

## Ban on genetically modified canola in Victoria lifted

Herald Sun

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### **A BAN on genetically modified canola in Victoria has been lifted - raising the prospects of a major political and environmental row.**

Premier John Brumby today revealed his government had decided not to extend a moratorium on growing GM canola, which expires on February 29.

A panel headed by Sir Gustav Nossal reviewed the economic impact of removing the ban on the commercial planting of GM canola.

Mr Brumby said the state government had accepted federal government approval and the findings of Sir Gustav's report.

Mr Brumby said lifting the ban would make Victorian farmers more internationally competitive and deliver environmental and economic benefits to the state.

"In direct terms, the review panel concluded that the economic benefit to the state over the next eight years of this decision will be something like \$115 million of additional economic activity," he said.

"The benefit of GM canola is that it uses far less pesticide than does traditional canola."

Earlier today, Victorian Farmers Federation president Simon Ramsay said there was no evidence of health risk associated with GM crops.

"There is no proof that there are any dangers to your health and we are basing that on science and fact," Mr Ramsay said. "In fact it improves the value and nutrition of food."

"Using that technology means increased yields, better water conservation and less chemicals so it is better for the environment."

Mr Ramsay also pointed out Australia's global competitors including the US, Canada and Europe extensively used GM crops.

He also singled out Labor politicians including new Albert Park MP Martin Foley and Gembrook MP Tammy Lobato, criticising them for urging the premier in writing not to lift the ban.

"When he (Mr Foley) was chief-of-staff for (former) Agriculture Minister Bob Cameron he was not opposed to GM crops," Mr Ramsay said.

"It's amazing what a leafy suburb does to your philosophy and these politicians are not looking at fact and science but appealing to the emotions of a sensitive public."

A panel headed by Sir Gustav Nossal has been reviewing the economic impact of removing the ban on the commercial planting of GM canola, which is due to expire in February next year.

Anti-GM campaigners say the government has been secretive in not making the panel's findings available to the public.

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