

Animal testing and cosmetics

The Australian cosmetics industry – which directly employs 18,000 people – is committed to animal welfare and safety for consumers, workers and the environment. The industry supports a workable, practical, evidence-based approach which is supported by the following policy elements proposed by the Federal Government:

- A ban on the use of new animal test data to support new chemicals developed exclusively as cosmetic ingredients
- Amendment of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes to ban cosmetic testing on animals
- The NHMRC to work with States and Territories to adopt the amended Code into State and Territory laws
- The Government to work with the cosmetics industry to develop a voluntary industry code of conduct on animal testing of cosmetic products
- An information and communications approach to provide clarity for consumers and industry around promotional claims that can and cannot be made on cosmetic products

It is also important the following exemptions from the ban, as outlined by the Government, are implemented in full:

- The use of data from animal testing undertaken before the implementation of the ban
- Cosmetic products and ingredients which are already on sale in Australia before the implementation of the ban, as any animal testing has already been undertaken
- Chemical substances used for a different purpose (e.g. a therapeutic or pesticide)
- Repurposing a chemical substance (and any associated animal test data) used initially for a different purpose, for subsequent use in a cosmetic product
- Animal testing for a different purpose e.g. biomedical research, drug development, environmental protection or occupational health

Implementation of the principles and exemptions outlined above will ensure a workable approach which meets the following criteria:

- A realistic transition timeframe for businesses and the regulatory system
- No disruption to critical medical research and/or other industry sectors
- No retrospective reach, recognising most chemical/botanical substances have been animal tested in the past
- No extraterritorial reach via a direct/indirect import ban, which would breach World Trade Organisation rules and Free Trade Agreement provisions
- Alignment with Australia's major trading partners
- Exceptions which recognise that ingredients used in other products can continue to be used in cosmetic products
- Exceptions allowing for environmental protection and occupational health and safety testing (as occurs in the EU)

Accord notes the extensive consumer research conducted recently by the federal Health Department which revealed that consumers seek an assurance that any ban will not adversely impact industry or consumers: *“Consumers expressed that they do not want to disadvantage businesses importing cosmetics or exporting Australian products to overseas markets. Consumers have an expectation that government ensure that the broader economic impacts are minimised when implementing the ban.”*

In going forward, Accord commits to working with the Government on the development of the code of conduct on animal testing. Our goal will be for effective implementation of a workable policy approach which has minimal disruption to businesses, consumers and trade.

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