

## **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON LICENCE DECISION DIR 084/2008: LIMITED & CONTROLLED RELEASE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED TORENIA**

### **What is this licence for?**

Florigene Pty Ltd has obtained approval to trial, under limited and controlled conditions, three torenia lines that have been genetically modified (GM). The release is proposed take place at one site in the local government area of Darebin City Council on a maximum area of 20 m<sup>2</sup> between October 2008 and May 2009.

### **What is the purpose of the trial?**

The purpose of the trial is to conduct proof of concept research involving experiments with the GM torenia lines to assess their capacity to absorb phosphate and slow or repress algal overgrowth in a hydroponic system. None of the GM torenia plants are permitted to be used as human food or animal feed.

### **How have the GM torenia lines been modified?**

Each line contains a gene from the plant called thale cress, which is expected to enhance the uptake of phosphate. The same or similar genes are widespread in the environment, being present in a range of plants and green algae.

All of the GM torenia lines also contain an antibiotic resistance selectable marker gene, which was used to identify transformed plants during initial development of GM plants in the laboratory. This gene is from a common gut bacterium.

### **What are the effects of the genetic modification?**

The expression of the new genes is expected to increase the rate of uptake of phosphorus from solution.

### **What controls have been imposed on this release?**

The finalised Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) that was prepared for this limited and controlled release and formed the basis of the Regulator's decision to issue the licence, concluded that the proposed release poses negligible risks to people or the environment. However, a range of licence conditions have been imposed to limit the release to the size, location and duration requested by the applicant as these were important considerations in the evaluation process. Control measures to restrict the spread and persistence of the GMOs and the introduced genes include ensuring that transport and storage of the GM plant materials are in accordance with OGTR guidelines, and monitoring for, and destroying, any volunteer plants on the release site.

### **Want more information?**

A number of documents relating to this decision are available on the OGTR website (<<http://www.ogtr.gov.au>> under "What's new") or via Freecall 1800 181 030. These documents include the finalised RARMP, an Executive Summary, a Technical Summary and a copy of the full licence.