



**Deputy Premier of Western Australia
Minister for Health; Training and Workforce Development**

Our Ref: 25-39295

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr *Simon* O'Brien

I refer to your letter of 26 February 2014, which sought my comments on the terms of Petition No.25, and other submissions. In my response, I advised that the Petition and background papers would be sent to the Pesticides Advisory Committee (PeAC) for discussion and the provision of advice to this office. I undertook to write to you again following receipt of this advice.

At its meeting on 23 July 2014, the PeAC discussed the Petition and issues raised and agreed on the following points, which I now submit to you for consideration.

- The Commonwealth Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is an Australian Government body responsible for national registration of pesticides. Before a pesticide can be registered in Australia, it must be rigorously assessed to ensure the safety of the user, the public and the environment, when used according to the directions on the label.
- The APVMA regulates the manufacture, importation, labelling and registration approval of pesticides to the point of retail sale of the pesticide. The registration and labelling of a pesticide product entails the risk assessment of the efficacy of the product, as well as human health and environmental harm. Relevant overseas research data and use experience are always important components of the assessment.
- States and Territories are responsible for the control of use of registered pesticides, to ensure that use is appropriate, in accordance with the label and has no untoward effects on humans, animals, agriculture or the environment.
- The States/Territories pesticide legislation is currently undergoing a rigorous overhaul to ensure a seamless approach between jurisdictions to the use of pesticides.
- A regulatory regime cannot always guarantee to protect the whole community. It can provide protection to the vast majority of residents, but those who are chemically sensitive may have to make additional arrangements to avoid exposure to pesticides. Regulations require the provision of when and where pesticides are to be used (i.e. notification and signage requirements).

- Local Government Authorities (LGA's) account for most applications of pesticides in public open spaces, either through their own employees or licensed contractors.
- Many LGA's have adopted the recommendations of two Department of Health publications:
 - "A Guide to the Management of Pesticides in Local Government Pest Control Programs in Western Australia"; and
 - "A Guide to the Use of Pesticides in Western Australia".

The first publication, which was developed to assist LGA's achieve consistent policy outcomes covers, among other things, the need for LGA's to adequately provide advance notification of their intention to spray pesticides on public places.

The second publication, which has more of an operational focus, provides, in a logical and practical way, a summary of all pesticide legislation in Western Australia (WA).

- Best practice in the use of pesticides by LGA's would be achieved by the uniform implementation of these publications. This is supported by the new *Health (Pesticides) Regulations 2011*, which replace the old 1956 Regulations, and which, among other measures, mandate the use of signage, both on the ground and on the spray vehicle (if appropriate) when applying pesticides in a public place.
- The two publications describe how pesticides are regulated in WA, and how pesticides can be used safely in public open spaces. This is how we know that the health of the community is being protected, and that there is no evidence of a systemic failure. A review is not supported.
- Copies of the publications are attached for your information.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Petition.

Yours sincerely



Dr Kim Hames MLA
DEPUTY PREMIER
MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Att:

13 AUG 2014