

Media Release 13/10/2010

Environment and Public Health groups welcome Endosulfan ban

Environment Tasmania and Dr Alison Bleaney from the Break O'Day Catchment Risk Group and Tasmanian Public and Environmental Health Network (TPEHN), today welcomed the ban by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) on the insecticide endosulfan. APVMA earlier this week cancelled the immediate registration of endosulfan following an assessment that prolonged use is likely to lead to adverse environmental effects via spray drift and run-off.

Endosulfan is also a risk to human health even at very low levels including residues found in foods, potentiating diseases such as breast cancer. It is a highly toxic and persistent organic pollutant, an endocrine disrupter specifically mimicking oestrogen and persists in our bodies passing onto the next generation across the placenta and in breast milk.

"This de-registration is a welcome step - and it is important now that State and Federal governments move to tighten up pesticides regulation by restricting the herbicides and pesticides that find their way into our waterways. This includes the triazine group of herbicides, which are already banned in the European Union due to their risks to the environment" said Dr Phill Pullinger, Director of Environment Tasmania. "

"We are very concerned about the cocktail of pesticides and herbicides that are finding their way into our local water catchments due to aerial spraying, spray-drift and poor regulatory control," said Dr Alison Bleaney of TPEHN and the Break O Day Catchment Risk Group. "It is critically important our State Government takes a precautionary approach to integrated catchment management across Tasmania including food production and drinking water " she concluded.

This ban is an immediate turn-about from APVMA which up until now has been advocating for endosulfan's continued registration for use in Australia. Endosulfan has been banned in over 66 countries and is proposed for a global ban under the Stockholm Convention. India is now the only strong advocate for its continued use.

Environment Tasmania is the peak body for Tasmanian environment & conservation groups – and represents over 20 Tasmanian environment groups with collective representation of over 5000 Tasmanians.

For More Information or Comment:

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