

## **MID MURRAY COUNCIL OPENS DOOR FOR GM CROPS**

Mid Murray Council will move to support allowing farmers to grow genetically modified (GM) crops within its district to assist economic growth in the local agriculture and horticulture sectors.

In line with all South Australian Councils, Mid Murray Council consulted with its community and the district's primary production and food processing industries on the option of whether or not to apply to be a non-GM designated area.

The consultation followed bipartisan support at a State Government level to lift the 16-year moratorium on GM crops in SA in all regions except Kangaroo Island. Under the new *Genetically Modified Crops Management (Designated Area) Amendment Act 2020*, individual Councils can now apply to be a non-GM designated area.

The Council consulted with industry leaders and the wider community in July and August. Council received 14 written responses and 73 survey responses, with the majority of respondents in favour of allowing GM crops to be grown locally.

Mayor Dave Burgess said Council voted this week in line with the majority views of the community and local farming sector to write to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development to support the lifting of the GM moratorium in the district.

"Our district's agricultural and horticultural sectors have weathered significant challenges in recent years, from long-running drought, to bushfires, and now the global uncertainty due to the COVID-19 crisis," Mayor Burgess says.

"Food production is a major industry in the Mid Murray, and 60% of our producers have indicated to us that one of the best ways we can support them right now is to support the lifting of the GM moratorium.

"Our farming sector is a significant local employer, and also contributes to broader family and community wellbeing.

"While there are differing views on the topic of GM crop production, our community has indicated that this is one tangible way in which Council can foster economic growth in our region.

"The results of our consultation will be shared with the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development and, while we will advocate for allowing GM crops to be grown locally, the decision will ultimately now rest with the Minister and the State Government."

The Council will now write to the Minister indicating its support for the GM moratorium to be lifted in the Mid Murray district. A decision will then be made by the Minister before 15 November 2020.

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