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To whom it concerns,

GM labelling need to become mandatory in Australia and NZ. Polling consistently shows that consumers don't want to eat GM and want to know what's in their food.

I therefore strongly oppose changes to the Food Code that would allow a wide range of GM foods, to be sold without safety assessment or labelling. The fact that this is being proposed by Australia and potentially rolled out in NZ without adequate consultation and discussion in NZ is unacceptable.

Relying on agrochemical science for safety is also unacceptable as the companies submitting the science have a vested interest.

Gene editing techniques have been found to make genetic changes that could never occur in nature and to result in widespread genetic damage that often goes undetected by GM developers.

I am deeply concerned that FSANZ has relied on advice from scientists with serious conflicts of interest, to conclude these new GM foods pose no greater risks than existing foods. Those seeking to commercialise GM plants, animals and microbes should play no role in deciding how - or even whether - foods derived from them should be regulated.

The trade impacts alone if you only take an economic interest should be enough to raise Red Flags. This would put us at odds with our international trading partners, which FSANZ admits "may have a significant impact on trade". The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, an international agreement signed by 166 governments worldwide, and the UN's food standards body Codex Alimentarius agree that all GM techniques differ from conventional breeding and that pre-market safety assessments are essential before GM organisms are used in food.

I support expanding the definition for 'gene technology' so FSANZ continues to assess and regulate all techniques and methods of genetic modification, other than conventional breeding. The proposal to deregulate new and emerging GM techniques and their food products, which pose new and unassessed risks, is completely unacceptable.

Thank you for considering my submission and hope you will take my concerns into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

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