

Gene Technology Ethics Committee Meeting

3 March 2005, Canberra

COMMUNIQUE

The Gene Technology Ethics Committee (GTEC) held its eighth meeting in Canberra on 3 March 2005.

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 communique includes 'expert advisers').

On 8 October 2004 the membership term of the first triennium of GTEC expired. The newly appointed membership to serve on GTEC until 2007 held its first meeting on 3 March 2005. Details of the new membership are at Attachment A. The new members were welcomed to GTEC and were given a presentation on the operations and activities of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR).

GTEC's Work Plan

GTEC considered its ongoing projects from the previous triennium and potential new areas of interest.

Ethical Guidelines in Relation to Genetically Modified Organisms

The Committee discussed the direction of this paper in detail and considered comments received from a limited preliminary round of consultation with other ethics committees and government agencies. GTEC resolved to progress the paper in the direction of a general educational statement. The working group was reformed and will present a revised document at the next GTEC meeting.

Ethical Issues Associated with Trans-species Gene Transfer

The Committee discussed the final stages of development for this paper. Further consultation from the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee (GTTAC) will be sought. A working group for this paper was reformed. The working group has agreed to invite a member of GTTAC to work with them in the final stages of preparation of the paper.

Further areas of interest

GTEC considered numerous additional areas which may result in developing GTEC papers in the future. Further information will be gathered on these items, which will be further discussed at future GTEC meetings.

GTEC and Relationships with Other Committees

GTEC will monitor the projects of relevant international ethics committees to increase awareness of the international environment regarding ethics and gene technology. GTEC also resolved to further develop relations with Australian ethics committees. GTEC will invite the Animal Welfare Committee to retain its observer status for the 2004-2007 triennium, and will respond to the invitations to comment on two joint works from the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, and the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee.

The Regulator reported on the operations of the OGTR. This information is publicly available in the Quarterly Report of the Gene Technology Regulator on the OGTR website, (www.ogtr.gov.au) or on request by phoning the number below.

Next Meeting

The next GTEC meeting will be held 7 June 2005.

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

Gene Technology Ethics Committee Membership List

Dr Rachel Ankeny M.A Phil M.A. Med Eth. Ph.D

- Director and Senior Lecturer Unit for History and Philosophy of Science, Honorary Associate Faculty of Medicine (Centre for Values, Ethics and the Law in Medicine), University of Sydney

Associate Professor Gavin Ash BSc (Hons) Ph.D (NE)

- Associate Professor School of Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences, Charles Sturt University

Professor Donald Chalmers (Chair) LL.B, LL.M

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

Reverend Dr Brian Edgar BTh MTh Ph.D

- Director for Theology and Public Policy, The Australian Evangelical Alliance

Dr John Fleming BA Th.L (Hons) Ph.D

- President, Campion College, Sydney

Dr Neville Hicks BA (Hons) Ph.D

- Reader in Public Health, University of Adelaide

Dr Gordon Howarth BSc(Hons) Ph.D (Expert Adviser)

- Senior Research Scientist Women's and Children's Hospital

Dr Kees Hulsman BSc (Hons) Ph.D

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

Ms Judy Jones BSc, LL.B

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

Dr Simon Longstaff BEd, M.Phil Ph.D

- Executive Director, St James Ethics Centre, Sydney

Dr Vaughan Monamy BSc (Murdoch) MSc (Tasmania) Ph.D (UNSW)

- Senior Lecturer in Environmental Science and Environmental Ethics, Australian Catholic University

Dr Rosemary Robins BA (Hons) Ph.D

- Lecturer, Department of History and Philosophy of Science