

Greens Dissenting Report

1.1 The Greens support aspects of the committee's majority report, in particular relating to the impacts of the APVMA relocation to Armidale and the need for our chemical regulator to have the appropriate resourcing to ensure that our agricultural and veterinary chemicals are safe for use as directed. Protecting the health of people and the environment is one of the most important roles for Government.

1.2 However the Greens do not agree with the committee views in relation to both glyphosate specifically or to chemical safety overall.

1.3 Despite the statement by the committee that the process undertaken to be 'robust', we find that the contradictions of the APVMA's statements warrant a different finding.

1.4 Under questions during the 2018 Supplementary Budget Estimates, the CEO of the APVMA, Dr Parker, admitted that he agreed with the IARC finding that glyphosate was 'probably carcinogenic'.

Senator Rice: Not talking about whether it is a risk but in terms of it being a hazard—this is that risk assessment being a hazard, timed exposure, essentially—do you accept the IARC findings that glyphosate is probably carcinogenic?

Dr Parker: Yes.¹

1.5 This was confirmed by the Executive Director of the Scientific Assessment and Chemical Review Division, Dr Lutze, who agreed with Dr Parker:

Senator Rice: Yes. But what I'm trying to get to is whether in APVMA—and in that assessment—there was acceptance of that IARC finding, which was essentially a change in the understanding of the hazard of glyphosate?

Dr Lutze: I've already answered yes.²

1.6 The APVMA's statement in relation to glyphosate on their website makes it clear that the risk of any particular chemical is a product of the hazard of that chemical and the exposure risk of that chemical.³ By admitting that the IARC findings may have bearing on the hazard of glyphosate, it is impossible to conclude that this would then not impact on the chemical risk of glyphosate.

1.7 Given the magnitude of the claims of the impact of glyphosate on human health, such a shift in one component of the chemical risk formula warrants a much more comprehensive review than the APVMA has conducted. Anything less than a

1 Dr Chris Parker, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, *Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee*, 23 October 2018, p. 97.

2 Dr Jason Lutze, Acting Executive Director, Scientific Assessment and Chemical Review, Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, *Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee*, 23 October 2018, p. 98.

3 *Glyphosate*, Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, <https://apvma.gov.au/node/13891>.

full and thorough independent review of glyphosate in light of the IARC findings is entirely insufficient.

Recommendation 1

1.8 That the Commonwealth Government order the conduct of a full and independent review of the chemical risk of glyphosate immediately.

1.9 The ad-hoc nature of our current regime for chemical review, as demonstrated by the approach of the APVMA to community concerns about glyphosate, is clearly not up to the task of keeping our community and environment safe.

1.10 The irony is that a mandatory scheme for re-approval and re-registration of registered products was introduced in the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Act 2013*, but this was repealed before coming into effect by the Coalition Government with the support of the Labor Opposition in 2014.

1.11 The need for such a system is overwhelming. As identified by Ms Joanna Immig from the National Toxics Network, many chemicals currently approved and in use in Australia have not been reviewed since the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Act 1994* began. Even more concerning, there are products that have been under continuous review for decades, including numerous chemicals that are already banned in many overseas constituencies.⁴

1.12 There were genuine concerns voiced in the inquiry about the independence of the decisions of the APVMA and the Ministers who influence them.⁵ Multiple witnesses pointed to the relationship between political parties and the agricultural chemical sector, singling out the role of both corporate donations to political parties and the influence of lobbyists with high level connections to political elites.

1.13 A legislated mandatory requirement to conduct appropriate reviews and re-registrations would remove much of the discretionary latitude available to the APVMA and help improve confidence in the independence of its decision making.

Recommendation 2

1.14 That the Government introduce legislation to reinstate the APVMA re-approval and re-registration scheme that was repealed in 2014.

Senator Janet Rice
Australian Greens

4 National Toxics Network, *Submission 24*, p. 3.

5 Friends of the Earth Australia, *Submission 35*; Gene Ethics, *Submission 40*.