

Agvet regulatory framework review misses the mark but not yet a missed opportunity

02 July 2021 (Canberra) – The final report of the review of Australia’s agricultural and veterinary chemical regulation framework released today contains 58 recommendations barely changed from those not supported by industry following the draft report.

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr Matthew Cossey, said, “This review remains an opportunity to modernise the agricultural chemical regulatory system and deliver genuine efficiency gains to ensure Australia maintains a world-class scientifically and technically competent and efficient regulator.

“It is disappointing that the final report has discounted the vast array of detailed, comprehensive feedback from industry and farming groups following the release of the draft report.

“This now presents Minister Littleproud with a chance to consider in detail the industry’s well-considered critique of the recommendations before taking any further steps in this process.

“We would invite the Minister to consider also removing the proposed APVMA governance board from a Bill currently before the Senate. Parts of this Bill to improve efficiencies of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority have been with Parliament since February 2018. They had bi-partisan support and would have been passed if the Government hadn’t sought to amend its own Bill and add an unwanted and uncalled for \$600,000 a year governance board that would end up being paid for by famers.

“It would be ridiculous for the Government to embark on a new process of reform when no outcomes have been delivered from the Government’s own processes for the last five years.

“The APVMA plays a crucial role in ensuring Australian farmers have access to safe, effective and modern crop protection products that enable them to farm more productively, profitably and sustainably. These products are also crucial for our nation’s environmental land managers combatting threats to our natural environment.

“Simplistic proposals like commissioners and boards aren’t what’s needed. Incremental, measured and targeted changes are what is required to ensure stability for the regulator, which has only just returned to its minimum required performance after its relocation.

“Getting this process right is what our farmers deserve to ensure they continue to have access to effective, sustainable and modern chemistry to assist their farming operations, which keep Australians fed and clothed and our export markets thriving.

Mr Cossey concluded, “All CropLife member companies have worked tirelessly since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the continued production and supply of critical crop protection and GM crop products during what has been such an important time for farming and food security and a challenging time for the nation. We will continue to actively participate in this review and hold high hopes for the leadership and constructive thinking the Minister will provide in seeing sensible reform delivered.”

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About CropLife Australia

CropLife Australia is the national peak industry organisation representing the plant science sector in Australia. CropLife’s members are the world-leading innovators, developers, manufacturers and formulators of crop protection and crop biotechnology products. The plant science industry, worth more than \$20 billion a year to Australian agricultural production, provides products to protect crops against pests, weeds and diseases, as well as developing crop biotechnologies key to the nation’s agricultural productivity, profitability and sustainability. CropLife is part of the plant science industry’s 91 country international federation.