

# Media Release

**THE HON TRISH WORTH MP**

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for  
Health and Ageing

Member for Adelaide

TW 10/2002  
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## **GOVERNMENTS/COMMUNITY/ETHICISTS AND SCIENTISTS ACHIEVE GENE TECHNOLOGY REGULATION MILESTONE**

“Important milestones have been achieved this week for Australia’s gene technology regulatory system,” Ms Trish Worth, Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, announced today.

“The announcement of committee chairs and the recognition of new gene technology legislation in Victoria and South Australia are major achievements for the new national regulatory system,” she said.

Ms Worth announced today that former Australian Governor-General, **Sir Ninian Stephen**, has been appointed chair of the Community Consultative Committee that advises the Gene Technology Ministerial Council and the Gene Technology Regulator, Dr Sue Meek.

“I am also delighted to announce that **Professor Donald Chalmers** has been appointed as chair of the Gene Technology Ethics Committee and **Professor Stephen Powles** has been appointed to chair the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee,” Ms Worth said.

Professor Powles is director of the WA Herbicide Resistance Initiative attached to the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Western Australia. Professor Chalmers is Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Tasmania. (A resume of each of the Chairs is attached).

“Each of the three committees comprise exceptionally eminent people with wide ranging experience across many disciplines and we are extremely lucky to have so many talented people agreeing to serve on these important committees,” Ms Worth said.

“This week I have also taken steps to declare new Victorian and South Australian legislation as ‘corresponding State law’ to the Commonwealth *Gene Technology Act 2000*.

“New State corresponding legislation demonstrates practical commitment by jurisdictions to Australia’s national regulatory framework.

“Together with the appointment of committee chairs, the commitment by States and Territories to the national legislative framework enhances Australia’s pre-eminent international reputation for protecting human health and safety and the environment through gene technology regulation,” she said.

**Further information on the committees and their meeting communiques are available on the website of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator: [www.ogtr.gov.au](http://www.ogtr.gov.au)**

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## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

### ***GENE TECHNOLOGY COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE***

**Chair: Rt Hon Sir Ninian Stephen, KG, AK, GCMG, GCVO, KBE**

- Member International Olympics Committee Ethics Commission 2001
- Chairman of the Review of Australian Blood Banking and Plasma Products 1999
- Judge of International Tribunals for Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda 1993 – 97
- Australian Ambassador for the Environment 1989 – 92
- Governor-General of Australia 1982 – 89
- Justice of the Australian High Court from 1972 – 82
- Judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria 1970 – 72

The *Gene Technology Community Consultative Committee* (GTCCC) - has been established as a result of views expressed during the consultation process on the new legislation. The GTCCC provides advice at the request of the Regulator or the Ministerial Council on matters of general concern to the community in relation to GMOs.

### ***GENE TECHNOLOGY ETHICS COMMITTEE***

**Chair: Professor Donald Chalmers**

LL.B University College, London. LL.M University of Papua New Guinea

- Currently Professor of Law, Dean and Head of the Faculty of Law, University of Tasmania.
- Chairman of Tasmanian Enquiry into Artificial Conception and a Commonwealth Ministerial Review of the National Institutional Ethics Committee system.
- Tasmanian Law Reform Commissioner
- Board Member, Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Member of the National Bioethics Consultative Committee
- Chair and Member, National Health and Medical Research Council Australian Health Ethics Committee. Represented the Committee at the San Francisco, Tokyo and London World Summits of National Bioethics Commissions
- Author of seven books and other government reports. Contributor to *Laws of Australia*, *Halsbury's International Encyclopaedia on Medical Law* and numerous articles on medical ethics.

The *Gene Technology Ethics Committee* (GTEC) - provides advice at the request of the Regulator or the Ministerial Council on ethical issues relating to gene technology and any codes of practice or policy principles developed by the Regulator or the Ministerial Council.

### ***GENE TECHNOLOGY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE***

**Chair: Professor Stephen Powles**

BAppSc in Agriculture (University of Western Sydney), MSc in Agriculture (Michigan State University USA) PhD in Biology (ANU).

- Currently Director of the WA Herbicide Resistance Initiative, University of WA
- Formerly CEO of CRC Weed Management Systems Adelaide
- Post-doctoral Fellow at Carnegie Plant Biology, Stanford University, California USA, and University of Paris, Orsay France.
- Rotary International Ambassadorial Fellowship; CSIRO Overseas Post-doctoral Fellowship; Carnegie/del Duca Scientific Fellowship; Reserve Bank of Australia Fellow; Australian Academy of Science Bede Morris Fellow; Australian Weed Science Society Medal for Research Excellence; Australian Academy of Science Commonwealth Fellow; International Honorary Fellow Weed Science Society of America, and Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering Fellow since 1984.
- Current research includes biochemistry and genetics of herbicide resistance, and biology and management of herbicide resistance.

The *Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee* (GTTAC) – provides scientific and technical advice (including on individual applications) at the request of the Regulator or the Ministerial Council. GTTAC replaces the former Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee (GMAC).