



## MEDIA RELEASE

### ON NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY ALL AUSTRALIANS SHOULD COMMIT TO BEING BETTER INFORMED ABOUT AUSTRALIAN FARMING

**21 NOVEMBER 2017 (Canberra)** – Australia’s inaugural official National Agriculture Day is the day to celebrate the enormous contribution Australian farmers make to our modern way of life. The food we eat and the natural fibres we love to wear are delivered to Australians every day because of the hard work of Australian farmers.

Mr Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of Australia’s plant science industry peak organisation, CropLife Australia, today said “never before have we had such peak interest in food within the Australian community and yet at the same time, a peak and growing disconnect in our urban populations about farming and all that goes into producing our nation’s food, feed and fibre needs.”

“Congratulations to the National Farmers’ Federation and the Australian Government on a successful National Agriculture Day. It is a day that has focused the nation’s attention on farming and the agricultural industries that support Australian farmers.”

“The Australian agricultural sector is a world leader in providing high-quality safe food, feed and fibre for a growing global population in ever more challenging circumstances. Australian farmers have led the way in using innovative technologies to remain at the forefront of farming and CropLife Australia is proud of the innovation and support of the plant science industry provided to our nation’s farmers,” said Mr Cossey.

“A recent poll by the National Farmers’ Federation found about 83 per cent of Australians describe their connection with farming as ‘distant’ or ‘non-existent’ while 57 per cent of Australians have had no contact with a farmer in the past year. This highlights the importance of Australian consumers committing to being better informed about farming and the challenges farmers face in producing the nation’s food, feed and fibre and so that they can make purchasing decisions based on facts and better choices that support Australian agriculture.”

“An important starting point would be all parliamentarians, but particularly city-based members of parliament, to gain genuine insights and understanding from on-farm and industry on-site experiences across the agricultural sector,” said Mr Cossey.

“As Australian agriculture heads towards being Australia’s next \$100 billion industry, there has never been a more important time for those who are making the public policy and regulatory decisions on agriculture to have a comprehensive, genuine and first-hand understanding of this growing sector.”

“Accordingly, today I have written to the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP, who is also the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, and the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, suggesting the establishment of The Australian Agricultural Parliamentary Program,” said Mr Cossey.

“The program, which could nominally be based on a similar structure to the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program, would be appropriately managed by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources in coordination with the National Farmers’ Federation and the relevant state farming organisations.”

“Agriculture is as important to our national security as the defence portfolio is and it is therefore appropriate that agriculture has a similar program for parliamentarians to be properly informed and have the opportunity to directly experience the real challenges in producing the nation’s food, feed and fibre,” concluded Mr Cossey.

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#### **About CropLife Australia**

CropLife Australia (CropLife) is the peak industry organisation representing the agricultural chemical and biotechnology (plant science) sector in Australia. CropLife represents the innovators, developers, manufacturers and formulators of crop protection and agricultural 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 \$17.6 billion a year to the Australian economy and directly employs thousands of people across the country. CropLife and its members are committed to the stewardship of their products throughout their lifecycle and to ensuring that human health, environment and trade issues associated with agricultural chemical use in Australia are responsibly and sustainably managed. Our member companies contribute more than \$13 million a year to stewardship activities to ensure the safe and effective use of their products. CropLife ensures the responsible use of these products through its mandatory industry code of conduct and has set a benchmark for industry stewardship through programs such as *drum*MUSTER, ChemClear® and Agsafe Accreditation and Training. Our stewardship activities demonstrate our commitment to managing the impacts associated with container waste and unwanted chemicals.

