



Queensland
Conservation

**PROTECT
CONSERVE
SUSTAIN**

Senior Clerk

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport – Standing Committee

Australian Parliament

Parliament House

Canberra

ACT

17 December 2012

Submission to Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Bill

QCC is an umbrella conservation organisation with responsibilities and member groups spread throughout Queensland with a particular focus on maintaining natural processes and viable ecosystems while encouraging sustainable development in appropriate locations. The decentralised nature of the state, and its ongoing reliance on primary production as a pillar of its economy, complicates this task.

The widespread presence of the chemical industry throughout the state, in support of primary production is of particular concern from the point of view of river health, water quality and near coastal reef pollution in Queensland. It is for these reasons that QCC has a particular interest in the review the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Senate Legislation Committee is currently conducting into the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Bill that was recently introduced to Federal Parliament. We understand this committee will be reviewing this bill and possibly holding public hearings between now and late February prior to further debate on it in the Parliament

For far too long the procedures followed at the Federal level to allow, or disallow, the entry of certain pesticides on the Australian market have been inadequate for the task. Many of these chemicals have never been properly assessed for their toxicity to the environment or human health and the few reviews that have been conducted have been long, laborious and generally ineffective.

The reform Bill now before Parliament gives your committee the chance to alter this, but our early advice is that the Bill in its present form will not do this. To fully appreciate what these deficiencies are I feel that your committee would benefit greatly from holding one of its public hearings in

Queensland to hear first-hand the concerns held by the wide range of scientific and conservation interests that exist in this state. In fact I believe Queensland is unique in the extent of its use of pesticides in primary production, the natural icons that exist here and the range of scientific advice on offer. Either Townsville in North Queensland or Brisbane would be an ideal site for a public hearing of your committee.

I look forward to hearing further from you as to the likelihood of such a public hearing and look forward to the chance to have QCC representatives address your committee in more detail at that time.

Regards

Toby Hutcheon
Executive Director