

## **MEDIA RELEASE - 12 November 1999**

### **STATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISSUE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS**

NSW Parliament's Standing Committee on State Development has been directed to conduct a detailed examination of a number of issues in relation to genetically modified foods.

Chairman of the Standing Committee on State Development, the Hon. Tony Kelly MLC, today announced that he had received a request from the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Richard Amery MP, to examine the potential costs and benefits of genetically modified food in New South Wales.

"This inquiry draws on the work the Standing Committee is presently undertaking in its concurrent inquiry into the international competitiveness of agriculture in New South Wales, Mr Kelly said. "

"The issue of genetically modified foods is a highly contentious issue, not only in Australia, but throughout the world."

"As with any contentious issue, there abounds claims and counter-claims as to the advantages and dangers of genetically modifying our food."

"To this extent, the Committee's inquiry into the issue will help in broadening community and government understanding as to the underlying issues and concerns relating to genetically modified foods."

Mr Kelly added that he was looking forward to leading the Committee's inquiry into an issue that will figure prominently in debate over the future directions of food agricultural production, food processing and food manufacturing.

"As we head into the next century, the issue of genetically modified foods is perhaps the most challenging issue confronting agricultural production and food processing industries today," Mr Kelly said.

"This inquiry will be a timely investigation of the issues and concerns surrounding the production and consumption of genetically modified foods.

“Whilst many look to the significant benefits which will result from the genetic modification of food, we need to weigh up these advantages with the uncertainty and potentially adverse trade, food safety, health and environmental implications of genetically modifying part of our agricultural production,” Mr Kelly said.

The Committee will shortly be calling for public submissions on the issue. The closing date for written submissions is Friday 18 February 2000.

Submissions should refer to the following terms of reference, and can be sent to:

The Director  
Standing Committee on State Development  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney 2000

For comment of further information, please contact the Chairman of the Committee, The Hon. Tony Kelly, MLC, on 9230 2837 or 0418 636 419.

