

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000574

OUTCOME: 5 - Regulation, Safety and Protection

Topic: OGTR Working Group

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Rice, Janet

Question:

Documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act refer to an OGTR working group that is considering organisms using new technologies and whether or not they are regulated under the Gene Technology Act 2000

- a) Who is on this working group?
- b) What specific techniques has the working group considered?
- c) Please table any advice the working group has issued.
- d) Did the OGTR require each member of the working group to declare potential or actual conflicts of interest?
 - i. If yes, did any members of the working group identify actual or potential conflicts of interest?
 - ii. if yes to i. please identify those members and their interests.
 - iii. if yes to i. what was the OGTR response to that declared conflict?

Answer:

- a) The working group is an internal group consisting of staff assisting the Regulator made available by the Department of Health in accordance with s 133 of the *Gene Technology Act 2000*. The group does not have any decision-making function.
- b) Questions considered by the working group involved the following techniques: Zinc-finger nucleases, Transcription activator-like effector nucleases, Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeat/Cas9 endonuclease system, Oligonucleotide-directed mutagenesis, cisgenesis, intragenesis, and Pioneer Hi'Bred International's seed production technology.
- c) The working group does not issue advice and has no decision-making function.
- d) No. The working group consists of staff made available to the Regulator by the Department. Staff are engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999* and are subject to the APS Code of Conduct, and APS Values and Employment Principles. Staff are also

subject to Accountable Authority Instructions on disclosure of interest issued to the Department in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

d) i.-iii.

Not applicable.