



Julie Collins MP

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Minister for Small Business**

Ref: MS24-000636

Dr Catherine Ainsworth
Chair
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
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Dear Dr Ainsworth

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 under the National Registration Scheme for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals, for the regulation of agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals in Australia. The APVMA performs a vital role in ensuring that agvet chemicals used in Australia are safe and effective through a range of assessment, advisory, consultation and enforcement functions. I expect that in performing its role, the APVMA's focus will be on regulating agvet chemicals for the protection and safety of Australia's people, animals and environment – and ask that the APVMA's purpose statement explicitly reflects this expectation.

I expect that the APVMA will use the best available science to make sound, evidence-based decisions that are transparent, robust and of the highest standard. I expect that the APVMA will clearly communicate regulatory decisions in a manner that is easily understood by the Australian community and our trading partners.

This Ministerial Statement of Expectations reflects government policy for best practice under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) 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 RMG 128, including the regulator best practice principles.

APVMA's structure, governance and workplace culture

The *Detailed response to the final report on future structure and governance arrangements for the APVMA (detailed response)*, released on 4 November 2024, provides a comprehensive response to recommendations made across several reviews of the APVMA and the agvet chemicals regulatory system in recent years, and outlines a pathway for the government's reform agenda.

I expect the APVMA to continue to focus on implementing commitments arising out of the detailed response. I acknowledge the reviews and response highlight the need to consider sustainable funding for the APVMA to deliver on all aspects of the response. The government will undertake further analysis as to the sustainability of the APVMA's current cost-recovery framework, in parallel to updating the APVMA Cost Recovery Implementation Statement, and will develop policy options if required.

The Australian Government and I are committed to taking action to ensure the integrity of the APVMA and Australia's agvet chemicals regulatory system. I expect the APVMA to continue its positive efforts to improve the APVMA's workplace culture, governance arrangements and strengthen its processes, in line with the Australian Public Service values. I expect the APVMA Board, and through it the APVMA senior executive, will be accountable for the APVMA operational culture. Where matters of serious misconduct or other significant risks are identified, the APVMA will advise me at the earliest opportunity. The APVMA should update my department, stakeholders and myself regularly on progress of these initiatives.

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. The APVMA should operate as a regulator, focussed on its full suite of regulatory functions, and communicate regularly with the public on its key decisions and regulatory and enforcement outcomes.

Further, I expect the APVMA to comply with the requirements of the whole-of-government resource management framework under the PGPA Act. It is expected the APVMA will be efficient in its operations and demonstrate value for money in performing its functions.

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

Particularly, I expect the APVMA will continue to engage in key communities of practice, participate in regulatory education activities and collaborate with relevant Australian Government working groups. I also expect the APVMA will use these opportunities to share knowledge, discuss improvement practices and regulatory best practices as demonstrated by Australian and international peers.

Engagement

I acknowledge the steps the APVMA has already taken to update existing stakeholder forums and provide opportunities for all stakeholders to engage with the APVMA. I expect that the APVMA will provide me with regular updates on progress of its improvement initiatives, while working with my department to ensure the APVMA gains the advice and support it may need to implement those initiatives. I anticipate this work will strengthen stakeholder engagement and lead to enriched regulatory outcomes that improve public trust in the agvet chemicals regulatory system. I expect the APVMA Board will continue to meet the legislated obligation to provide board minutes to the Secretary of my department. I also expect to meet with the APVMA Chair and APVMA CEO no less than twice a year, and that the APVMA CEO and other senior executives will routinely engage with my department.

I ask that this Ministerial Statement of Expectations and your responding 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 with you on these important priorities.

Yours sincerely



Julie Collins MP

29 / 1 / 2025