



ABN 67 104 140 918

A: 60 Leicester St, Carlton Vic 3053

T: 03 9347 4500 / 1300 133 868

F: 03 9341 8199

E: info@geneethics.org

W: www.geneethics.org

Media Alert: Monday November 2, 2009

GM canola growing in Melbourne suburb

Gene Ethics' supporters will picket the first confirmed GM canola site in suburban Melbourne, at Berwick at 10am today. The GM crop is growing on "Minta" 108 Soldiers Rd Berwick (Melway Ref: 131 F5) on property owned by the family of State Opposition leader Ted Baillieu.

"The crop is adjacent to housing estates where local residents seem unaware of the potential for their gardens to be contaminated by GM canola, through the spread of pollen and seed," says Gene Ethics Director, Bob Phelps.

Mr Phelps says: "home owners are entitled to know that GM canola:

- is being grown in their neighbourhood;
- poses health and allergy risks to residents; and
- contamination may be permanent."

"The closest GrainCorp depot for receipt of GM canola is at Geelong, 120 kms away. Every roadside between Berwick and Geelong will be exposed to GM contamination as canola seed is routinely dropped along the way to the port," he says.

"Monsanto, VicRoads and Agriculture Minister Joe Helper's office all refused to clean up GM canola from roadsides when contamination was found in the Western District," says Jessica Harrison of Cropwatch.

"We call on the Cities of Casey and Cardinia to declare themselves GM-free and to require this canola crop to be removed forthwith.

"An Office of Gene Technology Regulator report discloses that canola seed can germinate for up to 16 years after it is spilled. And the Tasmanian Government is still monitoring and decontaminating 52 GM canola trial sites that were contaminated before the year 2000.

"GM contamination is absolutely unacceptable and the crop must be removed before it irreversibly damages the local environment," Ms Harrison concludes.

Further comment:

Gene Ethics - Bob Phelps 0449 769 066

GM Cropwatch - Jessica Harrison 0407 307 231