

Accord Media Statement

Turnbull Government's Innovation and Science Agenda sets the nation on the right track for enterprise, investment and jobs: focus on improving regulation very welcome

Sydney, Monday 7 December 2015. Accord Australasia, the Australian hygiene, cosmetic and specialty products industry body, today welcomed the Turnbull Government's Innovation and Science Agenda as a significant measure to refocus policy on the challenges facing Australian businesses.

"The Innovation and Science Agenda hits the mark and shows that renewed policy optimism amongst industry is vindicated," Accord Executive Director Ms Bronwyn Capanna said.

"It is clear the Turnbull Government is serious about creating meaningful policies that cut to the core of the many challenges facing Australian businesses and the economy.

"The hygiene, cosmetic and specialty products industry is a sector which thrives on innovation and competition, both locally and internationally.

"Significant amounts of technical and scientific knowledge are embedded in our industry's products, including many important everyday products like sunscreens, as well as disinfectants and food sanitisers essential for infection prevention.

"Looking at ways to further the innovation potential of our industry is critical to future jobs and investment, especially for the many manufacturing and small-to-medium firms in our sector.

"It is therefore pleasing that the Agenda is comprehensive and covers key issues of culture and collaboration. Highly significant and also welcome is the Government making itself an "exemplar" and putting innovation and science at the core of its policy and economic agenda.

"Credit is due to the Prime Minister, Minister Pyne and their colleagues for crafting a forward-thinking and inspiring policy platform, and also for renewed engagement with industry and others on critical policies relating to innovation and science.

"Aside from laying a platform for innovation supporting measures, the Agenda recognises the equally critical issue of how poorly targeted regulation which is disproportionate to actual risks currently stifles innovation.

"This type of heavy handed regulation, which is still far too common in Australia, creates a negative mindset in the business community. It leads to a perception that investment in innovation is too risky, as timely launch of the new products or innovations will be blocked by obstructive regulators. As a result, many innovation investments do not even get out of the starting blocks.

"It's hard to think of a more demotivating scenario than investing heavily in a new technology or product only to have bureaucratic red tape kill your project. And this is particularly so if the new technology or product has already been assessed and approved by competent regulators in other advanced economies like the USA, European Union or Canada.

"Addressing the barriers posed by disproportionate regulation and unjustified, unique and often antiquated Australian requirements will have a significant pay-off for innovation.

"Already the government has a number of policy tools at hand which can help get regulatory frameworks into better balance. Key amongst these is the *Accepting Trusted International Standards* policy launched last year on 14 October 2014. This policy remains significantly underutilised at present, but is pleasingly re-emphasised in today's Agenda.

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

Cleaning products, sunscreens, cosmetics, oral hygiene, disinfectants, hair treatments, food & beverage sanitisers, household pest control, dairy sanitisers, soaps, detergents, make-up, adhesives, protectants and speciality chemicals

“Critical reviews are underway for regulators like the National Industrial Chemical Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) creating a timely opportunity to ensure such regulations support rather than stifle innovation.

“Most people do not realise that low risk cosmetic products like skin moisturisers are regulated as industrial chemicals under NICNAS. Nor would they be aware that sunscreens are regulated with many of the same requirements and rules as oral medicines. Both of these approaches are out of step with how other leading overseas regulators treat these products.

“With the announcement today of the Innovation and Science Agenda, it is vital that the strong and very welcome innovation push being taken forward by the Turnbull Government is fully embraced and implemented by federal regulatory agencies.

“Accord and the industry we represent look forward to working with the government to help turn its innovation vision into reality,” Ms Capanna said.

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