

11 June 2011

GTMC Secretariat
Department of Health and Ageing
MDP 138
GPO Box 9848
CANBERRA ACT 2609

Dear Secretariat

Submission on Gene Technology Review

I wish to comment as follows:

- **The effectiveness and efficiency of the way that the regulatory scheme operates, taking account of developments since 2005-06 including:**
 - a) “the national scheme for gene technology regulation in Australia to identify any need for, and opportunities to achieve, improvement in its national consistency, efficiency and effectiveness and coordination; and investigate if the aims of the Agreement to determine these are being achieved;” *Improvements could be made in assessing gene technology if the OCTR would only accept independent testing of products instead of self regulated testing and results and proof of adequacy by the gene technology companies such as Monsanto.*

The operation of the regulatory scheme is neither effective nor efficient when biotech companies in Australia are permitted to create a threat to organic agriculture.

- b) “emerging trends and international developments in biotechnology and its regulation and whether the regulatory system stipulated by the Act, including definitions within the Act, is flexible enough to accommodate changing circumstances;” *The OGTR needs to take into account views expressed by independent scientists with an opposing view to that expressed by the biotech companies. We the consumers are hearing more and more evidence of health problems associated with GM foods and products. There is also continuing evidence that*

GM crops do nothing to enhance the environment or the agricultural land on which they are grown. This is due to the even more excessive use of chemicals to control ever increasing weed growth and insect control due to artificial growing methods.

- **The consultation provisions of the Act to determine:**

- c) the stakeholders for various applications under the Act and the methodology used to engage them. *Stakeholders include not only biotech companies but farmers, communities and consumers. The growing of GM canola has been approved by the OGTR in Australia. There are now conflicts and tension arising between farmers, their non GM neighbours, communities, consumers and companies; The OGTR must consider and actively communicate more effectively with the public.*

Yours sincerely

Tracy Skippings