



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

**Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee**

**Meeting 19 – 20 July 2016**

**Canberra**

**COMMUNIQUE**

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The Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee (GTECCC) held its inaugural face-to-face meeting of the 2015-2018 Triennium in Canberra on 19-20 July 2016.

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**Background**

GTECCC is a statutory advisory committee established under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* to provide advice on the request of the Gene Technology Regulator (Regulator) and the Legislative and Governance Forum on Gene Technology on issues of ethical or community concern relating to gene technology.

The purpose of this Communiqué is to provide a brief overview of the key matters considered by GTECCC and resolutions of the committee at its meeting on 19-20 July 2016.

**Meeting agenda**

GTECCC was given a series of presentations on the gene technology regulatory scheme in Australia, GTECCC's role in the scheme, and on community attitudes to gene technology. Current areas of interest with respect to ethics and community consultation were discussed and the committee identified topics for possible inclusion in a GTECCC 2015-2018 work plan, for consideration by the Regulator. The key areas discussed include:

*New technologies*

GTECCC noted that ethics and public engagement have been a focus of current ongoing national and international discussions on a range of new technologies, including CRISPR and gene drives, and their regulation. The committee was updated on the Regulator's technical review of the Gene Technology Regulations 2001 currently being conducted. The review aims to provide clarity regarding regulatory capture of new technologies, and will involve broad consultation. The committee discussed the approach to communication and the timing of engagement with the community on new technologies.

*Approach to communication*

The committee considered OGTR's general approach to communication on gene technology and discussed potential benefits of increasing OGTR's profile as a trusted source of

information on the regulation of gene technology. The committee suggested considering approaches to streamline more complex information to non-specialist audiences with an interest in the regulation of gene technology.

*National Framework of Ethical Principles in Gene Technology 2012 (National Framework)*

The committee suggested considering whether a review of the National Framework was needed. The National Framework presents ten key ethical principles relating to gene technology, and to genetically modified organisms in particular, to guide scientists and to inform the community. These principles have been prepared to shape policies and actions that arise when dealing with gene technology. The [National Framework](#) can be found on the OGTR website.

*Issues for future consideration*

GTECCC discussed several other areas of potential work for consideration by the Regulator, including providing submissions on request to future reviews of the gene technology legislation or to publications relevant to the Committee.

**Reports**

The Committee received a report from the committee's cross-member with the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee.

**For all inquiries, please contact the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator on  
1800 181 030 (free-call)**