

# Gene Ethics Media Release 3/9/08

## GM-free WA guaranteed if Labor is returned

**The Carpenter government today made bold commitments to GM-free (no Genetically Manipulated crops). Their comprehensive GM-free policies are a bonanza for WA food and farming industries.**

"A well-funded GM-free certification and marketing program in Western Australia, for four more years, will allow the strong demand for GM-free foods to be met in Australia and overseas," says Gene Ethics Director Bob Phelps.

"Open market access at price premiums will be assured.

"For instance, Woolworths guarantees its Own Brand canola oil is GM-free, because it's grown in WA! Goodman Fielder, that uses 40% of Australia's canola crop, now labels Meadowlea spread as GM-free. Over 150 other local companies also label GM-free creating strong demand. Coles say over 90% of its customers want GM-free and will supply them. And Japanese buyers now have long-term contracts with Kangaroo Island (SA) growers for GM-free canola at good premiums.

"We also applaud the government's commitment to research the GM-free solutions to land and water degradation and climate change, using tried and true plant breeding methods instead of flawed and failed GM techniques.

"The government's commitment to explore GM food safety through a \$1 million research program is doing the job that Food Standards Australia NZ should be doing to keep public trust in safety of the whole food supply," Mr Phelps says.

"We also congratulate the Greens, Christian Democrats and One Nation. They supported a similar range of GM-free policies to the ALP, when they answered the Gene Ethics' GM election questionnaire.

"All these GM-free parties would maintain the GM ban, but if it were lifted by a pro-GM government they would all demand GM management measures, including:  
a public register of all GM crop sites;  
all animal feed to be labelled GM or GM-free; and  
strict liability laws to make GM companies liable for GM contamination.

"They would also back the labelling of every food made using GM techniques, which has the support of over 90% of the Australian people," he says.

"In contrast, the Liberal/National coalition is a GM policy-free zone as neither party answered Gene Ethics' searching pre-poll questions.

"Their policy to open the floodgates on GM crops and foods if they win government would not manage the treacherous transition into GM crops and foods.

"GM contamination would be inevitable and irreversible under the Coalition.

"GM-free is a key election issue for voters on Saturday and we are optimistic that Western Australia will continue to be part of a GM-free coalition with SA, Tasmania and the ACT," Mr Phelps concludes.

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