

Australia's Centre for Entrepreneurial Agri-Technology (CEAT) rebrands as Agrifood Innovation Institute (AFII)

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Australia's Centre for Entrepreneurial Agri-Technology (CEAT) rebrands as Agrifood Innovation Institute (AFII) effective from 1 January 2024. When CEAT started in 2018, focus was on addressing agricultural challenges by harnessing Australian National University (ANU) expertise in plant, environmental and computing sciences, engineering and technology development. This opens the opportunity to utilise ANU expertise across a broader range of disciplines (including social sciences, business and economics, law, policy and regulatory frameworks) to address a wider range of agrifood challenges facing society, industry and the environment.

With the University having committed to invest \$12 million in the CEAT Innovation Institute for a further five years, through the rebranding, the scope has been widened beyond just 'agri-technology' to encompass all the interdisciplinary capabilities of ANU to address complex agrifood challenges at the regional, national and global levels.

As an ANU Innovation Institute, AFII will invest in initiatives that:

- develop an entrepreneurial culture that promotes the translation of ANU research knowledge for societal benefit
- support researchers to build new partnerships with the agrifood sector
- invest in new models of biological, technological, social and policy innovation that change how ANU researchers work with industry
- harness the full interdisciplinary capabilities of ANU to address complex national and global challenges that threaten the resilience, stability and growth of the agrifood sector
- help shape national and global debates about how to meet increasing global demand for nutritious, abundant food that is produced in ways that are environmentally sustainable
- provide graduate students with a wider range of career opportunities.

With the rebrand comes an increasing need for ANU to deepen connections with industry and innovation networks beyond our campus. To complement the initiative new leadership roles are announced. Associate Professor Alison Bentley will join ANU, both as AFII Deputy Director and as a Group Leader in the Research School of Biology.

In addition, the new AFII Board will include members from the corporate sector bringing significant industry and innovation ecosystem experience:

- **Victoria Taylor (Chair):** Head of Sector Building at Cellular Agriculture Australia, Non-Executive Director of Horticulture Innovation Australia and WaterNSW, member of the NSW Rice Marketing Board
- **Ben Fargher:** Lead of Cargill Environmental Markets in the APAC region.
- **Hebbat Manhy:** Head of Deep Technology at Cicada Innovations, member of the NSW Smart Sensing Network Advisory Board and Monash University's Faculty of Robotics and Automation Industry Advisory Board
- **Rob Gordon:** the former CEO of SunRice, Non-Executive Board Director of the Inghams Group (Chair, Risk and Sustainability sub-Committee; Member, Finance/Audit Committee), and is a member of RaboBank's Agribusiness Advisory Board.