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INDUSTRY RESPONDS TO CHEMICAL TREATMENT FINDINGS



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A3P, representing the Australian plantation timber products industry welcomed the findings of a review into the use of chemical timber treatments that found no evidence that copper chrome arsenate (CCA) treated timber posed an unacceptable risk to human health.

In commenting on a review into the continued use of CCA as a timber treatment conducted and released by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), **A3P's** Chief Executive, Belinda Robinson, said that the industry supported most of the review's findings.

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"In particular, the industry supports the APVMA decision to introduce requirements for improving some treatment plant practices as well as product labelling and handling information," she said.

"This review has confirmed that used correctly, CCA, is a safe, practical and inexpensive timber treatment" Ms Robinson said.

Despite CCA having been in use world-wide for more than 70 years without evidence of harm to human or environmental health, the APVMA took a precautionary position on the use of CCA as a timber treatment for 'frequent and intimate' contact products such as children's play equipment, decking and outdoor furniture.

"These restrictions could create an impression that CCA treated products are unsafe yet neither the APVMA or a series of reviews conducted in the USA, Canada, the EU and New Zealand have found any evidence that CCA has adverse human health impacts provided, of course, it is appropriately handled and managed" said Ms Robinson.

"Stringent manufacturing and handling procedures are already in place, and distributors provide extensive factual information to customers about treated timber products" said Ms Robinson".

"This decision has effectively reversed the onus of proof. The same 'precautionary' arguments put by the APVMA could equally apply to many of the products that we all have under the kitchen sink and in the garden shed" she said.

"The APVMA's own technical report confirms the level of arsenic in treated timber that can be dislodged and absorbed is lower than arsenic from many other sources including food and water" she said.

"The industry notes that the APVMA has not recommended the removal of any existing structures. This surely suggests that the APVMA does not perceive any substantial risk of harm from their continued use" said Ms Robinson.

Attempting to remove the ambiguity surrounding the use of some products in Australia, a research proposal has been submitted to the APVMA to address the Authority's concern over the absence of suitable data.

In the meantime, **A3P** members will be working hard to ensure full compliance with the APVMA's findings, most of which we strongly support".

Further information, contact:

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