



Media Release, Research Story

World-class \$25m "super greenhouse" underway at Waite

Monday, 11 May 2009

[Original View \[0\]](#)

Construction on a \$25 million national plant research facility aimed at boosting agricultural research and the plant biotech industry is underway at the University of Adelaide's [Waite Campus \[1\]](#).

Due for completion at the end of 2009, the [Plant Accelerator \[2\]](#) is the largest and most sophisticated public facility of its type in the world and acts as headquarters of the newly established [Australian Plant Phenomics Facility \[3\]](#). The Australian Plant Phenomics Facility consists of the Plant Accelerator in Adelaide and the [High Resolution Plant Phenomics Centre \[4\]](#) at [CSIRO Plant Industry \[5\]](#) in Canberra.

The University has appointed [Built Environs \[6\]](#) as the Head Contractor of the Plant Accelerator building project, which will involve the construction of 50 high-tech glasshouses and laboratories that will house over 1km of conveyor systems that will deliver plants automatically to state-of-the art imaging, robotic and computing equipment.

"This is the seventh major contract the University has awarded in its \$400 million building program, with another two contracts scheduled to go ahead in the next few months," said [Professor James McWha \[7\]](#), the University's Vice-Chancellor and President.

"Facilities like the Plant Accelerator will attract additional international scientists and post-graduate students to Waite campus, which is Australia's pre-eminent plant science research site in Australia, with a critical mass of 1200 researchers from at least eight organisations on one campus," he said.

Scientists at the [Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics \[8\]](#) at the University of Adelaide's Waite Campus - [Professor Mark Tester \[9\]](#) and [Professor Geoff Fincher \[10\]](#) - developed the proposal for the Plant Accelerator, which is being jointly funded by an alliance of the Commonwealth (\$10 million), the SA Government (\$10 million) and the University of Adelaide (\$5.9 million) under the [National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy \[11\]](#) (NCRIS).

"This high-throughput facility will be available for all Australian plant scientists and will greatly assist our researchers in 'phenotyping' plants - that is, identifying the role of each plant gene in the function of the whole plant," says Professor Mark Tester, Federation Fellow with the [School of Agriculture, Food and Wine \[12\]](#).

"The facility will allow up to 160,000 plants to be phenotyped each year, enabling researchers to respond faster to market needs, increase the quality of plant science research and accelerate the transfer of these advances to benefit our local industry.

"The facility could also lead to major discoveries that hold the key to solving some of the world's greatest problems in crop production, such as tolerance to salinity and drought."

[www.adelaide.edu.au/space/plant \[13\]](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/space/plant)

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An artist's impression of the new Plant Accelerator facility.
[Full Image \(249.63K\) \[20\]](#)

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- [0] <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/news/news33062.html>
- [1] <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/campuses/waite/>
- [2] <http://www.plantphenomics.org/TPA>
- [3] <http://www.plantphenomics.org.au/>
- [4] <http://www.plantphenomics.org/HRPPC>
- [5] <http://www.pi.csiro.au/>
- [6] <http://www.builtenvirons.com.au/>
- [7] <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/VCO/>
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