

4 May 2019

Bob Phelps
Executive Director
Gene Ethics
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Dear Mr Phelps,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. A response to your questions is attached.

This election will have real consequences for Australia's economy and our future.

Despite global headwinds, our economy is strong. This year, for the first time in more than a decade, the Government will deliver a Budget surplus.

A stronger economy means we can deliver on our plans to:

1. Create 1.25 million more jobs over the next five years.
2. Maintain budget surpluses and pay down debt.
3. Deliver tax relief to encourage and reward hard working Australians.
4. Guarantee increased investments for schools, hospitals and roads.
5. Keep Australians safe and our borders secure.

The alternative at this election is Mr Shorten. Labor's risky agenda includes billions of dollars of higher taxes – on retirees, housing, incomes, investments, family businesses, electricity and more.

Thank you for communicating our response to your members.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst
Federal Director

MORRISON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO GENE ETHICS

Australia has one of the world's strongest regulatory regimes for the approval of genetically modified (GM) crops and food products. All dealings with GM organisms, including the cultivation of GM trial crops, are regulated by the Gene Technology Regulator (the Regulator) under the *Gene Technology Act 2000*.

The *Office of the Gene Technology Regulator* (OGTR) performs a thorough assessment of each GM crop before it can reach the market, ensuring that it does not present risks to human health or the environment. The environmental release of any GM crop in Australia is illegal unless authorised by the Regulator. Further information is available on the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator website at www.ogtr.gov.au.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) assesses the safety of GM foods for human consumption and also administers and endorses the food labelling standards. Over two decades of scientific evidence by government regulatory agencies world-wide overwhelmingly confirms that there are no health and safety issues associated with GM foods.

Agricultural biotechnology has already brought huge benefits to Australian farmers. Australian cotton farmers have been growing GM cotton varieties since 1996, and in 2010 almost the entire national crop was devoted to GM varieties, either herbicide tolerant, insect resistant or a combination of the two. The cotton industry has been very proactive in addressing the impact on the environment and farming neighbours through chemical use. Cotton growers report that the new GM varieties have reduced their chemical use by more than ninety per cent in the last decade, with some cotton crops now not sprayed for pests at all. Cotton now is an industry generating \$2 billion in export earnings.