



# NEWSLETTER

Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee

July 2017

Issue 11

## Your IBC

Farewell to Dr Ian Parish who will be leaving the IBC at the end of August. We would like to thank him for his contribution to the IBC over the past 4 years.

## OGTR National IBC Forum

On 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May several ANU staff attended the OGTR National Institutional Biosafety Committee meeting at the National Gallery. Presentations were given by OGTR, DAWR and various other organisations. Some of the topics included current trends in gene technology (genome editing in particular), compliance and record management systems, the development of online training systems, and the role of Confidential Commercial Information in applications to OGTR. The OGTR gave an update on the technical review of the Gene Technology Regulations 2001, providing a summary of the submissions they had received. They also outlined some changes that have been made to the assessment of applications for facility certifications. It is hoped that these changes will reduce the processing time for facility certifications.

## Technical Review of the Gene Technology Regulations

As part of its [technical review of the Gene Technology Regulations](#), the OGTR invited responses late last year to a [discussion paper](#) outlining four options for regulating new technologies. Option 1 proposed no changes to the existing regulations; Option 2 proposed regulation of all new technologies based on oligonucleotide-directed mutagenesis and site-directed nucleases; Option 3 proposed regulation of only those new technologies that involved use of a DNA template to guide DNA repair; and Option 4 proposed regulation of new technologies based on the outcome they produced rather than the technique used to produce them (e.g. CRISPR/Cas9-mediated insertion of a foreign gene would be regulated but allelic exchange might not).



“At first I was happy I made smart transgenic mice..”

Image used with permission from Vadlo.com

The OGTR received [741 submissions](#) including a submission from the ANU IBC favouring Option 4. Option 1 received a very low level of support. Option 2 was favoured by almost all community groups and individuals, and by some research organisations. Option 3 was favoured by most government agencies and some research organisations. Option 4 was favoured by most agriculture-related industry organisations and by the largest number of research organisations, including the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering. The IBC was invited to meet with the OGTR to discuss its submission on May 16<sup>th</sup>, together with several other Canberra-based organisations that also made submissions. Dr David Jones (Chair of the IBC) and Dr David Tschärke (Deputy Chair) attended.

The Regulator is currently considering all of the submissions and, taking them into account, will decide which option best ensures the continued effectiveness of the gene technology legislation. If, as seems likely, the Regulator recommends that amendments be made to the Gene Technology Regulations, the next step in the review process will be a public consultation on proposed amendments. This consultation is likely to take place later this year.

## Mandatory Training for staff using GMOs

The OGTR Guidelines for Certification of PC2 facilities state that personnel undertaking dealings with GMOs in a certified PC2 facility must be trained in the behavioural requirements for the facility and that a signed and dated record of that training must

be kept by the certification holder. The completion of the Gene Technology Practices course and Biological Safety course are mandatory for users of GMOs at the ANU. Please be reminded that staff need to update their training for both courses every 5 years.

## Update of ANU Gene Technology Practices course

The online Gene Technology Practices course has recently been updated. The course content has been reviewed and streamlined to make it more relevant to the needs of ANU researchers. The exam for this course has also been updated to provide feedback on correct and incorrect answers to each question, as well as an overall review of questions answered correctly or incorrectly at the end of the exam. If you have any feedback, please send it to [rdna.officer@anu.edu.au](mailto:rdna.officer@anu.edu.au). If you completed the course prior to the update and wish to receive feedback relating to your results, please free to contact the IBC Secretary at the above email address.

## NLRD application forms revised

A review of the NLRD application forms was carried out in May. Minor changes were made to Sections 3A and 4D. The revised forms are now available on the IBC webpage at <https://services.anu.edu.au/research-support/ethics-integrity/applications-for-approval>

## Update to the IBC Website

The ANU Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee website has recently been updated. We invite you to visit us at <https://researchservices.anu.edu.au/ori/rdna/index.php>

On our website you can find information about GMOs with links to OGTR requirements, copies of our newsletters, facility inspection requirements, information about applying for a dealing (exempt, NLRD, DNIR or DIR), application forms and more.

## Annual PC2 Facility Inspections 2017

Preparations have begun for the annual PC2 facility inspections. It is expected that they will be carried out during the September – November period. The

IBC Secretary will be contacting facility managers shortly with tentative timetables for the proposed inspections. As stated earlier in this newsletter, it is compulsory for all staff working with GMOs approved under NLRDs/DNIRs to complete the Gene Technology Practices and Biological Safety courses. This training needs to be updated every 5 years. Please also remember that training records need to be updated regularly in your facility manuals. These will be checked at the time of the annual inspection.

## New Research Information Management System

A new research information management system is currently being developed. Once completed it is hoped that all new NLRD and DNIR applications and annual reports will be able to be submitted to the IBC for assessment via this online system. Watch this space for further information as it comes to hand.

## Work with any type of GMO must be approved by the IBC

If you are working with recombinant organisms of any type (including transformed cell lines and routine cloning) **you must have the written approval of the IBC**. The IBC has an obligation to ensure that all GM work is correctly classified and that all GM work classified as non-exempt is monitored. Please email [rdna.officer@anu.edu.au](mailto:rdna.officer@anu.edu.au) describing your work and you will receive prompt and helpful feedback.

## Unintentional Releases

Unintentional releases need to be reported to the OGTR via the [IBC Secretary](#). Liaison Officers should make sure this requirement is widely known in their local area. Local procedures for reporting unintentional releases (which include reporting to the IBC Secretary) should be included in facility manuals for easy reference.

## Need help?

Contact the IBC Secretary,  
T: 6125 5325  
E: [rdna.officer@anu.edu.au](mailto:rdna.officer@anu.edu.au)  
W: <https://researchservices.anu.edu.au/ori/rdna/index.php>