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12 June 2017

Senator Jonathon Duniham
Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Legislation Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Chair,

Inquiry into the *Industrial Chemicals Bill 2017* and related Bills.

1. Chemistry Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Committee's inquiry into the *Industrial Chemicals Bill 2017* and related Bills.
2. Chemistry Australia (formerly the Plastics and Chemicals Industry Association) is the peak national body representing the chemistry industry. Chemistry Australia members include chemicals manufacturers, importers and distributors, logistics and supply chain partners, raw material suppliers, plastics fabricators and compounders, recyclers, and service providers to the sector and the chemistry and chemical engineering schools of a number of Australian universities.
3. The chemistry industry is the second largest manufacturing sector in Australia. Our industry employs more than 60,000 people, with every job also creating five more in related supply chains. The industry contributes \$11.6 billion to gross domestic product, and supplies inputs to 109 of Australia's 111 industries.
4. Australia's entire society – businesses, consumers and governments – along with its natural environment receive enormous benefits associated with the safe, responsible and sustainable use of industrial chemicals. By supplying 109 of 111 Australian industry sectors, chemistry assists Australia to respond and address global challenges of protecting the environment, ensuring a safe and sustainable food supply and improving standards of living in Australia and elsewhere.
5. Chemistry Australia has been calling for reform of Australia's industrial chemicals regulatory framework for many years. Indeed, such reform has been a key element of Chemistry Australia's Strategic Industry Roadmap.
6. The current regulatory framework – the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme – has operated as a major obstacle to the introduction of newer, innovative chemicals substances.
7. Chemistry Australia, therefore, welcomes the introduction of the current suite of Bills into the Parliament. The Bills represent the combined efforts of the Commonwealth Department of Health and key industry and community stakeholders to deliver meaningful reform to the regulatory framework for industrial chemicals and strike a better and more appropriate balance between hazard/risk and regulatory burden.
8. Crucially, if passed by the Parliament and implemented effectively, the reforms will ensure that Australian users of industrial chemicals have access to the latest, most innovative chemistry on the

same day as their overseas competitors. The benefits of this opportunity cannot be overstated. Australian manufacturers and industries will have access to the latest innovative solutions to enable them to compete more effectively in global markets. A lack of the necessary chemistry should no longer be an obstacle to undertaking certain processes or activities in Australia.

9. Noting that the significant reforms incorporated in the *Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Amendment Bill 2017* and the *Industrial Chemicals (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2017* are due to commence on 1 July 2017, Chemistry Australia supports prompt passage of the Bills.
10. The *Industrial Chemicals Bill 2017* which will introduce a new regulatory framework to be known as the “Australian Industrial Chemicals Introduction Scheme” (AICIS) from 1 July 2018. Chemistry Australia notes that much of the detail of the AICIS will be included in the Rules made following passage of the *Industrial Chemicals Bill 2017*. Chemistry Australia also notes that those Rules will be subject review by the Senate as disallowable instruments. Chemistry Australia, therefore, also supports the prompt passage of the *Industrial Chemicals Bill 2017*.
11. With regard to the Rules to be made under the *Industrial Chemicals Bill 2017*, Chemistry Australia will continue to work with the Department of Health and other key industry and community stakeholders to ensure that the Rules deliver on the full promise of the reforms. It is important that these Rules align as closely as possible to the regulatory frameworks and approaches of other major economies to ensure that the Australian economy is no longer disadvantaged by its industrial chemicals regulatory framework.
12. Finally, Chemistry Australia would like to record its gratitude to the staff of the Department of Health who have managed the consultation and reform process.
13. If you require clarification of any of the issues raised above or wish to discuss aspects of our submission, please don't hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Lee
Director – Policy and Regulation
Chemistry Australia