

News Media Release 29/8/08 Tasmanian GM-free breakthrough

Gene Ethics applauds Tasmania's all-party joint select committee report published today which recommends that: "prohibition on the release of GMO (Genetically Manipulated Organism) food crops to the Tasmanian environment should be extended and reviewed after five years." See: <http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/CTEE/genetech.htm>

"The GM ban helps isolate the rogue states of Victoria and NSW which allow Monsanto's Roundup tolerant GM canola to be grown commercially this year," says Gene Ethics Director Bob Phelps.

"Most states and the vast majority of their citizens want to stay GM-free.

"To match the Tasmanian, WA, SA and ACT GM bans and to restore the uniform system of national GM regulation, the GM states should re-impose their GM bans immediately.

"GM-free states grow over sixty percent of Australia's canola and will reap the rewards of free access to all markets for their GM-free products.

"Their policy of zero tolerance for GM contamination in imported grains, seeds, plant products and animal feed is the only way to ensure a secure GM-free future," Mr Phelps says.

"The report recommends that the Tasmanian government should;

- back independent scientific testing of GM foods on human health and safety;
- call on the Australian government for national surveillance of GM's health and safety; and
- ask Food Standards Australia for tough human safety testing, like that for new drugs.

"We also welcome Tasmania's push for better GM food labeling.

"Shoppers will use the information to choose between GM and GM-free processed foods.

"A few farmers claim the choice to grow GM canola but when they contaminate our environment and food supply, everyone else's right to choose GM-free will disappear.

"The Tasmanian report clearly spells out why GM-free is the way to stay for market, health and environmental benefits and that is why we support it," Mr Phelps concludes.

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