



BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY 5.56

INTERIM POLICY ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED AGRICULTURE IN BYRON SHIRE

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POLICY TITLE INTERIM POLICY ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED AGRICULTURE IN BYRON SHIRE

FILE REFERENCE COR050505

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Date of Review

1. OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. To increase the level of sustainable agriculture in Byron Shire.
- 1.2. To state Council's position in regard to the growing of genetically modified crops in Byron Shire.
- 1.3. To protect agricultural activities and enterprises from lost opportunities and to protect the basis for sustainable agriculture in Byron Shire for current and future generations.
- 1.4. To link agricultural activity more closely with the protection of biological diversity and the maintenance of essential ecological processes and life-support systems upon which agriculture and all other activities depend.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1. Introduction

- a) Council is preparing a strategy aimed at increasing the level of sustainable agriculture in Byron Shire. This strategy will be consistent with Commonwealth, State and regional strategies and policies and will become linked to the Shirewide local environmental plan and other strategic planning initiatives associated with the Greenprint for a Sustainable Future.
- b) Council considers that genetically modified crops have the potential for irreversible and unforeseen serious environmental and economic impacts. Given the possibility of the introduction of genetically modified crops into the Shire, there is a need to state Council's precautionary position on this issue, in advance of the development of the proposed sustainable agriculture strategy.

2.2. Definitions

- a) "Genetically modified" crops (also referred to as genetically engineered (GE) crops or genetically modified organisms (GMO)) are crop cultivars or varieties that have been modified by a process of artificially inserting specific genes from a source organism into the gene sequence of another, with the purpose of producing specific traits in the resulting crop.
- b) "Sustainable agriculture" is agriculture that contributes positively to the lives of rural people and their communities, to the region's productivity and economy, and which also protects the biological and physical resource base on which it depends. Sustainable agriculture is focused on ensuring the long-term viability of agricultural land for the purpose of agriculture and therefore integrates consideration of economic,

social and environmental aspects to achieve balance, rather than emphasising the importance of one over the others.

3. POLICY PROVISIONS

3.1. Byron Shire Council does not support the growing of genetically modified crops in Byron Shire.

3.2. Council shall work cooperatively with neighbouring local government areas to ensure that proposals or applications for approval to trial or to produce genetically modified crops within those areas are also referred to Byron Shire Council for consultation before approval.