



**Office of the Gene Technology Regulator**

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

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# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **GENE TECH REGULATOR HAS ASSESSED RECORD NUMBERS OF APPLICATIONS FOR COMMERCIAL-IN-CONFIDENCE**

No applications to treat the location of field trial sites of genetically modified crops as confidential have been approved, the Acting Gene Technology Regulator, Ms Liz Cain, announced today.

"None of the applications for confidential commercial information (CCI) submitted had provided any evidence or other material that would enable me to be satisfied that 'significant damage' would 'be likely' to occur to the health and safety of people, the environment or to property if the locations of the field trials were disclosed," Ms Cain said.

"I could not, therefore, approve any of the applications submitted to me."

Ms Cain said that she was pleased that all applications had been assessed within five weeks.

"Since the deadline for applications closed (6<sup>th</sup> July 2001), CCI applications in relation to 31 trial sites had been withdrawn. The remaining CCI applications in relation to 87 trial site locations had been assessed as not meeting the stringent eligibility tests under the *Gene Technology Act 2000*.

"One of the key components of the Gene Technology Act, which came into effect on June 21 2001, was the disclosure of trial site locations and other information about GM trials," she said.

"By the July 6<sup>th</sup> deadline, we were able to post on the website specific details about well over 80 percent of sites operating in Australia.

"CCI applications from six organisations were considered under the provisions of the Act."

Ms Cain said today that all of the applications for CCI had now been rigorously assessed in accordance with the Act and none had met the confidential commercial information criteria. The applications that were assessed for CCI were from Monsanto, La Trobe University, University of Queensland, Pacific Seeds, University of Western Australia and GlaxoSmithKline.

"The companies involved have been notified of my decision. I am required under the Act to give them 28 days to appeal my decision.

"After that time, if no appeal proceeds, I will ensure that all relevant details about these sites, including locations, will be placed on the website.

"I gave an undertaking to assess applications within 90 days of receipt, so I am pleased to have been able to deal with the current ones well within that time frame, particularly as there is so much public interest in site locations."

Ms Cain said the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator website was a major source of information to the public and industry players on the administration of the Gene Technology Act and she was delighted at the way in which it had developed.

"We are making improvements and updates almost every day to the website," she said.

"One of the most significant changes is that trials are now listed in State and Local Government areas, making it much simpler for people to access information of interest to them.

"The next step will be to include maps of each State and Territory with trial sites plotted for quick reference.

"I encourage the public to visit the site and to give us feedback on what we can do further to improve the flow of information," Ms Cain said.

For further information ring the Hotline on 1800 181 030 or visit the website on [www.ogtr.gov.au](http://www.ogtr.gov.au)

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