

# Media Release

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## ACPFPG announces acting CEOs to replace outgoing Professor

The Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics (ACPFPG) announced today the joint appointment of Associate Professor Sigrid Heuer and Mr Michael Gilbert to the positions of Acting CEO, replacing outgoing CEO Professor Peter Langridge who will retire on 30 June 2014.

Professor Langridge was a founding member of ACPFG in 2003 when he oversaw its establishment. He was appointed as ACPFG's inaugural CEO, a position he has held for 11 years. Since 2003, he has built a team that has developed ACPFG into a world leading wheat research organisation.

Chair of the ACPFG Board, Mr Dale Baker, stated "ACPFPG thanks Peter Langridge for his contributions to the Centre. From his integral role in founding ACPFG through more than a decade of leadership, he has been a critical part of the success of this organisation. ACPFG is a pre-eminent cereals and grains research institute with a leading international reputation. We owe a debt of gratitude to Peter and express our heartfelt appreciation".

Mr Gilbert and Associate Professor Heuer together emphasised that they will build upon Peter's foundation of ACPFG. "ACPFPG will be focussed on the application of great science to the future needs of Australian growers and its international standing will be continued by ACPFG's world-class scientific and management team," said Mr Gilbert.

Sigrid Heuer joined ACPFG in January 2013 after nearly ten years at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines where she worked as a senior scientist on developing rice with abiotic stress tolerance. She brings to ACPFG a wealth of international experience and leadership in applied plant science and molecular breeding.

Michael Gilbert managed the establishment of ACPFG in 2002 and has since worked with ACPFG as General Manager and Company Secretary. He has extensive experience in finance, management and intellectual property and for six years was on the committee that advises the Federal Minister upon IP matters (ACIP). A long-time supporter of Australia's biotechnology industry, he was a director of AusBiotech for six years. Michael is a director of the Canadian ABIC Foundation board and is on the advisory board of the University of Adelaide MBA program. He is also Chair of the UniSA PBRC advisory Board.

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### About Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics

ACPFPG was established in 2003 by the South Australian Government and the Australian Federal Government through the Australian Research Council and the Grains Research and Development Corporation. ACPFG scientists improve cereal crops' tolerance to environmental stresses such as drought, heat, salinity and nutrient toxicities; major causes of yield and quality loss throughout the world and significant problems for cereal growers. For more information about ACPFG please visit [www.acpfg.com.au](http://www.acpfg.com.au)

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# Biographies



## [Professor Peter Langridge](#)

Professor Langridge's illustrious career as a plant scientist has involved his appointment to many positions on scientific boards, review panels and fellowships including participation in the International Evaluation of the Genetics and Plant Breeding Division on INRA review panel, Chairing of the Expert Panel on strategic study of biotechnology research in the CGIAR and Honorary Fellow at the James Hutton Institute. He has served on eight journal editorial boards, has supervised over 50 PhD students and authored over 350 scientific papers.

In 2010 Professor Langridge chaired the 'Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council' group that delivered the report 'Australia and Food Security in a Changing World' outlining strategies to address food security globally. In 2011 he received the award of South Australian Scientist of the Year.

Professor Langridge has been involved in, or has led, many of the international cereal improvement initiatives during his career. His reputation is not only as a leading plant scientist and innovator, but also as a recognised expert in international scientific co-operation.



## [Associate Professor Sigrid Heuer](#)

Associate Professor Sigrid Heuer joined the ACPFG as leader of the Nutrient Use Efficiency group in January 2013 and was appointed deputy CEO shortly afterwards.

Prior to joining ACPFG she spent nearly ten years as a researcher at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines. At IRRI, Sigrid's research focused on developing rice with abiotic stress tolerance.

Her initial work, in the team of Dr David Mackill, focused on the *SUB1A* submergence-tolerance gene and the development of molecular markers to enable molecular breeding of tolerant rice varieties.

In addition to this, Sigrid worked on a project on heat-tolerance, however, most of her time in recent years has been devoted to the cloning of the *PSTOL1* protein kinase gene, which confers tolerance of phosphorus deficiency in rice.

Sigrid Heuer was appointed ACPFG's joint acting CEO in May 2014.



## [Mr Michael Gilbert](#)

After graduating as a Mechanical Engineer in 1984, Michael joined Sola Optical for 10 years; one of the early international "Medical Devices" companies.

Michael completed an MBA in 1998 and established Adelaide Consulting, with clients including The University of Adelaide. After project managing the establishment of the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics at the Waite Precinct in 2002, Michael joined it as General Manager and Company Secretary.

Between 2004 and 2010, Michael was a Director of AusBiotech and chaired its Risk and Audit Committee. He was a member of the Advisory Council on Intellectual Property, the organisation that advises IP Australia and the Federal Government on IP matters.

Michael is now a director of the ABIC Foundation, based in Canada.

Michael Gilbert was appointed ACPFG's joint acting CEO in May 2014.

