



## **Australia's personal care & cleaning products industry launches new website to counter unfounded safety scares: [www.furphies.org.au](http://www.furphies.org.au)**

**Sydney. Monday, 10 December 2012. Accord Australasia - the national hygiene, cosmetics and specialty products industry body – has launched a new website to help clarify misconceptions and myths about product safety for Australian consumers.**

"It's often hard to sort fact from fiction when you are bombarded with negative stories in the media and can find so much misinformation on the internet and throughout the social media," Accord Policy Director Craig Brock said.

"Safety is the number one priority for our industry. All members of our responsible industry in Australia go out of their way to check any claims that their products may be unsafe.

"What's therefore disappointing is the level of attention often given in the media to safety claims or reports that have little scientific or government agency support to back them up. When this happens we frequently see consumer scares occur, for no valid reason.

"Over the years many of these scares have taken on a life of their own to become safety myths that lurk within the internet to emerge from time to time in the mainstream media or daily conversation.

"Whether it's claims that lipsticks contain dangerous levels of lead or that antiperspirants cause cancer, there is no credible scientific support backing up these claims. They are simply furphies designed to attract attention and cause unnecessary alarm.

"That's why Accord has developed the [www.furphies.org.au](http://www.furphies.org.au) website to help Australian consumers put many of the wildest safety claims they may hear or read about into perspective.

"While many of these claims are advanced by activist groups pushing a political agenda, particularly within the USA, increasingly they are part of a dubious commercial push by some non-mainstream companies trying to inappropriately advertise and sell 'chemical-free' or 'chemical-safe' products.

"Trying to scare people into buying your products shouldn't be part of an ethical industry's practices. And saying your product is 'chemical-free' is a nonsense claim that will rightly attract the attention of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

"As the national industry body, Accord's membership covers companies or brands that are across the spectrum of product choice, including 'organic', 'natural' or those which cover off some significant aspect of sustainability. These companies are confident enough in their products' quality and characteristics to sell them on their own merits, without needing to misinform consumers about competitor products.

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***Our industry is committed to developing solutions for healthy living and a quality lifestyle***

“Our industry is all about choice and fair competition. Just as some people may choose a vegetarian or organic diet, some may also prefer organic cosmetics or a more eco-friendly cleaning product.

“What all consumers should expect is that regardless of their product choice, the product they have bought is safe and effective.

“In concert with the responsible industry’s commitment to safety, our industry’s products are regulated for safety by agencies within the Australian Department of Health & Ageing as well as the Product Safety Branch of the ACCC.

“The mainstream industry represented by Accord goes out of its way to ensure compliance with Australian safety laws<sup>1</sup>.

“The [www.furphies.org.au](http://www.furphies.org.au) website will hopefully bring some balance into how safety issues relating to personal care and cleaning products are perceived and reported,” Mr Brock said.

The site is easy to navigate and covers these topics in a balanced, evidence-based manner:-

Cosmetics & Personal Care Products	Household Cleaning Products	Ingredients	General chemical issues
<p>Baby products</p> <p>Deodorant – and breast cancer?</p> <p>Perfumes</p> <p>Hair colorants</p> <p>Lead in lipstick?</p> <p>Mouthwash – and oral cancer?</p> <p>Sunscreens</p>	<p>Antibacterial products</p> <p>Cleaning products – and asthma?</p> <p>Household cleaning – natural and chemical free?</p> <p>Laundry detergents and phosphorus</p> <p>The 'hygiene hypothesis'</p>	<p>Aluminium</p> <p>1,4-Dioxane</p> <p>Formaldehyde</p> <p>Fragrance ingredients</p> <p>Nanomaterials</p> <p>Parabens</p> <p>Phthalates</p> <p>Plant, animal &amp; petroleum-derived ingredients</p> <p>Sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS)</p> <p>Sunscreen ingredients</p> <p>Talc</p> <p>Triclosan</p>	<p>What are chemicals?</p> <p>Is natural – is good?</p> <p>Extra! Extra! Toxic chemicals found in...</p> <p>Tips on reading the media</p> <p>Product safety</p> <p>The skin barrier</p>

For more information about Australian regulation of personal care and cleaning products:

- <http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/971497> & <http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/980990>
- [http://www.nicnas.gov.au/Current\\_Issues/Cosmetics.asp](http://www.nicnas.gov.au/Current_Issues/Cosmetics.asp) & [http://www.nicnas.gov.au/Chemicals\\_In\\_Australia/Health.asp](http://www.nicnas.gov.au/Chemicals_In_Australia/Health.asp)
- <http://www.tga.gov.au/industry/scheduling.htm>

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<sup>1</sup> In response to increased concerns that non-compliant and potentially unsafe products are being introduced through non-mainstream retailers the ACCC has released a ‘Product Guide for \$2 dollar shops’ - <http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/996645>

