



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 RELEASE

WA sacrifices its GM-free competitive advantage

Tuesday January 25 2010

The Western Australian parliament must disallow the exemption from the law that would allow commercial Roundup tolerant genetically manipulated (GM) canola to be commercially grown. Gene Ethics is fully informing MPs with the data needed to reject the exemption order when it comes up for review.

“Redman and Barnett are sacrificing the state’s unique competitive advantage and premium prices for GM-free foods available in global canola markets. WA, SA and Tasmania are the only reliable exporters of GM-free canola world-wide and we are reaping the rewards,” says Gene Ethics Director Bob Phelps.

“The Premier and Minister are misusing their power and shirking their responsibility to declare GM and GM-free Zones over all or part of the state to protect and promote the markets for clean, green, GM-free WA foods.

“Gene Ethics calls on all Western Australian parliamentarians to vote to disallow this mad, bad decision when it comes before the parliament for review. The market and feral weed impacts of herbicide tolerant GM canola make rejecting the exemption the only sane decision.

“Redman’s pro-GM decision is no surprise. As Minister, he has been courted in public and private by Monsanto executives, and funded a two hour GM promotional forum that cost taxpayers about \$25,000. In contrast, he consistently ignores well-informed critics of GM crops,” Bob Phelps says.

“Monsanto is the outright winner from this government’s GM escapade. The world’s biggest seed company always needs new places to peddle its patented GM seed and to hijack its GM-free competitors. The US government is investigating Monsanto’s monopolistic behaviour that includes restricting access to non-GM seed, suing farmers who unwittingly grow GM because of contamination and suing companies that make GM-free claims on organic and other foods.

“Redman’s claims of benefits from GM canola are as hollow as Monsanto’s ‘pot of gold at the end of the rainbow’ ads published last week. Terry has now approved the GM equivalent of Windows ’95, on the empty promises of better GM crops in the future. Monsanto’s Roundup tolerant canola was launched in 1996 yet Australia is only the third country in the world to grow it – after Canada and the USA. The twenty other countries growing canola have just ignored GM varieties.

“Most Western Australian shoppers, and shoppers in our top five markets overseas - Netherlands, France, Pakistan, Japan and Belgium – want to stay GM-free. We should not side with our main GM competitor Canada against the wishes of our customers. It’s just bad business.

We expect the parliament with listen to shoppers and food processors and over-rule the GM cowboys in government who would allow GM canola without restriction,” Mr Phelps concludes.

Further information or interviews:

Bob Phelps, Gene Ethics director: (03) 9347 4500; 0449 769 066