

Nancy Hillier
President, Botany Environment Watch

8/6/06

Dear Dr Hartley,

The Botany Environment Watch (B.E.W.) member's thank you for giving us the opportunity and the discussion paper which promotes the safer use of chemicals.

Please understand we make the following comments as lay people, not as experts with the relevant degrees. However because of the group's resident action, we have been able to expose the threat of chemical handling in the industries in Botany. B.E.W. have been successful in bringing about new controls, more information to the public. We currently play a leading role in three committees set up to attempt three major clean ups of chemical contamination and waste.

Because of years of concern and interest in the issues of our own area, this has led us to be worried over chemical uses in our everyday lives.

In regards to the following comments we trust they are relevant to your document and give the necessary information your organisation is seeking.

Comments

Proposal 1 Total Support

3rd dot point. Conducting seminars etc.

Would these forums be held in local areas where there are Chemical Industries? At a time when workers and other interested people could attend?

Would the chosen venues have access for people with disabilities?

Total support for proposal No2.

Proposal 3 and 4. Supported

Comment. Information is vital for local doctors, Local Government, Local Emergency Management Planning Committees and environmental resident groups, existing in areas where there are chemical industries and others, who produce or use hazardous chemicals in the operations of their business.

Proposal 4 and 5 Supported.

Proposal 6 and 7 Supported and refer to above items 3 and 4.

Proposal 8 Supported. However do not forget these are still people who care and are interested, but do not have computers.

Proposal 9 and 10 Supported.

We wholeheartedly support the need for stronger legislation for the producing and using chemicals. Also National Standards must be adopted.

Proposal 11. Supported.

For too long downstream users of chemical have been omitted from strict surveillance of their chemical usage and storage.

Proposal 12. Supported.

Government Agencies should not be subjected to political interference in sound management of chemicals.

Agencies must pay more attention to early complaints from the people in regard to experiences or impacts arising from the use or production of chemicals.

Agencies should also keep up with other countries with advanced knowledge of chemical usage and destruction as well as updated monitoring systems.

Australia must develop its own updated modern techniques for testing chemicals, which impact on humans and the environment. We now appear to rely on other countries to test our samples of contamination at a delay of many days.

Proposals 13,14,15,16,17,18 All are Supported. Refer to earlier comment on National Standards.

Comments

Proposal 17. Please lobby intensely for National Standards. Chemicals which are intractable and cause waste must not be produced and should be banned.

Any chemicals, which are extremely hazardous, should be banned. Risk/Assessment of hazardous chemicals as we know it never has satisfied B.E.W. members. We believed it was used as a tool for industries to get approval for production of these chemicals in residential areas. What we are experiencing now in some instances is the result of inadequate Risk Assessment.

In conclusion, much more information is required in terms of understanding chemicals in foods. Additives, which are described by a numerical figure, is totally inadequate. Names and why used, impacts causing allergies should all be covered by general information for the users.

Nancy Hillier O.A.M.

President B.E.W.