

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

**GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS FREE AREAS EXEMPTION ORDER (NO. 3) 2009 —
DISALLOWANCE**

Motion

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston) [4.01 pm]: Mr Acting Speaker —

Mr R.F. Johnson: Have you been promoted? That is good. I like that.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: We will repay the favour in time.

Mr Acting Speaker, I move —

That the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Exemption Order (No. 3) 2009 under the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003, a copy of which was laid upon the table of the house on Tuesday, 9 June 2009, is hereby disallowed.

It is a sad day—a sad week actually—to be starting private members’ business in this place with a disallowance motion to stop the planting of genetically modified crops in Western Australia. At the same time as cane toads are hopping across the border from the Northern Territory into Western Australia and people are saying, “Let’s stop the toads”, we are now introducing something that we will never be able to stop. It does not matter what we do, the contamination of non-genetically modified crops by GM crops has been proven in the trials and we will not be able to prevent contamination from one field of GM crops to another field of non-GM crops. This really will be the ruination of our clean–green image in WA. The decision to allow GM crops was a reckless decision by the Minister for Agriculture and Food and a decision that has absolutely disappointed many people. The minister has refused to listen to people, except for those in the seed companies and a few farmers—not the majority of farmers. It is disappointing that he has taken no notice of 27 000 signatures on a petition. Since that petition was tabled in Parliament, thousands more signatures have been added. No consideration whatsoever has been given by this minister to this issue. One can only wonder whether he listens to the people in his own electorate. There has been much concern and dissension in the shires in his electorate. He refuses to listen to the people who voted for him. What a disaster that will be for him at the next election. Certainly there will be other political plays that will happen: under the Labor Party’s rules and regulations our preferences go to the National Party, and I will make sure that at our next state conference we will change that so that the preferences will not go to the National Party. Whoever puts their hand up—I can see the Premier smiling.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The Premier sees the chance for the seat to change to the Liberal Party, because that is what will happen.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Excellent!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I know the Premier has a deal at the moment but, as we know, the Premier does not stick to his deals. I would be very nervous if I were the minister. He does not stick to his deals, and to prove that members need look no further than my electorate, which experienced 40 million worth of broken promises in one year. The minister should be very nervous about what this Premier will do to him in the future.

I come back to the shires. The Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003 is a disaster for the shires. If a truck carting GM canola rolls over, who is responsible for cleaning up the spillage and mess, and without any compensation whatsoever? We know who it will be, because the minister has said that the mess will be cleaned up by the shire in which the accident occurs. To me, that is two-faced, especially when many shires have requested that no GM seeds of any type be in their area. However, the government has handballed that responsibility to those shires.

Many shires have requested that in the future they have more say about where they are headed and that the minister listen to their considerations and the considerations of their ratepayers. This is the case, particularly in the Nannup, Margaret River and Augusta, towns, which are in the heart of the minister’s electorate. The people in these towns have been extremely vocal. The doctors alliance said no to GMOs, but the minister did not listen to them. The chefs united group has also said no to GMOs.

Dr G.G. Jacobs: Did they say no to GM insulin?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The Minister for Water would be a great one to interject after his performance in this place in the past 12 months. The biggest drip that came out of a tap was the Minister for Water.

The shires have requested further meetings with the minister. The minister demonstrated his arrogance on the steps of Parliament House only a week ago when he refused to talk to the people there. He stormed off and said,

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“That’s what I’m going to do.” He spent 30 seconds on the microphone and then stormed off because he was subject to a bit of booing. He would not talk; he is an arrogant minister who is not listening to either the people who voted for him or the people with concerns.

Mr D.T. Redman: I have fronted every occasion out there.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: It is one thing to front up, but it is another thing to listen. He stormed off, took his little booties and went home.

The minister has disregarded 90 per cent of the submissions on the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act. Ninety per cent of the people who put in submissions said no to GMO, yet the minister walked away from them.

What was the point of running forums at the university, when it was a roadshow towards GM? Hendy Cowan, for whom I did have the utmost —

Mr D.T. Redman: You don’t now?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Not after his performance when he shut down the anti-GM people at that forum. It was an acting performance from trained performers who said yes to GM. Hendy Cowan talked down some farmers and then allowed other farmers to talk for as long as they liked. I have lost any respect I had for him. I thought he was a statesman, but after that performance I thought he was a disgrace and that he had been brainwashed.

What was not picked up at that meeting during the presentation by the farmer who was promoting GM crops in WA and outlining what is happening on the east coast was that already farmers are turning away from GM crops. Off the top of my head, I recall that the number of farmers in favour of GM crops peaked at 62 per cent, but in the past year it declined to 50 per cent. The point the farmer made was that it is all about rotation. That is fine. He then said that it is also about cost. The farmers did not listen. The cost was going up, because once they had signed up with their seed group, there was no stopping it. The farmers were captive to those people that produce the genetically modified seed. That was obvious from that presentation at the University of Western Australia. However, again, the high-flyers who think that this is the way to go did not listen to anyone. They just said, “No, we’ve got to have it.” Believe me, in time they will regret that decision because of the cost factor. Once a person is captive to those people, without any capping on the cost, GM crops will be the great big white elephant and people will move away from them.

Again, why would the government move towards GM when it has a market out there that takes all the crop? If it moves towards GM, the market restricts where the crop can be sold. To me, that just does not gel with why the government would make this decision. At the moment the wheat price is right down. If all the crop goes into one market, a GM canola market, do members think the price will stand up? Of course it will not, because there will not be any non-GM crop to sell into the other markets, so it will all go into one market. It is pure economics. If there is only one market, who will control that market? It will not be the grower; it will be the buyer. It will certainly be the buyer who will say, “I’ll only pay that because you can’t sell it anywhere else.” Sure, there have been some moves in the European Community in recent times, and I certainly understand that. However, I had dinner with the Japanese Consul one night about a week ago, and he was very concerned about where we are headed with our GM products. If that is not a lesson, I do not know what is.

I went to a Pastoralists and Graziers Association meeting probably 12 or 18 months ago at which the Premier, after his trip to Japan, stood up and in his speech urged caution. He said, “Proceed very, very carefully on this. I’ve just come back from Japan and the message has been given to me as well.” That was from the Premier, yet the minister, in his little arrogant way, is going forward and now must have support, because the government does not want a split between the National Party and the Liberal Party. It will never happen because very often money talks louder than politics, and this is one of those times. However, I can say that the last time I mentioned this, the Premier denied that he ever said that. He said, “When?” But that day at the PGA conference he certainly said, “I urge caution.” Has the Premier changed his tune on that?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I said that we’ll take a cautious approach.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: He will say, “No, I didn’t say that.” He will change his tune.

Again, it is a very big risk, and when people take risks, accidents happen. There is a chance here that the damage that will be done to the farming community will never be repaired, because it has already been proven that cross-fertilisation is hard to control. There is a five-metre barrier from one crop to another. I believe that at the time the minister said, “We’d better move that out to 10 metres.” Has anyone been in the countryside and seen a willy-willy go through a field? It can take a shed with it and drop it 500 metres away. Can members imagine what can

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happen to those tiny little seeds in a willy-willy? They could end up in Perth, all the way from Wyalkatchem, before they drop down. Therefore, to have a 10-metre barrier on any crop is absolutely ridiculous, and the contamination will continue. What will happen to the people whose crops are contaminated? They will have no legal rights other than through common law, because this minister has not put any rules or regulations in place to cover that. It will end up with farmer against farmer, brother against brother and even father against son. I know that some of those people have talked about situations occurring along those lines. Common law will apply. Who will win? It will not be the farmer; it will be the lawyers and other people. Communities will suffer, because those communities will be deeply divided, including the member for Wagin's community, which is already seeing some of those divisions. The member has been down there and has met with them. He knows that some of the farmers in that community are getting irate with each other. That is something I do not want to see. That is because there are no controls. If someone wants to grow GM grain there, he can. The shire cannot declare that it is a GM-free area. It cannot say that GM cannot be carted through the area. That is because the minister has said that this is good: "Just bend over; it is good for you, take it!" The member has to remember that those people will exercise a vote at the next election. I am sure that in the Williams area we will see a substantial swing against the sitting member because he has not taken a position to support the people in his local electorate. I have been to Williams and met with the community. The roof did not fall in because the Labor Party went into Williams! They were very happy to see us there because they believe that this government—the member for Wagin and also the Minister for Agriculture and Food—has ignored them. I believe that the member for South Perth made a short visit there and collected a couple of bags of chaff and bales of hay for the horses, but he got a message while there from a very large group of anti-GM people saying, "We are concerned; it is too early. The government has not done the homework very well."

Mr T.K. Waldron: I will let the member for Collie–Preston know that I have put my position and they understand my position. I spoke to one of them recently, who had put something in the paper that was completely wrong. He actually apologised.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Talking about things that are wrong and misleading Parliament, did not the member have to make a correction this week? There is a pattern appearing here with misleading Parliament. The member should be careful. He should not say anything about how other people are wrong. He should not say anything about that.

The member for South Perth and other people in this room are also concerned about the consumers. That is a group of people other than farmers who are also very concerned. Consumers are a very large group of people within our electorates. Some of those people comprise a new wave of people—young mums.

Mr B.J. Grylls: There have always been young mums!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The minister can have old mums, if he wants. The minister wants me to be correct. As a person who ridicules other people's speeches, he should be very careful.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Young mums are not new; there have always been mothers.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The minister has got it on the record again. I am saying that consumers have concerns. One of those concerns is labelling. Labelling is an absolute must so that consumers at the corner shop can make their decision. What I am saying about the young mothers of today is they are well educated and they certainly read up on what is good for their children. I see the member for Merredin nodding his head. He is a man with a young family, and I am sure that his wife reads up on things as well. Women do not go out and grab the first brand they see off the supermarket shelf. They want to know about it, and about its background. The member for Merredin can laugh, but I am sure that is what happens, even in his house. Those securities have been blocked. Those laws should be in place before we even start growing GM foods in WA. The law should be very clear on labelling. I know that members opposite will say that is the responsibility of the federal government, and I should talk to it. I have written to the federal government as well.

Mr D.T. Redman: What is your expectation on labelling?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: It should clearly and precisely indicate that a product contains GM, because, if it is not clear, consumers are being cheated. Members opposite will say that 85 per cent of the oil used in some fish and chip shops already contains GM material. I say that we should label them as well so that we will all know.

Mr D.T. Redman: Even if you cannot measure it?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: What does the minister mean by that?

Mr D.T. Redman: What if you cannot measure something that has GM in it?

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Mr M.P. MURRAY: Why can we not measure it? It can be measured and traced, as the member well knows. It can be traced right back to the source. In many ways, it is a good thing that it can be traced back because if people break the rules by buying it in bulk and mixing it, it can be traced back to the origin. I am saying that labelling is a must.

Tony Burke's position on GM has previously been mentioned in this house.

Mr D.T. Redman: Do you want to read it out for me?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I knew the member would have a copy; that is why I am talking about it. He is predictable. Does the Minister for Agriculture and Food have the gumption to be like Tony Burke in his decision on mad cow disease? He listened to the community, he heard what it said, and he changed his position. Has the minister got the gumption to do that? I bet he does not have the same fortitude as Tony Burke. The minister will use his example when it suits him, but does the minister support the importation into Australia of beef from countries where there is mad cow disease? Does the minister support that? Is he nodding his head?

Mr D.T. Redman: I don't think you understand —

Mr M.P. MURRAY: No, I am asking the minister a straight question. In one breath he uses Tony Burke as an example, but he does not use the example of him admitting to having made a bit of a blue in not having done enough research, and is therefore proposing to look at the issue for two years and go from there. That is what the Minister for Agriculture and Food should do, given the number of people who have brought petitions to Parliament and written to members saying that they do not need GM food.

A further concern that has been brought to my attention is the gutting of the Department of Agriculture and Food. It will not be able to carry out research and studies in the future; a lot of that work will be contracted out to private companies. There will be bias; a lot of these companies will simply give the government the results they think it wants, not the true results. I believe that that will happen in time with GM food. Private companies will give the government the results they think it wants to hear, because it is paying them money. It should be remembered that the gutting of this department is an absolute disgrace. We had a great agency in which studies were carried out on crossbreeding and other areas; now it has been gutted. The government is also dropping things off that are of concern to everyone in the Department of Agriculture and Food, such as the program for the control of skeleton weed. The emphasis now is on containing it rather than trying to eradicate it. Will that be the same for GM crops? If we want to get rid of it in the future, will it be containment or eradication? I believe that it will just be containment; we will not be able to eradicate it, because we cannot even get rid of skeleton weed in Western Australia. The same goes for footrot; we have dropped the eradication program. Again, the emphasis now is on containment rather than eradication, and the Western Australian Farmers Federation is furious about it. Believe me, the same processes will happen in the future with GM crops.

I see the member for Murray–Wellington over there, looking at me very intently. He will have also received many letters on the GM issue; I have copies from people who have forwarded them to me. It is not just farmers but also consumers who have gone to the member for Murray–Wellington.

Mr M.J. Cowper: From my electorate?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Yes, one letter. I think I will dig it out! People are writing to all politicians.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr P.B. WATSON: The Leader of the National Party is commenting from a seat that is not his own.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Leader of the National Party, you know better than that. Please cease commenting unless you do so from your seat.

Debate Resumed

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I will show the house this article from the *Geraldton Guardian* with the heading, "Support for GM halt call". Who does it feature? National Party state president, Wendy Duncan. The National Party also lies to the electorate, saying one thing before the election and doing another.

Point of Order

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I ask that the member table the document he is quoting from.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

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Mr B.J. Grylls: Will you table it?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I will table it. I have no problem with that. It is an article from the *Geraldton Guardian*. It states —

Ms Duncan said it was Nationals' policy to support the lifting of the moratorium on non-food products but the party did not support commercial production of GM foods in Western Australia.

That is the National Party's policy. When we look on the website, we see that it has all been wiped. It has been cleaned and sanitised so that we cannot find anything. This is what the National Party said, as reported in this article on 6 June 2008. Things do change over time. I have not seen anything from the Nationals since saying that their policy has changed. The article continues —

“As far as GM food is concerned we believe caution is the best way to go at this time,” she said.

...

“We are geographically isolated and in a perfect position to remain GM free in our food crops until we know for sure they are safe,” ...

We do not know for sure that GM foods are safe. There is evidence about that uncertainty all over the world. Even the Indian government recently withdrew a GM eggplant because it was concerned about the problems associated with it.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Are you going to put that article on the table?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I do not know who is running this show.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, there is no call to have the paper tabled. That is not an appropriate request.

Mr B.J. Grylls: You're happy to quote from something but not make it available. I am not quite sure that you are quoting accurately.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: Firstly, under the standing orders there is no requirement for a person who is not a minister to table a document. Secondly, Madam Acting Speaker, the Leader of the National Party was just canvassing the ruling you made a moment ago. I ask him to not canvas the Acting Speaker's ruling.

Debate Resumed

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I find it quite ironic that the minister has introduced GM food into WA, yet when asked to fund the introduction of a dung beetle species that could have helped WA's tourism industry, he refused to do so. He refused on many grounds, saying that studies have not been done, but mainly he was concerned about his bottom line, the budget. On the one hand, he is quite willing to run the line that I am concerned about. Who is pulling his strings? That is what worries me. There is a bigger player in the background. I am not sure who that player is. Someone is certainly starting to pull his strings. A puppet-master is out there somewhere saying he had better do this. However, when real issues such as our multimillion-dollar tourist industry come up, he neglects that area. He said that the Minister for Tourism's money should be used.

There were worldwide reports of the fly problem in WA and the minister sat on his hands. Before the last election, the minister called for the government to do something. When he got the job, he refused to do it himself. I am pointing out the arrogance of the minister. The minister is two-faced. He has changed his tune and he refuses to listen to the general public. It was a worldwide issue and he would not deal with it for a small amount of money, \$500 000. Yet he has come out and allowed our green, clean image to be absolutely ruined.

After the testing of GM foods, when there were 11 failures out of 17, the minister said it was a very successful test. I cannot believe that in anyone's language. There was a failure rate of well over 50 per cent. It proves that in the future we will not be able to contain GM seeds and cross-pollination in WA. We just will not be able to do that. The minister's own testing has shown that. When the minister was asked what protocols he was going to put in place into the future to maintain GM crops in their rightful spot or in their rightful paddocks, he did not give an answer. All the minister said was, “We have done the testing.” Were the tests about yield? No. On the minister's own admission, the tests were not about yield. Should that not have been one of the tests as well, so that farmers would have a better understanding of what yields would come out?

Mr D.T. Redman: That shows your ignorance.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: No. When the minister was asked that question, that is the answer that he gave—and many press releases prove that that is what the minister said.

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When the minister went to Canada, did he meet with any of the anti-GM groups? No. He only gave them a phone call. The minister would not listen to the other side of the equation. Before the minister left for Canada, there was much publicity in many of the country magazines about how the minister was going to Canada to look at both sides. When the minister got to Canada, he made only one phone call to one group. It really, really disgusts me to think that the minister spent taxpayers' money on going to Canada, but did not meet with both sides of the equation. That is a waste of money. The minister went to Canada just to reassure himself. He went there not for the consumers in Western Australia, and not for the growers in Western Australia, but just so that he could satisfy his own ego—which is probably a better way of putting it—by saying, “I am going to do this regardless of what happens into the future.”

Another group that is very concerned is the apiarists. They will not be able to sell their product if it goes anywhere near a GM crop. There is no market for their product if it is GM contaminated. They will be putting a presentation to the minister as well. I know that they have spoken to the minister. Although they are only a small group in Western Australia, they are a very important group. Members may not believe this, but there is already a shortage of bees in Western Australia. If apiarists drop out of the system because it is not viable for them, we will need to import honey again, and we will then have the problem of contamination from overseas. Anyone who has seen canola seeds would know how small they are. Any right-minded person would understand that these seeds could stick to the wing or the beak of a bird and be dropped hundreds and hundreds of metres from where they first started. Yet the minister says that contamination is not going to be a problem. Believe me, we are going to have some major problems.

I want to go back to the Department of Agriculture and Food. I have already said that we will get the answers we want if we pay for them. There is a major concern that the cuts that are being made to that department will come back to bite farmers on the backside. They really, really will. That is because the research will be done by a body other than an independent body such as the department. What I have noticed in the Department of Agriculture and Food is that if people disagree with the minister, they disappear—I do not know where they go—and new people appear. That has been quite a trait in that area. I have noticed also that people who have been promised a job but who did not agree with the minister have disappeared. People who were promised a job and who jumped ship from another political party have ended up on the street and have had to go back to practising as a vet, or whatever. It really concerns me that veiled threats are being made in the Department of Agriculture and Food that if people do not toe the line with the minister, they will be gone. I am not saying that that is coming directly from the minister. What I am saying is that there is a group out there that is saying, “Be careful, because if you do not agree with the minister, you will be rolled; you will be out of here.” That is common knowledge within the department. That is certainly a concern of mine. What has been popping up in many other areas under the Liberal–National Party government is: do not speak out because you could be rolled. You will lose your job within the public service.

I brushed on this and then got distracted by the minister over there—I would like the minister, in his reply, to tell us about his protocol in the future about cartage, about machine cleaning, about how local governments are to deal with that, and about transport routes so people know where it is. What happens if there is a spillage, such as a truck falling over? There have been no publications on those issues. No real information has come out of the minister's office on these areas. I do not think there are even any directions to say what should happen. That has been left wide open. If we leave it like that, we will get cowboys out there trying to do a trip through the night or something like that. We will get problems. We see it in all walks of life. We cannot say, “There's a little bit of seed in the bottom of the bin. Don't worry about that; there's only a tonne or so. Fill in over the top”—which has already happened on the east coast when five tonnes was left in one truck. The grain was filled from over the top and contamination occurred. The grain receival body got away with it because of the one per cent rule. They stirred up the five tonnes with another 2 000 or 3 000 tonnes to get under the one per cent rule. I would hate to think that is the type of thing we have to do to stop contamination being realised in WA—that we had a grain receival body that was cross-mixing to make sure that it did not come up under the banner of GM because it is under one per cent and that will be allowed. That is where some of the faults are. There are many ways we can have contamination, but some of the basics have failed already. I have yet to see what the minister will do or what rules he is to put in place to make sure that does not happen.

The minister says that I am ignorant about the yield factor, but I do read as much as possible about the yield factor. I have not seen enough evidence to convince me that the yield factor is one of the driving forces. Although fertilisers are one, and herbicides and pesticides are another—I can understand farmers embracing that—we already have weeds that are resistant to some sprays. I am not saying from GM canola. The minister will know very well that some weeds are very strong and are very resistant to sprays. We have the rotation method but that does not help along the roadsides.

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Another concern that was brought to me at Williams the other day was roadside contamination from resistant weeds—not canola itself but weeds that are resistant to sprays. We see the machines that are driven down the road, spraying. We will have another really strong, really heavy problem with weeds resistant to sprays that are supposed to remove them. That in itself will cause the next generation of cross-breeding. The farmers will pay again. They will have to double spray or use a stronger spray to remove the weeds from their paddocks. It may be the case in the short term that fewer herbicides and pesticides or whatever will be used.. That is why we should be having longer trials and very controlled trials; not trials in which we have 11 failures out of 17. We must really work hard on that issue. I see the minister laughing, but we can certainly say that there are problems out there now. These problems will be ten-fold in the near future. I am talking about trials over a very few years. We know that rye-grass is a very strong weed, but it is not a cross-contaminant. Certainly some of the onion weeds and those sorts of weeds will cross-contaminate because they are of the same species. We have seen that. Farmers have had to spend a lot of money to clean up those paddocks. I feel sorry for them because it will be happening in the future.

There have been many letters, and I will quote a few. The first is addressed to Mr Barnett and Mr Redman from a Mr Leonard Johnson. I think it is very pertinent. It reads —

Since We have gotten involved in the issue of GM or no GM I have heard many compelling reasons for NOT having GMOs in WA.

What I haven't heard, is why you want to bring them in.

I am a farmer and I have no correspondence at all from either of your departments at any time giving me any information so that I can make an informed choice.

Why is that? Surely with an issue as important as this one people should be given the facts. As it is, the most I have heard Mr Redman actually say is that he wants to give farmers a choice and bring them into line with the rest of the world. I can't see that as a compelling reason.

We ARE farmers in a grain area ... why haven't you asked us? Or even told us what these supposed choices are? As far as I can see, you are actually taking choices away from us.

I would really appreciate it if you could let me know your reasons.

I believe that there were also some petitions delivered to the minister's office. I have not seen those presented in this house. I would just ask if they have been presented. They were delivered to Dumas House.

Mr D.T. Redman: It is always my practice to read in petitions that come from my electorate no matter what those petitions are. I am not aware of petitions that had been given to me —

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Okay, I will take that as a fact. I am not criticising the minister but I am letting him know that people out there are concerned. They have not read them in *Hansard* or seen those petitions presented in Parliament. I suggest that the minister do some homework very quickly and look at what is going on with those petitions.

Another communication I have is addressed to the shadow Minister for Health, Mr Roger Cook, and reads —

I am sending this email to you because I am very concerned about Terry Redman blindly accepting Genetic Engineering crops to be grown in WA. He seems to believe the science that multinationals like Monsanto and Byers and others say about their patent crops.

The multinationals do not want any independent scientific bodies like universities to test their science because they know that it will not stand up to scrutiny. It is bad science. Mr. Redman does not seem to understand the science behind Genetic Engineering (GE). You just can't implant a gene from one species into another nature will not allow it. The science in short—the multinationals uses a raw DNA virus that is not recognised by the host plant so that virus can insert its DNA. Pollen carries the raw DNA virus and inserts itself into related species hence contaminating other plants which now become GE and belongs to the multinational whose patent it is. Animals eating, sucking pollen from GE plants now have the raw DNA virus in them which could recombine with other viruses within them causing new strains of diseases. This is precisely what is happening to us as we eat GMO food.

There is an attachment to explain it in more detail. The attached file was from Dr John Fagan, a molecular biologist at the University of Management, Iowa, the United States. It goes on to ask the reader to read the rest of it, which is quite long-winded. The email was from Trevor Anton to the shadow Minister for Health's office. These are very varied people. There is a further communication from Madeleine Love, which reads —

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

To The Honourable Members of WA parliament:

Most members of Parliament will have received this, but I believe that it should be read out in Parliament. It reads —

This statement by India's Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh made late last night, announcing a moratorium on GM eggplant, is amazing for its transparency and democracy. It covers many of the aspects of the GM food and crops situation we'd wish an Australian politician to understand, and more. It showed respect for the public, science, farmers, and recognised financial interests and how they have effected information flow and decisions.

Even in India they have real concerns, and we are not listening. That is the major problem. We have a community that will be divided and a community that wishes for more information that is not forthcoming. That is something I believe we must address. The lack of information provided to the grower and the consumer is astounding, to say the least, as is the lack of legislation to back up these people who do not want genetically modified crops to be grown. If the government must do something that concerns the community so much, it should at least put some parameters around it so that the people can have confidence in what the government is doing. At this stage they have absolutely no confidence in the government. Some members opposite are very concerned about what some people are saying in the city, not the country. They do not have a vested interest in this; they are straight-out consumers. They are concerned for their children and about the way agriculture is headed worldwide. We are running with the big boys when we could be standing up to be counted in the future as a state that said no and was proved right. I would not like to carry on my back into the future the decision that this government is making. This decision could be terribly wrong and the state could pay for it forever. The minister should take note of that. There is still time for the minister to turn this around and hold a moratorium. He should slow it down and not rush in. We should do some more studies and look at what the independent scientists are saying, not the seed sellers. It must be remembered that over time the world has been left to deal with dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyl, DDT, Agent Orange and now Roundup Ready, which the jury is still out on. We have made those mistakes in the past and we are still paying for them. In my electorate is a "hot area" where potatoes used to be grown 20 or 30 years ago. Even today cows and sheep cannot graze on that land and be sent to market because the land is contaminated with DDT. We are heading towards making the same mistake with GM crops. I again request that the minister listen to the people.

Many other members wish to speak on this matter. If the minister will not change his mind, will he make some small concessions to the farmers and others? Will he commit to establishing a register of GM farmers that would help when litigation occurs in the future over the contamination of crops? A register of GM growers would allow a farmer to know where the contamination came from. If a farmer next door was growing GM crops, his neighbour could go to court and argue that his crop was contaminated by that farmer. He would not have to prove to the courts, at a huge cost —

Mr D.T. Redman: Don't you think that process needs to be more rigorous to be sure that someone who was not guilty wasn't found guilty and that someone who got compensation actually deserved it?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: This request was made to me by some of the groups in the community, which is why I am putting it to the minister. The register would allow people to know where a GM crop was being grown. A non-GM farmer might not want to plant the same crop as a neighbour who was growing GM crops so that the non-GM farmer's crop would not become contaminated. Alternatively, a non-GM farmer whose crop was contaminated would be able to argue in court that he did not wish to grow GM crops on his property.

Another suggestion is to allow shires and non-GM farmers to apply for GM-free areas. That would mean that if 10 or 15 farmers want to get together in a certain district and say, "We want to remain GM free", then they will then be allowed to do that by law. At the moment the government is saying the current situation is the law. Farmers want some such protection, and they want some help from the minister by way of his saying, "This area can be declared GM free." That would probably happen in areas with bigger fields, such as the minister's electorate where this issue is very, very hot. People are saying they do not have any protection there. They want to say to the minister—their member of Parliament—that they want their area to remain GM free. That is the least the minister could do in his electorate for these people who he duped by making a policy change after the election. He could at least go back to them and front-up and say that he will give them that opportunity. I remind the minister that although canola is not the issue down there, I could not believe that the Department of Agriculture and Food wasted money on its great display of blue carnations, which was done to demonstrate that GM is really good for us—for Christ's sake!

Mr D.T. Redman: Are you saying that you're against all GM? From that statement, I take it that you are against all GM.

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Yes.

Mr D.T. Redman: Is that all GM activity?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Yes. We know that it is already present in some areas—do not worry about that! I would love to see Western Australia remain GM free, but we know that there is already contamination in some areas.

[Interruption from the gallery.]

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L.L. Baker): Members of the public are very welcome in the public gallery, but we ask you to please be quiet; no interjections are permitted. Thank you.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I return to my point, which I am sure the minister will answer: a commitment by the minister to provide, or allow, GM-free areas would raise his standing in his own electorate. That is what is being asked for down there. That would allow farmers in other areas to say, “No; we want a buffer zone of X, and we want to be GM free in this area.” If they are allowed that, they can then sell into any market in the world and not be captive to the GM market, the logistics of which I cannot understand, as I said earlier.

Some regulation needs to be introduced so that seed producers can not deduct a royalty at the endpoint if there is more than 50 per cent contamination. If a crop has been contaminated—some would say illegally; others would say unintentionally—if it is over a certain percentage of contamination when it is taken to the market, a premium must be paid to the seed producer. Farmers have to pay for the right of having that contamination on their property, even though they did not ask for it. That is the way the law stands at the moment, to my understanding, although I will stand corrected.

Mr D.T. Redman: I think you will be corrected on that.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Why should a person whose crop has illegal contamination of over 50 per cent have to pay a premium on something they did not want and certainly did not ask for? It would be in the minister’s best interests to provide a cut-off regulation in the future for people whom that happens to.

In conclusion—some people may say this is drawing a long bow—not so long ago we did not hear about people having a reaction to peanuts, but it is now quite a common issue and people are having violent reactions to peanuts.

Mr D.T. Redman: We might have a chance of finding a solution here!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Without full studies being conducted into the effects of GM changes—I am not just talking about canola—people with allergies may suffer in the future from a genetic change in foods. This again will bring another factor into play whereby doctors and hospitals will pay for a decision such as that of this government; a decision that is a disaster for our state. Therefore, I ask the minister to please, please, reconsider, to give more time for study, and to not be bought off by Monsanto paying \$50 000 to be a sponsor at his conference.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [4.55 pm]: I rise to support this motion put forward by the member for Collie–Preston to disallow the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Exemption Order 2010.

It is a fact of good marketing that companies always give their consumers what consumers want. I am pleased to see the member for Riverton nodding. Good marketing is about respecting that golden rule to give the consumer what he or she wants. There is no market intelligence available to us today that suggests consumers in Western Australia, or elsewhere in the world for that matter, want genetically modified products. Numerous studies, surveys and pieces of market research have been conducted that prove the point that consumers today do not want to choose a GM product. I recall quite recently that the Leader of the National Party said he was well aware that if a straw poll were conducted in Hay Street Mall tomorrow that asked people whether they would like a GM product or a GM-free product, they would go for the GM-free product with incredible consistency. A survey conducted by Newspoll in September 2008 polled some 1 200 Australians and found that only two per cent of respondents would ever contemplate going for a product promoted as having GM ingredients; that they would be attracted to a product because it had GM ingredients. The vast majority of people want products that contain any form of GM material labelled accordingly.

This confirms the point that we are headed on a trajectory that will see Western Australian farmers—canola producers—producing a product that is not wanted in the global market, that is not in demand and is not being specifically sought out. There may be arguments to say, “Oh, well, we can kind of sneak this in; we can ensure that it goes into a manufacturing processing area where the consumer won’t really know what the final product is.” But surely, if we are looking to elevate ourselves from being mere producers of a commodity into producers of a product that can attract a premium price, we should look to produce a product that we can clearly market as

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

GM free. We could add to that whole marketing package and say that all Western Australian products are GM free. That is the simple point that has been forgotten. There are too many people, perhaps friends of those who are in government today, who believe that they have a vested interest in being able to produce genetically modified canola. It seems that they have won the minds of the government of today. They have been able to convince the government of the policy position that was drawn up in the most tawdry of circumstances; when the Liberal Party was in the depths of opposition, consultants went around who had vested interests in ensuring that the GM product is grown in Western Australia and they were the ones who drafted the Liberal Party's policy that was then taken to the election and has subsequently become government policy. That is not the way to formulate policy. I am very proud to say that I am a member of a political party that has a far more rigorous and thorough policy development procedure. It has a very steady cautious rigorous policy development procedure.

As for the minister's comments, the member for Collie—Preston highlighted that the minister's party went to the last election with a very clear position. Hon Wendy Duncan, President of the National Party at the time, was very clear about it. She said that any genetically modified product that was going to enter the food supply stream was unacceptable; that there were too many risks involved. She made that position very clear. I understand that was a published National Party policy. But as my colleague has indicated, we cannot find National Party policies on the National Party website any more. I give credit to the Liberal Party; it still has its pre-election policies on its website. National Party policies cannot be found. However, members will see in National Party press articles that it went to the election with a very clear position. People who voted for the National Party at the last state election thought they were voting for a party that would not allow the production of GM canola. That was quite clear to those people who voted for the National Party. The Minister for Agriculture and Food has committed an outrageous act of perfidy. If he wants to continue in that way, tricking people who voted for the National Party, I suppose the court of public opinion will bring him to book eventually.

We have heard the argument in Western Australia that GM canola is all about giving farmers choice. I think it is good to give people choice, but it is not choice when the choice of one person will be to the detriment of another, and that is exactly what we risk here with GM canola. Under this guise of choice, people who believe they will be financially ahead and have some sort of desire to try this whiz-bang technology that has all sorts of sales pitches and razzamatazz attached to it, and who promote it as the new silver bullet for agriculture in Western Australia, are being allowed to produce a GM product according to the minister's wishes. However, that could have a detrimental impact on their neighbours; it could lead to the pollution of neighbouring properties, where people have made a conscious decision to market their product GM free to attract a premium price—their legitimate right to market their product in such a way. Those people could suffer GM pollution. However, the minister is not talking about compensating them. The minister clearly has a responsibility to indicate to people who made the choice to be GM-free farmers and to maintain a GM-free status that he will provide some form of compensation to them should they find their GM-free crop has been polluted by a neighbour's GM product.

We heard something also of the trials. I understand that about 13 farms were involved in those trials. The minister promoted them primarily as testing contamination. There were in fact some 11 contamination incidents, so the trial of 2009 was hardly an overwhelming success story. My experience is—I do not think this was properly tested in his trial—that when the product comes off the farm to the CBH Group silos, the likelihood of contamination is very high. That is my personal experience, minister. When I worked for CBH, it was not at all unusual for a truckload of barley to end up on the A1 wheat stack. Those sorts of mixes happen all the time. The minister might say that things have changed at CBH since the 1980s, when I was working for that company during harvest time, but the fact is that human error does occur. We know that in Victoria this year there were mixes. With all the scrutiny and rigour around the issue of contamination at the receipt points, this problem is still occurring—contamination of GM-free products is happening. That issue must be resolved.

On the issue of contamination on a paddock scale, any amount of research shows that pollen can be transferred from one person's property to another. I find the minister's buffering proposals to be totally inadequate. I noticed also a suggestion that people will be able to find in editions of *Farmnote* information on the protocols for advising neighbours that they will produce GM product. There is therefore nothing legislative or regulatory about it at all. I believe three editions of *Farmnote* are mentioned that provide people with information on how to communicate with their neighbours and advise them they have a genetically modified crop. That is totally inadequate. There must be a regulatory mechanism. I believe we are rushing ahead here before testing has been done and before the legislation's regulatory mechanisms have been drafted and worked out in relation to how to manage the whole issue of GM canola in Western Australia.

The issue of co-existence is probably the next thing that comes to mind. In Canada, co-existence became impossible. The decision was made therefore that Canada would not try to market GM-free product. Canada is a producer of just GM canola. There is therefore no such thing as co-existence. The GM product eventually

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

overwhelms the supply chain, not because of its superior attributes at all, but simply because of its overwhelming presence; its domination; its ability to pollute and contaminate. That is the problem here. It also betrays the traditional rights of farmers to free access and exchange of seed. We are going down a path here that is all about the corporatisation of agriculture. Some may say that farming is a fairly corporatised business already when farmers have big loans with banks and so on, but I believe at the core of Western Australian culture is the family farming unit. That is a wonderful thing. It is a great strength of our farming system that it is based around family farming units. However, if we suddenly force people to pay license fees and special fees for the herbicides that are used, they will become totally dependent on multinational companies for the seed that has been up until now their right to hold over from a previous season. The seed from one year can be held over to another, perhaps with minor charges in relation to seed cleaning or something, but not with the huge licence fee costs.

On the issue of agronomics, it is very interesting to compare things. I hope the minister will clarify this point, but supposedly the trials looked at some of the agronomics around a GM canola crop. I point out to members that the Bayer GM canola product, Invigor, is about \$16 a kilogram for the seed, and farmers must buy that seed every year; they cannot keep seed over from the previous year. Compare that with between 50c and \$4.30 a kilogram for non-GM seed; so already there is a big difference there.

Then let us look at the herbicide costs. To spray a Bayer Invigor GM canola crop, farmers must use Liberty, and that costs about \$72 a hectare—much more than the non-GM canola herbicide, Atrazine, which costs \$28 a hectare. So there is a huge difference in the agronomics. Those people, like the minister who claim that there are agronomic benefits through using a GM product, need to provide much more data, which is something that has not been produced. I know that the minister will respond and say, “We will leave it to the farmers. Farmers are shrewd businessmen. They can make these choices. They’ll work out what’s best for their bottom line.” The fact is that some farmers in our community—a minority I believe—are making fundamental business mistakes when it comes to the marketing of their product. They are making the mistake of locking themselves into producing a commodity in which they are price takers—a fundamental business mistake—instead of looking for opportunities that abound and producing a product that can be niche marketed and can be differentiated from the global pool that is produced everywhere else in the world. A product that is unique to Western Australia can be marketed at a higher price, freeing us from the shackles of being price-takers. The Minister for Agriculture and Food wants to lock us into this problem, which Western Australian agriculture has faced for far too long, of being price-takers for producing a commodity product that can be barely distinguished from a product produced somewhere else in the world. It is disgraceful. The minister should be looking at every business opportunity to help our Western Australian farmers produce a unique product; one that is something that we can be proud of and which nobody else in the world can produce. This minister is doing the exact opposite, and that is a disgrace.

I am looking forward to hearing the minister explain a little bit about this GM technology. I want to know whether the minister really believes that the agrobacterium method of inserting the gene types into the genetic code is reliable. If that is something he believes is a precise science, is he aware that perhaps when we insert into the gene code we do not control whereabouts in that gene code those traits might go? There are all sorts of problems that are, perhaps, the cause of things that we are seeing, such as the increase in allergies in our young people and other health concerns.

People often put it that consumers in the United States have been consuming a genetically modified product of one form or another for a number of years—10, 15 to 20 years perhaps. A couple of issues arise with that. Firstly, Americans have been consuming that product probably without their knowledge or consent. I do not think the United States diet is necessarily one that we would want to emulate. I would be much more interested in looking towards the European attitude towards food—that is, the attitude to healthy eating—than I would be about choosing the American approach to food, which is oriented to fast foods and less healthy forms of eating. If we have to choose a model to emulate, the European model is certainly one that we should be looking towards. Of course, the European Union has far stricter controls on GM product than we have.

In the time that is left to me I would like to highlight further the issue of weeds in our Western Australian environment, particularly in the South West of the state; the possibility for super weeds to be created; and the problems around the spillages that inevitably will happen. I would like to draw members’ attention to some parliamentary questions that were responded to on this point. The answers were most inadequate.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: A parliamentary question on notice put to the Minister for Agriculture and Food via the Legislative Council on 10 November 2009 and answered on 2 March 2010 by the minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food touched on this very point. The reply states —

Roadside volunteers of crops following harvest and transportation are a normal occurrence.

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

That means that the minister is saying that it is quite normal for us to see a product spilt as it goes to the silo. How would that be dealt with, bearing in mind that we would be seeing on our roadsides GM canola, which would be Roundup resistant. Therefore, spraying it would not be any good. The answer that came back on that point was that mechanical means would be used to remove the canola. There would have to be armies of people walking thousands of kilometres of wheatbelt roads that would be contaminated by GM canola, pulling out GM weeds. That is a totally unacceptable situation. Perhaps the minister has plans to talk about an army of weeders. If he does, he might let us know.

It is in that parliamentary question that the point was put regarding farm notes on segregation. Three farm notes are mentioned in that parliamentary question. Unless the minister has more information on that, we should be extremely concerned about his proposal for farmer-to-farmer communication on the GM genie that he is about to let out of the bottle this seeding season, which is not many months away now.

We are still waiting, I think, to hear the outcomes of independent feeding trials. I am switching now to the impacts on human health. The problem has been that those who want to conduct independent feeding trials have had great difficulty getting the seed from Monsanto and from Bayer to be able to conduct their independent feeding trials, so I defy the minister to show us somewhere in the world where there have been satisfactory, long-term, independent feeding trials that prove the case that there is no damaging health impact from the feeding of genetically modified foods.

My colleague the member for Collie–Preston mentioned the need for a register, and also for the government to be working on the whole issue of a compensation fund. I think if people really believe in this product and if they are prepared to take the risk on their own properties, they should also be prepared to compensate those who might suffer the consequences of this product. The compensation fund must be created. If the government cannot do that between now and seeding this year, it has to accept this disallowance motion and delay the operation of the order until 2011. By then, the government might be able to establish the compensation fund. However, it might well find also that people are simply not prepared to put up the money for an eventual compensation fund; they are too scared to do so, which means that the product does not have community support. There it is tested.

I will conclude my remarks. However, I would like to return to that point of this being about choice. It is not fair on people to be given a choice when their decision will have a damaging impact on their neighbour and on the reputation of Western Australian agriculture.

MS A.S. CARLES (Fremantle) [5.16 pm]: I am going to focus on the trial that took place in 2009, because we have a minister who has lifted the moratorium based on the trials that his department says were a great success, yet the evidence shows that they failed. A 20 per cent failure rate with strict scientific conditions is not a success.

Nearly a year ago the Greens in the other house brought forward a disallowance motion regarding the exemption order that permitted the trials to even take place, because we said then that segregation would be impossible and that contamination was inevitable. Report 8 of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs published in July 2003 said the same thing, and the report on the trial that eventuated shows that these predictions were actually correct. We say that GM canola cannot be effectively segregated from non-GM canola or other grains, thus removing the option of non-GM canola and injuring the livelihoods of non-GM canola growers. The government has made arguments that this is all about choice. It is not about choice; it is actually about removing choice. Our choice at the end of the day is going to be between GM canola and more GM canola.

I will turn to the point about why GM canola cannot be segregated. Canola seeds are light, small and mobile. For those members who have never seen them, think about mustard seeds or hundreds and thousands. They get into crevices of farm machinery. They can escape through tiny holes and cracks. They can be carried on the wind currents. The report of the trial includes lists of lengthy precautions that were taken to try to prevent GM seed from escaping, yet out of the 52 plantings, there were 11 incidents. As I said before, a 20 per cent failure rate cannot be called a success under strict conditions.

I will quickly itemise the incidents that took place. There was one incident of delivering the seed direct to a site rather than to quarantine authorities as required. There were two seed spills. There was one incident of planting too near a non-GM canola crop. There was one incident of wind blowing the seed into the adjacent cereal crop. There was one incident of the wrong amount of seed being sown. The site was abandoned, but some of the seeds germinated on the site in a wheat crop. There was one incident of delay in delivering grain. There was one incident of grain left in the wrong place. There was one incident of wind blowing seed over a fence into the neighbour's land. There was one incident in which machinery broke down, so a second machine had to be cleaned down as well. There was one incident of grain being delivered without prior notification. This was the scientific trial upon which the government is basing the lifting of the moratorium. In addition, one site was

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

planted with an extra six hectares of GM seed than was permitted by the exemption order that allowed the trial. Under section 7 of the act, it is an offence to breach the conditions of an exemption order—the penalty is \$200 000—yet this episode was not even registered as an incident, let alone prosecuted as an offence under the act. That occurred in a trial. God help farmers in the real world who do not have those scientific conditions placed on them and who are working to time and cost pressures!

These incidents prove that the trials cannot demonstrate an ability to segregate GM canola from non-GM canola. Even though everyone was highly motivated and recently trained, segregation was not possible. This is consistent with what has happened elsewhere with GM canola. For example, the previous speaker alluded to answers provided to a question asked this month in the other place by Hon Giz Watson, Greens (WA) member in the upper house, in which the government admitted that spillage does occur from road transportation. The minister's response reads —

Roadside volunteers of crops following harvest and transportation are a normal occurrence.

...

GM traces may be found in the pollen in beehives.

GM traces have been found in Canadian mustard. GM canola volunteers are still being found in Tasmania at 12 of the 57 trial sites from the last decade.

Of most concern, was the response to Hon Giz Watson's question: "Is it possible to completely avoid GM contamination in an environment where GM crops are grown?" The minister answered —

If the agreed protocols for the segregation of GM and non-GM canola are complied with any adventitious presence will be kept below the Australian Grains Industry threshold of 0.9 per cent presence.

The answer is no. The government is conceding that it is not possible to remove this risk. It is now talking about a 0.9 per cent risk. How exactly will the government manage even 0.9 per cent risk and keep farmers to that 0.9 per cent level? It is simply not going to be possible.

In May 2009, an information paper on GM canola published by the Ministerial GMO Industry Reference Group chaired by Hon Kim Chance, then MLC, included a table of estimated average escape rates at each of nine different stages in the GM canola production phase. All estimates show potential for contamination in at least six of the nine stages in a production process. The report then points out that these levels and the risk increases exponentially; that is, in multiples and not just by addition. Therefore, every growing season poses an exponential risk if GM escapee plants are not controlled.

The system that the government proposes, when talking about this risk of 0.9 per cent that we are expected to accept now, depends on everyone following correct procedures and doing the right thing at all times. As I said, even with the best of intentions, people are fallible, and it is most likely that mistakes will take place.

I refer to *Farmnote* 409, which was put out in 2010 by the Department of Agriculture and Food in relation to "On-farm segregation of GM and non-GM canola". This is the government making recommendations about how to keep things separate. It lists all sorts of very complicated procedures for how farmers are supposed to maintain and deal with this risk. It is cold comfort for farmers, especially when the department acknowledges at the end of the process that contamination can happen anyway. For example, officials from Western Power or telephone companies can have access to GM growing areas without notification, and they could potentially transfer GM seeds.

I will briefly touch on the legal issues, because this will be a minefield if we go ahead. Canadian farmers visited Parliament about 18 months ago and briefed the Greens on their experience. These are farmers who said that initially they were pro-GM and were happy to go along with the Monsanto spin. However, they were doing a tour to warn other countries about what took place and their experience. They said that co-existence was absolutely impossible. They talked about problems with super weeds and increasing costs, and all sorts of litigation that has taken place. They revealed the ironic situation in which Monsanto can actually sue a non-GM farmer if GM material ends up in his or her plot; farmers cannot even protect themselves if they want to stay GM free.

There are all sorts of other problems in our legal system. Our growers will have to rely on ordinary common law principles and mechanisms such as nuisance, trespass and negligence to try to make their case, but how realistic will this be for them? There will be all sorts of issues; causation is one of the biggest issues they will face. How can one prove where the GM seed has come from? It could have come from a farm 50 kilometres down the road, or it could have come from the next-door neighbour. Causation is going to be hugely problematic. As far as I am

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

aware, there is no enforceable legal duty on a GM-growing farmer to even inform his or her neighbour that he or she will be growing GM crops. Other elements that will be difficult to prove include intention, recklessness and negligence. If a GM-growing farmer has done all that he or she reasonably could, but the seed was still spread by the wind—as happened twice during the trials—it will be very hard to prove negligence. Why should farmers bear the financial cost of litigation and the extra burden that this is going to create?

There are also the social ramifications for rural communities of pitting neighbours against each other in this way. Litigation between neighbours is capable of splitting small rural communities. Community unrest would affect social cohesion and the mental health of farming families in particular. Rural men's health has recently been the focus of a suicide prevention program run by Suicide Prevention Australia. Additional stresses on rural families should be avoided. Fear of inability to cope with changed circumstances is a recognised major stress factor.

I will conclude with a point about democracy. I am a very new member in this chamber, but I know that the numbers on this GM disallowance motion are very close. I also know that there are members of the government who are not at all happy with the government's stand on this issue. I urge those members to really think about what they are voting on here and to understand the implications. This is about our food chain and it will have huge implications for the future supply of our food. I urge them to get informed and to listen to the tens of thousands of Western Australians who have bothered to sign petitions, to all the people who have written letters to us, and to all the farmers who are so concerned. Let us keep our state GM free.

MS A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [5.27 pm]: I rise to support this disallowance motion. I like to try to keep up with the science in respect of a wide range of matters, and I guess I have been a little more open-minded on the question of GM crops than have perhaps some other members on our side of politics. I have been particularly interested in the work identifying drought-resistant genes in crops in Africa. My fundamental concern is that given the chronic inaction we are seeing on climate change and the inability of the conservatives in this country—and, indeed, the inability of the Greens in this country—to support the only viable policy to address climate change, we are going to have a great problem feeding the seven billion people we have on this planet at this moment, let alone the nine billion people we expect to have by 2050. We have to be open to new ways of producing or enhancing our capacity to produce food.

With that in mind, I actually went to the forum referred to earlier by the member for Collie–Preston. It was at the University of Western Australia, and I thought it would be a good, intellectual discussion on the issues surrounding GM; I thought that I would probably learn a lot. My perception was exactly the same as the member for Collie–Preston. Instead of being a forum for intellectual debate, the chairman, Hon Hendy Cowan, made a very clear statement at the beginning that he would not tolerate people popping up and opposing the GM provision. At the same time he gave very extensive time to those people who were in favour of GM crops to put their point of view. What I found even more alarming was the lack of rigour in the presentations that were given by the GM regulator and by the representative who was explaining the research that had been done to make these declarations that these various forms of GM crops were safe. As I said, I went there with an open mind to see where we were. I was singularly unimpressed by the lack of scientific rigour that characterised the presentations that were made both by the regulator and by those who were responsible for certifying these crops as being safe.

I will not repeat all the points that have been made by my colleagues. The key point is this one of choice. As was articulated by the member for Gosnells and the member for Fremantle, this is fundamentally a question of choice. Given the science that we have and given the very low levels of protection that the government is proposing to put around these GM crops, we cannot possibly guarantee both GM and non-GM crops. We simply have not done the work to provide that segregation. There are questions of whether we could ever decently provide that segregation. I have been looking at some of the research on this. *The Wall Street Journal* took 20 organic products that were marketed in the US as being GM free and 16 of those contained traces of GM organisms and, in some cases, more than traces. Another study done by the US Department of Agriculture revealed that almost 80 per cent of seed companies in the US found traces of a GM corn variety called starlight. This variety was only approved for stock feed because there were a lot of concerns in the US about its impact and whether it was safe for human consumption. Eighty per cent of seed companies found that this GM corn variety had infiltrated their seeds. It is now being found in enchiladas and taco shells in the US.

This does not mean that ultimately there may not be some scientific solutions to this problem. I have been reading some papers from Cambridge that said there are some ways in which we may be able to stop this cross-contamination. For example, it may be possible to create GM plants that are male sterile. These plants do not produce pollen. We have to deal with the population somehow! Further, theoretically, it may be possible to modify a GM plant so that the pollen in that GM plant does not contain the introduced gene and that, in turn, can stop the cross-pollination. We are not putting protections in place today. We have nothing like that. We have a geographical barrier that is completely inadequate to deal with this issue of cross-contamination.

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Some members have briefly touched on the liabilities associated with a person who wants to produce a GM-free product, a non-GM product or an organic product. There is great potential for a breach of contractual obligations if a farmer supplies a non-GM product that is subsequently found to contain GM material. Indeed, in the risk analysis that was done I think back as early as 2000 in the lead-up to the federal election, it was identified that these risks are quite considerable, and they may go down the food chain. So, if a farmer supplies some non-GM canola that then goes into other products further down the food chain, that person may be liable for a series of consequential losses. Indeed, the person may even be liable for the cost of a recall of that product. This is a serious risk that has been identified in relation to these products.

The solution or risk minimisation strategy that has been devised to deal with that problem is to say, “Don’t ever call your product GM free, because that is just too absolute. Use a phrase that will give you a bit of wriggle room. Say that your crop is non-GM, and then put in a little asterisk that says, ‘Conditions apply; non-GM means less than one per cent of GM’”. Clearly, farmers who want their product to be GM free, non-GM or organic have to face major contractual liabilities and risks.

On the other side of the equation is the incredibly unfair problem of the infringement of the seed manufacturers’ property rights. I am sure we have all heard of the Monsanto case, where some poor unsuspecting non-GM farmer found that his crop had been infiltrated or cross-contaminated by —

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I have read aspects of that case. I have not read the entire case, and nor, I am sure, has the minister. That farmer was then sued by the company, because even though he had not done anything to encourage or inveigle the seeds into his crop, they had come into his crop, and he had harvested it and sold it, and he was found to be liable because he had breached the intellectual property rights of the seed manufacturers.

Dr M.D. Nahan: He planted 1 000 acres and it was found that it was from stolen seed!

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I do not think that is correct. But, even if that is correct, I go back to the federal government’s analysis of risk. Even if we put that Monsanto case to one side, it is clear from the document that was prepared by the federal government in 2000 in the lead-up to the introduction of the commonwealth legislation that the unintended presence of GM may lead to the potential for liability. So a farmer can in fact be a victim. Monsanto and Bayer have responded to that by saying that they are not going to pursue anyone who does not deliberately or knowingly infringe the patent. A farmer has planted his crop. How does he know that his crop has been infiltrated? Does he know just by the mere fact that a GM farm is some 10 metres away from his farm? What happens if he tests his crop and his crop turns out to have some of that farmer’s GM crop in it? What does the farmer do then? Does he then not sell his crop? What does the farmer do with his crop under those circumstances? The only solution that has been identified by the seed companies is, “If you tell us you’ve got some, we’ll come in and remove the plants that are genetically modified from your crop.” It seems to be a completely naive proposal. If the farmer does not know beforehand and he harvests his crop and it is subsequently discovered that he has GM, do the seed companies propose to buy that crop? How practically does a farmer deal with this? A solution that says, “If you contact us, we’ll come and take out each individual plant that may have been contaminated” of course seems to be a totally and absolutely unrealistic and impractical response to this very, very real problem.

As I say, notwithstanding whatever the member for Riverton might say about his interpretation of the Monsanto case, it is quite clear from the risk analysis and the legal advice that have been provided to the federal government that a farmer affected by the unintended presence may be liable if he sells that crop. We have clearly got a problem here. It may well be, as I say, that at some point in the future we find a solution. We may be able to develop a canola crop that does not contain the gene in the pollen. We may be able to create a genetically modified canola crop or some other crop that is not capable of leading to cross-contamination, in which case a different series of issues will arise. I am not saying cross-contamination is the only issue, but cross-contamination of course is the major issue for people who want a choice; who want the ability to say we want to supply non-GM and we want to buy GM-free food. Until and unless the minister can guarantee that there will be no cross-contamination, it is simply not possible to make that choice.

I urge the minister at the very least to consider the proposals put by the member for Collie–Preston for some mechanisms that would at least give us some greater transparency about what is going on. That is the bare minimum that we can achieve. Once again, as we have seen in many other instances, be it freight rail and now this, the National Party went to the election with one policy, being all things to all men, and now, when it gets into government, takes a totally different point of view. I very strongly support this disallowance motion.

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [5.42 pm]: As most members would know, I was a —

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

Mr P. Papalia: Don't read this one!

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I will do what I like, thank you.

I was a farmer for 28 years. I did not grow any canola because I was waiting for GM canola to be released before I had a go at growing it. I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of quite a number of farmers who are here to listen to this debate today.

For three and a half years I was a grower representative on the western panel of the Grains Research and Development Corporation, which of course is responsible for spending the commonwealth allocation for grain research. According to my notes, an article in *The Economist* of 21 November last year stated —

Between now and 2050 the world's population will rise by a third, but demand for agricultural goods will rise by 70% and demand for meat will double. These increases are in a sense good news in that they are a result of rising wealth in poor and middle-income countries. But they will have to happen without farmers clearing large amounts of new land ... or using up lots more water ...

That is, because of course in most parts of the world water supplies are stretched to their limit. My notes continue —

Moreover, they will take place while farmers also wrestle with the consequences of climate change, which, on balance, will do more harm than good to farmland round the world."

The magazine also contains an interesting article about the American company Monsanto. It states that Monsanto's biggest advances so far have been in the region of weed and bug control; however, in 2012 or 2013 it will release a soybeans that contains less trans fats. It will then go on to release plants that are engineered to use nitrogen more efficiently, hence lowering the cost to farmers and requiring less nitrogen fertiliser, which of course comes from the petroleum industry; this will result in less nitrogen pollution in the water supply and result in less nitrous oxide gases released into the atmosphere. Finally, in about three years Monsanto expects to release its first drought-tolerant products. Of course, these are expected to be in demand because of expected water shortages in the future.

The point to remember is that without GM technology there can be only small increases in food production, and the increases will come about only at considerable environmental cost and will probably not be sustainable in the long term. I remind members that conventional plant breeding results in an increase of about 1.1 per cent per annum in yield, and the scenarios I have mentioned actually need an increase in yield of the order of about 2.5 per cent per annum.

Some issues have been raised about premium markets for non-GM products. Most of this has come out of Europe. In the case of Europe, the GM–non-GM argument has basically been used as a trade barrier. Any grower will tell us that the European market is a market that cannot be relied upon. In the United States, GM varieties now represent about 85 per cent of the national corn crop, 88 per cent of the nation's cotton crop and 91 per cent of all soybeans.

I am quite confident that our handling system in Western Australia will be able to handle and separate GM and non-GM crops. It has the protocols and the procedures to keep them separate, and the quality assurance programs, such as the hazard analysis and critical control point system, will do that. I also remind members that the canola that is to be grown has, of course, been approved by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and Food Standards Australia New Zealand, which is a federal-level body. They have been grown for a couple of years in Victoria and New South Wales, and there have not been any problems with that from what I can see. I will also quote from "Genetically modified grains: Market implications for Australian grain growers" written by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics; it reads —

A second indication is that there is only patchy evidence of premiums for non-GM grain and oilseeds in world markets. These premiums have not been sufficiently large to offset the agronomic benefits of GM crops. At this stage, the worldwide market for certified non-GM products is only a niche one.

The country that is particularly mentioned in this case is usually Japan, which imports about 1.5 million tonnes of GM canola from Canada each year. Of course, oils from the GM product from Canada and the non-GM product from Australia are mixed. In the case of pollen, most travels less than 10 metres from the plant—50 per cent travels less than three metres. To go over the limit and to be considered as GM, it has to go over 0.9 of one per cent. It is simply not possible for this to be caused by the wind. The highest frequency, from trials overseas, has been 0.07 of one per cent.

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I think an interesting diversion that has been raised is the question of allergies, and in particular peanut allergies. I merely point out how completely illogical it is to suggest that the increase in peanut allergies in this state can be connected to a crop that is not yet grown here.

Another issue raised is the transference of the gene into weed species. It is true that it has been possible in cross-related species, such as radish and turnip, in the laboratory. However, it is extremely unlikely in the field. One might as well say that it is virtually impossible, and the offspring of that cross would almost certainly be infertile.

As to Roundup Ready canola growing along the roadsides, any farmer will tell members that the application of a small amount of sulfonylurea to the mix will take care of any Roundup Ready canola that is growing on the roadside.

Tony Fischer, who is probably one of our most respected agriculture scientists, states —

In the longer term, I believe, along with most other agricultural and plant scientists, that the world will accept GM crops. GM crops are likely to become more attractive to the public through the use of smarter gene constructs designed to achieve the desired phenotype, but which have even lower health or environment risks, and through the incorporation of traits of direct benefit to the consumer (healthier foods) or to the environment (more waterproductive crops). Investment in research must continue for this to be achieved.

Australia faces an interesting situation because the federal government and the state governments of Victoria and New South Wales are more than comfortable with growing GM crops. None of the problems that have been talked about here, as far as I can see, have arisen.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: What about South Australia's position?

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: South Australia's position is a hardline position against the release of GM crops.

Mr P. Papalia: What about Tasmania?

Mr D.T. Redman: They are coming around.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Exactly. The state Labor Party's position on this matter has a lot more to do with green preferences at the last election. I looked at the results of the last election and I ascribed the seats of Albany, Balcatta, Collie–Preston, Forrestfield, Joondalup, Kwinana and Perth as almost certainly being won on green preferences. Probably another half a dozen could have been —

Mr M.P. Whitely: You obviously never had a conversation with Kim Chance and felt the passion of the man. He is a very intelligent man.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: That is true. I have never had a conversation with him. Maybe unusually in my party, I do not have a problem accepting that man has contributed to climate change. If we are to feed the increasing number of people on this planet, we need to use every available technology at our fingertips. If we turn our back on GM technology, we will not be able to feed the people of the world.

MR J.E. McGRATH (South Perth) [5.52 pm]: It is no secret that I have some serious reservations about the way the government is headed on the issue of genetically modified crops and I have made those points known to my colleagues in the party room. My concerns are threefold. Firstly, I am concerned for the consumer. Many consumers in my electorate of South Perth have expressed concern about GM crops. Secondly, I am concerned about ensuring that farmers retain the right to farm by the traditional methods. Thirdly, I am concerned about the export markets.

The point has been made—it is no secret—that consumers worldwide are turning against GM foods. I have not seen a poll yet to show that Australians, and indeed Western Australians, have said that they would knowingly consume GM foods. In December 2009, Newspoll conducted a survey of 300 people. Of those, 216 people were identified as the main grocery buyer in the family, of whom 61 per cent said that they would not buy GM foods and 53 per cent of whom said that the ban on GM canola crops should be maintained. I also conducted a survey in my electorate at a number of shopping strips with one of my staff. The result of that survey was that 50 per cent of people said they would not knowingly consume or purchase GM products and 10 per cent said that they would because of the need to feed the world. They believe that we must go down this path. More worrying for me was that 38 per cent of my constituents did not know enough about it to have an opinion. The survey also conveyed that there was a general feeling that there is a lack of labelling. I understand that that is a commonwealth thing, but I think that we, as legislators, need to look very carefully at proper labelling as we move into the future. I think consumers are looking for correct labelling. They want to be more certain of what

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they are consuming and they want to have a choice. A colleague of mine made the point that if someone goes into a fish and chip shop, the odds are that the oil that the fish and chips are cooked in would more than likely be from GM cottonseed. My answer to that is that if business proprietors were required to put a sign on their shops that stated what they were cooking their product in, maybe they would not have as many customers.

The second point I raised was about farmers. Some people have said to me that I have no farms in my electorate, which is true. Someone even phoned me and said that because I am a city member I should not have a vote in this, and asked why I am sticking my nose into something that is a country issue. I said that I would agree to not do that if country members did not vote on things to do with the city. Some country members are stopping us from having deregulation of trading hours, so maybe we will do a swap: we will vote on city matters and we will have a country Parliament and a city Parliament.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: It is a city matter as well, because there are farmers in the metropolitan area—many of them—who are concerned. There is the issue of brassicas.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Anyway, I have to move on.

I understand that there are farmers who want the right to grow GM Roundup Ready canola, and I personally do not deny them from seeking that right. But I also understand that there are many farmers who are just as equally concerned about whether this will have any impact on the farming processes they have undertaken for a century and a half. Last week I made a trip down to Williams with the member for Swan Hills where we met quite a large group of farmers from a number of country centres. They simply asked us why we are going down this path. They felt that there was no need for it, and that there would be no extra yield and no great reduction in chemicals, as has been proven in the United States, and that cross-pollination, as has been mentioned today, would be a factor. The farmers said that Western Australia has a proud history of farming and we produce the best wheat, oats and barley in the world because of our great climate. I concede that the people who want to use GM-ready canola seed are concerned about weeds, but farmers have also told me that there are already some strains of weeds that are resistant to Roundup; only time will tell whether this will be the panacea.

I am not against science; I have never been against science. I think we have to move on and progress, but my personal feeling, as I made clear to my party, is that we should move into this area with some caution. I understand that many Western Australians are awaiting the result of the voting on this disallowance motion, but I was led to believe there was sufficient support within my party's ranks to maybe have the moratorium extended. In fact, the member for Southern River brought a motion to our party room to extend the trial by another two years, but that was defeated.

I would like to acknowledge the support and the effort put in by the member for Southern River, who I listen to because he has an agricultural science degree and so has some knowledge on this subject; and, the member for Swan Hills, who is a former farmer, which I did not know until last week. He has farmed in the eastern states and also Western Australia, and some fairly big farms too. The member for Alfred Cove also mentioned to me that she has been approached by concerned constituents, so I guess that is why as city members we have felt that we need to have a say on this matter and to voice an opinion.

Getting back to where I sit on this issue, it has been a very difficult situation. Some people have said that I was going to cross the floor. I have always said that I would not rule out crossing the floor and I have given this issue serious consideration, so much so that, along with a couple of colleagues who expressed concern in the party room, I had a meeting with the minister as late as this morning. The minister has agreed to some concessions, which I believe might go some way towards easing some of the concerns in the farming community. The questions we put to the minister were fairly similar to those the member for Collie–Preston raised earlier today, and I think that they address some of the general concerns that farmers have.

We first asked the minister whether he could give us a commitment to a public register of farmers who are growing genetically modified canola. In that way common law could be used more readily if a farmer had a problem because there would be a register. I have read evidence —

Mr M.P. Whitely: Will you take an interjection?

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I have not got much time, member, honestly, because we want to get it through.

However, I read that in Victoria one problem has been that farmers found out down the track that a farmer down the road is growing genetically modified canola and they were not aware of it. I think that we cannot afford to have that situation because of the great anxiety and concern among our farmers in this regard, so that was the first thing —

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Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: And there's potential liability about holding their crops as non-GM or GM free.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Yes.

Another thing that we asked the minister was whether he would allow a farmer or a group of farmers to apply for a GM-free area. The minister made the point that they can do that now anyway, and I understand that. I believe that some countries in Europe have not banned the growing of GM crops but certain regions have said that they do not want it in their area. These are often famous growing areas that have come together collectively, and I personally urge our farmers to do that. I would have liked the shires to have some sort of control over that, but the minister explained to us that this will be controlled by the state government. However, there is nothing to stop farmers in a region that has a history of a niche market that they want to service from getting together collectively so that they can protect one another.

The third thing we asked for from the minister related to the end-point royalty, which has been mentioned by other members. I am sure that the minister will elaborate on these points when he gets to his feet. We felt, like other members, that it was a bit unfair for a farmer who goes to a receival point with some GM canola in his truckload but who obviously had not used GM seed to have to pay an end-point royalty. Why should he? The member for Southern River contacted Monsanto today—we have all been working very hard on this and burning the midnight oil—and he has a commitment, which I think he will read in later, from Monsanto with regard to that end-point royalty. We, as members of the government, will be watching all aspects of the end-point royalty very closely. I think the minister knows that this is such a contentious issue that he is on notice and that this has to work. If it does not work, the buck will stop with him.

Another thing the minister agreed to—I was very pleased about this—was an audit of compliance with the stewardship protocols, which will be resourced through the agency. I urge the minister to ensure that this will be a very important part of this process; that Department of Agriculture and Food people will go around to farms where GM canola is grown to ensure that the proper protocols are met; and that these farmers will inform their neighbouring farmers that they are growing GM canola and will be required to meet all those protocols. The minister has agreed also—I am sure he will elaborate on it—that he will report back to Parliament in 12 months. Even though this exemption order is a lot bigger than the 17-farm trial held this year, in some respects it could be seen as some sort of trial, provided the Department of Agriculture and Food is diligent and the minister gives us that assurance that it will be diligent. I think that, depending on how the trial goes, we can look at this in 12 months' time.

The minister also said that he would write to all GM growers and highlight their obligations. That is very important. It is also important that the act remain in place. The minister could have amended the act and completely lifted the ban on GM crops, but it has been done only by regulation. The other thing the minister said was that the public register of farmers would be on a geographic information system with the Department of Agriculture and Food that would enable farmers to look at a map and see who is growing GM and who is growing organic products. That is good for the entire industry, and I thank the minister for doing that; it is very important. GM growers should be prepared to provide their details when they decide to go down this path. There is nothing for them to hide so they should do that. That will allow much more confidence throughout the agricultural industry.

I hope this has at least given some comfort to those farmers who have concerns. A lot of people have come to my electorate office from long distances to talk to me about this matter. As a matter of principle and in support of those people who have petitioned me, I will be abstaining from the vote. However, I give my commitment that I will continue to listen to people's concerns. I personally hope it all works well and that we do not have any problems. I think the minister understands that this issue has been debated in Parliament several times now and, from what I have heard today, the minister and the Department of Agriculture and Food are on notice that members from both sides will be looking at this issue.

The Liberal Party is a party in which members have freedom of choice to vote. A number of members have raised their concerns and we have had some very healthy debate on this matter. What we have achieved today—as I said before, I look forward to hearing it from the minister—is that some form of risk management protection will be put in place for the many thousands of GM-free farmers. The number of farmers who want to go down this path and farm GM products are a minority. The minister has said that he will give them that opportunity, and we have asked the minister to give them that freedom of choice, but in return they must not take away that choice from conventional farmers.

Mr M.P. Murray: Are there no concessions for shires that wish to remain free?

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I do not know. I am sure the minister will talk about that. If a group of farmers get together in a centre that has a good reputation for producing GM-free canola—obviously, parts of Western Australia in the Great Southern are doing so at the moment—and can market themselves as producing GM-free crops, there might be great potential for them in export markets.

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [6.09 pm]: I can well remember in the mid-1970s, as a new graduate in agricultural science, bursting onto the scene of agriculture and hearing the doom and gloom predictions about the so-called Green Revolution. The Green Revolution was breeding new hybrids that would massively increase production and were more responsive to fertilisers. There was a very strong movement in environmental circles that this was going to be the death knell of agriculture; it was just about going to be the death knell of society. I can still remember very vividly that Dr Paul Ehrlich in his book referred to the fact that by the year 2000, because of the Green Revolution, we would have run out of fossil fuels and the world would have been at war long before the year 2000 because there would have been such a shortage of food. Guess what? It has not happened. Because of the Green Revolution, India today, despite its massive growth in population, is still a net exporter of food. From that perspective of history, therefore, I am a bit wary of all the doomsayers. Nonetheless those who have checked up on my background will know that I certainly have a keen interest in organic agriculture.

When the Liberal Party went to the last election I had a look at our policy on GM crops and I was quite comfortable with that policy in terms of moving towards trials and checking things out. When the trial began last season I was bombarded with emails from people begging me to move a disallowance motion in this place. I thought I had not really done a lot of homework on this GM thing and I wanted to see whether it was safe. To me that is the number one issue. My election slogan was about putting people first. And I believe that we need to put public health before the convenience of farmers and before the profits of Monsanto or some other company.

I therefore set about trying to find out how safe GM foods are. I was not interested in popular press articles; I wanted peer-reviewed scientific journal articles. My research officer is Dr Nicole Myers, who has a bachelor's degree in biotechnology—this is exactly what this is about—and a PhD in immunology. I set her to work digging out these papers. Guess what? We could not find any; they just ain't there. I thought we must be looking in the wrong places. We therefore contacted Dr Paul Brent from Food Standards Australia New Zealand—FSANZ—which is responsible for conducting the safety checks on GM foods, and told him that we could not find the toxicology studies. After a long, roundabout discussion, he informed my research officer that they do not exist. I said, "What? What is going on here?" We therefore learnt that the safety data is simply information presented by the seed company that is evaluated by a team of very competent scientists. I do not question their integrity or abilities in any way at all, but the data is based purely on the information that is sent in. That concerned me, particularly given Monsanto's rather shady history—to put it very politely—in terms of it being not unknown to have twisted the truth somewhat in the past.

It therefore really concerned me that these papers did not exist. I then came across an article in the October 2009 edition of *Nature Biotechnology*, which is a biotechnology industry journal. I will, if I may, read a couple of sections from it. It stated that a number of public sector scientists had lodged a formal complaint with the United States Environmental Protection Authority about the fact that because GM crops are the intellectual property of the companies, they can and do prohibit independent scientists from doing research work on their crops. That is quite preposterous as far as I am concerned. The article refers to another GM company, Syngenta, and states —

... Syngenta recently implemented a rule prohibiting any study that compares its commercial crops to other companies' crops, ...

Hello, we are banning scientific research! I find that unacceptable. A little further on the article states —

"Companies put in mountains of data but there's no devil's advocate—no other side", says Krupke at Purdue.

In this instance somebody within the biotechnology industry is taking the industry to task about the fact that the seed companies are denying independent scientists the right to do research work.

It is also interesting that we discovered that occasionally universities and independent research groups are allowed to undertake research. However, to be allowed to do that they have to sign a contract that states that if the results are not positive for the seed company, they are prohibited from publishing them. Hello, what is going on? This is preposterous. How can we have a system in which intellectual property is so tightly owned that basically the public and the scientific public is dependent on the sales pitch of the seed salesmen? Surely, agriculture departments and universities can do independent trial work to provide farmers with the appropriate information.

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitley

The *Scientific American* of 21 July 2009 carries a similar article to the one I just quoted. It states —

It would be chilling enough if any other type of company were able to prevent independent researchers from testing its wares and reporting what they find—imagine car companies trying to quash head-to-head model comparisons done by Consumer Reports, for example. But when scientists are prevented from examining the raw ingredients in our nation’s food supply or from testing the plant material that covers a large portion of the country’s agricultural land, the restrictions on free inquiry become dangerous.

I certainly concur with that. My concern from a public health point of view is that there are question marks about GM food. There is a lot of scaremongering and misinformation around. I have done my homework on some of the stuff that has been peddled by those who are anti-GM and found that what they are saying is wanting. It is simply not accurate. By the same token, as the public we are entitled to better knowledge of how safe these foods are.

The issue of food safety, as the Minister for Agriculture and Food will, no doubt, point out in his speech, is not a state jurisdiction. That is where I find myself in a very difficult position. The bottom line is that my issue is with the federal system, with the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and Food Standards Australia New Zealand in how they are running the show. It is not a state issue. As states we have agreed to delegate that responsibility to the feds. Perhaps the member for Armadale, should she be successful in getting to Canberra, may well want to take the fight up to the OGTR and FSANZ to try to get some better protocols in place.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: I would not disagree with you.

Mr P. ABETZ: The member for Armadale and I agree on something. That is wonderful.

Because of the question marks in the public’s mind surrounding GM crops and the lack of independent toxicology work, my feeling is that within the next couple of years the anti-GM sentiment in Europe and Japan will either grow or fizzle out. If it fizzles out and people realise that the toxicology studies show it is safe, let us grow GM crops. It would not be a problem at all. However, each crop needs to be considered on its merits. I will not go into the details of that scientifically. Each crop must be treated as a separate event, which it is by FSANZ, because of the different proteins they produce and the allergy issues. Therefore, when I talk about GM crops, it is not a blanket thing.

Issues are emerging from the use of GM crops. I find it interesting that, based on statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture, there are concerns. I will quote from a paper dated November 2009 and titled “Impacts of Genetically Engineered Crops on Pesticide Use: The First Thirteen Years”. It states —

There is no serious dispute that RR —

That is, Roundup Ready —

crops have been popular, for the most part effective, and about budget-neutral for farmers. But they have fostered unprecedented reliance on glyphosate for weed control, and overreliance has spawned a growing epidemic of glyphosate-tolerant and resistant weeds.

Thankfully, the protocols that are put in place in Australia should prevent the problem of glyphosate resistance getting out of control.

Given the fact that the food side is, in a sense, outside the state jurisdiction, I thought, “How can we help those farmers who want to be non-GM?” I believe that is their right in the same way that it is the right of a farmer to grow GM should he want to do that. One of the things which has been brought to my attention and which is quoted many, many times—several speakers have quoted it—is that if a farmer’s crop gets contaminated, he is going to have to pay royalties to Monsanto. I have done some homework on that, and the only instances I could find—I am very critical of Monsanto—in which Monsanto had actually pursued people were when, quite clearly, it was not an accidental contamination. Accidental contamination will never result in more than one or two per cent absolute maximum contamination. From pollen drift across a paddock, usually 0.2 per cent contamination is about the maximum. A test is done when the crop is delivered to the Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd terminal. CBH has a strip that it puts into the crop, and it tests three times. That picks up whether it is above or below 0.9 per cent contamination. If it is below 0.9 per cent, it is considered GM free. If it is above 0.9 per cent, CBH takes an extra sample and a more detailed analysis is done that will inform Monsanto of the exact percentage. If it is 1.5 per cent or something like that, Monsanto will check where it came from to make sure that whatever the source of contamination was will not be repeated next year. But nobody will be pursued to pay royalties.

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

This morning I spoke with the corporate manager—I think that is what the person is called—Keryn McLean, from Monsanto in Melbourne, and I was emailed the document which I have in my hand and which I would like to lay on the table very shortly for members to view, with the permission of the Speaker. The email states —

Monsanto will not be pursuing farmers for accidental or inadvertent presence of grain containing our patented technologies, as it has never been, nor will it be Monsanto policy to exercise its patent rights where trace amounts of our patented traits are present in a farmer’s paddock or grain as a result of inadvertent means. If a circumstance such as this is brought to Monsanto’s attention, we will work with the parties involved to investigate the cause.

Mr W.J. Johnston: What does Monsanto say is a trace amount?

Mr P. ABETZ: Actually, a trace amount is not what Monsanto is talking about. It is accidental or inadvertent presence of its patented traits; it is not saying trace amounts.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, it did. They are exactly the words you read out.

Mr P. ABETZ: Let me read it again.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Monsanto will not pursue it if they are trace amounts.

Mr P. ABETZ: The email states —

Monsanto will not be pursuing farmers for accidental or inadvertent presence of grain containing our patented technologies, —

That is one part —

as it has never been, nor will it be Monsanto policy to exercise its patent rights where trace amounts of our patented traits are present in a farmer’s paddock ...

Mr W.J. Johnston: But what is a trace amount?

Mr P. ABETZ: A trace amount is a rubbery figure. If it is below 0.9 per cent, it is considered not present at all, but whatever the trace is—whether it is 15 per cent or 20 per cent—as long as it is inadvertent, Monsanto will not pursue it. I have found only two occasions in history on which Monsanto has pursued this. I am no fan of Monsanto. It gave the technology free to the Argentineans, but in Brazil, a neighbouring country, farmers had to pay for it. The Brazilian farmers were driving their trucks to Argentina, buying the GM seeds and trucking it across the border, and so their crops were 98 per cent GM. Monsanto said, “Hey boys, this is not on!” I would agree with Monsanto. It is entitled to do that.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: The fact that it is up to Monsanto to decide whether or not it is within its discretion to enforce it actually shows that it has a legal right to pursue it.

Mr P. ABETZ: No, it does not.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: It is saying that it is not going to exercise that right. That is underpinned by the view that it has the right to pursue it.

Mr P. ABETZ: That is a misstatement. That is simply not the case. I will explain that to the member for Armadale later. The fact is that Monsanto owns the patent rights, but it can sue somebody only if there is intent, which is the issue. That is the point there. The other issue I want to watch very closely is seed supply. Monsanto has been buying a significant number of seed companies and we want to make sure that a ready supply of non-GM seed continues to be available. I certainly will be monitoring that very closely. I will watch with interest how this develops.

MR D.T. REDMAN (Blackwood–Stirling — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [6.27 pm]: I appreciate the input from a range of members in this debate. It is something that is dear to many people’s hearts. As many would be aware, it is a controversial issue but I have always respected people’s right to put their views.

I will start by acknowledging in the gallery a range of people who have taken the time to come to Parliament and listen to this debate. Obviously a lot of people have had an interest in the path that this government has chosen to go down. A number of growers or farmers were involved in the trial. They were trial participants. We have representatives from the Grains Association of WA, the WA Farmers Federation, a couple of universities, Pacific Seeds, Nufarm, and also Nuseed, the Canola Breeders Association of WA, the Grains Research Development Corporation and the WA No-till Farmers Association. I might add that sitting behind these organisations are a lot of people who have made representations to me on this issue, and clearly have an interest in setting up an opportunity for farmers in this state. I certainly appreciate their presence in the gallery today. On top of that, I

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

might add, on Wednesday and Thursday last week I took the time to go around to a number of the farm improvement groups in the Wheatbelt of Western Australia. I went into the Liebe Group at Dalwallinu on Wednesday and spoke with about 150 people. I went to the Mingenew–Irwin Group in Dongara. From there I went down to see the Facey Group in Wickopin. On previous occasions, I have been to Esperance and talked to the South East Premium Wheat Growers Association. These people are on the cutting edge of farming. They are out to develop their businesses. On every occasion they have been supportive of the position that this government has taken. I want to give a little bit of context to some of the debate, and then I intend to walk through and pick out some of the important issues that people have raised. I understand that a lot of stuff has been raised by a range of members. Over a long time I have responded to a lot of letters, emails and formal expressions of concern from a range of people and have provided this information. I understand that although I have provided a lot of this information, which is on the public record through the parliamentary process, I will try to pick up what I see as some of the more important issues that people have raised in this debate.

Just to provide a little context on GM crops grown around the world, it has been grown in other countries for more than a decade; in some cases for nearly 15 years. In 2009, there were 25 countries growing 134 million hectares of GM crops; that is nine per cent of the world's 1.5 billion hectares under crop. That is significant, and I think it presents a context for the decision that we are now making in Western Australia. We are now getting ourselves in step with what has been happening around the world for more than a decade.

I will quote from the website of the World Health Organization. It states —

GM foods currently available on the international market have passed risk assessments and are not likely to present risks for human health. In addition, no effects on human health have been shown as a result of the consumption of such foods by the general population in the countries where they have been approved.

That is on the World Health Organization website. The European Food Safety Authority says that glyphosate-tolerant GM canola is safe. Likewise, in Australia the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and Food Standards Australia New Zealand have approved the two crops that we are now allowing to be grown in Western Australia. These are world-class regulatory bodies and we need to have confidence in them. We are really challenging our federal processes if we do not have confidence in them, because these are the gatekeepers; the agencies to which we allocate resources to make these sorts of decisions. Although I am not an expert in a range of these matters, I certainly have confidence in our scientific community and our regulatory processes.

I want to talk about why we have the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003. I highlight that the only way Western Australia can play a role in regulating GM technology is through the marketing argument. That act basically says that we are not allowed to grow GM crops in Western Australia. It is unconstitutional for us to use arguments and legislative processes in Western Australia against GM crops—to use a health argument or even to use arguments about environmental concerns around that issue; it is not in our jurisdiction. The act talks about controlling the release of GM products through exemption orders on GM crops to deal with markets and maybe to try to create or look after markets where there might be niche opportunities. In that context, if we are to have this debate, we should centre it on the market argument and leave to the federal arena the arguments around health, safety and issues to do with the environment. That said, it is important to recognise that there are some concerns and angst around GM technology, and that it is certainly a controversial issue.

I also highlight that while we have been debating the commercial release of GM canola, the government made the decision more than 12 months ago to allow the growing of GM cotton in the Ord River irrigation area. No-one brought on debate in this house about the introduction of that; it was something that went through without any discussion in this chamber. However, GM seems to be at the forefront of people's minds now. In fact, the member for Collie–Preston said that he does not support any GM. I find it interesting that that was a debate that did not happen.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The member for Armadale makes an interesting point. I am pleased to be in this seat, because not too long ago I was sitting where she is now and had the challenge of raising debate with her. I always enjoyed that challenge!

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Just keeping it warm for you!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is an interesting point that the member makes, because we often consider GM technology in the context of whether a crop is a food crop or not a food crop; cotton is okay, but it is not okay to have GM canola. When oil is pressed out of cotton, the meal that is left over goes into stock feeds and so on. Obviously the cotton goes into producing cotton material; I would be very surprised if a lot of the garments that

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we are wearing today did not come from GM sources, which puts a contradiction into some of the debate. It is also actually quite possible to go out and buy cottonseed oil; in fact, my wife uses it at home because of some of its characteristics.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Did she buy GM free, or are we going to see you sprout a tail?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The member for Armadale needs to do a little more research, but I do appreciate her taking an interest in this debate. I will come back and comment on some of the issues she raised. No attention has been given to the GM cotton argument.

A number of members have spoken about shires and their stance on this issue. I watch that very closely. A number of those shires are in my electorate. People raise the notion of declaring themselves GM-free. It is an absolute position. The member for Fremantle described canola as a small seed. If we put one GM seed in an eight or 10-tonne truckload of canola, that truckload is not GM-free. That is why we have this level of adventitious presence, which we stand by. It was brought in by the Labor Party—by Hon Kim Chance—when it was in government. It was interesting to see how the shires managed to declare themselves GM-free. Again, that was an absolute position.

I turn to an article that appeared in the *Farm Weekly* on Thursday, 7 May 2009 that quoted one of my lecturers who was at the University of Western Australia when I studied agriculture, Professor David Lindsay. I want to talk about Professor Lindsay's commentary on the stance that the shires took. The article states —

Prof Lindsay, now a part-time lecturer in communications and science, said he was concerned that science was being “rubbished” in the GM debate.

He said he thought the concept of shires becoming GM free was farcical and if they were serious they would have to take the ban a lot further.

“They would have to make sure that the local pharmacists and doctors clear their shelves of GM pharmaceuticals like insulin, growth hormone, many drugs for treatment of cancer and hepatitis A and B, and many of the new vaccines,” Prof Lindsay said.

He went on to say —

“They will need to make sure that the supermarkets don't stock most cheeses anymore because they are made using GM rennet and, of course, anything with soybean in it must be summarily thrown out to preserve the purity of the shire.”

Prof Lindsay said if the shires looked into the proposed bans dispassionately, they may realise the hypocrisy of accepting GM technology for one purpose and condemning it as a contaminant in another role.

He highlighted the point that if shires want to be GM-free, we need to have a very close look at a whole lot of stuff. That is an interesting point. I thought Professor Lindsay put it very, very well.

Before I respond to some of the members' comments, I want to talk about the farmers who are looking at growing GM canola in the 2010 season. Some 650 growers have been accredited with the stewardship program. They are the protocols that they need to follow and respect in order to grow GM canola. Three hundred growers have signed the licence and stewardship agreement, which is a formal agreement with the seed suppliers to use that technology. Just because some do not choose to go down that path does not mean that they do not support the technology. I am talking about those people who have made the decision that it fits in with their program and fits in with the agronomic processes, crop rotations and weed control strategies that they want to have in their particular farming systems.

About 200 tonnes of GM seed has been ordered for this coming season. We are expecting something like 30 000 hectares of GM canola to be grown this coming season of some 800 000 hectares typically grown as canola across the state. My assessment is that the overwhelming majority of farmers want access to this technology. They want access to this tool. They see it as another tool in the box to deal with the challenges they face in remaining competitive on the international market.

I concede that there are members who have some concern and angst about GM technology. Even some government members, including the member for South Perth, the member for Southern River and the member for Swan Hills, have highlighted their concerns to me. I was very appreciative of the approach that they took with me. They took the time to meet with me and talk the issue through. I have never had a request from the member for Collie—Preston to meet with me and discuss the issues and some of the objectives that he would like to achieve in the debate about moving GM forward in Western Australia. In response to that, I was able to

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

highlight some issues that I think we can address. The member for South Perth highlighted a couple of issues. I made the point that it is my intention to conduct a random audit of compliance with the stewardship program in this coming year. That is very important from my perspective. It is also very important for the Department of Agriculture and Food. If we are going to roll this out, it is important that we have an understanding of the level of compliance so that we can address the range of issues that people have raised.

Mr M.P. Murray: Are you saying that there will only be random samples?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is a sample size. If farmers have 30 000 hectares of GM canola this season, it is appropriate to do a random sample to see whether there is a level of compliance and whether people are respecting the protocols around the distance between crops and letting their neighbours know and so on.

The Department of Agriculture and Food also has a geographic information system. This geographic information system is on the web. People can go to the website and have a look at their farm. We use this system, for example, when we conduct spraying programs to deal with plague locusts, because it highlights sensitive areas, such as around marron farmers, yabby farmers and organic growers. That enables us to respond to the community concern that in spraying for plague locusts we do not interfere with the operations of other people. I am happy for GM growers to be identified on that system. I am also happy for organic growers to be identified on that system. I want to ensure that everyone knows where these people are, so that we can continue to deal with the challenges of working together, as we have done for many, many years in the farming community.

I am very happy to be able to deal with some of the issues that members have raised with me, and I will continue to respond to the issues that people raise as we go forward with GM canola in Western Australia. It will not be something that I will just brush off my hands when it is finished. I will go on responding to people as they raise their concerns. The growers now will have to consider very carefully the choice to grow GM canola. A number of points were raised about the notion of yield—that is, it has not yielded a lot, or it has yielded a lot. Yield seems to be the point that is made. That is a very one-dimensional view of looking at the cropping systems that we have in Western Australia and at the high-tech, cutting-edge people who are doing this. To say that yield is the be-all and end-all is very simplistic. Farmers use a complex system to deal with weed control. They want to make sure that they rotate the various pesticides and chemicals that they use so that they do not build up resistance. We want to give farmers the option of having a canola that is resistant to Roundup. Farmers will use it only if it fits into their farming system. We want to give farmers that choice. Not everyone will use it. The examples in Victoria and New South Wales have shown me that single farmers have been using three different sorts of systems on their property. It is not a silver bullet. No-one is saying it is. We should not be looking just at yield. We should be looking at the whole complexity of how we manage crops in a modern agricultural farming system.

It is also incumbent on growers to be fully aware of all their obligations. That is why I have undertaken to write to all the growers to ensure that they understand and appreciate that.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: How are you enforcing that?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: They certainly have an obligation to go through the stewardship program—that is part of the federal commitment—in order to take up and use the technology.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: If they fail, what is the penalty? None! There is no penalty!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I believe we have made the right decision; we have made a good decision; and no doubt this government will make a whole range of other really good decisions.

I will follow through on some of the points that the member for Collie–Preston made. The first point he made was about introducing something we will never be able to stop or get rid of.

Mr M.P. Murray: That is right.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I will get down to a little bit of tintacks because I think sometimes we need to look at tintacks rather than make global statements like that. I make the point that irrespective of the decision that I made to allow the commercial growing of GM canola this year, or indeed the trials last year, we were picking up GM presence in seed imported from the eastern states. There is a level of adventitious presence or accidental presence coming across the border in seed that people purchase from the eastern states.

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Adventitious presence! They are lucky to get GM, are they, even though they do not want it? Is that what it means? Tell me what that means.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: This is why the former government and Hon Kim Chance supported a ministerial council resolution at a national level to have in place 0.9 per cent as the level of adventitious presence, and anything below that is called non-GM. So again I come back to this point about absolutes—GM-free versus non-GM. It is an important point to make that despite the decisions this government has made, there is a level of, as members opposite call it, contamination that has come across in seed to Western Australia. We need to be cautious about making global statements when we do not truly understand the science of what is happening.

I refer to the issue of shires. Shires have been raised on a number of occasions. This is not a local government decision. I respect their right to make statements and to put views in respect of their desire to remain GM free. Again, a number of people have clearly raised the issue with me. It is not a local government decision; it is a state government decision. Quite rightly, a group of farmers can get themselves together and market themselves, as the member for Gosnells highlighted. I think it was a good point that he made at the start of his speech about marketing and about meeting niche markets rather than falling into a commodity pathway. It is a good point. There is no reason why farmers cannot choose to do that. What we are doing here is not taking away the scope and opportunity for farmers to do exactly that.

Mr P. Papalia: It is the customer—the customer won't buy from you!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I will respond to the member for Warnbro's point, which was that the customer will not buy. Does he really think that farmers in Western Australia, who are some of the leading, most competitive, high-tech farmers in the world, are going to grow something that they cannot sell?

Mr P. Papalia: I have to ask the question!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: They are simply not going to do that.

Mr M.P. Murray: At what price?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It becomes an issue of choice. Farmers are not going to grow something they cannot sell; it is as simple as that.

Another comment was made about the act. The review of the act was triggered by the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act itself. That has happened. I have responded to that. A number of comments were made about the commentary that came in on that and the various submissions that were made. The review looks at whether the act served the purpose for which it was intended. It has. I have made no signals at all—I challenge anyone who says that I have—about any intention to remove that act. Again, that is something that we have in this state to be able to monitor and control the introduction of GM into Western Australia.

I highlight another point about our federal regulators. It relates to a point that the member for Armadale made when she referred to the challenge of feeding nine billion people. I ask her to have a close look at the speech that Hon Tony Burke made at the Pastoralists and Graziers Association conference. His notes state —

Similarly, I am so glad that WA ended the moratorium on GM. I am really glad. I've said so publicly before but I haven't had the chance to say so in the presence of Terry [Redman].

It is very pleasing to see that the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is supportive of our position. I know the member for Armadale is making a bid to get into that group. I am sure that after the next federal election it is a practice that she will have to take up as a consultant lawyer. I am sure she will be able to lobby from a distance to change the position she is taking here, which is in total contrast with that of the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The other point that was made by a number of members was about being captive to the multinationals with this technology. The member for Gosnells made the point and highlighted that people have to pay charges. That is not true; people do not have to pay charges.

Several members interjected.

Extract from Hansard
[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 10 March 2010]
p570c-596a

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is very difficult to deal with this. This government has made a good decision, and I stand by that decision. We will go on making good decisions, and we are now putting the farmers in Western Australia on an even keel.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Everyone else who spoke in this debate was heard in relative silence. I am really honestly struggling to hear the minister. I ask members to show him the same respect that everyone else was shown.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I will close by saying that we are now putting the farmers of Western Australia on an even keel and in step with the international community in such a way that they can be competitive in challenging international markets.

Question to be Put

MR B.J. GRYLLS (Central Wheatbelt — Minister for Regional Development) [6.52 pm]: I move —

That the question be now put.

Question put.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): I think the ayes have it; the ayes have it.

Question passed.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.M. Francis): Too late. I called, “The ayes have it” before I heard a dissenting voice.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr M.P. WHITELEY: When you said, “I think the ayes have it”, a couple of people called “Divide”. The member for Armadale and somebody else called “Divide”. There was clearly a call for a division.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Take a seat, member for Bassendean. There is no point of order. I did not hear a dissenting voice before I said, “The ayes have it.”

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Mr Acting Speaker, could you just explain exactly what you did not hear? You did not hear —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Take a seat, member for Armadale.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: You do need to explain —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, take a seat! I am not going to enter into debate on this. I said, “The ayes have it”, and I did not hear a dissenting voice before that on the question —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Let me finish! I did not hear a dissenting voice on the question of whether the question be put. I am now going to put the question.

Motion Resumed

Question (Disallowance Motion) put and a division taken with the following result —

Extract from Hansard
[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 10 March 2010]
p570c-596a

Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson; Acting Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Adele Carles; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Ian Blayney; Mr John McGrath; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Martin Whitely

Ayes (24)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr P. Papalia	Mr T.G. Stephens
Ms A.S. Carles	Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr M. McGowan	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mrs C.A. Martin	Mr E.S. Ripper	Mr A.J. Waddell
Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr M.P. Murray	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr M.P. Whitely
Mr J.C. Kobelke	Mr A.P. O’Gorman	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr D.A. Templeman (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (26)

Mr P. Abetz	Mr V.A. Catania	Mr A.P. Jacob	Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr F.A. Alban	Dr E. Constable	Dr G.G. Jacobs	Mr C.C. Porter
Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr M.J. Cowper	Mr R.F. Johnson	Mr D.T. Redman
Mr J.J.M. Bowler	Mr J.M. Francis	Mr A. Krsticevic	Mr M.W. Sutherland
Mr I.M. Britza	Mr B.J. Grylls	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr A.J. Simpson (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr T.R. Buswell	Dr K.D. Hames	Mr P.T. Miles	
Mr G.M. Castrilli	Mrs L.M. Harvey	Ms A.R. Mitchell	

Pairs

Mr B.S. Wyatt	Mr J.H.D. Day
Mr P.B. Watson	Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr J.N. Hyde	Mr C.J. Barnett

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 6.57 pm
