

Gene Technology Ethics Committee Meeting

15 November 2006, Canberra

COMMUNIQUE

The Gene Technology Ethics Committee (GTEC) held its thirteenth meeting in Canberra on 15 November 2006.

GTEC was established by the *Gene Technology Act 2000* (the Act) as a statutory advisory committee to the Gene Technology Regulator (the Regulator) and the Gene Technology Ministerial Council. All committee members and expert advisers hold office on a part-time basis. (A reference to 'members' in the communiqué includes 'expert advisers').

The 15 November 2006 GTEC meeting was a half-day meeting held following the official public launch of the *National Framework for the Development of Ethical Principles in Gene Technology* (the Framework). The launch was held in conjunction with the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's 2nd National Institutional Biosafety Committee Forum.

At the meeting, the main items discussed were the launch of the Framework and developments with the Committee's draft discussion paper on 'Environmental Ethics and Gene Technology'. Members received a report from the Chair regarding relevant conferences he has attended since the last GTEC meeting, and from the Regulator regarding the ongoing and completed work of the Office. Members were informed of relevant work from other national committees via cross-member reports.

Key outcomes from the thirteenth meeting are reported below.

GTEC's Work Plan

National Framework for the Development of Ethical Principles in Gene Technology

Members discussed the outcomes of the Framework launch and ideas for further promoting the document. The Committee thanked the Working Group and all the people who contributed to the development of the Framework. The Committee also thanked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Christopher Pyne MP, for launching the document.

Environmental Ethics and Gene Technology

The Committee held an extensive and detailed discussion about the latest draft of the discussion paper 'Environmental Ethics and Gene Technology'. The Working Group outlined the major changes which have been made to the paper since GTEC's last meeting in July 2006. GTEC considered the major themes of the paper and the ways in which they may be expanded further.

The Committee identified a number of editorial and structural changes, to be completed before the first meeting in 2007.

GTEC and Relationships with Other Committees

The Committee received reports from the Chair, the Gene Technology Regulator, the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee (GTTAC) and the Gene Technology Community Consultative Committee (GTCCC).

GTEC considered the final draft of the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) *Guidelines for the generation, breeding, care and use of genetically modified and cloned animals for scientific purposes*. The Committee resolved to make comments on the document and forward these to the AWC.

Next Meeting

The next GTEC meeting will be held in March 2007.

**For all inquiries, please contact the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator on
1800 181 030 (free-call)**