

November 26, 2021

Hort Innovation announces new Board Directors

Two new Directors joined the [Hort Innovation](#) Board today, as the grower-owned Rural Research and Development Corporation gears up for its next phase of growth.

At the organisation's virtual Annual General Meeting, voting members elected Catherine Oates and Robert Mullins and re-elected Julie Bird to the Hort Innovation Board. The newly constituted Board then voted that Julie Bird would retain Chair, and Paul Harker would remain the Deputy Chair position.

Ms Bird welcomed the new Directors and said the Board changes come at an exciting time for industry.

"Horticulture is the fastest-growing agricultural sector in Australia – with a 27 per cent hike in value over the past five years to \$15.1 billion, and our modelling shows that figure could double by 2030," Ms Bird said.

"There is a wealth of research, development, marketing, extension and trade activities that will underpin that growth and we are working with industry and delivery partners to deliver meaningful outcomes that serve horticulture now, and for decades to come."

Ms Bird said Ms Oates is well equipped for the position as an experienced Non-Executive Director with 20 years of international senior management experience in the wine sector.

"Catherine has a strong understanding of agri-business, effective stakeholder engagement, RD&E, global marketing, market access, and sustainability, and will prove a real asset."

Ms Bird said Mr Mullins brings with him a broad range of experience, having held senior technical and commercial leadership positions, and boasting a strong history of industry commitment.

"Bob was raised on a farm and has enjoyed an international career in businesses that create value through plant-based technology in Agriculture, particularly in high-value horticulture," she said.

"We are thrilled to welcome these deeply skilled professionals to the Hort Innovation Board, each brings a lot of energy, industry expertise and a deep understanding of governance and oversight."

Ms Bird said the Board looks forward to working with the Hort Innovation staff and the nation's dedicated fruit, vegetable, nut, nursery, turf and cut flower growers to ensure the profitability, productivity and sustainability of the sector for years to come.

She gave special recognition to outgoing Hort Innovation Board Directors Stephen Lynch and Sue Finger for their valuable contribution to organisation and the industry as a whole.

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