

News Media Release 19/11/18

Victorian Election Scorecard | GM-free & regenerative farms and food

Gene Ethics sent a questionnaire to all registered political parties in early October but only two parties replied, despite repeated requests.

The Victorian Greens Parliamentary Leader and Agriculture Spokesperson, Dr Samantha Ratnam answered YES to all our questions on Regulation, Agriculture & Marketing, and Research & Development, in line with their policy. (SEE attached)

"Her responses align with Gene Ethics' food and farm policy goals, in areas over which state governments have most control," says Gene Ethics Director, Bob Phelps.

The Greens: "want to see a state-wide moratorium on the commercial release of GM organisms until all marketing, environmental and public health issues are resolved," Ms Ratnam said.

Victorian Socialists also answered YES to all our questions. Though they do not yet have detailed policies their overall approach accepts, "the need for rigorous assessment and regulation of all GM crops and food by independent scientific bodies, and clear labeling of GM products. If GM crops harm farmland or consumers, we will advocate that the responsible entity pays compensation but any "no fault" scheme should not be at the expense of common law damages."

The Victorian ALP Government and Opposition did not answer Gene Ethics' questions.

"Agriculture Minister Jaala Pulford has repeatedly declined our requests to meet her or her advisors," Bob Phelps says.

"The Brumby Labor Government lifted the state GM-free moratorium on commercial GM canola in 2008, paying \$93,000 for a report to justify it. The Premier's office was a member of the global US-based Biotechnology Industry Organisation and the Innovation Minister signed a Public Private Partnership (PPP) with Dow AgroSciences," he says.

"Nationals Leader and Shadow Agriculture Minister Peter Walsh told us the Coalition partners back GM and chemicals, would do nothing to curb their use, and would welcome more GM crops and foods, during a meeting last year with him," Mr Phelps concludes.

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Questionnaire pro forma attached FYI.