

Subject: CSIRO Media Release - CSIRO welcomes new Chief Scientist
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CSIRO welcomes new Chief Scientist

Chief Executive of the CSIRO Dr Geoff Garrett today welcomed the announcement of Dr Jim Peacock as the nation's new Chief Scientist.

Dr Garrett said the appointment of Dr Peacock, a former Chief of the Division of Plant Industry at CSIRO, was "great news" for the science community and for the future of science in Australia.

"Jim has an outstanding record both as a scientist, and also as a person who understands science, scientists and how science and its application can benefit all," Dr Garrett said.

After completing a degree in Botany at the Sydney University Dr Peacock went on to complete a PhD on genetics of the Australian flora, supported by a CSIRO Post Graduate Fellowship.

Dr Peacock won a CSIRO Post Doctoral Fellowship to go to the University of Oregon at Eugene and study Drosophila Genetics.

Before leaving for the USA Jim worked at CSIRO's Plant Industry in the genetics section and took up a Senior Research Scientist position at CSIRO in September 1965.

In 1969 he returned to the USA to work at the University of California San Diego on molecular biology and then moved to Stanford University in 1970 where he was a Distinguished Visiting Professor in Arthur Kornberg's Department of Biochemistry. Jim returned from the USA in 1971 to work at Plant Industry and in 1978 was appointed Chief of the Division.

Over the next quarter of a century, Jim built Plant Industry into one of the world's foremost plant science institutes, across a number of research disciplines. Jim also developed very effective relationships with Australian and international agribusiness enterprises providing landmark examples of the nexus between research discoveries and their adoption into commercial practice. Jim retired as Chief of CSIRO Plant Industry in 2003.

He has been awarded many honours recognising his scientific achievements - elected as a Fellow of The Royal Society (UK) in 1982, won the BHP Bi-centennial prize for Science Excellence in 1988 and elected to the elite group of Foreign Associates of US National Academy of Sciences in 1990. The crowning achievement came in 2000 when Jim and Liz Dennis shared the Inaugural Prime Minister's Prize for Science.

In 1994 Jim was awarded the country's highest Honour the Companion of the Order of Australia (ACC). In 2002 he was elected President of the Australian Academy of Science.

As the Chief Scientist position is a part time role, Jim will continue to make significant contributions in leading key science initiatives within CSIRO.

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