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Margaret River doctors join GM foods protest

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A group of Margaret River doctors have joined the protest against genetically modified foods in the region, citing health concerns.

A petition with the signatures of seven local medical practitioners has been handed to Augusta-Margaret River councillors, stating they were “sufficiently concerned about the health risks to humans from the consumption of GM food” to urge the shire be declared GM-free.

GP Allan Walley said the signatories did not necessarily oppose the technology, but argued more independent research was needed into health impacts from GM foods.

Dr Walley said previous international research had pointed to “potentially disastrous side effects”, which needed broader examination.

This included an international paper, published in 2007, which reported evidence of liver toxicity in rats fed a variety of GM corn.



“What we are saying is that there is no rush, it is not something that we need now or in the near future,” he said.

Ian Edwards, managing director of consultancy firm Edstar Genetics, said GM foods had been consumed worldwide for more than a decade without evidence of a “single sustainable problem”. Dr Edwards said the methodology used in the rat-feeding experiment had been “thoroughly debunked upon careful peer review”.


Augusta-Margaret River councillors were handed a petition last week, signed by more than 1400 people, claiming GM crops posed “unacceptable risks to human health”.

The petition urged the council to declare the shire GM-free for at least the next five years.

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