
Strategic Review provides opportunity to improve the APVMA

14 July 2023 (Canberra) – A report on the APVMA authored by Clayton Utz and released today is a genuine opportunity to further improve APVMA operations. The report outlines a range of issues, many of which have been raised by CropLife over several years. However, it is concerning that parts of the report demonstrate a lack of detailed understanding about the regulatory system. Further, the report contains a range of contradictions which raise questions over how it has been conducted. Notwithstanding these concerns, CropLife, the peak industry body for the plant science industry, looks forward to working with the Government to ensure that Australia has a world leading, independent and evidence-based Regulator for agricultural chemistry.

“It is crucial to note that amongst the varied and widespread matters outlined in the report, the review resoundingly concluded that the agvet approval and registration process continues to maintain stringent regulatory requirements to ensure the safety and efficacy of these important products,” said Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, Mr Matthew Cossey.

“I welcome the comments of Minister Watt, referencing the robust environmental and produce monitoring undertaken in Australia, reinforcing that the registration and use of chemicals in Australia poses no threat the health of consumers, the environment or the farmers who apply them.


“Protecting and ensuring the independence of the APVMA as we move forward, continues to be of highest priority for industry, this includes ensuring it is truly independent and free from undue influence from any group, be it politicians, industry, stakeholders or activists. The Government must continue to ensure that the registration and safe use of agricultural chemicals is determined by science, evidence and independent assessment. This is critically important to Australia’s well-earned reputation as world leaders in high food safety standards, stewardship and farming sustainability as recently confirmed by ABARES.

“While the report raises concerns about prioritisation of approval timeframes over compliance and enforcement capability, these goals should not be mutually exclusive and should be easily achieved by the APVMA. It is only in the last few years that we have seen the APVMA return to minimum approval timeframes which are a legal requirement and are comparable to other regulators in similar jurisdictions.

“It is entirely reasonable to maintain expectations of an efficient Regulator as it is crucial to ensuring that the Australian farming sector remains productive, profitable and competitive.

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.



“Australia is the only OECD nation whose regulator is entirely funded by an industry fees and levies cost recovery model. CropLife would welcome a genuine funding commitment from the Australian Government, to the APVMA aligning it with other global regulators such as Canada, the USA, the EU and many others. However, while it’s been confirmed that the cost recovery arrangements of the APVMA do not result in inappropriate industry influence on the Regulators’ decisions, any such perceptions could be eliminated entirely through government funding of the Regulator.

“CropLife welcomes any actions that ensure that the APVMA remains an independent, world-leading, evidence-based regulator that efficiently meets all its obligations and responsibilities. Damaging the reputation of the APVMA without a genuine basis to do so or through sensationalised or exaggerated propositions is a direct disservice to the national interest.

“Now that this report has been made public, it is imperative that any assessment or response to this review is undertaken in a genuinely independent manner in both substance and perception. This will ensure that the next stage of decisions are made on the basis of fact and not any alternative agendas.

Mr Cossey concludes, “We are committed to working with the Government and will give close consideration to the report over the coming weeks. It’s crucial for the plant science industry, the Australian farming sector and for the nation’s food security that the APVMA is a world leading regulator in all of its functions.”

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