

break o'day catchment risk group

4 Bayview Avenue, Binalong Bay 7216
Email: sthelensmedc@vision.net.au

ph. 03 6376 8351 fax: 03 6376 8311

Minister Giddings - Minister for Health

24 April 09

Minister Llewellyn - Minister for Primary Industry and Water

OPEN LETTER

Dear Ministers,

We, the undersigned scientists and medical practitioners request that you take the necessary administrative and/or legal actions to ban aerial spraying of pesticides and prohibit the use and sale throughout the state of all pesticides which adversely affect health, as defined by the recent EU directive regarding pesticides:

'Certain highly toxic chemicals, namely those which are carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic to reproduction, will be banned unless exposure to them would in practice be negligible. The same applies to substances which are endocrine-disrupting, those which are persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) and those which are very persistent and very bioaccumulative (vPvB).

For developmental neurotoxic or immunotoxic substances, higher safety standards may be required. Substances likely to be harmful to honeybees will also be outlawed. Moreover, products containing certain hazardous substances ("candidates for substitution") are to be replaced if safer alternatives are shown to exist. MEPs successfully demanded a shorter deadline for their replacement, of three years rather than five.

Aerial crop spraying will in general be banned, albeit with exceptions subject to approval by the authorities. No spraying will be allowed in close proximity to residential areas.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/briefing_page/45150-012-01-03-20081217BR145149-12-01-2009-2009/default_p001c004_en.htm

We ask you to undertake immediate action for the following reasons:

- Tasmanian cancer rates are increasing. The age-standardised rate of diagnosis of cancer in Tasmania has **dramatically increased** between 1980 and 2005. The age standardised incidence rates (ASR) of all cancers (excluding non-melanoma skin cancers) increased by 33% for males and 30% for females during the 25-year period from 1980 to 2005 and they are continuing to rise. Tasmania is now rated as having the **highest age-adjusted rate of cancer** (excluding skin cancer) in Australia (433.9 per 100,000 people). ([http://www.menzies.utas.edu.au/pdf/CancerInTas2005_Final\(4\)%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.menzies.utas.edu.au/pdf/CancerInTas2005_Final(4)%20(2).pdf)) Such "age-adjustment" is important, because as the state with the oldest population, the rate of cancer in Tasmania would be expected to be the highest. The higher rate suggests that factors specific to Tasmania are operant. While the comparatively high rate of smoking is the most likely explanation it remains plausible that other factors are also involved.
- Increasing rates of acute illness, (including diabetes and cancer) in this state have coincided at the same time with the use of many dangerous pesticides sprayed on increasing forestry plantation acreages, farm land, sporting venues, roadsides, and Tasmanian gardens;
- While links between pesticides and many forms of illness (e.g. some cancers, Parkinson's disease) have long been known, there is increasing medical research evidence linking miniscule doses (parts per trillion) of pesticides to endocrine disruption and some cancers. Such effects include interference with the communication system of glands, hormones and cellular receptors that control the body's internal functions. Endocrine disruption can result in a range of illnesses and has been linked to breast, testicular and prostate cancer, as well as impaired fertility, miscarriages, fibroids and reduced testosterone in men, leading to lower sperm counts and demasculinisation. It is plausible that the unusually high rate of prostate cancer in Tasmania (the highest in the nation, even after accounting for age) is related to exposure to these chemicals;
- Of the many hundreds of pesticides registered for use in Australia only a fraction have been tested for health risks. Many of these chemicals are also used in Tasmania, especially in forestry plantations now established in 44 of the

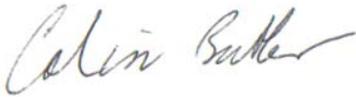
State's 48 drinking water catchments. Testing **carried out by Department of Primary Industry and Water on 55 rivers show many of our rivers that supply drinking water now contain pesticides that are banned in the European Union.** Unlike the passive smoker, almost everyone in the State is at risk as a passive consumer of these poisons.

- We therefore appeal for the complete abolition of these substances (as per the recent EU directive), and in particular the banning of aerial spraying, which results in the potential contamination of much of our beautiful, but far from clean, green and pristine State.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Alison Bleaney OBE, MB ChB FACRRM, Sec BODCRG



Colin D Butler BMed Sci(Hons), BMed, DTM&H, DLSHTM, MSc (epidemiology), PhD (epidemiology)



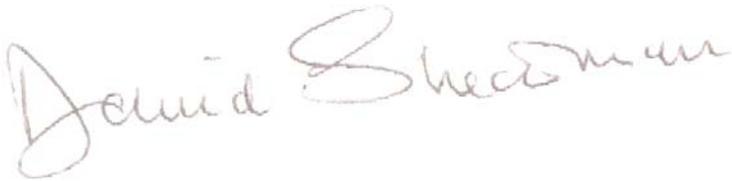
Dr David Strong BSc BMedSc MBBS Tas DipPaed MPubHlth NSW FRACP



Dr Matthew A Landos BVSc(HonsI), MACVSc(Aquatic Animal Health)



Dr Phill Pullinger MBBS, Director of Environment Tasmania Inc.



David Shearman, M.B Ch.B Ph.D FRCPE FRACP
Professor of Medicine
Hon Secretary, Docotrs for the Environment Australia

Scott Bell MB;BS,B Med Sci, FRACGP, FACRRM



Dr Roger W.H. Harlow BSc(Hons), PhD (Adel), Gr.Dip App Computing



Dr David Obendorf, BVSc(Hons), B(An)Sc, PhD

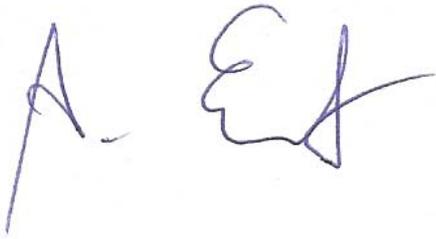
Alex.E. Whiteside NZCSc(Organic Chemistry) ATSc-OCCA(UK) Professional Grade.



Dr Janet Lyall, MBBS, MRCGP(UK), FRACGP, LFHom(UK)

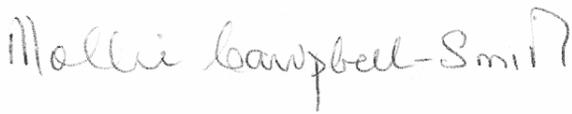


Helen Connor-Kendray, Bachelor of Health Science (Nursing), Past Member of Royal College of Nursing. President Parkinson's Tasmania Inc. Member of Parkinson's Australia BOM.

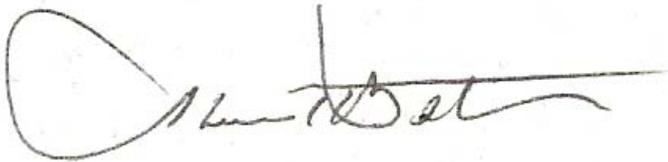


DR. ANDREAS ERNST
PO BOX 1389
LAUNCESTON 7250
workititas@bigpond.com

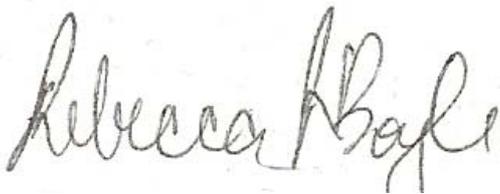
Dr Andreas Ernst (Occupational Physician)



Mollie Campbell-Smith, MBE, AM, BSc (Hons) Dip Ed, MACE



Ahmet Bektas BSc



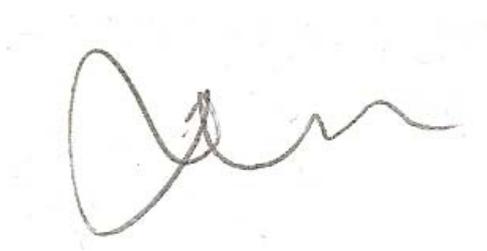
Dr Rebecca Boyle PhD



Dr Katie Pullinger FRACGP



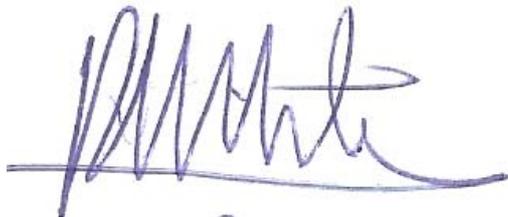
Dr Anne Paizs FRACGP



Dr Juliet Lavors BMBS



Geoffrey Coner FAGM



Rob White MBBS FRACGP



Dr S Visagie



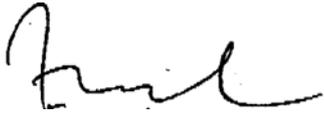
Shelley Young MBBS FRAGP



Natasha Litjens MBBS



Mark R Nelson MBBS (Hons) MFM, FRACGP, FAFPHM, PhD (Professor of General Practice)



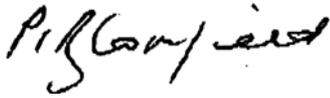
Dr Frank Nicklason MBBS (Tas) FRACP



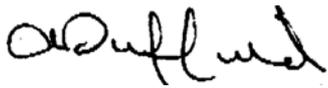
Janet Vial BMedSc, MBBS, MD, FRACP (Associate Professor of Medicine)



D Challis MBBS, FRCPA (Anatomical Pathologist)



P Blomfield MRCOG, FRACOG, CGO (Gynaecological Oncologist)



Anne Duffield (Endocrinologist)



Udayan Ray (Director of Chemical Pathology)