



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FARMERS TO BE SHACKLED BY MINDLESS POLITICS IF COMMON SENSE DOESN'T PREVAIL**

**16 NOVEMBER 2017 (Canberra)** – South Australian farmers will continue to be shackled by narrow, misguided, anti-science party politics for a further six years following last night's parliamentary vote that is set to extend the state's moratorium on the cultivation of genetically modified (GM) crops.

Mr Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of Australia's plant science industry peak organisation, CropLife Australia, today said "playing these types of anti-farmer politics is irresponsible given any opposition to the farming of GM crops is based on nothing but the misguided belief of myths and misleading claims."

"The timing of this bill is entirely political and rather than being rushed, it should be properly considered and debated when the moratorium is due to end in 2019. I call on the South Australian Premier, the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation to show genuine leadership and adopt a position that is based on evidence and science, and not support the passage of this bill in the lower house," said Mr Cossey.

"It's also ironic that the Greens and the Labor party who purportedly seek to advocate for environmental policies are stopping South Australian farmers from joining the rest of the country, and the rest of the world, in adopting technologies that bring environmental sustainability gains for farmers. If this goes through, this commits South Australian agriculture to another decade as Australia's rural backwater. There are times that Governments need to lead and show political bravery as opposed to feeding base politics – this is one such time."

"Independent market analysis undertaken by Mecardo in 2016 and 2017 clearly shows that there is little evidence that South Australian farmers achieve a premium for its non-GM canola crop due to a ban on the cultivation of GM crops."

"Farmers in other parts of Australia, who have successfully grown non-GM crops side-by-side with GM crops since 2008, achieve a premium for their non-GM canola over South Australian sold non-GM canola. Policies based on evidence and science have never been more crucial given the ever-increasing demands on farming, unfortunately however, this decision is based on ignorance and short-term party-political agendas," said Mr Cossey.

"Australian farmers growing GM crops for the last 20 years have realised significant economic and environmental benefits. Since 1996 Australian farmers growing GM cotton and canola have gained \$1.37 billion worth of extra income and South Australian farmers have not seen a cent of that."

"This year's Productivity Commission report on the *Regulation of Agriculture* recommended the removal of state-based moratoria on GM crops due to the unnecessary hindrance of market investment in agricultural innovations that prevent Australian farmers from having access to the latest innovative farming tools. State government decisions such as this negatively affect all Australian farmers."

"After many decades of GM and non-GM crops being grown side-by-side successfully and productively most of the Australian states and territories have either allowed GM crop cultivation through exemptions or lifted the moratoria all together. This decision to extend the ban on GM crops is evidence that the South Australian Government and the Minister for Agriculture, Leon Bignell, are not committed to the state's future farming success," said Mr Cossey.

"It's a sad day when so-called representatives of the people don't bother to consult with South Australian farmers that are missing out on the significant benefits from growing safe and approved GM crops that their state and international competitors have access to."

"A truly productive and competitive South Australian agriculture sector that can sustainably contribute to food security challenges in a changing climate requires farmer access to modern farming technologies. South Australian farmers deserve to have the choice of safe and approved crops and it is time that public policies for GM crops are based on facts and evidence, not political game-playing," concluded Mr Cossey.

Contact: Jaelle Bajada (Director – Corporate Affairs) Ph: 02 6273 2733 Mob : 0410 491 261

### 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 *drumMUSTER*, ChemClear® and Agsafe Accreditation and Training. Our stewardship activities demonstrate our commitment to managing the impacts associated with container waste and unwanted chemicals.

