

Accord Media Statement

The cosmetic, hygiene and specialty products industry welcomes the Government's industrial chemicals reform announcement, but expresses some reservations about the proposed costs

Sydney, Wednesday 27 May 2015. Accord Australasia, the Australian hygiene, cosmetic and specialty products industry body, welcomes the Government's commitment to reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens arising from the chemicals regulatory framework as announced yesterday by Assistant Health Minister Nash.

"It is encouraging that the Government is laying down plans to streamline chemical assessment. Such a move has been long overdue as the current framework throws a substantial barrier in the way of innovation, new technologies and a smooth pathway to market," Accord Executive Director Bronwyn Capanna said.

"Everyday products have been the losers under the current regulatory system which is poorly targeted and treats chemical ingredients of low hazard in much the same manner as those of high hazard.

"Assistant Minister Nash's announcement of a 'move to a more proportionate risk-based framework' for assessment of chemicals is strongly welcomed by industry.

"Reduced complexity, red tape and streamlined pathways to the market for low-risk everyday products can go hand in hand with essential health, safety and environment protection. There is no doubt about this.

"Accord has previously strongly endorsed the Government's policy of accepting trusted international standards. This means that if an ingredient or product is currently in safe use in another advanced economy that has robust regulation, then it should be able to be used for the same purpose in Australia without further assessment.

"Such a policy has a ready fit with global products like cosmetics which are often imported from leading world markets and fashion centres like the USA and Europe.

"The cosmetic and cleaning products industry stands by to work with the Government to deliver this much-needed policy change. In order to do this we would welcome receiving more details about the implementation plan for the policy.

"There are some concerns regarding the details we have seen so far.

"High amongst these are the costs foreshadowed by the Government along with the plan to recoup these costs from industry.

"Industry should not be expected to bear all of the costs for improving the system.

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“Industry should also have an opportunity to determine if the costs being incurred represent the best possible value the Government could obtain to take these reform proposals forward.

“A further point needing urgent clarification is how the Government intends to link this proposal to reform the operations of the chemical regulator, NICNAS, to the recently commenced COAG investigation of the costs, benefits and opportunities for structural change to Commonwealth chemical assessment functions.

“Accord looks forward to engaging with the Government to ensure the implemented policy delivers the promised improvements in terms of tangibly reducing costs, red tape and time to market,” Ms Capanna said.

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For details regarding Assistant Health Minister Nash’s announcement –

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2015-nash020.htm>

For details regarding the COAG commissioned investigation of the opportunities for structural change to Commonwealth chemical assessment functions –

<https://www.tenders.gov.au/?event=public.atm.showClosed&ATMUUID=3885B8DB-9E36-8EEF-E2C0B040EE1E881D>

Media contacts – Bronwyn Capanna, Executive Director – 0418 384 221; Craig Brock, Policy Director – 0422 363 646

Accord Australasia is the peak national industry association representing manufacturers and marketers of hygiene, cosmetic and specialty products, their raw materials suppliers and service providers. Our industry’s products are used every day across the nation in homes, public places, commercial premises, institutions, industry and farms.