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GPA APPOINTS INAUGURAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Grain Producers Australia has appointed an inaugural Chief Executive to continue strengthening national advocacy and representation for Australia's broadacre, grain, pulse and oilseed producers.

GPA Chair Andrew Weidemann said the GPA Board chose experienced strategic rural communications expert and senior policy advisor, Colin Bettles, following a competitive recruitment and selection process.

"Colin demonstrated a high level of industry knowledge and in-depth understanding of GPA's history, vision and goals. Importantly, he also shares the Board's passion and commitment to drive positive, proactive changes that will benefit our members and our industry," he said.

"This inaugural appointment of a Chief Executive also signals another exciting chapter in GPA's growth. We're taking the next step building a stronger team and resource base, to represent Australian grain farmers on the national stage, and deliver better policy outcomes that help protect and boost their profitability and sustainability."

GPA Deputy Chairman Barry Large said Colin's diverse skill-set and farm policy acumen will bolster GPA's operations, along with his professional experience and standing with other farm representative groups, and key industry stakeholders.

"We're pleased to welcome Colin's commencement this week, starting as GPA's first-ever, full-time Chief Executive," he said.

"His appointment will not only strengthen GPA's oversight of the Grains Research and Development Corporation and biosecurity management on behalf of levy-paying growers, it will also enhance our capacity to represent growers on other critical issues, such as trade, on the national stage.

"It will also improve our ability to engage more proactively with government, industry, media and members, especially State Farming Organisations, to further empower Australian grain producers."

Colin comes from a dairy farming family in WA and started as Grains Writer with the Farm Weekly in WA in 2006. He covered major industry policy issues such as; droughts; wheat exports deregulation; farm representation; biosecurity; research and development; and crop biotechnology.

In 2010, he moved to Canberra and worked in the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery as Fairfax Media's Canberra Bureau Chief, until 2018, building a strong national reputation for covering the impact of federal politics and legislation on all farm commodities; not just grains.

His professional experience also includes running his own business and working in professional cricket managing media and communications and country cricket, for the WA Cricket Association.

Recently he's worked as Senior Media Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister and in senior strategic advisory and communication roles for Sefton and Associates and with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

"I'm honoured to be appointed to this exciting new role and look forward to working with the GPA Board and all of our members, to serve the best interests of Australian grain farmers," he said.

"One of my first priorities will be to meet with our members and listen to feedback. I'm open to hearing about new ideas and bold initiatives that can add value to GPA's advocacy powers; especially working with like-minded partners who understand our commercial and scientific focus.

"The more we empower GPA, the better job we can do championing the interests Australian grain farmers to deliver results that put more dollars in their pockets, and make their businesses, and the communities they live in, more profitable and sustainable."

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