

## **Australian Greens—Additional Comments**

1.1 The Australian Greens have long been concerned about the role that genetically engineered organisms play in our modern agricultural system. Despite decades of research and commercialisation, doubt still remains over aspects of the safety of genetically modified foods and the advertised benefits of GM crops are yet to be seen. Crop yields have not increased, but the use of pesticides on our food has. The only ones profiting from GM are large GM companies.

1.2 While the Australian Greens do not oppose the amendments proposed in this Bill, which are technical in nature with an emphasis on improving the clarity of the scheme, a number of concerns about the assessment of GMOs in Australia remain.

1.3 The following principles have not yet been fully enshrined in legislation:

- All assessment of GM crops must include careful consideration of health and environmental risks; and
- Consumers have the right to know what is in the food they are eating.

1.4 It is the opinion of the Australia Greens that Australia has a long way to go in terms of its safety assessment as it relates to GMO in agriculture, or genetically engineered products or materials in products.

1.5 A number of concerns have been raised in earlier inquiries, but particularly concerning are those that highlight the need to better address both GMO labelling and GMO contamination.

1.6 I recently moved a successful motion in the Senate calling on the Government to investigate the creation of an insurance scheme for those growers whose crops are contaminated by GMO. I also previously introduced a private members Bill that sought to properly label GMO. Despite these initiatives, successive Governments have failed to fully grasp the challenges that GMOs present to both our environment and our health.

1.7 These larger issues remain part of the on-going debate around GMOs and need to be taken into consideration during further legislative reform around GM technology.

**Senator Rachel Siewert**

