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## **Food Labelling Review: Consumers asked to suppress GM food concerns**

The Food Labelling Review Issues Paper is out today. The Review is trying to frame the persistent public demand for GM food labelling as a threat to future technological innovation:

"Certain technological developments in food production – genetic modification (GM), irradiation and nano-technology - have raised consumer concerns relating to these technologies that have led to calls for disclosure on food labelling. However, caution needs to be exercised in order that the development and application of these and other innovative technologies are not unduly inhibited." [<http://bit.ly/bNEspA> paragraph 3.16]

MADGE Australia spokesperson Fran Murrell asked "Is the panel asking consumers to 'exercise caution' in their concerns about GM and nano technologies?"

"Consumers will continue to value their concerns, and demand the full labelling that allows them to 'exercise caution' with GM food."

"Currently most GM foods are deceptively unlabelled, such as additives, oils, sugars, starches and animal products raised fully or partly on GM feed."

"The GM industry has not won public acceptance for its food. It has been developed with a lack of public input, discussion and acceptance, and hidden unlabelled in our food for more than a decade."

"If, as this review suggests, GM, nanotech and irradiation only have a future if they are hidden, consumers need to be extremely concerned."

The review implies that GM foods are already labelled. In reality, although up to 70% of processed foods are estimated to contain GM ingredients, most escape labelling. There is persistent doubt about their safety.

"If GM food is so wonderful why hide it? Europe manages to label GM food so why can't Australia?" said Fran Murrell.

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