

## Legislation, Uniform

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**From:** contact@gmfreefarmers.com.au  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 December 2014 3:46 PM  
**To:** Legislation, Uniform  
**Subject:** Submission to Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review Committee  
**Attachments:** SIGNATURE.pdf

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To the Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review Committee,

On behalf of the new Western Australian farming group, the 'GM-Free Farmers', I would like to submit our concerns and suggestions in regard to the repeal of the 2006 Gene Technology Act.

As it stands, the current Act mirrors the Commonwealth Act and we have no problem with this. However WA needs to have a clear understanding of any Commonwealth amendments tabled in the future with our own State Parliamentary scrutiny and local consultation. Western Australia's extensive coastline and desert border effectively quarantine us from the other states and highlight some of our unique State based issues. This isolation brings rise to many different problems and circumstances that need treating differently to a Commonwealth blanket approach and may require additional amendments.

Some of these unique differences are:

- 1) WA has export markets for our local produce that mostly differ to the Eastern states and some of these customers may have differing standards or requirements to those offered by the OGTR.
- 2) With most GM traits being chemical resistance in one form or another, some of these chemicals being allowed by the APVMA on a Commonwealth level may be unsuitable or banned in WA or at least parts of WA.
- 3) Our natural environment in WA is unique in Australia and worldwide for that matter. We have strict quarantine protocol in place that doesn't currently allow certain crops to be grown in WA. Declared weeds, pests and diseases also vary significantly to other states. Any future GM crops may be at odds with current state regulations.

With no regard for marketing issues arising from the release of any GMO's on a Commonwealth level, a local WA committee could be formed to provide a market related assessment of any OGTR decisions. Similarly, a committee giving recommendations on specific WA environmental issues could also be formed. These two new committees will help fill a void in the current procedure overseen by the OGTR, APVMA, TGA and FSANZ at least on a state level.

No Commonwealth or State Act currently addresses the issue of Strict Liability legislation. The addition of such to a WA specific Act will likely avoid any more farmer vs farmer court battles such as the ongoing Marsh v Baxter case until the Commonwealth Act recognises the need for such legislation and can be amended.

The GM-Free Farmers would like the opportunity to appear before the Committee in regard to issues raised in this submission.

Having not been included in consultation regarding this Bill amongst other relevant issues, we requested an audience with Ken Baston back in November this year and have a meeting scheduled for Feb 12th 2015. If possible we would like to address the Committee subsequent to our meeting with the Minister for Agriculture and Food.

Yours sincerely,  
Darrell Boase.  
(on behalf of the GM-Free Farmers group)  
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