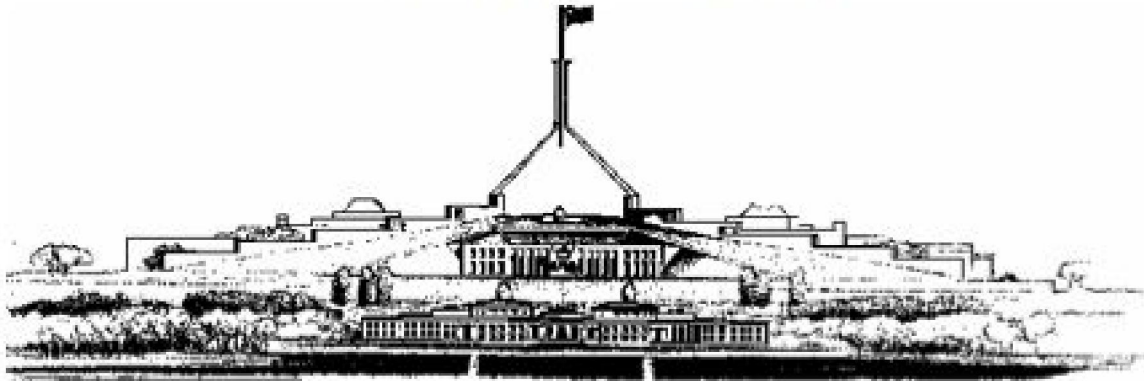




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**THE SENATE**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Science: Research and Development**

**QUESTION**

**168**

**Wednesday, 15 May 2002**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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# QUESTION

**Date** Wednesday, 15 May 2002  
**Page** 1654  
**Questioner** Brown, Sen Bob  
**Speaker**

**Source** Senate  
**Proof** No  
**Responder** Patterson, Sen Kay  
**Question No.** 168

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## Science: Research and Development

**Senator Brown** (Tasmania) asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, upon notice, on 7 March 2002:

With reference to the answer to question on notice no. 2558 (Senate *Hansard*, 9 November 2000, p.19650):

- (1) Which premises at Ridgley are being used for the University of Tasmania's experiments.
- (2) If they are not university premises: (a) whose are they; and (b) what is the role of the landlord in the experiments.
- (3) When did the Ridgley experiment begin and who are the principals.
- (4) What is the difference between these experiments, involving genes from *Agrobacterium rhizogenes*, and those being conducted by Monash University.
- (5) How much has the Commonwealth contributed to each of the three sets of experiments listed in the answer to part (a) of question on notice no. 2558.
- (6) Are there no expectations or plans to conduct field trials by Monash University, the University of Tasmania or the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation; if there are, what are the expectations or plans.

**Senator Patterson** (Victoria—Minister for Health and Ageing)—The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

- (1) Information about these experiments was provided under the old (voluntary) Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee (GMAC) process. The new Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) came into existence on 21 June 2001. As part of the establishment process, the OGTR has ascertained that the work in question has been completed and that the experiments in question are no longer being undertaken. Therefore no licence (deemed or otherwise) have been requested or issued for the work in question.
- (2) Details on the ownership of the premises used for experimentation was not collected as part of the voluntary GMAC system.
- (3) Information provided under the GMAC process was supplied on a confidential basis. However, the OGTR can confirm that the experiments in question are no longer being conducted.
- (4) The Tasmanian experiments in question were looking at the *E. nitens* and *E. globulus* species of eucalypt. The Monash University experiments involved introduction of different genes into *E. grandis*, *E. dunnii* and *E. nitens* eucalypt species.
- (5) The GMAC process focussed on the assessment and management of risks. The GMAC did not seek or receive information on the source or quantum of funding of GMO research. In May 1999, responsibility for the regulation of GMOs was transferred to the then Department of Health and Aged Care. No funding from the Department has been allocated to these projects since the health portfolio assumed responsibility for gene technology regulation.
- (6) Neither GMAC, nor the OGTR have received any applications for field trials of genetically modified eucalypt, pine or acacia in Australia. GMAC and OGTR records contain no information on expectations or plans to conduct such field trials.