



Australian Government

Department of Health

Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

**Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee
Meeting of 19 November 2019
Communiqué**

This Communiqué covers matters considered at the 13th meeting of the Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee (19 November 2019, Canberra)

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 19 November 2019.

GTECCC Work Plan

Guiding principles for communication on gene technology

GTECCC progressed the development of the overarching guiding principles for engaging in, and contributing to, communication on gene technology. The Committee agreed that the guiding principles would require further development by the next membership of GTECCC.

GTECCC also discussed broader aspects of OGTR's communication, including:

- OGTR's online visibility; and
- engagement and knowledge sharing with other regulatory agencies with a role in regulating gene technology.

Resolutions:

- **GTECCC suggests** that the Regulator considers the comments and suggestions provided by the committee in relation to:
 - themes/concepts not captured;
 - themes that could be consolidated; and
 - how this project might be referred to the next GTECCC membership.

Regulatory Culture Project

OGTR provided members with an overview of a regulatory culture project that has been initiated to better understand and influence the culture of regulated organisations for better compliance outcomes. Members acknowledged that the project was in the scoping phase and suggested that the Regulator continues to engage the next membership of GTECCC on this project.

Communication Items

Community attitudes to gene technology 2019

GTECCC was given a presentation on the findings of the 2019 survey on community attitudes to gene technology, which highlighted an overall shift in attitudes towards a neutral position and a significant increase in 'don't know' responses. The topics and observations raised by GTECCC included that support for GMOs is conditional based on regulation and safety, and the type of modification and its purpose. The report for the 2019 survey can be found [here](#).

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) communication activities

GTECCC was given an overview of FSANZ's review of how the Food Standards Code applies to foods derived using new breeding techniques (NBT). FSANZ aims to ensure there is open communication and active engagement with all interested parties and will also explore ways to raise awareness about GM and NBT foods.

Third Review of the National Gene Technology Scheme

The Committee was provided with an update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Third Review of the National Gene Technology Scheme. GTECCC discussed the challenge of regulation keeping pace with rapid advances in technology, noting this is an issue for areas other than gene technology.

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) public consultation on mitochondrial donation

GTECCC was given a presentation regarding NHMRC's approach to community consultation on mitochondrial donation. The consultation aims to raise awareness and gather public views on the social and ethical issues associated with the possible introduction of mitochondrial donation in Australia.

Community Science in the United States

GTECCC received a report in relation to the Global Community Bio Summit 3.0, held recently in the US. An OGTR officer attended the Summit to engage with the international DIY biology community. Members noted the Australian DIY biology community is relatively small and in regular contact with the OGTR.

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.

As this was the last meeting of the current membership, the Chair and the Regulator reflected on the achievements of GTECCC over the past four years, thanking members for their valued contribution.

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