



Australian Government
**Australian Pesticides and
Veterinary Medicines Authority**



Renewing the APVMA's engagement model

Consultation paper

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Introduction

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) hosts formal discussions, forums and working groups across the agvet chemical industry.

Our stakeholders can be categorised as:

- Regulated entities – those who pay fees to the APVMA for registrations, permits, licences etc. This includes those who may be developing new agvet chemicals or products.
- Users/consumers/community – those who use the chemicals we regulate or have an interest in the impacts of agvet chemicals.
- Government – federal government and state and territory governments that have responsibility for or an interest in agvet chemical policy or our co-regulators.

The APVMA has reviewed its engagement practices based on recommendations in independent reviews of the APVMA, the findings of its 2024 stakeholder and public survey, and a review of engagement practices used by the APVMA and comparable organisations. This review reported that many stakeholders found APVMA's engagement approach to be at times inconsistent, fragmented, uncoordinated, and one-way in its communication.

The review also identified gaps in the stakeholder groups the APVMA engages with, and mechanisms used to engage.

The APVMA now seeks your feedback on the following alternative as we aim to deliver a more collaborative, transparent and dynamic experience for our stakeholders as they engage with us. Our new model should also deliver a more streamlined consultation and engagement process, enabling broader participation from various sectors and interest groups.

The new model is intended to deliver a material shift in both:

- The level of transparency regulated industry, consumers, and other stakeholders can access regarding the APVMA's understanding of current and emerging challenges.
- A more two-way, collaborative experience for stakeholders, in both defining problems and identifying solutions.

To help the APVMA settle its new model, we are inviting stakeholder submissions on an alternative approach. The following sections of this document set out the main features of the proposed new model.

This proposal is part of APVMA's commitment to be more accessible, proactive, and inclusive in our stakeholder engagement. We look forward to working with you to develop a more effective model of engagement as we work together in the long-term interest of the agvet chemical industry and the Australian community.

Timeframes

Table 1: Timeframe deliverables

Date	Key milestones
12 December 2024 to 7 February 2025	Stakeholder feedback sought and received
24 February 2024	Approach finalised, and selection process to establish new committees opens
Week commencing 24 March 2025	New structure commences operation, and first meetings held
Second half of 2025	Review of structure and additional changes implemented if required

Background

The APVMA has been subject to a period of significant change, resulting in changes in leadership and subsequently different approaches to stakeholder engagement.

Item 1.3 of the Australian Government's [detailed response](#) to the Rapid Evaluation of the APVMA's structure and governance and other reviews outlines the government's expectations for the APVMA in how we engage with stakeholders, including this review on our engagement model to ensure transparency and equity in the interactions across stakeholders.

The APVMA has traditionally focused its engagements on directly impacted stakeholders from across the agvet chemical sector, resulting in limited engagement from research, environmental, animal welfare, human health and Indigenous groups.

As part of our role as Australia's agvet chemical regulator we have established forums and working groups to both inform and hear from industry about:

- the National Registration Scheme for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals
- changes that impact our stakeholders
- mechanisms to achieve the objectives of the APVMA's governing legislation efficiently and effectively
- sharing information and problem solving.

Stakeholders cannot be involved in regulatory decisions.

The APVMA is committed to a redesign of our engagement model to enable increased participation, collaboration, and co-operation. In turn, we hope this will improve our decision-making and, ultimately, the outcomes delivered for the agvet chemical industry and the Australian community. We are determined to ensure that stakeholders can engage with the APVMA in a way that is transparent (so stakeholders can understand what is happening across APVMA) and efficient (so their time is used effectively).

Structure and governance

In considering a new model for formal engagement, APVMA aims to:

- improve transparency, consistency, and collaboration across our advisory and working groups
- work flexibly on problem-solving and considering future issues as well as delivering to immediate functional concerns.

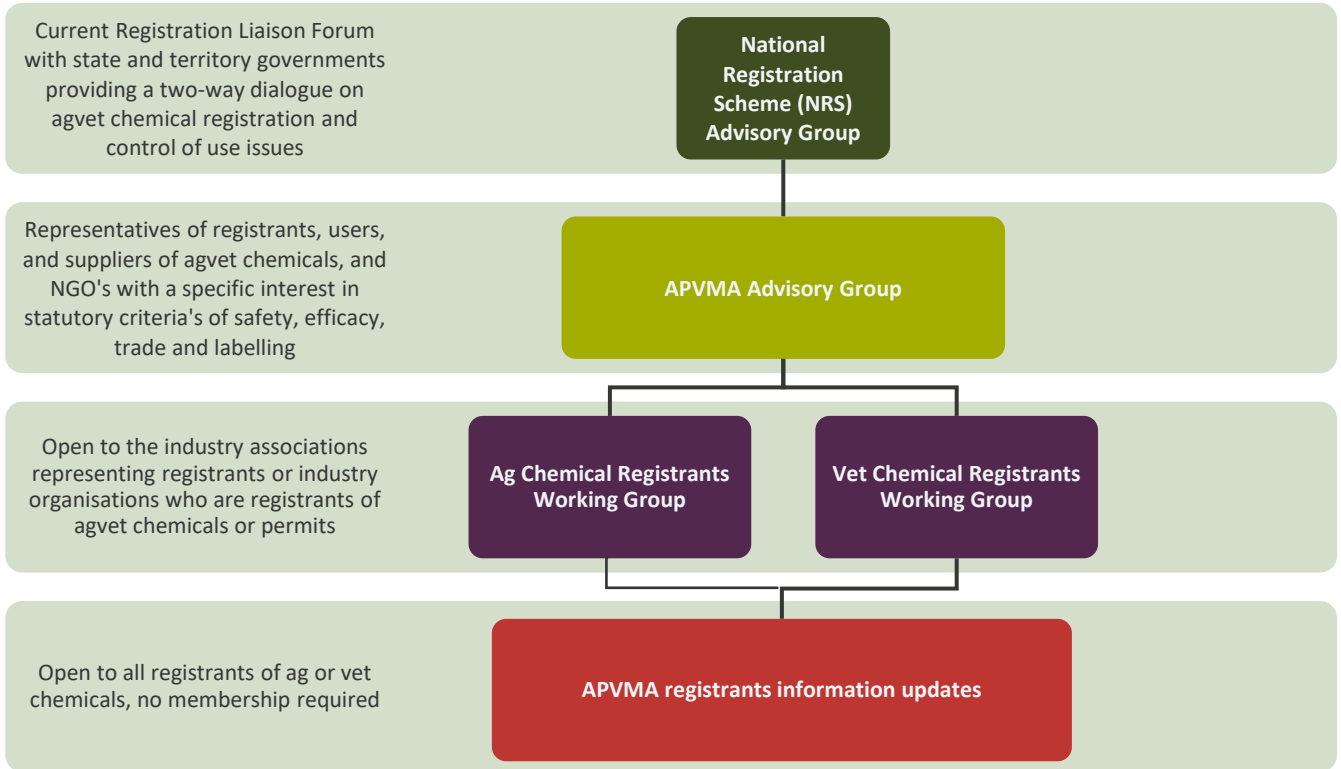
The APVMA has developed a new engagement model for stakeholder feedback which proposes operating across 3 levels:

1. Strategic
2. Operational
3. Informational

The APVMA also proposes refreshing the Terms of Reference and the member selection process to align with our objectives for the groups. The terms of reference will include the requirement for all members to engage in a constructive and professional manner, and a mechanism for dismissal if members do not meet these requirements.

We will also provide a clear scope for the establishment of sub-groups under each proposed level where needed to bring together industry and private sector expertise on particular issues.

Summary of proposed structure



Engagement groups

Not for comment

The National Registration Scheme (NRS) Advisory Group is not open for comment but has been included to provide a holistic view of the stakeholder engagement model.

Previously known as the Registration Liaison Forum, the NRS Advisory Group includes all state and territory governments. It looks at the outcomes of APVMA's regulatory scene and those of state and territory regulations, and how all parties together achieve the requirements under the NRS.

This forum also focuses on the touchpoints between regulation and control of use and provides an opportunity for state and territory governments to provide feedback on how the APVMA can improve labels and provides an opportunity to ensure the labels the APVMA is proposing are enforceable in each state.

For comment

Table 2: Summary

	APVMA Advisory Group	Ag chemical Registrants Working Group	Vet chemicals Registrants Working Group	Registrants' information updates
Scope	Strategic advisory group	Operational working group for agricultural chemicals	Operational working group for veterinary chemicals	Informational forum for registrants
Focus	APVMA's legislative responsibilities: registration, monitoring and chemical reviews, compliance and enforcement. Current and future agvet chemical risks and opportunities.	APVMA's systems and processes in relation to the registration of chemicals used to manage land and pests, including herbicides, pesticides, and rodenticides, and pool and spa chemicals.	APVMA's systems and processes in relation to the registration of vet medicines, animal agriculture and companion animals.	Provide regular and topic focused updates on APVMA registration processes and activities.
Frequency	2 times per year (additional meetings can be convened to address issues)	2 times per year (additional meetings can be convened to address issues)	2 times per year (additional meetings can be convened to address issues)	As required
Chair	APVMA CEO	APVMA CEO	APVMA CEO	APVMA subject matter experts
Membership*	Open to representatives of registrants and users of agvet chemicals and non-government organisations with an interest in the statutory criteria outcomes.	Open to nominated industry organisation registrants and industry associations of agricultural chemical registrants.	Open to nominated industry organisation registrants and industry associations of veterinary chemicals registrants.	Nil – open to all
Observers	DAFF DCCEEW Department of Health and Aged Care	DAFF DCCEEW Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Office of the Gene Technology Regulator	DAFF Therapeutic Goods Administration Office of the Gene Technology Regulator	n/a

*Current members of the APVMA Consultative and Agvet Users Forums will be invited to join the relevant group and nominate a representative.

APVMA Advisory Group

We propose establishing a new advisory group focused on issues and interests relating to APVMA's legislative responsibilities: registration, monitoring and chemical reviews, compliance and enforcement, as well as in interest in current and future agvet chemical risks and opportunities. The advisory group will be open to registrants (and their nominated representatives), those who use agvet chemicals (and their nominated representatives), and those NGOs with an interest in the statutory criteria outcomes (safety of people, animals, and the environment, efficacy, residues and trade).

Through the advisory group, the APVMA will communicate and consult on current work programs across its legislative remit of registration, monitoring and review and compliance and enforcement. The APVMA will also seek advice, input, and information on key issues facing users and/or the community regarding agvet chemicals.

It will provide a mechanism for agvet registrants, users (and their nominated representatives), sellers, and other interest groups to engage with the APVMA and with each other on agvet issues.

Registrants' Working Groups

- Ag chemical working groups
- Vet chemical working groups

These working groups will be open to those nominated industry representatives of registrants as well as industry organisations that are registrants. The working groups will be focused on issues and the operational aspects of the APVMA relevant to fee payers, including registrations, permits, licences etc.

One working group will be established for the agricultural chemical sector and another for the vet medicine sector. Pool and spa chemicals are classified as agricultural chemicals under the agvet code.

Registrants' information update

We propose establishing an open information briefing, targeted to registrants but open to all. Sessions would be held virtually as a webinar style event, as needed to provide updates on specific topics by APVMA subject matter experts. These would be a one way provision of information, with provision for follow up with the subject matter experts post the briefing.

New membership selection criteria

The APVMA will seek expressions of interest for membership of the relevant forums and working groups, with a limit of 20 members in total in each.

Organisations may apply for membership at any time; however, the membership cycle will remain the same. For example, the 4 year cycle may begin in March 2025 and end in March 2029:

- Those who have become members in March 2025 will remain members for the full 4 year cycle, before needing to reapply for the next 4 year cycle.
- Those who became member after March 2025 will still have their membership end in March 2029, meaning some members may not be a member for the full 4 years before needing to reapply.

Previous membership will not guarantee membership on reapplication in the next cycle.

Expressions of interest and membership criteria

Members of any forum, committee or advisory group will:

- Be located in Australia.
- Representative of industry or businesses in agvet chemical sector, or an organisation which represents the interests of those impacted by agvet chemical use, or be a thought or community leader in the relevant sector.
- Have relevant skills or expertise for the engagement group they are applying to.
- Commit to attending the number of meetings proposed (anywhere between 2–4), with a membership term of up to 4 years.

Application process

Current members of the APVMA Consultative and Agvet Users Forum will be invited to participate in either the advisory or working groups. The APVMA will assess the suitability of interested stakeholders or groups applying for membership against the objectives of the group.

Interested parties should demonstrate:

- Their organisation's interest in participation (reference to their corporate objectives/goals).
- Why that person/role is appropriate for the group (reference to Terms of Reference).
- Detail their relevant skills or expertise.
- Any other supporting information.