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Media Release – February 5, 2008 Brumby’s GM canola: doomed to fail

Gene Ethics is rallying with other groups at parliament at Noon today.

Brumby’s government ignores the reasonable arguments of community groups, subverts democratic processes and arrogantly crashes-through with grandiose schemes that are doomed to fail the public. Public Private Partnerships enrich the powerful at public expense, while key community services – farming and food production, public transport, schools and hospitals - are run down or sold.

True to form, Brumby is hell-bent on allowing the Genetically Manipulated (GM) herbicide tolerant canola ban to expire on February 29. This ignores the support for GM-free farms and food among a majority of farmers, food processors and shoppers.

“The GM canola ban is to expire on the phony pretext that GM drought tolerant crops and fart-free pastures may be created in 10 or 20 years, if ever!!

“Brumby takes a ‘long-term’ view on the improbable outcomes of GM research but ignores the immediate, permanent and irreversible impacts and costs of releasing GM canola now, for which we’ll all pay.

“Brumby estimates a return of just \$115 million over 8 years (\$15 million pa) to the Victorian economy from GM canola,” says Gene Ethics Director Bob Phelps.

“That’s peanuts and the Canadian experience shows over 90% of any profits will go to Bayer (world’s biggest agro chemical company) and Monsanto (world’s biggest seed company).

“They take no risks and incur no costs by selling the patented GM seed and the chemicals to go with them because these GM giants will not be liable for the inevitable damage to public health, the environment or markets.

“A Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation report concludes Australian family farmers will not profit at all from GM canola.

“The Brumby government must change its ways or crash, as Kennet’s Liberals did when they ignored the community’s aspirations for a more community centred and sustainable society,” Mr Phelps concludes.

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