



**SENATOR THE HON MURRAY WATT
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

PDR ID MS23-001171

Dr Steve Jefferies AM
Acting Board Chair
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

APVMABoard@apvma.gov.au

Dear Dr Jefferies

Steve

I am writing to you to set out my expectations for the delivery of the regulatory functions of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

Ministerial Statement of Expectations

I recognise the APVMA is the independent statutory authority responsible, in partnership with the states and territories, for the regulation of agricultural chemicals and veterinary medicines in Australia. The APVMA performs a vital role in ensuring that agricultural chemicals and veterinary medicines used in Australia are safe and effective through a range of assessment, advisory, consultation and enforcement functions.

This Ministerial Statement of Expectations reflects government policy for best practice under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* as described in the Regulator Performance Resource Management Guide 128 (RMG 128) administered by the Department of Finance. I expect the APVMA to report the APVMA's regulatory performance in accordance with the RMG 128 guide and the regulator best practice principles RMG 128 contains.

Workplace culture and governance

The Clayton Utz report (Second Stage review report) into the operations of the APVMA, received on 4 July 2023, identifies numerous issues. On 13 July 2023 I issued a ministerial direction to address some of these concerns about delays in finalising a number of long running chemical reconsiderations.

In addition to the priorities I set out in my ministerial direction, I expect the APVMA to continue its current efforts to improve the APVMA's workplace culture and governance arrangements and strengthen its processes, in line with the Australian Public Service values. The APVMA is to regularly update the department, stakeholders and myself on the progress of these initiatives.

I also expect the APVMA to fully support and engage with the rapid evaluation of the APVMA's structure and governance to be conducted by Mr Ken Matthews AO. The report from the rapid evaluation will be provided to me by 30 September 2023 and will include

recommendations on the future governance, structure and funding arrangements of the APVMA.

I expect the APVMA to ensure it has the capacity and capabilities needed to support any reform program arising out of the government's response to these recommendations. I, and the Albanese Government, are committed to taking action to ensure the integrity of Australia's agricultural and veterinary chemicals regulation system.

Independence, transparency, and accountability

The APVMA operates as part of the Australian Government as an independent regulator performing a range of assessment, advisory, consultation, investigatory and enforcement functions while being accountable to the Parliament, and ultimately to the public. I expect the APVMA to communicate regularly with the public on its key decisions and regulatory and enforcement outcomes. I expect the APVMA to operate as a regulator, focused on its full suite of regulatory functions.

I also expect the APVMA to comply with the requirements of the whole-of-government resource management framework under the Public Governance, Performance, and Accountability Act. It is expected the APVMA will be efficient in its operations and demonstrate value for money for the functions it performs.

The APVMA will maintain robust, effective and collaborative working partnerships with other Commonwealth, state and territory agencies, as well as the APVMA's counterpart regulators in overseas jurisdictions, to ensure the proper functioning of Australia's regulatory framework.

Engagement

I expect that the APVMA will regularly provide me with updates on progress of its improvement initiatives, while working with the department to ensure the APVMA gains the advice and support it may need to implement those initiatives. I expect the APVMA Board will continue to meet the legislated obligation to provide board minutes to the Secretary of my department. I expect to meet with the APVMA Board Chair and APVMA CEO no less than twice a year, and that the APVMA CEO and broader senior executives will routinely engage with my department.

I ask that this Ministerial Statement of Expectations and your Statement of Intent be available on agriculture.gov.au, and further ask that it be made available through the APVMA website and included in APVMA corporate plans and your next annual report.

I look forward to working cooperatively on these important priorities.

Yours sincerely


MURRAY WATT

12/9/2023