

Exposure Draft

Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Bill 2003

Background

In June this year the Government issued its response to the Standing Committee on Health's Inquiry into the *Gene Technology Bill 2002*.

Of particular note was the Government's response to Recommendation 3, in which the Government declared a three-year moratorium on the commercial release of GM food crops and foreshadowed the introduction of legislation to give effect to the moratorium.

In line with this commitment, the ACT Government tabled an exposure draft of the *Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Bill 2003* in the Legislative Assembly on 11 December 2003. The Bill seeks to prohibit the commercial production of certain genetically modified food crops in the Territory for a period of three years.

The Bill has been introduced as an exposure draft to provide the community with an opportunity to understand the legislative proposal and provide written submissions for the Government to consider prior to the legislation being finalised.

Overview of the *Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Bill 2003*

The Government is proposing that under this Bill the Minister for Health will have the power to impose an order prohibiting the cultivation in the ACT of a specified GM food plant or class of GM food plants.

The Minister may specifically exempt from prohibition any field trials or contained research involving GM crops that have been approved by the Gene Technology Regulator.

The proposed legislation makes provision for enforcement and monitoring powers and offences in relation to a moratorium order.

The proposed legislation has a sunset clause and is to be in effect for three years with provision for annual review in light of trade and marketing developments. The moratorium will sunset on 17 June 2006.

Consultation Arrangements

Comment is invited on the exposure draft Bill. There is no special form for submissions. Submissions should be in writing and directed to:

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The closing date for comment is 9 January 2004. Inquiries should be made to Melissa Crampton on (02) 6205 0838.