

# **Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee**

**Meeting 9th December 2010**

**Canberra**

## **COMMUNIQUE**

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The Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee (GTECCC) held its fourth meeting of the Triennium in Canberra on 9 December 2010.

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GTECCC is a statutory advisory committee to the Gene Technology Regulator (the Regulator) and the Gene Technology Ministerial Council. All Committee members hold office on a part-time basis.

The function of GTECCC is to provide advice to the Regulator (and the GTMC) on request, 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 at its fourth meeting on 9 December 2010.

### **GTECCC's Work Plan**

GTECCC reviewed progress in the following key areas, which had been identified as priorities at the previous meeting:

#### **National Framework for the Development of Ethical Principles in Gene Technology (the Framework)**

The Chair gave a brief update on the progress by the National Framework Review Working Group. The Committee suggested various means of engaging the research community to increase awareness of the importance of ethics when conducting research. The Committee agreed that the National Framework overlapped with other national research ethics frameworks and could be cross-referenced.

The Committee agreed that the draft National Framework should proceed as an aspirational document –which is intended to foster good research.

#### **Environmental Ethics and Gene Technology**

The Environmental Ethics Working Group reported on their presentation of the Environmental Ethics paper at the Australasian Association of Bioethics and Health Law conference in July 2010.

GTECCC agreed for the working group to finalise the environmental ethics information paper and make it available on the OGTR website. This paper is an outcome of GTECCC's deliberations and is independent from the OGTR.

### **Community attitudes to biotechnology**

An officer from the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR), presented the results of the 2010 IPSOS-Eureka Social Research Institute survey on community attitudes to biotechnology. A key finding was that the Australian public continued to strongly support biotechnologies that provide health or environmental benefits; however, support for genetically modified (GM) foods has dropped since 2007. The Chair noted the importance that community attitudes had in assisting GTECCC in it's task and thanked DIISR for it's ongoing work and support.

### **Reports**

The Committee received a report from the Gene Technology Regulator regarding the activities of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator. Reports were also received from the committee's cross-members with the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee (GTTAC) and the Australian Health Ethics Committee (AHEC).

The committee noted that this was the last meeting for the current membership of GTECCC. The work of committee was acknowledged by the Chair and the Gene Technology Regulator.

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