



By Matthew Jones

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Hort Innovation updates constitution

Hort Innovation

Members vote heavily in favour of changes to how board of directors is formed

Constitutional change has taken place at Australian research and development corporation Hort Innovation, following an extraordinary general meeting last Friday (9 October).

The online meeting was attended by a quorum of the organisation's voting members, with over 90 per cent of votes cast in favour of the amendments tabled.

The updated constitution states that all new directors will be elected to the Hort Innovation board by voting members. Terms of new directors will be limited to a total of six years across two terms of three years.

Under the previous constitution, directors were eligible to serve for nine years. The majority of directors were appointed or reappointed by the existing board, rather than via an election of voting members.

The moves have been welcomed by the Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA), a high-powered association of Australian growers and suppliers.

"The overwhelming grower support for change at Hort Innovation highlights the industry demand for focussed research and development, and marketing, which supports industry's growth targets" said Michael Simonetta, chair of AFPA.

With the new constitution in effect, Hort Innovation members will elect three new directors at the company's annual general meeting (AGM) in November this year.

Hort Innovation is funded by compulsory levies paid by growers, along with contributions from the Commonwealth government. The Hort Innovation constitution requires that the organisation is accountable to levy payers, investors and the Australian government for the annual investments of up to A\$120m.

"Hort Innovation plays a key role in the Australian horticulture industry by facilitating research and development investments on behalf of Australia's horticulture producers," said Simonetta.

"The 11,000 growers in the industry need investments which are focussed and commercially relevant. It is vital that Hort Innovation is accountable for the investment decisions made with grower levies and taxpayer funds."

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