

## **Gene Ethics Media Release 21/2/19 SA Pro-GM Crop report is rigged**

**The South Australian government is seeking to upstage a Parliamentary Select Committee review of the state's GM-free status that is still taking and testing evidence in open forums. The Genetically Manipulated (GM) Food Crop Ban that parliament approved should run till 2025 as parliament and community intend.**

**"The Liberal government's report did not use independent, transparent or open processes," says Gene Ethics Director Bob Phelps.**

**"Global GM companies ran a concerted PR campaign with local agribusiness clients and scientific allies to promote the removal of the state's moratorium on GM crops, ignoring the facts.**

**"SA food manufacturers, processors and the grains industries all benefit from the state's GM-free reputation in export markets, as our evidence to both inquiries shows.**

**"Confining the argument to a couple of hundred canola growers and their sectional interests, as the government does, unfairly ignores 5,000 other grain growers, the food industry and whole community.**

**"The report proposes that Kangaroo Island preserve its GM-free identity so it can retain access to Japan's high-priced market for GM-free grain.**

**"This is precisely the kind of benefit that the whole of SA could enjoy if a concerted government and food industry program positively promoted the state's GM-free status.**

**"Then GM-free SA as a whole could reap the fantastic rewards that Kangaroo Island has achieved for years.**

**"The Anderson report is also rough and ready on the facts," Mr Phelps says. For instance, the report falsely claims that benefits to farmers from GM crops would include:**

(a) having more varieties to choose from to best suit specific environments and seasonal weather anomalies

"But the only crop proposed for growing in SA is herbicide tolerant GM canola, so that Roundup can be sprayed more often and at higher doses without harming the crop. These GM plants have no new traits for better tolerating environmental stresses.

(b) environmental and health benefits from reduced farm chemical applications

"Everywhere herbicide tolerant GM crops are grown the amount of synthetic chemicals sprayed has greatly increased. And the residue levels allowed in foods from these crops have also had to be increased to remain compliant.

(c) a likely boost to the value of farm land whose productivity and profitability is raised.

"The reverse is true as a contract to buy and use patented GM seed allows the corporate seed owner to enter the farm anytime, without notice. When GM cropland is sold, the new owner must also agree to the contract. This scares away buyers and depresses GM farmland prices.

"The report also claims GM and non-GM canola can coexist and be segregated but this is only possible when a threshold of 0.9% GM contamination is allowed. The extra management costs that all growers must bear when GM and non-GM canola are grown and handled together are ignored," Mr Phelps concludes.

**More comment: Bob Phelps 0449 769 066**

**The government's review site:**

**[http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/primary\\_industry/genetically\\_modified\\_gm\\_crops/gm\\_review](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/primary_industry/genetically_modified_gm_crops/gm_review)**

**The Select Committee's site:**

**<https://www.parliament.sa.gov.au/Committees/Pages/Committees.aspx?CTId=3&CIId=355>**