

The shape of the Report

The Commission's Warrant directs us, in brief, to explore strategic options for New Zealand in respect of genetic modification. At one extreme New Zealand could become free of all genetically modified material, with no genetically modified products in use or able to be brought into the country, and no research involving genetic modification technology, even in containment. At the other extreme New Zealand could allow full, unrestricted use of genetic modification in all situations. Between these extremes lie any number of intermediate positions, each with its own combination of controls and freedoms, with the degree of control varying with the type of use and situation.

To address this basic strategic question, the Commission has structured its considerations in the following way:

- We start by naming seven core values we believe lie at the heart of this debate (chapter 2).
- These values are then grouped into three spheres or sets of criteria: cultural, ethical and spiritual; environmental and health; and economic and strategic (figure at the end of chapter 2).
- The sets of criteria are outlined (chapters 3, 4, 5).
- The criteria are then used in assessing various potential applications of genetic modification: research, crops, food, medicine (chapters 6, 7, 8, 9).
- There follows a discussion of other key issues: intellectual property, the Treaty of Waitangi, liability (chapters 10, 11, 12).
- We then draw our major conclusion about New Zealand's strategic options in respect of genetic modification (chapter 13).
- Three major recommendations are set out (chapter 14). We then list all our recommendations (chapter 15).
- The addenda to the Report comprise an explanation of genetic modification for non-scientists, the Commission's Warrant, the Treaty of Waitangi, the list of reference notes for each chapter, a glossary of Maori expressions, abbreviations and technical terms, and an index.
- The appendices contain essential supporting material. The first appendix introduces New Zealand and the current status of genetic modification here. It also describes the processes of the Commission, and includes operational detail. The second appendix summarises and analyses submissions from Interested Persons (who took part in the formal hearings), and the final volume covers representations from the public and other activities outside the formal hearings.