



THE GMO REGULATORY SYSTEM

The *Gene Technology Act 2000* (the Act) came into force on 21 June 2001 as the Commonwealth component of a national regulatory scheme. Corresponding law is currently being prepared and implemented in the States and Territories. An Inter-Governmental Agreement underpins the system for regulating genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in Australia.

The object of the Gene Technology Act 2000 is:

" To protect the health and safety of people, and to protect the environment, by identifying risks posed by or as a result of gene technology, and by managing those risks through regulating certain dealings with genetically modified organisms (GMOs)."

Key features of the Act are the appointment of an independent Gene Technology Regulator and a requirement for transparent and accountable implementation.

The Act prohibits all dealings with GMOs unless the dealing is:

- A licensed dealing;
- A notifiable low risk dealing;
- Exempt dealing; or
- Included on the GMO Register.

The Act and the associated *Gene Technology Regulations 2001*, provide a comprehensive process for the Regulator to assess proposed dealings with live and viable GMOs ranging from contained work in certified laboratories to general releases of GMOs into the environment, and extensive powers to monitor and enforce license conditions.

The Act establishes three Committees that provide advice to the Regulator and the Ministerial Council: the Gene Technology Advisory Committee; Gene Technology Ethics Committee; and Gene Technology Community Consultative Committee.

The Gene Technology Regulator liaises with other regulatory agencies, including the Australian New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA), the National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (NRA), and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), to coordinate the approval of GM products for use and sale.

The Act creates a Public Record of GMO dealings and GM Products on the OGTR website: www.ogtr.gov.au

- **For further information contact us:**

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