



Australian Government

Department of Health

Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

**Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee
Meeting of 25-26 June 2019
Communiqué**

This Communiqué covers matters considered at the 12th meeting of the Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee (25-26 June 2019, Melbourne)

Background

The Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee (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) or 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 25-26 June 2019.

GTECCC Work Plan

Guiding principles for communication on gene technology

GTECCC was asked to provide advice on overarching guiding principles for engaging in, and contributing to, communication on gene technology. Members agreed that this complex topic would require more than one discussion, and that this meeting would be the commencement of developing guiding principles.

Members discussed why guiding principles were needed and the values that would underpin them, noting the overlap with the values identified in the [National Framework of Ethical Principles in Gene Technology 2012](#). GTECCC began discussing high level guiding principles for communication on gene technology, and agreed to continue building on this conversation at future meetings to work towards agreed overarching guiding principles.

Communication Items

OGTR communications

GTECCC was provided with information on recent relevant communication and engagement activities. Members discussed the 2019 survey of community attitudes to gene technology and the risk of biases that can influence consumer surveys. The report for the 2019 survey will be published shortly on the [OGTR website](#).

Perspectives on communication

Four speakers gave presentations to provide their perspectives on communicating about gene technology. Two speakers were GTECCC members, and the others represented a non-government organisation and a university Institutional Biosafety Committee. The committee

discussed the importance of considering the ethics of scientific research. While there were different views as to whether this was appropriately addressed in Australian schools, members agreed that students should be encouraged to think critically.

Community Science

GTECCC members joined OGTR staff in an informal visit to an open community science laboratory, to learn more about the growing community of individuals in Australia who are conducting community science, which is also sometimes known as do-it-yourself biology or biohacking. It was noted that community scientists are subject to the requirements of the regulatory scheme in the same manner as any other person.

Reports

GTECCC received reports from the Regulator and a cross-member with the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee (GTTAC) on recent activities of the OGTR and GTTAC, respectively, since the last meeting.

**For all inquiries, please call the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator on
1800 181 030 (free-call) or email ogtr@health.gov.au**