

Media Coverage

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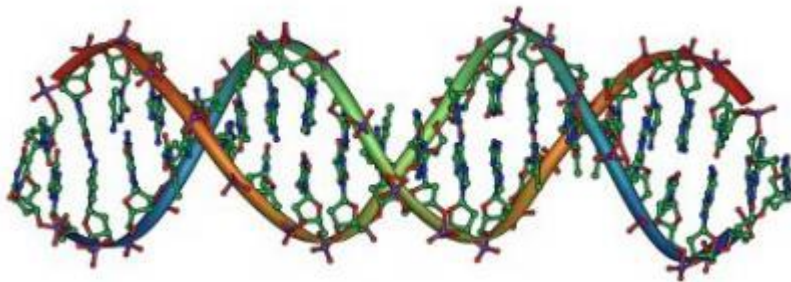
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Scientists and biotechs opposed to biologics patent amendment

The Australian Academy of Science and AusBiotech have both spoken out against the proposed amendment to the patent act that would ban patenting any biological materials.

[Tim Dean](#) (Australian Life Scientist)



The scientific community and the biotechnology industry have both come out in opposition to the proposed amendments to the patent act that threaten to prohibit the patenting of any biological materials.

The Australian Academy of Science (AAS) and AusBiotech have both made submissions to the [Senate Inquiry into the Patent Amendment \(Human Genes and Biological Materials\) Bill 2010](#) arguing that the bill is too broad reaching and could hamper scientific research and the provision of new drugs and therapies to the public.

The bill suggest amending the patent legislation to ban any "biological materials including their components and derivatives, whether isolated or purified or not and however made, which are identical or substantially identical to such materials as they exist in nature."

According to the AAS, the amendments goes too far and are "likely to hinder scientific progress and commercial utility in Australia and internationally."

The AAS submission suggests the amendment would also "exclude many of the new biological drugs that are proving so successful in treatment of cancer and other diseases."

AusBiotech also agrees the amendment is too wide-reaching, saying it would cover: "genes, DNA, RNA, cDNAs, oligonucleotide primers, proteins, peptides and amino acids, lipids, carbohydrates, vaccines, bacteria, viruses, antibiotics, enzymes, hormones, immunoglobulins and other blood products, stem cells, anti-toxins, anti-venoms, skin and other tissues, allergenics, probiotics, antibodies, epitopes, monoclonal Abs, recombinant therapeutics and other personalised medicines."

Both organisations also warn that the amendment would place Australian patent law at odds with that in most other nations worldwide, and could threaten the development of new therapeutics for the Australian market by international pharmaceutical companies.

AusBiotech is in favour of continual monitoring and improvement to the patent system, and for an explicit research exemption to allow scientists to continue conducting research using patented materials.

The Senate Inquiry is set to report its recommendations on 16 June this year.