



Frequently Asked Questions by ARC Stakeholders – January 2023

Including questions raised in ARC client meetings held in January 2023

Responses developed in collaboration with, and endorsed by, Ozgene Pty Ltd.

Q 1: Who is the preferred provider for the Animal Resources Centre (ARC)?

A:

- Ozgene Pty Ltd (Ozgene) was identified as the preferred provider of ARC capability moving forward.
- Ozgene is a WA company that has been operating for over 20 years as a provider of genetically modified mice for the research community.
- Ozgene's headquarters is in Technology Park, Bentley, WA, and it operates vivariums in Australia and the USA. The USA operation is fully AAALAC accredited.
- Ozgene has established a company 'Ozgene ARC Pty Ltd' (Ozgene ARC) that will be focused on continuing the great work of the ARC.
- An application for AAALAC accreditation is also planned for the Ozgene ARC operations in 2023 after the facility is established and fully operational.
- Ozgene offer a full spectrum of pre-clinical capabilities from the development of mouse models through to breeding, characterisation and phenotyping.
- Ozgene has clients across a diverse range of scientific disciplines coming from both domestic and international, universities, research institutes, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies.
- Ozgene was founded by research scientists and internally they continue to do novel scientific research.

Q 2: What is the plan for the transition of the ARC to Ozgene ARC and new premises?

A:

- The transition of the ARC from the WA Government to Ozgene ARC will be completed by, or before, 31 May 2023.
- Ozgene ARC intend to set up in a discrete area of the existing ARC premises from mid-March 2023. Ozgene ARC will breed selected lines housed in new Tecniplast Emerald individually ventilated cages (IVC).
- Ozgene ARC are also in the process of securing a new leased premise, which it will immediately fit out for a longer term vivarium. This will include four discrete vivariums, each with 2464 IVC and their own thermal disinfection washers, IVC sterile change stations and other required equipment.

- As fit out of the alternative new premise is completed and as the IVC equipment arrives in discrete shipments, Ozgene ARC will use a staged process to relocate IVCs and animals from the ARC Murdoch University site to the new facility.
- Following the transition of the ARC's operations, during 2023 Ozgene ARC will operate from both the existing ARC premises as well as the new facility.
- Ozgene ARC anticipates a full transition to the interim facility between September and the end of this year.
- In the longer term (3-5 years), Ozgene ARC intends to construct a new purpose-built vivarium on land it already owns in Technology Park, Bentley.
- The timing of the transition from the retrofitted facility to the new purpose-built vivarium will depend on construction timeframes.
- Ozgene have experience with their previous vivarium relocations in relocating thousands of animals from ARC to Technology Park in the early 2000's, and this expertise will be important with the ARC transition from Murdoch to new premises.
- Ozgene has carefully planned each step of the transfer process to ensure the wellbeing, safety and specific pathogen free (SPF) status of the animals.
- Through this process the State Government is working with the ARC to ensure continuity of products and services for people who routinely use the ARC's services.

Q 3: What are the short term implications for existing ARC customers?

A:

- Clients will continue to order animals from ARC until May 2023, and from 1 June 2023 will order from Ozgene ARC.
- The ARC will engage with clients and suppliers regarding novation of existing contracts to Ozgene ARC.
- Ozgene ARC will contact clients and suppliers in due time to establish new contracts.
- Ozgene ARC will endeavour to ensure that ARC customers' experience dealing with the ARC throughout the transition is impacted as little as possible, and is eager to maintain and further strengthen its relationships with its customers.

Q 4: What animal models will be available from Ozgene ARC?

A:

- Ozgene ARC will continue to provide rat and mouse models currently available from the ARC.
- Clients can expect similar flexibility in ordering common strains of animals.
- New strains will be available and imported from JAX USA or other suppliers as required by researchers.

- Ozgene ARC will ensure continuity of rat strains through appropriate use of ARC rats, rederivation from cryogenic samples, or importation from suppliers. They will liaise with clients to ensure they meet their requirements.
- Ozgene ARC are in discussions with JAX and other suppliers to ensure current ARC animal strain agreements continue and any required new licences are agreed.
- New custom strains will continue to be created by Ozgene as it has done over the past 23 years.

Q 5: What are Ozgene ARC's plans for pricing?

A:

- Animal and service pricing will be available as per ARC's 2023 pricelist for all of 2023.
- The intention is to provide competitive pricing to clients, which is enabled through customised management processes.

Q 6: What are Ozgene ARC's plans for improving processes, systems and services?

A:

- Ozgene ARC will digitise all colony management and animal information to optimise and improve vivarium operations.
- Ozgene ARC will be introducing their integrated web based ordering and payment system and will provide webinar training ahead of this becoming live from 1 June 2023.
- Ozgene ARC is planning to upgrade the entire ARC vivarium to IVC cages and latest washing technology to the level of Ozgene's USA AAALAC accredited processes.

Q 7: What will happen to the ARC staff?

A:

- ARC staff have recently been advised that Ozgene ARC do not intend to make any formal offers of employment to existing ARC staff.
- Permanent ARC staff have the option of either voluntary severance or redeployment within the public sector.
- It is expected that either one of these options will be taken up by different staff depending on their personal circumstances and preferences.
- ARC management will support all staff through the transition process.

Q 8: Will the ARC need to stay at Murdoch University beyond the current lease?

A:

- Currently, Ozgene ARC aims to move the ARC operations from the aging facility at Murdoch University to a new location within the current lease timeframe.

- Murdoch University has confirmed it is willing to negotiate to extend the lease for the ARC facility for up to six months beyond the current lease that ends in December 2023 should that be required.

Q 9: Will the monthly ARC stakeholder updates continue?

A:

- JTSI, Ozgene ARC and ARC will continue to provide joint monthly MS Teams and/or written communique updates to advise stakeholders of developments.