

Gene Technology Ministers' Meeting

PRIORITIES UNTIL DECEMBER 2025

The following priorities were agreed by all Australian Governments through the Gene Technology Ministers' Meeting (GTMM) held on 13 April 2023. The priorities progress the recommendations made by the Third Review of the National Gene Technology Scheme (the Scheme) and the preferred regulatory model of risk-tiering in the Decision Regulatory Impact Statement endorsed by the (GTMM) in July 2021.

1. Legislative amendments to modernise and improve the Scheme	Status update
Legislative reforms are required to update, future proof and modernise the Scheme. The changes will ensure the Scheme reflects current best practice, is appropriately flexible and risk based in an environment where the science and inherent risks of gene technology is evolving.	Public consultation on the draft Gene Technology Amendment Bill (draft bill) was conducted from 13 September to 8 November 2024. An information webinar was held on 25 September 2024 with more than 250 stakeholders in attendance. A recording of the webinar is available on the National Gene Technology Scheme website. Stakeholder feedback is being analysed and advice will be provided to the Australian Government Office of Parliamentary Counsel to progress the amendments. The GTMM will consider a revised draft bill before it is introduced to the Commonwealth Parliament.
2. Prepare for the next Review of the Scheme	Status update
The Third Review of the Scheme will be completed in 2025. Planning for the Fourth Review will be undertaken to complement the extensive legislative reforms of the current Review and aim to identify areas which require further consideration. A review of the intergovernmental agreement will also be undertaken prior to the commencement of the next review.	Ministers agreed at the 13 April 2023 GTMM to delay the commencement of the Fourth Review of the Scheme for a period of 2 years to allow for implementation of legislative reforms arising from the Third Review. The GTMM has asked the Gene Technology Standing Committee to consider the scheduling of the intergovernmental agreement and next review. The Gene Technology Standing Committee will report back to GTMM late 2025.

3. Guidance for Genetically Modified (GM) gene drive organisms	Status update
To facilitate innovation, while supporting all Australian Governments to ensure continued management of risks, guidance material will be developed to increase clarity and understanding of proponents' regulatory obligations and strengthen compliance for the possible broader environmental release of genetically modified organisms, and potential future environmental release of GM gene drive organisms.	To inform the development of the draft National Gene Drive Policy Guide (the policy guide), extensive consultation was undertaken with all Australian Governments and through a public consultation process. Stakeholder feedback has been analysed and the Gene Technology Standing Committee continues to progress this work on behalf of the GTMM. The GTMM thanks all stakeholders who contributed to the development of the policy guide.
5. Increase stakeholder and public understanding of gene technology and its regulation under the Scheme	Status update
Educational materials will be developed, and existing resources will be updated to ensure stakeholders have access to current gene technology information and developments. These materials will also support increased public understanding and confidence in the Scheme.	The Scheme is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders are kept informed about matters relating to gene technology, to aid public understanding and confidence in the Scheme. New information has been published on the Scheme website to provide more information on a range of gene technology techniques, including genetically modified gene drive organisms and how they are regulated in Australia. Read more .