

Geoff Fincher

Approved by Geoff 26/3/21

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present to you two outstanding candidates for admission to the Honorary Degrees of Doctor of Science (honoris causa): **Emeritus Professor Peter Langridge** and **Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bruce Fincher AO**.

Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bruce Fincher AO

In his 21-year career at the University of Adelaide, Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Fincher has distinguished himself as a global leader in cereals research, and today we acknowledge this significant contribution.

His research in cereal chemistry into the structure, biosynthesis, and digestion of plant cell walls has changed our understanding of plant science. He was the founding Director of the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence in Plant Cell Walls, which was based at the Waite Campus of the University of Adelaide.

Plant cell walls are the most abundant source of renewable energy on the planet. He has helped to define the major role they play in human and animal nutrition and as sources of biofuels and biopolymers.

Professor Fincher also discovered many of the enzymes involved in the synthesis and degradation of cell wall polysaccharides of barley, identifying their key role in the brewing industry and human nutrition.

Graduating from the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science in 1968 he continued his studies earning a PhD from the University's Faculty of Science in 1973. He took up the position of Professor of Plant Science at the University of Adelaide in 1993.

As Professor Fincher's research grew, his work on the properties of cereal grains first focused on the malting and brewing industries, where he continues to have a long standing collaboration and consulting role with the Carlsberg Research Laboratory in Denmark. More recently, he made a significant contribution to our understanding of the importance of plant cell walls as major components of dietary fibre, which can reduce the risk of diabetes, colorectal cancer, and cardiovascular disease.

In 2017, Professor Fincher was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished service to science, and to education, in the field of plant genomics, as an academic, researcher and administrator. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering.

His achievements have been recognised with many awards, including the Thomas Burr Osmond Medal (American Association of Cereal Chemists), an SA Great Award; the South Australian Industry Leader Award (BioInnovation SA), and the F. B. Guthrie Award (Royal Australian Chemistry Institute).

He was also admitted as a Fellow of the American Association of Cereal Chemists and is a Corresponding Member of the American Society of Plant Biology.

Publishing more than 250 scholarly papers, his citations today are close to 20,000.

In what has been an exemplary research career, Professor Fincher continues to contribute to the University of Adelaide, providing research leadership and expertise at the School and Faculty level, through his scholarly publications, his experience with the Australian Research Council, and other academic endeavours.

Chancellor, I am pleased to present to you **Professor Peter Langridge**, PhD in Plant Genetics; and **Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Fincher**, Bachelor of Agricultural Science, PhD in Plant Biochemistry, Officer of the Order of Australia, for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science (honoris causa).