

section 4.5 |



appendix 1

Context and process

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4.5 Background papers and authors

The background papers were prepared at the request of the Commission at the outset of its inquiry to help provide an initial understanding of the topics that fell within its scope, an awareness of some of the potential issues that the inquiry would evoke, and information on the various topics that were the subject of the inquiry.

In planning these papers, the topic of genetic modification was divided into nine areas, representing different aspects of the inquiry as defined by the Commission's Warrant. Authors were asked to outline the current situation, practices or status with regard to genetic modification and the topic of their paper. They were asked to note areas of uncertainty, knowledge gaps, and varying perspectives about the effects or value of genetic modification, and to describe trends and likely future developments. The authors were also asked to provide a list of questions and issues to be considered during the course of the inquiry, and those were carried forward into the Public Scoping days held in Wellington on 7–9 August.

Having received the papers, the Commission invited peer reviews where it was felt alternative perspectives might need to be canvassed. Neither the papers nor the reviews reflected or indicated the Commission's viewpoint at the time. Copies of these papers were placed on the Commission website.

List of papers and their authors

Current uses

Professor A.R. Bellamy MSc, PhD, FRSNZ

Dick Bellamy is Professor of Cellular and Molecular Biology and Director of the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Auckland. His initial degree was in Botany and his PhD in Microbiology. Dick's research interest centres on human viruses, particularly rotavirus, a virus responsible for gastroenteritis in young children. A research project currently under way in his laboratory involves the use of genetically modified plants to express viral proteins for vaccine production.

Legal aspects

Helen Atkins

Helen Atkins is a partner in the Wellington office of Phillips Fox, Lawyers. Helen has specialised in public, environmental, resource management and local government law for 10 years. Helen has been involved in the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) legislation process since the early days when she was on secondment to the Ministry for the Environment in 1993–1995. Helen has been involved in hearings in front of the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) in relation to applications to develop genetically modified organisms in containment. She has acted for chemical companies and assisted at New Zealand Chemical Industry Council seminars in the early days of the life of the HSNO Act. More recently, Helen presented a paper to the 2nd Annual ERMA Conference in Wellington on her views of the hearing process that ERMA has adopted.

Ethical issues

Dr Barbara Nicholas

Dr Barbara Nicholas is a bioethicist, with a background in science and theology. She has worked as a health policy analyst, researcher in Health Technology Assessment, and lecturer in bioethics at Otago Medical School. Her recent research has included empirical and philosophical research on the social and ethical impact of genetic technology.

This paper was peer reviewed by Prof Donald Evans, Director, Bioethics Centre, University of Otago.

Public perceptions

Joanna Gamble

Joanna Gamble is a consumer scientist at HortResearch in Auckland. She has a Masters degree in Psychology, and has worked in consumer and market research for five years. She currently manages the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology funded project “Public Perceptions of Transgenic Plants and Plant-Based Products”.

Maori aspects

Bevan Tipene Matua

Bevan Tipene Matua was raised in Porangahau, Hawke’s Bay, and is of Ngati Kahungunu, Ngai Tahu, Ngati Raukawa, and Rangitane descent. In 1994 he received a research fellowship at Crop and Food Research, Lincoln, while

completing a masters thesis on the effects on Maori and other indigenous peoples of the Convention on biological diversity, intellectual property rights and biotechnology. Bevan has since worked in related areas for government and iwi. He is currently doing a PhD on the sociocultural perceptions of risk which focuses on Maori perceptions of genetic engineering. At the time of writing the background papers, he worked as a Senior Policy Advisor (Maori) for the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) and is a lecturer in Maori Studies at Canterbury University. His views did not reflect ERMA policy. He has subsequently assisted the Commission in the running of its Maori Consultation programme workshops.

Environmental aspects

Dr Lin Roberts

Dr Lin Roberts is Director of Business and Environment Consultants in Christchurch. Her main work area is promoting sustainability in business and agriculture. She also teaches Masters programmes at Canterbury and Lincoln, and advises on research strategies. Prior to establishing her consultancy, she was a Claude McCarthy Fellow at Victoria University (1993–1994), and held various roles at the Ministry for the Environment (1986–1993). During that time she was Chair of the Interim Assessment Group for Field Testing and Release of Genetically Modified Organisms (1989–1990); Chair of the New Organisms Steering Group (which developed the policy behind the NO part of HSNO), and Manager in the Ministry for the Environment with responsibility for HSNO (1991–1993). Before this, Lin was a post-doctoral fellow at Texas A&M University and a scientist working in biological control, Entomology Division DSIR (1980–1984).

This paper was peer reviewed by Clare Miller and D M Suckling, HortResearch, Lincoln.

Economics

Dr Janice Wright

Dr Janice Wright originally trained as a scientist and graduated from the University of Canterbury as a Senior Scholar in Physics. A developing interest in policy applications of science led her to the University of California at Berkeley to study Natural Resource Management with a focus on energy. More recently, she completed a doctorate in Public Policy at Harvard University, working at the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, and completing a dissertation on decision-making in the environmental and health sectors. Since returning to New Zealand

two years ago, Dr Wright has worked as an independent policy adviser and analyst. She is a member of the Independent Biotechnology Advisory Council (IBAC) and led their project on the economic implications of a first release of a genetically modified organism for food production.

This paper was peer reviewed by Peter Clough.

Human health aspects

Dr Michael Berridge

Dr Berridge gained a PhD from the University of Auckland in the field of molecular regulation of plant growth. He gained postdoctoral experience at Purdue University in the United States investigating gene regulation in early development and was subsequently employed on the scientific staff at the Medical Research Council laboratories at Mill Hill, London. He returned to Wellington in 1976 where he established a research programme concerned with molecular regulation of blood cell development and is presently Acting Director of the Malaghan Institute. Dr Berridge is secretary of the New Zealand Association of Scientists.

This paper was peer reviewed by Joanne Dixon, medical geneticist.

The international aspects of genetic modification

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

This paper was prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Wellington, in June 2000, in response to a request from the Commission for background information. It was revised in August 2000 to include a reference to the decision taken by the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Council on the labelling of genetically modified foods. The paper is not a submission. It does not represent a Ministry or a New Zealand Government view.