

## ABCA Communique #5 – 6 September 2016

The Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia (ABCA) met in Canberra on 6 September 2016. The theme for the council meeting was regulation of new breeding techniques in agriculture.

Dr TJ Higgins provided a brief overview of NBTs in Australia. The Council meeting was addressed by Dr Raj Bhula, the newly appointed Gene Technology Regulator.

ABCA noted industry case studies in the plant and animal sectors highlighting issues of new breeding techniques regulatory conflict between jurisdictions.

The passing of the *GM Crops Free Areas Act 2003 (WA)* repeal bill in the Legislative Council of the Western Australian parliament reaffirmed the importance of making regulatory and public policy decisions based on science and evidence. The bill is now in the Legislative Assembly for debate.

Council Chair, Mr Ken Matthews AO, said that Council members had stressed the importance and urgency of having available a best-practice system of regulation of new breeding techniques for plant and animal-based agricultural products. Council members urged that regulations be based on science and evidence and be designed in proportion to risk.

Council members expressed their concern about current domestic and international uncertainty about the regulatory processes to apply to the rapidly evolving new breeding techniques.

They urged the several Australian agencies potentially involved in regulation of new breeding techniques to better coordinate their approaches and to strive for a clear, risk-based system of regulation, harmonised with best international practice, which facilitated market access for Australian exports.

For more information on Council activities and broader information about the sector as a whole, visit the ABCA website ([www.abca.com.au](http://www.abca.com.au)).



Agricultural  
Biotechnology  
Council of  
Australia