



*Save the Nature of the Kimberley*

**enviroNS**  
**KIMBERLEY**  
INC

PO Box 2281 BROOME WA 6725

Phone: 08 9192 1922

Fax: 08 9192 5538

Email: [ekfreshwater@westnet.com.au](mailto:ekfreshwater@westnet.com.au)

Web: [www.enviroNSkimberley.org.au](http://www.enviroNSkimberley.org.au)

**Media Release**

**19th August 2008**

---

## **WA Elections: Carpenter's no-GM stance welcomed, Ord expansion plans questioned**

EnviroNS Kimberley today welcomed the WA Premier's announcement that the state-wide moratorium on Genetically Modified (GM) crops would be extended for a further 4 years if Labor wins government. But the group has questioned the wisdom of spending large amounts of public money on expanding the troubled Ord River Irrigation Scheme.

EK Freshwater Campaigner Dr Gary Scott, said: "The Premier's GM crops announcement is a recognition of the widespread community concern about the environmental and health risks of GM crops and signals a healthy scepticism about their supposed benefits.

"EK is horrified that the WA Liberal Party (and the Nationals) are prepared to allow GM cotton to be commercially grown if Ord Stage 2 proceeds. This is an entirely irresponsible policy position and simply confirms to us that the Kimberley environment will not be in safe hands should Mr Barnett be elected Premier," Dr Scott said.

However, EnviroNS Kimberley questions Mr Carpenter's decision to invest in the expansion of the Ord Scheme into the Mantinea Flats area, promising to spend \$30 million on the provision of infrastructure.

"Ord Stage 1 has already been a considerable burden on the public purse since its inception over four decades ago – now we have a state Premier wanting to throw more money into an expansion of the scheme," Dr Scott said.

"It would be far better to spend public money assisting Kimberley producers to convert to organic methods of production and helping them to secure long-term markets for environmentally sustainable products. This includes ensuring that the environmental problems associated with Ord Stage 1 are adequately dealt with."

"EK is concerned that large-scale agricultural development in the Mantinea area will impact upon the adjacent Ramsar-listed wetlands of Parry's Lagoon. This is an internationally significant site for migratory bird species. The proposed development would involve large-scale land-clearing, the use of pesticides and fertilisers and would draw off even more water from the river system – all of which will be to the detriment of the wetland", said Dr Scott.

**Media contact: Dr Gary Scott, ph 08 9192 1922 or 043 937 3386**

*The Kimberley Freshwater Campaign is supported by the Australian Conservation Foundation*