

I dispute the blanket claim of your draft report, that "There is no economic or health and safety justification for banning the cultivation of genetically modified (GM) organisms." The cultivation of Monsanto's Roundup-Ready soybeans, for example, entails the wholesale application of a pesticide known (by the WHO and others) to be carcinogenic, and consequently banned in many countries for reasons of environmental and public health and safety. The banning of such a chemical would in fact render the production of this GMO crop economically non-viable. This is just one example of the need for a more nuanced consideration of the question of GMO regulation. This, together with the need to practice the precautionary principle in relation to GMO technology – widely recognised by academics who have been monitoring developments in this field – suggests that state moratoria should not be lifted. Indeed, the democratic freedom of people to determine their own modes of production and eating habits needs to be highlighted in your report. From an economic point of view, what would be the cost of labelling GMO ingredients in food – which, in the interest of consumer choice, should obviously be mandatory. "People before profits" is the mantra of public sovereignty. It grieves the people to find that formula reversed, in the interest of so-called national sovereignty, i.e. of transnational ruling elites. While GMO crops may not be inherently unsafe, from a strictly scientific point of view, the context of their deployment (i.e. the market, solely dedicated to the expansion of private profits) must be considered a critical factor in the likely emergence of adverse effects on human health and the Australian environment.