




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

GENE TECHNOLOGY (QUEENSLAND) BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (12.55 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): The message from His Excellency recommends the Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

GENE TECHNOLOGY (QUEENSLAND) BILL 2016

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—


A Bill for an Act to apply the Gene Technology Act 2000 (Cwlth) and Gene Technology (Licence Charges) Act 2000 (Cwlth) as laws of Queensland, to repeal the Gene Technology Act 2001, and to amend this Act and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 16 August 2016

Tabled paper: Message, dated 16 August 2016, from His Excellency the Governor, recommending the Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016 [[1247](#)].

Introduction

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (12.56 pm): I present a bill for an act to apply the Gene Technology Act 2000 (Cwlth) and Gene Technology (Licence Charges) Act 2000 (Cwlth) as laws of Queensland, to repeal the Gene Technology Act 2001, and to amend this act and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016 [[1248](#)].

Tabled paper: Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016, explanatory notes [[1249](#)].

I am pleased to introduce the Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016. The Palaszczuk government is committed to providing certainty and consistency for Queensland state government agencies, higher education institutions and sole traders in relation to the regulation of gene technology activities.

Queensland's Gene Technology Act 2001 and Gene Technology Regulation 2002 are part of an integrated national legislative scheme. By regulating and managing risks associated with gene technology and genetically modified organisms, GMOs, the scheme focuses on protecting the environment and the health and safety of people while still enabling the development, testing and commercial release of highly productive new crops and life-saving vaccines.

State legislation is necessary to ensure regulatory coverage of state government agencies, higher education institutions and sole traders. Under the intergovernmental Gene Technology Agreement 2001, Queensland has committed to keeping our legislation consistent with the Commonwealth legislation which covers the majority of organisations conducting dealings with GMOs.

Presently, Queensland's legislation operates as mirror legislation which means that whenever the Commonwealth gene technology legislation is amended Queensland's legislation must also be amended to ensure that all gene technology activities in Queensland are regulated consistently. This manual amendment process takes time and effort, and results in a period of misalignment which creates uncertainty and potential disadvantages for Queensland entities covered by state legislation.

When GMO risk assessments are updated and tightened to require more stringent safety procedures, Queensland researchers who continue operating under earlier, unamended legislation may be put at unnecessary risk. Conversely, when regulatory requirements are reduced in response to knowledge and experience gained over long periods of safe use of a GMO, Queensland research programs and organisations that continue operating under unamended, more stringent legislation may be disadvantaged and viewed as a less appealing investment.

Queensland's legislation has been amended four times since 2007 to mirror the Commonwealth legislation. A further set of minor and technical amendments to the Commonwealth Gene Technology Act 2000 commenced on 11 March 2016 and, as such, the Queensland and Commonwealth legislation are out of alignment once more.

The Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016 will effectively introduce these latest Commonwealth amendments. This bill will establish a lock-step opt-out approach so that consistency with the Commonwealth legislation is automatically maintained, while the Queensland parliament's ability to block any Commonwealth amendments that are not in Queensland's interests is still preserved. I am very pleased to be introducing this bill for parliament's consideration today. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. LM ENOCH (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (12.59 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee.