

Will Hodgman MP
Leader of the Opposition
Dr Vanessa Goodwin MLC
Shadow Minister for the Environment
Monday February 22, 2010

Liberals will invest \$950,000 to overhaul pesticide and chemical monitoring

A Hodgman Liberal Government will overhaul the pesticide and chemical monitoring system in Tasmania to ensure the collection of accurate data to better understand patterns of chemical usage and to assist in the mitigation of any possible environmental and human health issues.

We will also commit to a full, independent, scientific investigation into claims of unusual incidents of illness in humans and marine life on Tasmania's East Coast.

Leader of the Opposition Will Hodgman said:

The Tasmanian Liberals believe good science should form the basis of our approach to issues that affect our environment, our health and our agricultural practices.

This is why we are committing \$950,000 over 4 years to overhauling our chemical and pesticide monitoring scheme in Tasmania to ensure the most accurate data available forms the basis for our approach to managing chemical and pesticides usage and mitigating any potential human and environmental impacts.

The issue of dangerous chemicals cuts across three Ministerial portfolios and none of the responsible Ministers appear to have the issue on their radar.

Not only is the detection of chemicals in our watercourses potentially damaging to the environment and our brand, but there are many people in the community who are increasingly concerned about the possible impacts on human health – Labor has ignored this but a Hodgman Liberal Government will not.

We will also commit to initiating a full, independent, scientific investigation into claims of irregular health concerns in humans and marine life on Tasmania's East Coast. The claims made are serious and deserve to be treated in a way that reflects this. A full and independent investigation is the only appropriate response.

Shadow Minister for the Environment, Dr Vanessa Goodwin said:

This policy requires a rethink of the current testing regime. The new testing process should be based on a risk assessment that considers testing based on:

- Identification of industry and agriculture with a known or likely propensity to use pesticides and other chemicals and their relationship to waterways;
- The chemicals likely to be in use and their characteristics with regard to mobility;
- The historical data of chemicals used in catchments;
- The seasonal factors that may influence possible contamination such as rainfall and patterns of usage;
- The sensitivity of the surrounding environment and pesticide use be included in integrated catchment management plans. It should consider the likelihood that any water contaminated above acceptable levels may be digested or make contact with people;

We believe that our strategic, risk assessed approach to chemical and pesticide testing will enable Tasmanians to have confidence in the testing and reporting process.

A Hodgman Liberal Government will work constructively with all stakeholders, Local Government, agricultural or industry users and regional water authorities, together with key health and environmental organisations.

We will do this to develop robust, science-based approach to improve risk-based chemical monitoring and reporting, complemented by improved education, information and enforcement.

The policy offers a real change and a better monitoring regime into the future.

For further information or comment please call Brad Stansfield – 0419 884 666