List of recommendations

2	Benefits and risks of gene technology in agriculture	7
	Recommendation 1	29
	The committee recommends the continued use of gene technology,	
	but only with stringent regulation, constant and cautious	
	monitoring, and public reporting.	29
	Recommendation 2	29
	The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government	
	increase funding for research into the potential benefits and risks	
	(environmental, health, social, economic and ethical) presented by	
	genetically modified organisms29 Recommendation 3	
		30
	The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government	
	ensure that funding for research into improving agricultural	
	productivity and sustainability is allocated equitably across all areas	
	of research	30
3	Understanding genetically modified organisms	31
	Recommendation 4	38
	The committee recommends that all public education campaigns	
	funded by the Commonwealth government recognise and address	
	the environmental, economic, cultural, ethical and social concerns	
	of the consumer	38

Recommendation 5	42
The committee recommends that government agencies, especially the Interim Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the Australia New Zealand Food Authority, review the design of their internet sites to ensure they are user friendly	42
Sites should lay out clearly what they contain, be easily navigable, and present readily understood information which is updated regularly.	42
Recommendation 6	43
The committee recommends that Biotechnology Australia, in its role as the coordinator of information about gene technology provided by government departments, monitor the efficiency and effectiveness with which material is presented	43
Biotechnology Australia should regularly publicise all information from the Gene Technology Regulator, including information about the regulator's role and function	43
Recommendation 7	46
The committee recommends that Biotechnology Australia be made a statutory authority.	
Recommendation 8	
The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government,	
 through Biotechnology Australia: monitor understanding and awareness of biotechnology; and assess the effectiveness of its current public awareness campaign 	
and the need for additional information	46
Recommendation 9	47
The committee recommends that information provided by	
Commonwealth agencies about gene technology:	47
 detail the independence, transparency and accountability of the 	
regulatory processes;	47
give equal prominence to information about the risks and	
benefits; and	47
 detail how the regulation of gene technology is able to avoid or minimise risk. 	47

5	Research, development and commercialisation	59
	Recommendation 10	63
	The committee recommends that Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia develop a strategy for Commonwealth funding to facilitate and encourage the innovative use of gene technology in the	
	development of commercially viable, emerging industries in agriculture, fisheries and forestry	63
	This strategy should be drawn up in consultation with state and territory agriculture departments and the private sector	63
	Recommendation 11	
	 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government: continue to contribute funding for the basic gene technology research required for applications to agriculture, fisheries and 	
	forestry; and	64
	seek more involvement, possibly through partnerships, of private sector involvement in this research	64
	Recommendation 12	67
	The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government review the current arrangements in place regarding gene technology research and ownership of intellectual property to ensure maximum	
	commercial benefit for Australian industry	67
	Recommendation 13	67
	The committee recommends that, in conjunction with the review	
	proposed in Recommendation 12:	67
	 each research and development corporation review its practices in relation to commercialisation and ownership of intellectual 	
	 property to maximise benefits to Australian industry; and the committee of the chairs and managing directors of the rural research and development corporations, in conjunction with Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia and industry, 	67
	take a lead role in assessing and disseminating best practice	
	arrangements.	67

Recommendation 14 6	59
The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government, in	
conjunction with state and territory governments and the private	
sector:	;9
review the efficiency and effectiveness of plant breeding	
programs in Australia;6	;9
identify ways of improving them; and	;9
promote their adoption, particularly where Commonwealth	
funding is provided6	9
Recommendation 156	59
The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government,	
in conjunction with state and territory governments and the	
private sector, consider the benefits of amalgamating some of	
the existing plant breeding programs	;9
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The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government,	Ŭ
together with state and territory governments and industry,	
develop a policy for maintaining Australia's germplasm	
collections and continuing to make them accessible	' 0
Recommendation 17	
The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government	~
continue to contribute to the operation of the international	
germplasm centres	2
Recommendation 18	
The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government: 7	
 play a major role in international negotiations to harmonise the 	2
International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources with the	
Convention on Biological Diversity; and	19
 take a position that balances the interests of those who wish to 	~
import genetic resources from overseas with maximising	
Australia's benefit from its native genetic resources	'2

Recommendation 19	81
The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government:	81
 monitor the impact of the new business tax arrangements 	
on the level of investment in biotechnology; and	81
 implement further changes to taxation arrangements if 	
further stimulus to invest is needed	81
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The committee recommends that, when reviewing the impact	
of the new business tax arrangements on the level of investment in	
biotechnology, the Commonwealth government also review:	84
the contribution of grant programs and the 125 per cent tax	
concession for research and development; and	84
the need for more support, through grants and taxation	
measures, for investment in the early stages of	
commercialisation	84
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government fund a specific incubator program to assist the	
application of biotechnology to agriculture.	84
Recommendation 22	88
The committee recommends that the Commonwealth government	
continue to fund programs for increasing the numbers of people	
and the levels of skills in:	88
 biotechnology research; and 	88
 the business and management issues involved in the 	
commercial use of the research	88
Recommendation 23	94
The committee recommends that Biotechnology Australia, in	
conjunction with other agencies, develop and deliver educational	
programs and materials targeted at small producers and breeders	94
These programs and materials should cover:	94
the business and intellectual property issues relating to	
the breeding of agricultural genetically modified	
organisms; and	94
 the practical aspects of using genetically modified 	
organisms in agriculture	94

6	Intellectual property	95
	Recommendation 24	106
	The committee recommends that IP Australia:	106
	avoid issuing broad patents;	106
	raise the thresholds for granting patents so that they	
	are equivalent to the highest set by overseas countries; and	106
	screen patent applications more rigorously	106
	Recommendation 25	107
	The committee recommends that the Patent Act 1990 be amended:	107
	to give effect to the changes proposed in	
	Recommendation 24; and	107
	to clarify that the long term interests of end users are	
	as important as the rights of intellectual property owners	
	to benefit from their investment in that intellectual property	107
	Recommendation 26	107
	The committee recommends that IP Australia develop and	
	implement mechanisms for sharing skills with other	
	patent offices	107
	Recommendation 27	111
	The committee recommends that research institutions that receive	
	Commonwealth funding and do not at present acknowledge	
	and reward their researchers for innovative output that leads to	
	commercial success, be required to do so as a condition of	
	receiving public funding	111
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	The committee recommends that, in international negotiations,	
	the Commonwealth government support the strengthening of	
	the provisions of the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of	
	Intellectual Property and assist in establishing stronger	
	intellectual property systems in developing countries in Asia	115
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	The committee recommends that the effectiveness of the	
	initiatives to upgrade the level and volume of intellectual	
	property skills in Australia be monitored, reviewed, and	
	improved when gaps in required skills are identified	122

7	Regulation	123
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	The committee recommends that the Office of the Gene	
	Technology Regulator report to the Parliament at least	
	quarterly for the first three years of its existence	139
	Recommendation 31	145
	The committee recommends that, if and when a revised	
	standard for labelling genetically modified foods is instituted,	
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	the use made by the public of label information; and	
	the public's views on the usefulness of the information	
	provided	145
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	The committee recommends that the Australian Quarantine	
	and Inspection Service certify both non genetically modified	
	and genetically modified produce for export	
	Recommendation 33	
	The committee recommends that the Commonwealth	
	government, together with industry representatives, play	
	an active part in negotiations to implement the Biosafety	
	Protocol in such a way that:	150
	 apparent contradictions between the protocol and 	
	World Trade Organization arrangements are clarified	
	and addressed; and	150
	 Australia's interests in freely trading genetically 	
	modified organisms are maximised, without jeopardising	
	public safety.	150
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	The committee recommends that the Genetic Manipulation	193
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	Technical Advisory Committee, continue to take a cautious	
	approach to approving the use of genetically modified	152
	agricultural organisms	133

Recommendation 35	157
The committee recommends that the Commonwealth	
government:	157
ensure that there is sufficient in house capacity in the Gene	
Technology Technical Advisory Committee to provide	
timely and effective risk assessment of genetically modified	
organisms;	157
 give it the authority to coopt independent expertise when 	
required; and	
make these assessments public	157
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The committee recommends that all novel crops, whether bred	
by conventional means or by gene technology, should be	
assessed and regulated for their impact on the environment	
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The committee recommends that the Commonwealth	
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is clearly prescribed in the new gene technology legislation;	160
sufficient funding is provided to enable him/her to fully	
discharge his/her duties; and	160
the Gene Technology Regulator is publicly accountable	