

ABCA Communique

7 March 2025

Dr Joe Smith | Chair



The Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia (ABCA) convened at the National Press Club in Canberra today, bringing together leading farming, agriculture, biotechnology, industry, and science organisations, as well as key stakeholders. The meeting provided a forum to address current and significant issues related to biotechnology and Australian agriculture.

Global efforts to ensure food and nutritional security are increasingly complicated by factors such as climate change, characterised by hotter and drier conditions and heightened incidences of extreme weather. With Australian farmers on the frontline of these challenges, innovations in agricultural biotechnology are essential in helping them adapt. Moreover, the rapidly changing trade landscape is challenging for farmers, while also potentially presenting opportunities. Against this backdrop, the Council underscored the urgent need for continued regulatory modernisation to ensure farmers have timely access to all available tools including cutting-edge biotechnological developments.

Presentations from key policy and regulatory bodies—the Department of Health and Aged Care, the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR), and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)—highlighted recent advancements in biotechnology regulation. ABCA members welcomed what is expected to be the completion of FSANZ Proposal P1055. They also emphasised the importance of implementing recommendations from the Third Review of the National Gene Technology Scheme, given their significance for both agricultural and medical research.

Distinguished researcher, Dr Russel Reinke (formally of the International Rice Research Institute), provided the Council with his firsthand experience of deploying Golden Rice (locally called Malusog Rice) in the Philippines. His presentation sparked a roundtable discussion on the complexities of deployment even with overwhelming product acceptance.

Reaffirming its commitment to advancing public awareness, informed policy-making, and a robust regulatory framework, the Council remains dedicated to ensuring that accurate, evidence-based information guides the continued development and deployment of agricultural biotechnology in Australia.

For further information on the Council's activities and broader sector insights, visit the ABCA website at www.abca.com.au.