

Dr Steve Jefferies AM

Approved by Steve 28/3/21

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present to you an outstanding candidate for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science (honoris causa): **Dr Stephen Paul Jefferies AM.**

With a career spanning more than 35 years, Dr Steve Jefferies has made a significant contribution to Australian agricultural excellence through education, research, and industry development.

A graduate of the University of Adelaide with a Bachelor's degree and a PhD in Agricultural Science, Dr Jefferies began his working life with the South Australian Department of Agriculture which later became the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), working in oat breeding, field crop agronomy research, and moving into research management and ministerial liaison roles, before joining the University of Adelaide as a Research Fellow working on barley breeding.

He moved into management and commercialisation roles in the grains industry in 2002 as CEO of Australian Grains Technology (AGT), a start-up established to further grains R&D, and from 2016, as the Managing Director of the Grains Research and Development Corporations (GRDC).

Dr Jefferies recognised early that wheat breeding had a strong commercial future and worked hard to help transition it from the public to the private sector through the establishment of AGT. Today, AGT is Australia's largest and market leading plant breeding company, growing from a start-up of four people to a company employing over 100 people, with four major operating centres around Australia, with breeding and variety commercialisation operations in wheat, barley, canola and lupins.

As Managing Director of the GRDC, the Federal Government's statutory body for investment in grains research, Dr Jefferies led a complete review and renewal of its operations, in line with the development and implementation of a Strategic Plan for 2018-2023. His work in those years has made a significant contribution to Australian grains research, innovation, development, and commercialisation.

Throughout his career he has made significant contributions to the University, first as a barley breeder at the Waite Campus then moving to lead Australia's most successful wheat breeding program when he was a member of academic staff at Roseworthy, and

championing the transition of the University's Waite and Roseworthy wheat breeding programs into the commercial sphere to form AGT.

AGT remains a strong partner with the University through engagement with undergraduate teaching programs, shared supervision of PhD students and joint research projects, delivering an industry applied focus for agricultural research students. The University is also a key shareholder of AGT.

Dr Jefferies' contribution to the Australian agricultural industry was recognised in the Queen's Birthday 2016 Honours with the award of Member of the Order of Australia and he was recently accepted as a Fellow of the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering.

Dr Jefferies has also been a member of the University of Adelaide's Agrifood and Wine Advisory Board.

He continues to bring a strong analytical capacity and a deep knowledge of the future of the Australian grains industry and with that considerable knowledge he has made significant contributions to the broader strategic directions of the University – particularly the School of Agriculture, Food and Wine – where he has emphasised the role that machine learning and data analytics can play in mining large field trial plant breeding data sets, for new information.

Dr Jefferies' career has been underlined by a commitment to the University, to the future of agricultural education and research and its significance to national and global economies.

Chancellor, I am pleased to present to you **Steve Jefferies**; Bachelor of Agricultural Science, PhD, Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Member of the Order of Australia, Fellow of the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science (honoris causa).