

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS

**1423. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

- (1) Who are the stakeholders and advisers to the minister on genetically modified crops?
- (2) Which of the stakeholders and advisers hold patents associated with GM canola or GM wheat?
- (3) What are the risk mitigation and compensation proposals for protecting GM-free markets and farmers?
- (4) Will the minister meet with GM-free farmers before the continuation of the second reading debate on the Gene Technology (Western Australia) Bill 2014?

**Hon KEN BASTON replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia assimilates information and input from stakeholders and provides formal advice on genetically modified crops.
- (2) DAFWA does not hold patents on GM wheat or GM canola. I am not aware of the details of patents held by stakeholders, but Australian patent information is publicly available from the IP Australia website—[ipaustralia.gov.au](http://ipaustralia.gov.au).
- (3)–(4) The member is confused about the legislative system in Western Australia. The effect of the Gene Technology (Western Australia) Bill 2014 is to replace the current Western Australian Gene Technology Act 2006 with a new act, applying the commonwealth Gene Technology Act 2000 as a law of the state. This will ensure there are no gaps or loopholes in the legislation and there is consistency with the national approach, in accordance with the 2001 Intergovernmental Gene Technology Agreement. The object of the commonwealth Gene Technology Act is to protect the health and safety of people and the environment by identifying risks posed by, or resulting from, gene technology, and managing identified risks through regulating certain dealings with genetically modified organisms. The commonwealth act requires parties to obtain a licence before conducting certain dealings with genetically modified organisms. It establishes the licencing process and requirements, and establishes the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, as well as expert advisory committees. This applies to all genetically modified organisms, not just those in agriculture. Medical and pharmaceutical research is covered by the same legislation, making it essential that there is a consistent national scheme. I refer the member to the second reading speech on this bill, which further details the operation of the commonwealth act. This bill is not related to the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003. Under the GMCFAA, the whole of WA is designated as an area in which GM cannot be grown, unless an exemption order is in place. The bill will not affect this designation, or the current exemption orders.