



Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

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# MEDIA RELEASE

GTR05/01

6<sup>th</sup> December 2001

## NEW GENE TECHNOLOGY REGULATOR TAKES UP POSITION

Australia's inaugural Gene Technology Regulator, Dr Sue Meek, has taken up the Canberra-based position this week.

Dr Meek is the first appointee under the *Gene Technology Act 2000*, which provides a comprehensive legal framework for the regulation of genetically modified organisms in Australia, in order to protect human health and safety and the environment.

Dr Meek, who has extensive experience in the development and implementation of public policy in the science and technology arena, said today she was looking forward to the challenges ahead as the public's watchdog on this new technology.

"I am a firm believer in the appropriate use of science and technology and that includes having regulatory systems in place to ensure there are safeguards for the community and the environment," Dr Meek said.

"As the Regulator, I am neither a proponent, nor critic, of gene technologies, but it is my job to vigorously implement the new laws which govern the development, trial and release of GMOs in the best interest of all Australians.

"Science and technology are major drivers of change in our society and economy. It is important that we increase public participation in decision making regarding their use. The *Gene Technology Act 2000*, with its extensive provisions for community input, is an important forum for such debate," she said.

Dr Meek said that the vast majority of the genetic manipulation work being carried out in Australia was experimental and taking place in contained facilities. However, some is now reaching trial stage which will involve limited and controlled releases into the environment.

"Already I have a number of applications before me for proposed trials of genetically modified cotton, canola and poppies and, in line with the emphasis on transparency in decision making contained in the Act, full details of these applications will be made available to the public on the website.

"The public will also have the opportunity to comment on the risk assessment and management plans that will be developed for each trial application and I will also be taking into consideration the views of a wide range of experts including the newly established Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee (GTTAC)," Dr Meek said.

Two other expert committees have been established under the Act to provide advice on ethical issues and matters of general concern to the community in relation to GMOs.

Dr Meek said the Australian community was very fortunate to have such an impressive group of people serving on the three advisory committees.

"The GTTAC has already met once, the ethics committee will meet before the end of the year and the community consultative committee will meet early next year," she said.

**Note: Attachments to this media release are:**

- **CV for Dr Meek**
- **List of committee members**

**Media contact: Kay McNiece, Media Adviser, OGTR 0412 132 585**

**Dr SUE MEEK**  
**COMMONWEALTH GENE TECHNOLOGY REGULATOR**  
**(Appointment effective December 2001)**

**AREAS OF FOCUS:**

Dr Sue Meek specialises in promoting understanding and awareness of science and technology issues and operating at the interface of industry, academia and government to develop policies and programs to facilitate the conduct and commercialisation of research and development.

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:**

**1997 - Present**

**Executive Director, Science and Technology Division, Department of Commerce and Trade**

Member of the department's Corporate Executive team. Responsible for promoting the integration of science and technology (S&T) across the department's sectorally-based structure, expanded research and development (R&D) support and infrastructure development programs, and the whole of government implementation of the *State Science and Technology Policy* and *Government Intellectual Property Management Policy*.

**1994 - 1997**

**Manager, R&D Branch, Department of Commerce and Trade**

Coordinated the consultation, formulation and Cabinet approval processes for the State's S&T and public sector intellectual property management policies. Responsible for the development and implementation of programs designed to increase investment in research in WA and enhance the State's infrastructure for industry-focussed R&D

**1991 - 1994**

**Manager, Emerging Industries Branch, Department of State Development**

Responsible for improving the State's capacity to identify, develop and adopt opportunities from strategic R&D intensive industries such as aquaculture, biotechnology, environmental management, information technology and renewable energy.

**1988 to 1991**

**Manager, Biotechnology Branch, Technology and Industry Development Authority**

Responsible for promoting the establishment and development of biotechnology-based industry within the State, encouraging the application of biotechnology to existing industry and providing advice on bioethical and regulatory issues.

**1984 to 1988**

**Technical Director, Sue Meek and Associates**

Development Consultant specialising in the commercialisation of biologically-based ventures. Consultancies involved technical and commercial performance appraisals of companies for potential investors, evaluations of products for inventors and business plan preparation for startup ventures. Also engaged as Executive Officer to the South Australian Biotechnology Promotion Committee and Consultant on Biotechnology to the South Australian State Government.

**1981 to 1984**

**Consultant Biologist, Australian Mineral Development Laboratories (AMDEL)**

Projects undertaken include an Australia-wide survey of new business opportunities for AMDEL in the biological sciences, the establishment of a regional water and waste water monitoring facility for the North Queensland region. Designed and managed a diverse range of consultancies ranging from environmental management strategies to product failure investigations.

**EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:**

**1982 Doctor of Philosophy, Marine Biology, James Cook University of North Queensland**

Research into the growth and regeneration of a fast growing coral species. Funded under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan.

**1976 Master of Science, Oceanography, Southampton University**

Course work in both physical and biological oceanography and research into the metabolism of enclosed marine microbial populations. Funded by the Natural Environmental Research and Development Council.

**1975 Bachelor of Science (Hons), Microbiology, University of Surrey**

Majored in medical bacteriology and virology and researched the structure and composition of dental plaque.

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:**

- \* Australian Institute of Company Directors
- \* AusBiotech
- \* Australian Marine Science Association

**CURRENT COMMITTEES & APPOINTMENTS:**

- Premier's Science Council
- Commonwealth, State and Territory Advisory Council on Innovation
- Medical and Health Research Infrastructure Council
- Telstra Small Business and Business Woman of the Year State Judging Panels
- Joint Venture Management Committee of Strategic Research Fund for the Marine Environment (Chair)
- NW Shelf Joint Environmental Management Study Steering Committee
- Commonwealth-State Consultative Group on UN Biosafety Protocol
- Executive Committee, WA Branch of AusBiotech
- Contributing Editor, Australasian Biotechnology Journal
- IDCs on Gene Technology Regulation and Access to Biological Resources
- State Agricultural Biotechnology Centre Management Committee
- WA Biomedical Research Institute Board
- The University of Western Australia's Intellectual Property Committee

**As at 27<sup>th</sup> September 2001**

## ***GENE TECHNOLOGY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GTTAC)***

### ***MEMBERSHIP***

#### **Professor Stephen Powles BAppSc, MSc, PhD**

Director of the WA Herbicide Resistance Initiative, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Western Australia.

#### **Professor James Kirkpatrick BA(Hons), PhD**

Professor of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania.

#### **Dr Nancy Schellhorn BSc, MSc, PhD**

Senior Entomologist at the South Australian Research and Development Institute.

#### **Professor Hugh Possingham BSc(Hons), PhD**

Professor Mathematics and Zoology, University of Queensland, and Director of the Ecology Centre and the Centre for Conservation Biology at University of Queensland.

#### **Dr Gerald Both BSc(Hons), PhD**

Chief Research Scientist, Division of Molecular Science, CSIRO.

#### **Professor Ashley Dunn MPhil, PhD**

Senior Associate and Professor in the Royal Melbourne and Western Hospital's Department of Surgery. Associate Director of the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research (Melbourne Tumour Biology Branch) .

#### ***Associate Professor Eric Haan BMedSc, MBBS, FRACP***

Head of the South Australian Clinical Genetics Service at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

#### **Professor Peter Langridge BSc, PhD**

Professor in Plant Science, University of Adelaide.

**Professor James Dale BSc(Hons), PhD**

Head of the School of Life, Faculty of Science, Queensland University of Technology and Professor of Biotechnology.

**Dr John Oakeshott BSc(Hons), PhD**

Director Manufacturing, CSIRO Entomology

**Emeritus Professor Nancy Millis AC MBE BSc, MSc, PhD, DSc**

Chancellor of LaTrobe University. Emeritus Professor, University of Melbourne.

**Dr Philip O'Brien BSc(Hons), PhD**

Senior Lecturer in Biotechnology, Murdoch University.

***Associate Professor Peter Upcroft BSc (Hons), PhD***

Principal Research Fellow at Queensland Institute of Medical Research. Associate Director, Brisbane Protein and Nucleic Acid Centre.

**Dr John Rasko BSc, MBBS(Hons), PhD, FRCPA, FRACP**

Senior Staff Specialist in Gene Therapy and Haematology, Sydney Cancer Centre at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Research Group Leader/ Principal Investigator at the Centenary Institute of Cancer Medicine and Cell Biology, Department of Experimental Medicine at Sydney University.

**Emeritus Professor Alfred James Pittard AM, Dip Pharm, BSc, MSc, DSc, MD, PhD**

Emeritus Professor, Department of Microbiology and Immunology, University of Melbourne. Chair of Microbiology, University of Melbourne.

**Dr Franklin Panetta BA, PhD**

Principal Scientist/Professional Leader, Alan Fletcher Research Station, Department of Natural Resources.

**Professor Marjory-Dore Martin BSc, BEd, MSc, PhD**

**(Cross member with GTCCC)**

Adjunct Professor at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, School of Biological and Chemical Sciences, Deakin University.

**Ms Judy Jones B.Sc, LL.B**

**(Cross member with GTEC)**

Lecturer in Law, Australian Centre for Environmental Law, Faculty of Law, Australian National University, Canberra

**Associate Professor Richard Roush BSc, PhD**

**(Expert Adviser)**

Chief Executive Officer of CRC for Australian Weed Management at the Waite Campus, Adelaide University.

## **GENE TECHNOLOGY COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (GTCCC)**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

**Mr Bruce Lloyd**

Chairman of the Australian Landcare Council.

**Ms Elaine Attwood**

National Adviser, of Consumer Affairs, National Council of Women of Australia. SA representative for the Consumers' Federation of Australia.

**Mr Robert Phelps BA (Hons)**

Director of the GeneEthics Network, which operates under the auspices of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

**Mrs Margaret Cover**

Self-employed as a partner in a mixed grain and livestock business on the Western Darling Downs.

**Dr John Keniry BSc (Hons), PhD**

Chairman, Ridley Corporation Limited (an Australian owned public company, which produces animal feed and salt for the global market,) and Ridley Incorporated (one of the largest producers of animal feed products in North America). Chairman of the National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals

**Mr Donald Coles**

Chairman and Managing Director of Valley Seeds Pty. Ltd and Access Genetics Pty. Ltd.

**Mrs Juliet McFarlane**

Helps to run family farm. By actively following the debate on genetic modification Ms McFarlane has developed a sound knowledge of gene technology issues as they apply to Australia.

**Councillor Clive Robartson OAM – B.App.Sc., Dip.Agric.Tech.**

Councillor of the City of Melville. Current Member of the Australian Local Government Association.

**Associate Professor Frank Vanclay BSc(Hon), MSocSci, PhD**

Sub-Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts for Charles Sturt University. Associate Director for the Centre for Rural Social Research, Charles Sturt University.

**Professor Marjory-Dore Martin BSc, BEd, MSc, PhD**

**(Cross member with GTTAC)**

Adjunct Professor at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, School of Biological and Chemical Sciences, Deakin University.

**Dr Rosemary Robins B.A (Hons), Ph.D**

**(Cross Member with GTEC)**

Lecturer, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Melbourne.

**GENE TECHNOLOGY ETHICS COMMITTEE (GTEC)**

***MEMBERSHIP***

**Dr Gavin Ash B.Sc(Hons), Ph.D**

Senior Lecturer in Plant Pathology, School of Agriculture, Charles Sturt University  
Associate Director, Research, Farrer Centre.



**Ms Belinda Byrne**

Health Correspondent, Channel Nine Television Network, Melbourne

**Professor Don Chalmers LL.B, LL.M**

Dean, Head of Faculty of Law, and Professor of Law, University of Tasmania

**Reverend Dr Brian Edgar B.Th (Hons), M.Th, Ph.D**

Dean of Studies and Lecturer in Theology and Ethics, Bible College of Victoria

**Dr Neville Hicks B.A (Hons), Ph.D**

Reader in Public Health, Social Health Unit, University of Adelaide

**Dr Kees Hulsman B.Sc (Hons), Ph.D**

Senior Lecturer in Ecology, Australian School of Environmental Sciences, Griffith University, Brisbane

**Dr Bidda Jones B.Sc (Hons), Ph.D**

Scientific Officer, RSPCA Australia

**Dr Simon Longstaff B.Ed, M.Phil, Ph.D**

Executive Director, St James Ethics Centre, Sydney

**Associate Professor Ariel Salleh B.A (Hons), M.A, Ph.D**

Associate Professor, Social Ecology, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury

**Dr Sandy Webb B.Sc, M.Sc, Ph.D**

Senior Policy Officer, Reproductive Technology, Health Department of Western Australia

**Ms Judy Jones B.Sc, LL.B**

**(Cross Member with GTTAC)**

Lecturer in Law, Australian Centre for Environmental Law, Faculty of Law, Australian National University, Canberra

**Dr Rosemary Robins B.A (Hons), Ph.D**

**(Cross Member with GTCCC)**

Lecturer, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Melbourne.

**Dr John Fleming B.A, Th.L (Hons), Ph.D**

**(Expert Adviser)**

Director, Southern Cross Bioethics Institute

**Mr Max Griffiths MBE B.A, B.Com, B.D**

**(Expert Adviser)**

Chairman, Austin Hospital Human Ethics Research Committee