

Submission by Janette Liddelow, Farmer

WA Feb 2018

**To the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
considering:**

"mechanisms for compensation for economic loss to farmers in Western Australia caused by contamination by genetically modified material, including approaches taken in Western Australia and by other jurisdictions and any other relevant matter."

The Moratorium on growing genetically modified crops in WA was removed as a result of pressure from the biotech industry for deregulation. Many farmers were fearful of the consequences and demanded to have their land, enterprises and markets protected. The government of the day committed to some principles of co-existence but since then, there has been widespread and unregulated growing of GM canola in the grainbelt. Little attention has been given to the suggested guidelines and protocols and it is my understanding that random and regular audits of GM cropping have not occurred.

Predictably, there have been issues of contamination, on farm and along the supply chain. Some instances have been reported and documented, many not. But it is widely known in farming circles there is an ever increasing incursion of GM material in the environment– through seed, through natural forces, through human error or accidents, or through poor farming practices.

The Gene Technology Act requires the State Government to take responsibility for the agronomic and economic impacts of genetic modification technology.

The environment needs protecting and grain markets need protecting. So I welcome the current attempt by the State Government to focus on this area of agriculture by initiating this enquiry and I congratulate Minister MacTiernan for attempting to deal with the fallout of contamination issues and offer some sort of protection and compensation to those affected.

I am a member of GM-Free Farmers and together with many other concerned farmers and consumers I believe we have come up with a simple and positive model as a mechanism to deal with the difficult issue of contamination and compensation. I have attached the Principles for the Farmer Protection Fund to this submission. It has a number of strengths in that it is simple, there is no blame attached, it is flexible and it does not require a bureaucracy to administer. It requires that the GM farmer is more mindful of his operation and neighbouring community but is only contributing a token related to his seed purchases. The fund then becomes available as required to compensate farmers on any loss due to gm contamination.

