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Company Announcements Platform
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Chief Executive to step down on completion of search for successor

The Futuris Corporation Limited Board has accepted the resignation today of Chief Executive and Managing Director and CEO, Les Wozniczka, effective upon completion of an international search for a successor.

Chairman Stephen Gerlach said: "Following the disappointing, revised earnings guidance announced to the market yesterday, Les Wozniczka and I have had discussions about the initiatives that the company needs to take for sustainable earnings growth and to achieve satisfactory market recognition for the value of its core businesses.

"While there is general agreement between us on the steps that need to be taken, Les has come to the view, and the board agrees with him, that it is time for a new leader to drive that process.

"Employed by Elders in 1995 to create a banking strategy and joining Futuris in 1999 and appointed Chief Executive in 2003, Les recognised the deep potential value of the businesses within our flagship Elders franchise and significant management changes have been made within the Elders businesses to respond to that value opportunity. He has also sought to leverage that value by building diversified agricultural businesses around the Elders core to derive multiple earnings streams from upswing in global soft commodities and the resultant economic growth in regional and rural Australia.

"Unfortunately, the market has not been convinced of the merits of the initiatives taken by the company. Shareholders are rightly disappointed with the resultant share price performance as are we. In the eyes of the market our company has not made satisfactory progress on building the core businesses and reducing debt through the realisation of the substantial capital tied up in non-core and underperforming businesses and assets.

"We are now mutually agreed that it is in the shareholders' interests that a fresh set of eyes and new leadership be brought to the Futuris management team.

"We will move as quickly as possible to find a successor, but will conduct a thorough search. We expect significant interest in the role given the outlook for

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the sector and the opportunity that exists within Futuris' core businesses and assets today," Mr Gerlach said.

Mr Gerlach said that, in the interim, the board and corporate management would remain focused on acceleration of the non-core asset rationalisation process over the coming year, with the intention that funds raised will be applied to the balance sheet.

There would also be no interruption to the program of reinvestment and reinvigoration in the Elders Rural Services business to ensure it remains at the forefront of the regional and rural Australian agricultural economy.

Mr Wozniczka said he took full responsibility for the market's assessment of the company and believed that a change of leadership is in the interests of the company and its shareholders.

"I have worked hard to put together many pieces of the jigsaw that will ultimately make up a very successful diversified agricultural services business, centred around Elders, and would very much have liked to opportunity to finish that picture.

"However, it has become increasingly clear that the market is looking for a different approach to the same task and recent share price performance, especially after yesterday's earnings revision, suggests that I no longer have the market support needed to carry on.

"Futuris is a great company with some fantastic assets and a great deal of unrealised value and I am sure that this value will ultimately be realised for shareholders.

"My successor will be supported by a very good management team strongly committed to our strategic vision and I take this opportunity to thank them for their support during my leadership of the company," Mr Wozniczka said.

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