Anthony said. "He has been instrumental in driving new Institute initiatives in recent times, including a major focus on digital agriculture."

"The Board is very confident that Richard and the AFI staff will continue to develop the role of the Australian Farm Institute in shaping policies that positively impact on the agriculture sector."

Ends

### **CONTACT:**

*Media enquiries: Katie McRobert - 0477 758 257*

*General enquiries: Tracey Bligh - 02 9690 1388*

[farminstitute.org.au](http://farminstitute.org.au)