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03 APR 2009

Senator C Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Moore

Thank you for your correspondence inviting the Tasmanian Government to make a submission to the Senate Inquiry into Gene Patents.

The patenting of genetic material is a complex ethical and legal issue with ramifications for the government and non-government sectors and the wider community.

Tasmanian Government officers have been involved in inter-jurisdictional consultation on the issue of gene patents and have advised me that the major potential implications for the health system relate to gene testing for predictive purposes, specifically:

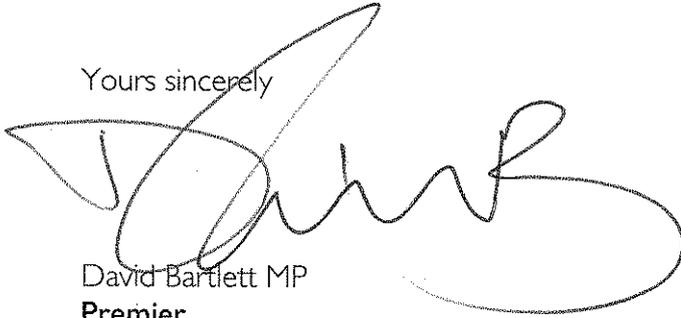
- the potential for limitation of supply in the gene testing market; and
- the risk of significant cost imposts should such limitation occur.

Consideration of these issues should be balanced with acknowledgement of the economic benefits that may be accrued through a well designed and managed gene patents system. For example, intellectual property trading in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry, in itself, can and has produced highly successful companies. This occurs internationally, and for Australia to remain competitive in this sector, it is important that any reforms or legislative amendments do not adversely impact on a company's ability to operate and grow, or impact detrimentally on potential investment in Australia.

I trust that the Inquiry Committee will note these comments and, in its deliberations, consider the full spectrum of social and economic issues associated with gene patents.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. I look forward to hearing the outcomes of the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Bartlett', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned to the right of the text 'Yours sincerely' and above the printed name 'David Bartlett MP Premier'.

David Bartlett MP
Premier