

## **Gene Ethics News Media Release, Tuesday March 6, 2018**

### **Keep SA's GM-free crop moratorium to reap the benefits.**

**Agriculture Minister Leon Bignell reports that just 221 of the state's 5,300 grain growers signed a petition to him, asking for the ban on Genetically Manipulated (GM) canola to be lifted. The vast majority of SA farmers, food processors and shoppers want the state's GM-free crop moratorium to continue.**

"South Australia is on a winner with its GM-free policy," says Bob Phelps, Gene Ethics director.

A recent CSIRO report \*\* that The Australian Oilseed Federation and the Australian Export Grain Innovation Centre commissioned refutes ABCA's self-serving GM industry claims of no benefits for SA farmers from the state's GM-free moratorium. CSIRO team leader Dr Sandra Eady said:

"We've achieved a \$100 million per year premium for our farmers, given the extra \$20-\$40/tonne paid for non-GM Australian canola."

Australian non-GM canola can achieve a \$20-\$40 premium in Europe because it is used to make biofuels, then GM-free excess can go seamlessly into the food or animal feed sector.

"We won this market from Canada in 2006 and have been getting premiums ever since," Phelps says.

The so-called Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia (ABCA) commissioned the Mecardo research. The CSIRO research has much greater credibility as it looks at the benefits for all sectors of primary production and ABCA's backers comprise:

CropLife Australia, the GM and chemical industry's peak body representing the companies that develop, register, manufacture and formulate agricultural inputs

AusBiotech, which represents and supports individual biotech companies, special interest groups and the Australian biotechnology industry as a whole; and

National Farmers' Federation Ltd (NFF), the peak national body representing farming lobby groups.

Benefits are flowing not only to GM-free farmers, but all food production and processing sectors as a government report last year found. Many SA food products now carry GM-free labels and also earn good premiums in local and export markets.

Europe is by far Australia's biggest and most valuable export market for canola, with zero tolerance for any GM canola in our exports. Growing what customers want to buy will ensure continued success.

**More comment: Bob Phelps 03 5968 2996 or 0449 769 066**

\*\* <http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-12-18/australian-canola-approved-as-low-emission-fuel-for-europe/9269232>