



tasmanian conservation trust inc

Media Release

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Draft Agricultural Chemicals Regulations too weak

The public comment period for the draft 'Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Regulations 2011' (Draft Agricultural Chemicals Regulations) closed yesterday and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT) has criticized the Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) for failing to address the major problems with how these very dangerous and widely used chemicals are applied in Tasmania.

TCT Director Peter McGlone said today "the Department does not have rigorous science to guide the regulatory limits for these dangerous chemicals and has resorted to educated guesses or is led by the demands of industry."

"Where the Department is uncertain it should apply the precautionary principle and stop the most dangerous chemicals from being used, make exclusion zones bigger and insist on lower contamination levels in water. It must also make research a bigger priority and require the use of technologies such as GPS to ensure safer chemical spraying."

"Unless these serious concerns are addressed the result will be greater contamination of our water ways effecting both our drinking water and freshwater ecosystems," Mr McGlone concluded.

The TCT's major criticisms of the Draft Agricultural Chemicals Regulations are:

- **Spraying near homes** – Aerial spraying of agricultural chemicals will be allowed up to 100 metres from homes and workplaces although there is no evidence that this is a safe distance even in low wind conditions.
- **Pilot error** – Pilots are left to judge if they are a safe distance from homes and workplaces when GPS equipment should be mandatory.
- **Triazines** – The wide-spread community concern regarding the most dangerous agricultural chemicals, the triazines, has been acknowledged by the Department but they will not be banned or have any special controls over their use.
- **Pollution levels in water** – The maximum residue levels for agricultural chemicals permitted in water bodies have not been specifically determined

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for 42 of the 61 commonly used agricultural chemicals but instead has been based on educated guesses from what is known about other chemicals.

- **Exclusion zones around water bodies** – Any effective protection of streams, rivers and wetlands has been removed as the exclusion zone around all water bodies has been reduced from 10 metres (proposed in 2008) down to only 2 metres.

Further comments:

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