

OGTR Service Charter

This Service Charter outlines the standards of service that the public and users of Australia's scheme for gene technology regulation can expect. The Charter also outlines the avenues available should these standards not be met. Performance measures against this Service Charter are incorporated into our business plan and are published annually.

The Service Charter comprises the following sections: **About us; Our role and functions; Our service; Our service delivery; Your role; Your complaints; Contact us;** and **Our values.**

About us

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) provides administrative support to the Gene Technology Regulator (the Regulator) in the performance of the position's functions under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* (the Act). The Act, which came into force on 21 June 2001, comprises the Australian Government's component of Australia's nationally consistent scheme for the regulation of gene technology. Each State and Territory has enacted, or is enacting, corresponding legislation. The OGTR is located in Canberra and comprises scientific, legal, policy, professional and administrative staff. We are part of the TGA Group of Regulators of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. From July 2006, we will be part of a Joint Agency that has some regulatory responsibilities in both Australia and New Zealand. The OGTR will remain an Australia-only entity.

Our role and functions

In administering the Act, the Regulator protects the health and safety of people and the environment by identifying risks posed by or as a result of gene technology, and manages those risks by regulating certain dealings with genetically modified organisms (GMOs). 'Dealing' with a GMO includes conducting experiments, making, developing, producing, breeding, propagating, growing, importing, possessing, storing, using and transporting a GMO. The Regulator also certifies containment facilities used for dealings conducted under the Act.

The Regulator consults widely on key decisions, including with expert advisory committees, State and Territory governments, the Australian Government Environment Minister, prescribed agencies and authorities, and the public.

Our service delivery

Our staff are contactable during business hours by telephone, facsimile, mail, in person and by email and will address requirements of the Act efficiently and within statutory timeframes.

In addition, we are committed to delivering high-quality service in relation to non-statutory functions. Our staff will:

- Always identify themselves and provide a contact name and telephone number in all written correspondence.
- Follow up your email and telephone messages within two working days.

- Within 10 working days, acknowledge your letters and, where necessary, advise you of a likely timeframe for a full response.
- Finalise a response, which will be in plain language, within the indicated timeframe.
- Endeavour to refer you to the appropriate organisation should your enquiry be outside OGTR's scope.
- Ensure that all relevant public information is available on our website (www.ogtr.gov.au) and easy to understand.
- Respect your rights to privacy and confidentiality.

To ensure that we meet the needs of our clients we undertake an annual customer survey against the standards of service outlined in this Service Charter. Feedback is reported and used for continuous improvement in the scheme.

Our service

OGTR staff are committed to ensuring that:

- You are treated with courtesy at all times.
- Your questions and concerns are addressed within the indicated timeframes and, where necessary, by updating you on progress with the enquiry where there are unavoidable delays.
- We are objective in our dealings with you.
- Our discussions with you are confidential.
- We offer face-to-face meetings to facilitate communication.

Your role

For more effective service and communication, we encourage you to:

- Treat our staff with courtesy.
- Respond to our requests for information accurately and in a timely manner.
- Understand and abide by any legal requirements and other obligations under the Act concerning gene technology and dealings with GMOs.

Your complaints

Should OGTR fail to meet these service charter standards or you experience any difficulties with our operations, please:

- Try to resolve this with the staff member you are dealing with.
- Ask to talk to the staff member's manager if you are not satisfied with the staff member's response or if our service commitments are not being met.
- If these options are not appropriate, you can contact the Regulator, who will respond to your written complaint within 10 working days of its receipt.
- If you are not satisfied with the Regulator's response you may raise your concerns with the nearest Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman by phoning 1800 133 057 or by writing to the Ombudsman at GPO Box 442 Canberra City ACT 2601 or by sending a fax to (02) 6249 7829.

Contact us

Whether you wish to make a suggestion, comment or a complaint, you can contact us on:

Telephone (Free Call): 1800 181 030

Fax: (02) 6271 4202

Or write to us at: OGTR
PO Box 100 (MDP 54)
Woden ACT 2606

Web site: www.ogtr.gov.au

Email: ogtr@health.gov.au

Our values

OGTR observes the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct in all aspects of its business. In addition, we value:

Professionalism; through integrity, objectivity, excellence, commitment, and consistency.

Accountability; through open and transparent processes.

Achievement; through effective, efficient and flexible work practices which are focussed on delivering timely outcomes.

Respect for each other and our stakeholders; through open and effective communication and quality service.

We are interested in your views about our service and our Service Charter. If you would like to make any suggestions on ways to improve our service or Charter, please contact us at ogtr@health.gov.au, by phone on (freecall) 1800 181 030 or by fax on (02) 6271 4202.