

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **GIWA Welcomes Passing of Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Repeal Bill**

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The Grain Industry Association of WA (GIWA) Inc welcomes the passing of the Genetically Modified (GM) Crops Free Areas Repeal Bill on 20 October 2016 in WA State Parliament.

In February 2015 the Grain Industry Association of WA released the WA Grains Industry Strategy 2025+, referring to the need for “Repeal of the State legislation on GM crops” (page 15) as an example of regulation which currently inhibits the competitiveness and profitability of the WA grains sector.

The core principle adopted by the WA grains industry in the WA Grains Industry Strategy 2025+ is that ***co-existence of technologies ensures growers and consumers can exercise their choice to respectively use new production technologies and make consumption choices***, and that the WA grains industry will benefit from a national approach to legislation which supports this outcome.

According to Michael Lamond, Chair of the GIWA Oilseeds Council:

“The benefit to WA growers from this legislation is both immediate and long term. It gives growers choice on the type of canola they can grow now, and it gives canola breeders the confidence to continue to breed high yielding canola varieties for WA in the future.

With GM canola, growers benefit sooner from new higher yielding varieties, coupled with new output traits, than would be the case with conventionally bred canola.

The state will benefit from farmers continuing to be able to grow GM canola because they will:

- be more profitable from growing higher yielding varieties
- have access to quicker releases of varieties adapted to our changing climate
- have access to alternative weed control options
- be able to grow grain quality traits for speciality markets
- be able to use new traits to reduce chemical applications
- continue to have marketing choice to meet consumer demand by growing either GM or non-GM canola”

In 2015, according to the Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia, the global area dedicated to GM crops reached more than 175 million hectares across 27 countries.

A global example of proven GM technology over more than a decade is found in the Canadian grains industry, a competitor to Australia, where over 90% of the canola crop is GM canola.

GIWA believes that under the exemptions of the *WA Genetically Modified Crop Free Areas Act 2003*, which allowed GM cotton and GM canola to be grown in WA, industry demonstrated its ability to manage co-existing technologies through its supply chains. More than 30% of the West

Australian canola crop is GM canola and this statistic is growing. Since 2010 WA has sold both GM and non-GM canola into international markets such as Japan and Europe, adding to the state's international reputation as a quality, reliable, clean, safe producer of grains and oilseeds.

GIWA believes the passing of the Repeal Bill gives WA growers more future productive gains, more management choice and more marketing choice. Without access to GM crop technology, Western Australia, which produces 40% of Australia's grain crop and exports almost everything it produces, would be less competitive with the rest of the world's grain producers.

Australian Oilseeds Federation President Jon Slee, (former Chair of the GIWA Oilseeds Council) concurs:

"The Australian Oilseeds Federation welcomes the passing of the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Repeal Bill in Western Australia – this is great news for the Australian canola industry's customers, growers, breeders and the trade. It provides market choice and certainty in accessing world class technology."

GIWA is a member based not-for-profit industry association representing the grain value chain in Western Australia, from plant breeders, researchers, growers, advisors, service providers, through to grain marketers and processors. In February 2015 GIWA facilitated a state industry strategy – WA Grains Industry Strategy 2025+ - to address global food demand and double the value of the WA grains industry to \$10 billion by 2025

<http://www.giwa.org.au/announcements/wa-grains-industry-strategy-2025-1>

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