

## Keeping patent law innovative

**Thursday 22 September, 2011** - CropLife commends the Senate Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs for their rational decision to recommend the Parliament reject a Private Member's Bill that sought to ban biological patents.

CropLife Australia, as the peak industry organisation for the plant science industry, is strongly opposed to the Bill because, if passed, it would significantly undermine the important emerging bioeconomy. The industry specific exclusion of biotechnologies would have been contrary to several of Australia's international agreements and would have undermined investor confidence in virtually every field of the Australian economy.

"Australia's patent system is underpinned by general principles that apply equally to all fields of innovation", CropLife Australia Chief Executive Officer Matthew Cossey said.

"These principles, established prior to the industrial revolution, have been shown to be flexible enough to cope with all of the technological change that humanity has witnessed since."

"The clear, transparent and comprehensive principles are essential because innovation is difficult to predict and retrospectively determining intellectual property rights would greatly decrease private investment", Mr Cossey noted.

"Patents on new inventions based on biological materials underpin the investment in many of the cleaner, greener technologies that will be vital to the future of food production both here in Australia and globally. Agricultural biotechnologies offer ways to produce more with less in an ever changing climate and are crucial for the future success of the nation's farming sector. These innovations would not be possible without private investment generated by good patent legislation".

"The Senate Inquiry's Report confirms the conclusion of several other expert inquiries over the past decade, which have all concluded that a ban on biological patents is unnecessary and counterproductive".

"CropLife Australia submitted to the Committee that the Bill would have unintended consequences on agricultural innovation, particularly in the biotechnology and crop protection sectors. We are pleased that the Committee has taken these concerns into account when making its decision to recommend that the Bill not be passed".

"CropLife agrees with the Committee that the Bill was not in the national interest and commends them for their work on this issue. It is now critical that all members of Parliament recognise that the Bill would make bad law and badly damage Australia's Agricultural future, and accordingly oppose the Bill", Mr Cossey concluded.

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### About CropLife Australia

CropLife Australia is the peak industry organisation representing the agricultural chemical and biotechnology (plant science) sector in Australia. CropLife represents the innovators, developers, manufacturers, formulators and registrants of crop protection and agro-biotechnology products. The plant science industry provides products to protect crops against pests, weeds and diseases, as well as developing crop biotechnologies that are key to the nation's agricultural productivity, sustainability and food security. The plant science industry is worth more than \$1.5 billion a year to the Australian economy and directly employs thousands of people across the country. CropLife member companies spend more than \$13 million a year on stewardship activities to ensure the safe use of their products on the environment and human health. CropLife ensures the responsible use of these products through its industry code of conduct and has set a benchmark for industry stewardship through programs such as **drumMUSTER**, ChemClear<sup>®</sup> and Agsafe Accreditation and Training.

**CropLife Australia Limited**

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