

**Gene Ethics supplementary submission on Gene Technology Amendment
Bill 2007**

Dear Mr Humphery,

Thanks for the opportunity to give oral evidence to the Committee on the Gene Technology Amendment Bill 2007.

We took a question on notice from Senator Gary Humphries during the hearing, in which he asked us to specify the disjunctions we saw between the terms of the Bill and the State, Territory and Australian Governments' Response to the Recommendations of the Statutory Review of the Gene Technology Act 2000 and the Gene Technology Agreement 2001.

We have now reviewed both documents and, after taking advice from colleagues in other jurisdictions, are satisfied that the state and territory governments were consulted on the final wording of the Bill. We therefore withdraw our call for a further state review of the Bill. However, we stand by our view that Australian governments have not appreciated the full implications of enacting the proposed powers to make Emergency Dealing Determinations and still consider that these matters fall outside the scope of the Act as defined by its objectives.

We also want to comment on the proposed Section 46A amendment in which dealings are to be licensed without due process "for the purposes of, or related to the purposes of, disposing of a GMO". "Disposing of" should be clearly defined in the law as it could include harvesting and selling, or other commercial dealings, not only destruction. As it stands, we consider this a way that the OGTR could license genetic contamination.

Senator Siewert asked us to comment on the GRDC's support for the Section 46A proposal. Please note that the GRDC is not a disinterested commentator on contamination issues. GRDC allocates at least \$100,000 pa from grower levies and taxpayer funds to Agrifood Awareness, a group that promotes acceptance of GE crops and foods. Agrifood Awareness was jointly founded by, and is funded by, GRDC, NFF and Croplife Australia, which represents the big agribusiness companies that are the main owners of GE crops and other organisms.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make these submissions.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Phelps
Executive Director
Gene Ethics