

FOOD LABELLING LAWS - 28 February, 2008

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (12:09): I move: *That this house calls on the state government to support, via Food Standards Australia and New Zealand, more comprehensive food labelling laws.*

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:19): I commend the motion of the member for Fisher. I believe it is vital that we understand where our food comes from. It is difficult when you are purchasing food anywhere (whether it be from a small shop or a large retail chain) to know what you are buying. We recently had the issue of GM food and GM crops not being permitted to be grown in South Australia. I believe this will cause issues down the track when the Eastern States will be able to produce canola that has gone through genetic modification breeding, which essentially is just fast-track breeding processes. So, it will cause upsets in the export of food.

Be that as it may, the issue is that people can be very emotional about genetically modified food, but I think they would be horrified to think that up to 80 per cent of canned food in stores is already genetically modified. I can think of soy products, but there would be countless other products and you cannot readily identify them in stores. That is an issue in itself, so it makes a bit of a farce of the whole GM canola debate, as far as I am concerned.

As far as using food labelling to show that you support your state or country of origin is concerned, I think that is also vitally important. There have been too many confusing ideas and labelling laws on whether a product is produced in Australia, made in Australia, or packaged in Australia, and the consumer really does not know where it has come from. On the *Sunrise* program this morning they were saying that the kangaroo (I think) inside the green triangle means that the food is produced and packaged in Australia. It may be owned by an overseas corporation, for example, Vegemite, which used to be totally Australian owned but not any more. At least the money in the first instance goes to workers in Australia who then pay taxes, and the money goes around. I commend the bill of the member for Fisher. I think it is an excellent bill to bring to the house.