

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Conduct of the inquiry

1.1 The Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 was introduced and read a first time in the House of Representatives on Wednesday, 28 November 2012.<sup>1</sup>

1.2 On 29 November 2012, on the recommendation of the Selection of Bills Committee, the provisions of the bill were referred to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee for inquiry and report 27 February 2013.<sup>2</sup>

1.3 The reasons given for the Selection of Bills Committee's recommendation were that there was significant industry and other stakeholder concerns regarding the efficacy of the bill and that an inquiry would allow for further scrutiny of the bill.<sup>3</sup>

1.4 In accordance with its usual practice, the committee advertised the inquiry on its website and in *The Australian*. The committee also wrote to a number of relevant organisations inviting submissions. Thirty-nine submissions were received, as shown in Appendix 1.

1.5 The committee held a public hearing on Monday, 4 February 2013, in Canberra. A list of witnesses who appeared at the public hearing may be found at Appendix 2. The references to the Hansard transcript made in this report are to the proof transcript and page numbers between it and the official transcript may vary. The Hansard transcript of the hearing is available online at the committee's website.

### House of Representatives inquiry

1.6 The House of Representatives also referred the bill to its Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry for inquiry. That committee held a public hearing on the same day as the Senate committee and heard from many of the same witnesses. At the time of writing the House of Representatives Committee's report had not been tabled in the House.

### Purpose of the bill

1.7 The bill is intended to implement 'reforms to the approval, registration and reconsideration of agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the current regulatory arrangements and provide

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1 *House of Representatives Votes and Proceedings*, 28 November 2012, p. 2002.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, 29 November 2012, p. 3480.

3 Selection of Bills Committee, *Report No. 16 of 2012*, Appendices 1 and 2.

greater certainty to the community that chemicals approved for use in Australia are safe'.<sup>4</sup> If passed by the Parliament, the following Acts would be amended:

- *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Act 1994*;
- *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994*;
- *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992*; and
- *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Collection of Levy) Act 1994*.

### **Structure of report**

1.8 The remaining chapters of this report are as follows:

- Chapter 2 describes the background to the bill including the current regulatory environment and the key provisions of the bill; and
- Chapter 3 describes the key issues raised during this inquiry including the provisions for re-registration and re-consideration; the risk-based registration process; minor use; costs; and enforcement.

### **Acknowledgements**

1.9 The committee appreciates the time and effort of all those who provided both written and oral submissions to this inquiry – particularly in view of the short time frame. Their work has assisted the committee considerably in its inquiry.

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4 Explanatory Memorandum, Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Bill 2012, p. 1.