

(RCGM, 2001)

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The biotech three major proposals

Royal Commission on Genetic Modification, 2001

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1. The 21st century has been dubbed the biotechnology century. Genetic modification is but one of many new technologies likely to become available. New Zealanders have always been quick to adopt and adapt new technologies, in whatever field they arise. Biotechnology will be no exception.
2. Adoption of the new, however, should not be done uncritically. While the Commission has recommended an openness to genetic modification, we have proposed appropriate safeguards to ensure the well-being of the community and the environment.
3. To provide for ongoing oversight of biotechnological developments, the Commission makes three further proposals: a bioethics council, a parliamentary commissioner on biotechnology, and a biotechnology strategy.

Toi te Taiao : the Bioethics Council

4. Ethical, cultural and spiritual concerns underlay much of what we heard about genetic modification and biotechnology.
5. The current system of regulation for genetic modification and associated technologies operates through a number of ministries and government departments, assisted by advisory bodies, which provide policy advice to the Government. Some, like the Ministries of Health, and Agriculture and Forestry, implement those policies. Other regulatory functions are carried out by separate bodies such as the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) and the Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA).
6. Under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO), ERMA and all other persons exercising powers or duties are directed to recognise and provide for "the maintenance and enhancement of the capacity of people and communities to provide for their own economic, social, and cultural wellbeing and for the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations" (section 5(b)). They are also directed to consider the relationship Māori have with their ancestral lands, waters, sites, wāhi tapu, plants, animals and other taonga (section 6(d)).

