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MEDIA RELEASE

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NO-BRAINER TO GROW THE 10:1 RETURNS ON INVESTMENT IN AG AID

Two former Ministers for Agriculture, The Hon John Anderson and The Hon Joel Fitzgibbon, have affirmed the benefits of aid-funded international agricultural research for development – significant benefits to partner countries and to Australian farmers. As **Crawford Fund** board members, they are voicing the Fund's call for an increase in the proportion of the aid budget invested in agricultural research, based on two new Crawford Fund reports to be launched on 1 December at the National Press Club.

"It's a no-brainer that more of Australia's development assistance budget should be invested in international agricultural research. The Crawford Fund's new reports, backed by international analyses, show a ballpark benefit-cost ratio of 10:1 on investment, and many less quantifiable social, environmental, and diplomatic benefits in-country and to Australia. With only 2.5% of Australia's development-assistance budget invested in it, surely it is in Australia's interests to increase the proportion invested to maximise our impact and grow those benefits for all," said John Anderson, who chairs the Fund's board.

This is the key message to be presented by Crawford Fund board members The Hons John Anderson and Joel Fitzgibbon, and CEO Dr Colin Chartres in briefings with decision-makers prior to the launch at the National Press Club of two reports commissioned by the Crawford Fund analysing the benefits to Australia and our partners from research focused on food and nutrition security.

The two commissioned reports [Australian Gains from Investment in International Agricultural R&D 2010-2020: Doing Well by Doing Good Report](#) and [The Benefits to Australia and to the Global Community from Investing in International Agricultural Research and Development](#) demonstrate that Australian aid funded agricultural research for development (Ag4Dev) continues to be an outstanding success. A summary of the reports is [here](#).

"Agriculture and food security are front and centre of world attention as we face the complex challenges of climate change, conflicts and COVID-19," explained John.

"These challenges exacerbate food insecurity and undernourishment and impact most heavily on the 900 million people already living in poverty. International agricultural research for development is well-targeted, contributes to the food and nutrition security of low-income countries, their environmental and economic sustainability and resilience, and to gender equity and regional stability. It is also something that Australia is very good at, and it brings significant returns to Australia's farmers, our biosecurity, scientific knowledge and global diplomatic reputation," said John.

"Based on these outstanding benefits and the benefit-cost ratio of 10:1 identified in our reports and other international analyses, it would seem a no-brainer that the current small proportion of around 2.5% of the aid budget invested in agricultural research should be increased," he said.

Australian investment in R&D for agriculture is mostly through the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (**ACIAR**), which, through strategic partnerships with Australian and overseas institutions, aims to improve the productivity and sustainability of agricultural systems and the resilience of food systems in partner countries. The Crawford Fund works alongside ACIAR to build the capacity of developing country and Australian scientists and farmers.

The Fund has brought a spotlight on the benefits from international agricultural R&D since the launch of the book titled *"Doing Well by Doing Good"*, written by the Fund's foundation director, Emeritus Prof Derek Tribe AO OBE, in 1991.

