

## INTRODUCTION

La Trobe University is committed to the advancement of knowledge in environmental and health related research. The University collaborates with a range of community organisations and industry to maintain the highest quality, international standards, recognizing the overarching responsibility to meet the needs of the Australian community.

The University engages in a diverse spectrum of research covering a range of disciplines including the study of conservation biology, plant pathology, vegetation science, conservation genetics and management, anti-cancer drugs, plant pathogen interactions and molecular genetics. These areas of research involve genetic manipulation of organisms (GMO) in order to understand genetic compositions, within a safe, ethically and environmentally responsible and regulated framework.

The purpose of this brochure is to provide an overview of the operation of genetic manipulation research at La Trobe University, within the national regulatory scheme.

## OFFICE OF THE GENE TECHNOLOGY REGULATOR

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) is established under the Gene Technology Act 2000 and the Gene Technology Regulations 2001 to administer the legislation with regards to the development, use and biosafety of dealings with genetically modified organisms in Australia.

The Gene Technology Act 2000, the Gene Technology Regulations 2001 and the *Handbook on the Regulation of Gene Technology in Australia: A user's guide to the Gene Technology Act 2000 and related legislation* are available on the OGTR web site at <http://www.ogtr.gov.au>.

## THE LA TROBE UNIVERSITY GENETIC MANIPULATION SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

The La Trobe University Genetic Manipulation

Supervisory Committee (GMSC) is a committee of the La Trobe University Council reporting through the Research and Graduate Studies Committee. The GMSC is constituted according to the Gene Technology Act 2000 and reports to the OGTR on all research conducted at La Trobe University which involves genetic manipulation. The Committee's membership includes a Lay Person, who is not associated with the University and not directly involved in gene technology, and is in a position to consider the wider community issues.

The aims of the GMSC are:

- to protect the safety of researchers, students, staff and the general community by ensuring that research involving genetic manipulation is undertaken with proper safety precautions and within properly maintained facilities;
- to ensure that research complies with professional standards by assessing all the possible hazards to the safety of research personnel, to public health, to animals and plants;
- to ensure that researchers comply with all legislation pertaining to genetic manipulation research by ensuring that appropriate regulations are adhered to and the OGTR is kept informed of all relevant research undertaken at the University; and
- to ensure that researchers can comply with University policy and with the terms of grants obtained to fund their research by providing a properly constituted Institutional Biosafety Committee to review and monitor their work.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GMSC

The Committee undertakes the following duties:

- reviewing and assessing proposals for work involving genetic manipulation;
- monitoring all genetic manipulation work undertaken

within the university;

- inspecting and certifying laboratories used for genetic manipulation research;
- providing advice to investigators and other interested parties on relevant legislation, guidelines, codes and standards;
- ensuring that all relevant safety guidelines are observed; and
- providing information to the OGTR on the genetic manipulation research activities undertaken at La Trobe University.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOLS/DEPARTMENTS

All Schools/Departments where research involving genetic manipulation is undertaken are responsible for ensuring that researchers and other staff:

- maintain appropriate facilities and laboratories in which to conduct recombinant DNA research;
- are informed of possible hazards when working in laboratories and facilities in which recombinant DNA research is carried out;
- have adequate training to ensure the research is carried out in accordance with OGTR guidelines and professional standards; and
- have access to the Chair or Biological Safety Officer of the GMSC for advice when required.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESEARCHER

All investigators undertaking research involving genetic manipulation at La Trobe University are required to:

## **RECOMBINANT DNA RESEARCH**

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## **THE LA TROBE UNIVERSITY GENETIC MANIPULATION SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Community information on  
research involving the genetic  
manipulation of organisms**

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/rgso/ethics/>

- work within the parameters outlined in the legislation and in the OGTR's *Handbook on the Regulation of Gene Technology in Australia*;
- have all research involving genetic manipulation approved by the GMSC and if necessary the OGTR prior to commencement of the research;
- lodge annual reports on the progress of approved projects through to completion. Progress reports are forwarded to principal investigators by the Secretary of the GMSC at the beginning of each year; and
- notify the GMSC of any changes to the project which would affect its classification as well as the biosafety aspects of the research project.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF LA TROBE UNIVERSITY**

As an Accredited Organisation under the Gene Technology Act 2000, La Trobe University has the following responsibilities:

- submit applications for licenses for dealings with genetically modified organisms to the OGTR;
- notify the regulator of all genetic manipulation research classified as a notifiable low risk dealing;
- maintain a list of all exempt dealings and report these to the OGTR annually; and
- maintain a list of all personnel working in physical containment level 2 laboratories on projects involving genetic manipulation.

### **HOW TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further information on the national regulatory scheme for genetic manipulation research can be obtained from the OGTR web site:

[www.health.gov.au/ogtr/](http://www.health.gov.au/ogtr/)

Information on La Trobe University research activities conducted within the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering can be obtained from the following web site:

[http://www.latrobe.edu.au/faculties/scitecheng\\_intro.html](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/faculties/scitecheng_intro.html)

Further information on the Genetic Manipulation Supervisory Committee or general enquiries can be obtained:

- by contacting the Secretary, Genetic Manipulation Supervisory Committee, Research and Graduate Studies Office, La Trobe University, VIC, 3086.
- by telephone on (03) 9479 1443, or e-mail at [gmsc@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:gmsc@latrobe.edu.au), or;
- by visiting La Trobe University's web site at: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/rgso/ethics/>