



## **Regulation of gene technology in Australian schools**

### **How are genetically modified organisms regulated in Australia?**

Making and working with genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in Australia is regulated through a nationally consistent legal scheme, including the Commonwealth *Gene Technology Act 2000* (the Act), the *Gene Technology Regulations 2001* and corresponding state laws.

Any dealings with GMOs in Australia must be appropriately authorised under the Act. Dealings with GMOs must be:

- licensed by the Gene Technology Regulator (the Regulator)
  - approved as a Notifiable Low Risk Dealing
  - classed as an Exempt Dealing
  - included on the GMO Register
- or
- specified in an Emergency Dealing Determination.

### **How does gene technology regulation apply in schools?**

Most student activities in schools usually do not require licensing by the Regulator. There are commercial biotechnology kits available that meet the criteria for an exempt dealing and cater for the needs of secondary schools. For example, there are kits for adding green fluorescent protein marker genes to specific bacteria.

### **Doing experiments that are classified as exempt dealings**

To be classified as exempt dealings, experiments must meet the definition of an exempt dealing in the legislation (as described in Part 1, Schedule 2, of the *Regulations*) and must not release viable GMOs outside the classroom or the laboratory. You can read about exempt dealings:

[What dealings with GMOs are classified as exempt dealings? \[PDF 119 KB\]](#)

[What dealings with GMOs are classified as exempt dealings? \[HTML\]](#)

If a school is unable to meet these conditions, [approval must be sought from the Regulator](#).

### **Properly containing GMOs**

To avoid release of a GMO into the environment, the Regulator has developed guidance notes about containing exempt dealings with GMOs:

[Containment of exempt dealings \[PDF 67 KB\]](#)

[Containment of exempt dealings \[RTF 254 KB\]](#)

Please note that exempt dealings cease to be exempt from licensing if a GMO is intentionally released and the guidance notes do not provide comprehensive guidance for laboratory safety, good laboratory practice or broader occupational health and safety issues.

You can also contact the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator for more information by:

- email: [ogtr@health.gov.au](mailto:ogtr@health.gov.au)
- free-call: 1800 181 030
- fax: 02 6271 4202

- mail: MDP54, GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601.