The Senate

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

Gene Technology Amendment Bill 2015 [Provisions]

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44th Parliament

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCI	Confidential Commercial Information
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DIR	Dealings involving an Intentional Release
DNIR	Dealings Not involving Intentional Release
FSANZ	Food Standards Australia and New Zealand
GM	Genetically Modified
GMO	Genetically Modified Organisms
LGFGT	Legislative and Governance Forum on Gene Technology
NLRD	Notifiable Low Risk Dealing
RARMP	Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

2.25 The committee recommends that the Bill be passed.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Referral of inquiry

1.1 The Gene Technology Amendment Bill 2015 (the Bill) was introduced into the House of Representatives on 18 June 2015. On 24 June 2015, pursuant to the Senate Selection of Bills Committee report, the provisions of the Bill were referred to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 18 August 2015.[1]

1.2 The committee was asked to consider the Bill in the context of:

- changes to license variation, including extending licenses beyond the scope of the original Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP);
- amendment to the list of factors which the regulator must consider before dealings can be declared Notifiable Low Risk Dealings (NLRDs) by the Governor-General, including removing the requirement that the genetically modified organism (GMO) be biologically contained so that it is not able to survive without human intervention; and
- any other matter of the committee's interest.[2]

Conduct of the inquiry

1.3 The committee advertised the inquiry on its website and in *The Australian* newspaper on 8 July 2015, calling for submissions to be lodged by 24 July 2015. The committee also wrote directly to a range of people and organisations likely to have an interest in the Bill, drawing their attention to the inquiry and inviting them to make written submissions.

1.4 The committee received five submissions to the inquiry. These submissions are listed at Appendix A and are published on the committee's website.

1.5 The committee agreed to not hold a public hearing.

Background

1.6 The *Gene Technology Act 2000* (the Act) is the Commonwealth component of the nationally consistent regulatory scheme for gene technology in Australia. The object of the Act is:

> [T]o protect the health and safety of people, and to protect the environment, by identifying risks posed by or as a result of gene technology, and by managing those risks through regulating certain dealings with GMOs.[3]

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1 Selection of Bills Committee, *Report No. 8 of 2015*, Appendix 4.

2 Selection of Bills Committee, *Report No. 8 of 2015*, Appendix 4.

3 *Gene Technology Act 2000*, s. 3.

1.7 The Act establishes a regulatory framework to provide an efficient and effective system for the application of gene technologies that operates in conjunction with other Commonwealth and State regulatory schemes relevant to GMOs and Genetically Modified (GM) products.[4]

1.8 In 2011, the Department of Health (formerly the Department of Health and Ageing) commissioned a review of the Act on behalf of the Legislative and Governance Forum on Gene Technology (LGFGT) (formerly the Gene Technology Ministerial Council).[5] The review investigated:

- emerging trends and international developments in biotechnology and its regulation;
- the efficiency and effectiveness of the operation of the Act consistently across the national scheme for gene technology regulation in Australia; and
- the interface between the Act and other systems (e.g. other Acts and schemes).[6]

1.9 The review found that, overall, the Act is working well and the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator is functioning in an effective and efficient manner, but that there are aspects of the Act's implementation at State and Territory level that require attention. The review also noted that current consultation processes in relation to applications under the Act are working well. The review made 16 recommendations;[7] 14 of which were agreed to by the LGFGT.[8]

Purpose and key provisions of the Bill

1.10 The Bill amends the Act to implement five of the agreed recommendations, comprising minor and technical amendments to the Act. These amendments improve the Act's operation without changing the underlying policy intent or overall legislative framework of the regulatory scheme. The Bill:

- discontinues quarterly reporting to the Minister (Part 1 Schedule 1 of the Bill);
- clarifies which dealings may be authorised by inadvertent dealings licenses (Part 2 of Schedule 1 of the Bill);

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4 *Gene Technology Act 2000*, s. 4.

5 Allen Consulting Group, *Review of the Gene Technology Act 2000: Final Report*, August 2011, p. 1.

6 Allen Consulting Group, *Review of the Gene Technology Act 2000: Final Report*, August 2011, p. 1.

7 Allen Consulting Group, *Review of the Gene Technology Act 2000: Final Report*, August 2011, p. vi.

8 Department of Health, *All Governments' Response to the recommendations of the 2011 Review of the Gene Technology Act 2000*, http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/gene-techact-review accessed 9 July 2015.

- updates advertising requirements for public consultations (Part 3 of Schedule 1 of the Bill);
- removes information about GM products authorised by other agencies from the Record of GMO and GM Product Dealings maintained by the Gene Technology Regulator (Part 4 of Schedule 1 of the Bill);
- changes licence variation requirements to provide greater flexibility for licence-holders (Part 5 of Schedule 1 of the Bill);
- updates the considerations required before dealings may be scheduled as NLRDs (Part 6 of Schedule 1 of the Bill); and
- clarifies ambiguous wording (Part 6 of Schedule 1 of the Bill).[9]

Provisions of the Bill

1.11 The provisions of the Bill, contained in Schedule 1, amend the Act to implement five recommendations from the *2011 Review of the Gene Technology Act 2000*, comprising minor and technical amendments to the Act.

Part 1 – Reporting requirements

1.12 Item 1 amends section 136 of the Act to require that annual reports include information about the following:

- GMO licences issued during the financial year;
- any breaches of conditions of a GMO licence that have come to the Gene Technology Regulator's (the Regulator) attention during the financial year;
- emergency dealing determinations made by the Minister during the financial year;
- any breaches of conditions of an emergency dealing determination that have come to the Regulator's attention during the financial year; and
- auditing and monitoring of dealings with GMOs under the Act by the Regulator or an inspector during the financial year.

1.13 Item 2 repeals section 136A of the Act, which requires that the above information be reported quarterly.

1.14 Item 3 provides that subsection 136A(3) will continue to have effect for quarterly reports that the Regulator has provided to the Minister, under subsection 136A(1), but which have not yet been tabled in Parliament at the time of the Item's commencement. Any such reports must be tabled in Parliament within 15 sitting days of the receipt of the report by the Minister.

Part 2 – Inadvertent dealings

1.15 The inadvertent dealings provisions of the Act allow the Regulator to promptly authorise the disposal of a GMO which has inadvertently come into

9 Explanatory Memorandum (EM), p. 1.

someone's possession. Part 2 clarifies the dealings which may be authorised for purposes relating to disposing of a GMO.

1.16 The Explanatory Memorandum (EM) explains that if an individual or organisation believes that they have inadvertently come into possession of a GMO, it must be tested and sampled to confirm whether the organism is a GMO. These testing activities fall under the dealing described as 'conducting experiments with the GMO.' Testing activities are considered to activities related to the disposing of a GMO, as the person or organisation will dispose of any organisms that are determined to be a GMO. The EM notes that:

> In some circumstances material for testing may be limited, and it would be necessary to propagate, grow, raise or culture the organism to obtain enough material for testing, for example, if only a small number of seeds are available…Transporting of the GMO to places with appropriate facilities or necessary equipment may be required in the course of testing or destruction of material as authorised by an inadvertent dealings licence.[10]

1.17 Item 4 amends subparagraph 46A(a), which relates to initial consideration of Dealings Not involving Intentional Release (DNIR) licence applications, and Item 5 amends subparagraph 49(a), which relates to initial consideration of Dealings involving Intentional Release (DIR) licence applications. The amendments for both subparagraphs 46A(a) and 49(a) provide the following clarifying details describing dealings authorised by the licence for purposes relating to the disposal of a GMO:

- conducting experiments with the GMO;
- propagating the GMO;
- growing, raising or culturing the GMO;
- transporting the GMO; and
- any other dealings to be undertaken for the purposes of, or for purposes relating to, disposing of the GMO.

1.18 Item 6 provides that, at the time of commencement, the amendments to subparagraphs 46A(a) and 49(a) will apply to undecided inadvertent dealings applications as well as inadvertent dealings applications made on or after commencement.

Part 3 – Public notification of risk assessment

1.19 Subsection 52 of the Act requires the Regulator to publish a notice stating that a risk assessment and a risk management plan (RARMP) has been prepared regarding dealings proposed to be authorised by a licence and inviting comment and submissions. Subsection 52(1) requires that the notice must be published in *The Gazette*, in a newspaper circulating generally in all States; and on the Regulator's website '(if any)'.

10 EM, p. 4.

1.20 Item 7 amends paragraph 52(1)(b) to provide the Regulator with greater discretion regarding the newspaper/s in which a notice may be published. The amendment allows the Regulator to choose one or more newspapers that the Regulator considers appropriate to publish the notice, having regard to the geographic area in which the dealings are proposed to be authorised by a licence.

1.21 Item 8 amends paragraph 52(1)(c) to omit the words '(if any)' to clarify that the Regulator does have a website, on which notices must be published.

Part 4 – GM products

1.22 Part 4 removes the requirement that the Regulator maintain a record of Genetically Modified (GM) product approvals made by other agencies. However, it does not alter the requirement that the Regulator record its own approvals for dealings with GMOs.

1.23 Items 9–16 amend references to the Record of GMO and GM Product Dealings (the Record), or descriptions of its contents, removing references to GM products.

1.24 Item 17 repeals subsection 138(5), removing the requirement that the Record contain information regarding GM products approved by other agencies that are mentioned in designated notifications given to the Regulator under the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992*; the *Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991*; the *Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989*; and the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*. Information about GM products can be sought directly from the relevant agency (the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, Food Standards Australia New Zealand, and the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme.)

1.25 Subsection 138(8) requires that the Regulator ensure that information mentioned in subsections 138(3), 138(4), 138(5) or 138(6) is entered on the Record as soon as reasonably practicable. Item 18 amends paragraph 138(8) to reflect Item 17 repealing subsection 138(5) and to include subsection 138(3A), correcting an oversight from a previous amendment. The amended subsection 138(8) will require the Regulator to enter the information mentioned in subsections 138(3), 138(3A), 138(4) or 138(6) to the Record as soon as reasonably practicable.

1.26 Item 19 (transitional provision) provides that, after the item's commencement, the Regulator may remove historical information about GM products from the Record.

Part 5 – Restrictions on licence variations

1.27 Subsection 71(2B) states that the Regulator must not vary a licence if the RARMP, which had been submitted for the original application of the licence, does not cover the risks of the dealings proposed to be authorised by the licence as varied.

1.28 Item 20 amends subsection 71(2B) to allow the Regulator to consider both the RARMP from the original application for the licence as well as RARMPs that have been accepted for other licences, which have already been issued.

1.29 The amended subsection also removes an unintended restriction on the Regulator's ability to initiate licence variations.[11] The amended 71(2B) will only apply to applications to vary a licence, not to variations initiated by the Regulator. Under the amended subsection, the Regulator will be able to initiate a variation whenever the Regulator becomes aware of any risks posed by licenced dealings which are not covered by the original RARMP or any other RARMP. This will allow the Regulator to manage these risks to protect the health and safety of the public and the environment.

1.30 Item 21 provides that, after the item's commencement, the amended subsection 71(2B), will apply to applications for variation of licence made on or after the commencement as well as to any applications for variation of licence that have been made, but not decided, before commencement.

Part 6 – Technical amendments

1.31 Section 30 of the Act guarantees the independence of the Regulator, stating that the Regulator has discretion in the performance or exercise of his or her functions or powers and that the Regulator is not subject to direction from anyone in relation to the issuing of GMO licences and the conditions to which a GMO licence is subject. Item 22 clarifies the ambiguous wording of paragraph 30(a).

1.32 Under section 74 of the Act, the Governor-General can make regulations to declare a dealing with a GMO to be a notifiable low risk dealing (NLRD). Item 23 amends subsection 74(3) regarding the conditions that the Regulator must consider before regulations are made declaring a dealing with a GMO to be a NLRD. The amended conditions require the Regulator to consider any risks to the health and safety of people, or to the environment; and, if there is any risk, whether the NLRD requirements prescribed under subsection 75(2) would be sufficient to manage the risk. The amendment also removes the requirement, under the paragraph 74(3)(a) of the Act, that the Regulator consider whether the GMO is biologically contained so that it is not able to survive or reproduce without human intervention.

11 EM, p. 6.

Chapter 2

Consideration of the Bill

2.1 The committee received five submissions, all of which supported the amendments outlined in the Gene Technology Amendment Bill 2015 (the Bill). The submissions were from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO); the Gene Technology Regulator (the Regulator); the Australian Academy of Science; CropLife Australia (CropLife); and Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ).

Submissions

CSIRO

2.2 The CSIRO declared its strong support for clear legislation in the oversight of gene technology regulation and advised that it did not have any specific comments to make regarding the Bill.[1]

Gene Technology Regulator

2.3 The Regulator noted that the amendments outlined in the Bill would implement minor and technical recommendations from the independent review of the Act, conducted in 2011 for the Legislative and Governance Forum on Gene Technology, which were agreed by the states and territories in 2013 (briefly discussed in Chapter 1). The Regulator expressed support for the provisions of the Bill, commenting that:

> I consider that the amendments would clarify and enhance the operation of the Act and support achieving its object "to protect human health and safety, and the environment, from risks posed by or as a result of gene technology, by managing those risks through regulating certain dealings with genetically modified organisms".[2]

2.4 The Regulator also noted that the amendments would not alter the policy settings of the regulatory scheme.[3]

Australian Academy of Science

2.5 The Australian Academy of Science described the amendments outlined in the Bill as 'conservative and justified' on the basis of the Regulator's accumulated experience of implementing Australia's system for the regulation of dealing with genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The Australian Academy of Science agreed that the amendments would improve the Act's operation without changing the underlying policy intent or overall legislative framework of the regulatory scheme.[4]

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1 Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, *Submission 1*, p. 1.

2 Gene Technology Regulator, *Submission 2*, p. 1.

3 Gene Technology Regulator, *Submission 2*, p. 1.

4 Australian Academy of Science, *Submission 3*, p. 3.

CropLife Australia

2.6 CropLife 'fully' supported the Bill, commenting that, 'the minor and technical amendments to the Act proposed by the Bill to make gene technology regulation in Australia more efficient, more effective and clearer.' However, CropLife also commented on the timeframes for the implementation of the recommendations following the 2011 review of the Act:

> …it is concerning that it has taken four years to implement what amounts to relatively minor administrative changes…the 2011 Review of the Act also recommended several more strategic and important changes to the national gene technology regulatory scheme and CropLife is hopeful the Department of Health is on track to deliver these significant improvements to the operation of the Act prior to the next review, which is anticipated in 2016.[5]

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand

2.7 Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) noted that the amendments outlined in the Bill were minor and technical in nature and supported 'the general intent of such amendments in simplifying and clarifying legislation.' In particular, FSANZ discussed and expressed its support for the amendments made in part 4 of the Bill, regarding the Record of GMO (and GM Products) Dealings:

> It has been a long standing practice of FSANZ to notify the OGTR [Office of the Gene Technology Regulator] of GM food product approvals so they may be entered into the GMO record. This practice is recognised in the MoU [Memorandum of Understanding] between FSANZ and the OGTR, however it has often been acknowledged that it represents a duplication of effort, and that information on approved GM food products can readily be obtained from FSANZ. Therefore, FSANZ supports the amendments removing this requirement.[6]

Changes to licence variation

Extension of licences beyond the scope of the original Risk Assessment Plan

2.8 Under subsection 71(2B) of the Act, the Regulator may only vary a licence if the risk assessment and risk management plan (RARMP) prepared for the original licence application covered the risks posed by the dealings proposed to be authorised by the varied licence. However, the amended subsection 71(2B) will allow licence variations to proceed, provided potential risks associated with the dealings are adequately addressed in an existing RARMP. The Explanatory Memorandum (EM) gave an example of how the amended subsection 71(2B) would function:

> In considering licence variation applications that utilise risk assessments contained in RARMPs for other licences, the Regulator would consider whether the two licences involve similar GMOs or similar dealings. For example, a limited and controlled plant DIR [Dealings involving Intentional Release] licence could potentially be varied to include dealings with a

5 CropLife, *Submission 4*, p. 1.

6 Food Standards Australia, *Submission 5*, p. 2.

> GMO of the same parent species carrying another gene or new methods of destroying GMOs, provided that these dealings had been assessed in the RARMP for another licence relating to the same parent species. For DNIRs [Dealings Not involving Intentional Release], licences could potentially be varied to include, for example, *in vivo* experiments with a GMO which is licenced for *in vitro* experiments, provided another RARMP considers *in vivo* dealings with the same GMO or with GMOs from the same parent organism with similar modifications.[7]

2.9 The Regulator supported the amendment, noting that it will 'improve the Regulator's ability to ensure licence conditions are appropriate to the circumstances, and increase flexibility for variations sought by the Regulator and licence-holders'. The Regulator asserted that it will also 'broaden the range of variations the Regulator may allow on application, while ensuring that the appropriate level of risk assessment continues to be undertaken for licence variations'. Furthermore, the Regulator assured the committee that the amendment will 'ensure continued transparency of the information underpinning variations sought by licence-holders to environmental release licences (DIR licences, e.g. GMO field trials and commercial releases).'[8]

2.10 The Australian Academy of Science described the change as 'justified' and noted its potential to reduce regulatory burden:

> Experience with the operation of the regulatory system has led to the accumulation of substantial information and practical experience with dealings with certain organisms and genetic modifications. Accordingly, the proposed changes to subsection 71(2B) to enable the Regulator to take into account the assessment of another licence application when considering an application to vary a licence in some circumstances are justified and represent an appropriate potential for reduction of the regulatory burden.[9]

2.11 CropLife also supported the proposed amendments 'to the extent that they represent the operational status quo', noting that the Act 'currently has no legislative provision that prevents the Regulator from using non-CCI [confidential commercial information] data submitted by Applicant A to support an application by Applicant B'. CropLife also commented that the amendments 'in no way extend licences beyond the scope of the original Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan'.[10]

Removal of an unintended restriction on the Regulator

2.12 The EM noted that item 20 'will remove an unintended restriction on the Regulator's ability to initiate licence variations'. The amended 71(2B) will only apply to applications to vary a licence, not to variations initiated by the Regulator. Under the amended subsection, the Regulator will be able to initiate a variation whenever the Regulator becomes aware of any risks posed by licenced dealings which are not

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7 EM, pp 5–6.

8 Gene Technology Regulator, *Submission 2*, p. 4.

9 Australian Academy of Science, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

10 CropLife Australia, *Submission 4*, p. 1.

covered by the original RARMP or any other RARMP. This will allow the Regulator to manage these risks to protect the health and safety of the public and the environment.

2.13 The Regulator welcomed the removal of the unintended restriction, commenting that:

> This minor amendment would provide clarity and certainty by making explicit that the requirement for risks to have been considered in an existing RARMP relates only to variation applications from the licence holder, not variations initiated by the Regulator.[11]

2.14 The Australian Academy of Science also supported the amendment stating that, 'the removal of the unintended constraint on the Regulator's ability to initiative licence variations to enable newly identified risks to be managed is strongly supported'.[12]

Amendment regarding Notifiable Low Risk Dealings

2.15 Notifiable Low Risk Dealings (NLRDs) are a category of low-risk GMO dealings undertaken with standard conditions and containment, which may be conducted with notification to the Regulator, rather than under a licence from the Regulator. Subsection 74(3) of the Act outlines the considerations that the Regulator must take into account before regulations are made declaring a dealing with a GMO to be a NLRD.

2.16 The Bill amends the conditions that the Regulator must consider before regulations are made declaring a dealing with a GMO to be a NLRD. The amended conditions require the Regulator to consider any risks to the health and safety of people, or to the environment; and, if there is any risk, whether the NLRD requirements prescribed under subsection 75(2) would be sufficient to manage the risk.

2.17 The Regulator supported the amendment, stating that it will not change the classification of any GMO dealings or the process for making regulations declaring GMO dealings to be NLRDs. The Regulator outlined the impact of the changes:

> The proposed amendment would re-frame these considerations to:
>
> - emphasise identifying *any* risk, rather than determining whether the dealings involve *minimal* risk to human health and safety and the environment
> - explicitly invoke requirements for conduct of NLRDs prescribed in subsection 75(2), which includes the appropriate containment level, for determining whether any risk can be sufficiently managed
> - remove the undefined terms 'minimal risk' and 'minimal conditions'

11 Gene Technology Regulator, *Submission 2*, p. 4.

12 Australian Academy of Science, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

- make explicit that the Regulator may consider any other appropriate matter.[13]

2.18 Furthermore, the Regulator noted that the amendments provide definitive language, which 'aligns with current scientific understandings of risk assessment and risk management of GMOs', and which increases clarity and specificity about the matters the Regulator must consider.[14]

2.19 The Australian Academy of Science supported the amendment commenting that the changes enhance specificity:

> The proposed changes to subsection 74(3) provide enhanced specificity regarding matters that the Regulator should take into account regarding the declaration of a dealing with a GMO to be a low risk dealing, and creates an appropriate link to subsection 75(2) regarding the management of any identified risk.[15]

2.20 CropLife also supported the amendment noting that 'by definition NLRDs must not involve the intentional release of a GMO into the environment'.[16]

Removal of the requirement that a GMO be biologically contained

2.21 The amendment removes the requirement, under paragraph 74(3)(a) of the Act, that the Regulator consider whether the GMO is biologically contained so that it is not able to survive or reproduce without human intervention.

2.22 The Regulator asserted that the notion of whether a GMO is biologically contained does not significantly contribute to the Regulator's assessment of whether dealings are appropriate for the NLRD category. Furthermore, the Regulator noted that the Act currently only requires the Regulator to *consider* whether a GMO is biologically contained; it is not a requirement for dealings to be declared NLRD:[17]

> It should be noted that 'biological containment' is not a requirement in order for GMO dealings to be declared NLDRs, rather this is simply a consideration to be taken into account in assessing whether particular GMO dealings are appropriate for the NLRD category. Indeed, GMOs that are not biologically contained form a significant proportion of the dealings scheduled as NLRDs, and include dealings with a range of GM animals and GM products.[18]

2.23 The committee did not receive any submissions expressing concerns regarding the removal of the requirement that a GMO be biologically contained.

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13 Gene Technology Regulator, *Submission 2*, p. 5.

14 Gene Technology Regulator, *Submission 2*, p. 5.

15 Australian Academy of Science, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

16 CropLife Australia, *Submission 4*, p. 2.

17 Emphasis added.

18 Gene Technology Regulator, *Submission 2*, p. 5.

Committee view

2.24 The committee is confident that the amendments outlined in the Bill will enhance the Act without altering the underlying policy intent or overall legislative framework of the regulatory scheme, and without compromising the Act's object of protecting human health and safety, and the environment, from the risks posed by gene technology.

Recommendation 1

2.25 The committee recommends that the Bill be passed.

Senator Zed Seselja

Chair

Australian Greens—Additional Comments

1.1 The Australian Greens have long been concerned about the role that genetically engineered organisms play in our modern agricultural system. Despite decades of research and commercialisation, doubt still remains over aspects of the safety of genetically modified foods and the advertised benefits of GM crops are yet to be seen. Crop yields have not increased, but the use of pesticides on our food has. The only ones profiting from GM are large GM companies.

1.2 While the Australian Greens do not oppose the amendments proposed in this Bill, which are technical in nature with an emphasis on improving the clarity of the scheme, a number of concerns about the assessment of GMOs in Australia remain.

1.3 The following principles have not yet been fully enshrined in legislation:

- All assessment of GM crops must include careful consideration of health and environmental risks; and
- Consumers have the right to know what is in the food they are eating.

1.4 It is the opinion of the Australia Greens that Australia has a long way to go in terms of its safety assessment as it relates to GMO in agriculture, or genetically engineered products or materials in products.

1.5 A number of concerns have been raised in earlier inquiries, but particularly concerning are those that highlight the need to better address both GMO labelling and GMO contamination.

1.6 I recently moved a successful motion in the Senate calling on the Government to investigate the creation of an insurance scheme for those growers whose crops are contaminated by GMO. I also previously introduced a private members Bill that sought to properly label GMO. Despite these initiatives, successive Governments have failed to fully grasp the challenges that GMOs present to both our environment and our health.

1.7 These larger issues remain part of the on-going debate around GMOs and need to be taken into consideration during further legislative reform around GM technology.

Senator Rachel Siewert

APPENDIX 1

Submissions received by the Committee

Submissions

1 CSIRO

2 Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

3 Australian Academy of Science

4 CropLife Australia

5 Food Standards Australia New Zealand