

Animal Testing and Cosmetics – federal Coalition announcement

Today's announcement by the federal Coalition is short of the level of detail industry would need to properly determine its likely impacts and workability.

The explicit acknowledgement of the general safety of cosmetic products in the joint media release from Minister Nash, Assistant Health Minister Wyatt and the member for La Trobe, Jason Wood MP, is welcomed by the industry.

In particular, Accord applauds the acknowledgement that our industry is highly regulated for safety – “*Australia has a strong and effective regulatory regime for consumer products*”. We additionally note the following endorsement of cosmetic safety: “*Cosmetic products – including many common products, such as mouthwash, acne washes, nail polish, and hair dyes – are well established and widely used. There are no physiological ambiguities or unknown detrimental effects to their use that necessitate their testing on animals.*”

This latest announcement sees the Coalition follow on from Labor and the Greens with its own policy on this issue. And Accord regrets that for such a significant policy announcement there has been minimal consultation with the impacted industry.

More details about how the government intends enacting this ban would be helpful.

Without this detail, it's very hard to accept the position that a 1 July 2017 ban, as proposed by the Coalition, is either reasonable or achievable.

Accord notes that while there are still some rough edges around the details in the bill Labor introduced earlier this year, Labor's proposal provided for a three year transition period. And in comparison with the very short timeframe announced by the Coalition, this better reflects business realities.

What seems to have been forgotten is that to everyone's knowledge, animal testing of cosmetics does not occur in Australia. Any local requests for animal testing data for cosmetic ingredients would only be at the directive of the relevant Australian health regulatory authorities, such as the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS).

Cosmetics are a major product in global trade. Enacting big legislative changes like this will have significant trade and other impacts which businesses would need to have sufficient time to adjust to.

Accord has long argued that the key to achieving a workable approach to this issue is to stop treating cosmetics and their ingredients as hazardous industrial chemicals. Australia is unique in the world in regulating cosmetic ingredients under the *Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989*.

Excising cosmetics from the industrial chemicals regime was the position we put to the federal Opposition during their public consultation process. It remains the key to a workable policy approach on this issue. Accord would welcome discussing this further with the federal Coalition.

3 June 2016

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Coalition media release: <http://nationals.org.au/the-coalition-will-ban-cosmetics-tested-on-animals/>

Accord policy position on cosmetics regulation: <http://accord.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2016-Discussion-Paper-removing-cosmetics-from-industrial-chemicals.pdf>