



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

# Cosmetic Testing on Animals Ban November 2016 Consultations

During the 2016 Election campaign, the Australian Government committed to introduce a ban on animal testing of cosmetic products. The Australian Government commenced a phased consultation process in November 2016 to better understand and consider ideas, key issues and views in the development of the policy.

As part of the first phase of consultation, the Department of Health held workshops and interviews with both the cosmetic industry and animal welfare groups. During consultations, participants were asked for their views on the ban and how a ban can be implemented in Australia. Following on from this, discussions moved to the consequences of implementing a ban as well as how bans have been implemented in other countries.

The purpose of this document is to highlight some of the major 'themes' raised during consultations. The document does not attempt to detail all issues identified by stakeholders.

## *Harmonisation with other countries*

A number of countries currently have animal testing bans in place. Participants suggested:

- Consideration must be given to global bans currently in place. The Australian ban should align with other countries.
- Greater clarity is required on the definitions of animal, cosmetic and animal testing as many companies and jurisdictions have differing definitions.

## *Business and trade implications*

Consultation identified that the introduction of a ban on cosmetic testing on animals could potentially impact Australian businesses importing or exporting cosmetics from overseas, including:

- Some overseas markets require animal testing for certain products before they can be sold in stores. It was indicated that business would need either to develop two formulations of a product (one for those countries where testing is required and one for Australia) or stop selling their products in one of these markets.
- Companies may be subjected to liability issues. An ingredient or product may be tested without an organisation's knowledge. This could result in a company having to remove their product from the market as it has been tested on animals albeit by a third party.
- While industry had been aware of the election commitment there was a view expressed that a period of transition would be required to meet the requirements of a ban.
- The ban should encourage the development and uptake of alternative test methods, potentially reducing costs for industry if it is able to move away from expensive animal testing.

### *Animal welfare concerns*

Animal welfare stakeholders highlighted views on the need to protect the welfare of animals. In particular it was noted that:

- The testing of cosmetics on animals is an important issue and a potential ban would position Australia as a more progressive nation.
- Animal testing causes pain and distress to animals.
- It is understood that cosmetic testing on animals does not occur in Australia; however, a ban will provide a safety net for the future.

### *Public health*

Consultation noted that animal tests are undertaken to determine the safety of a product or ingredient for consumers, the environment and individuals working with the product.

Participants indicated:

- There is currently a lack of developed and approved alternatives for some animal tests.
- Any ban must not pose unacceptable risks to public health, worker health or the environment. Individuals who work with these products or ingredients need to know they are safe.

### *Consumer implications*

The consultation process highlighted the need to consider the implications of the ban on consumers, including:

- Consumers would be able to purchase products with confidence, as currently there is consumer confusion surrounding labelling of products as cruelty free or not tested on animals. There would be a potential increase in consumer confidence.
- Products should have prominent labelling to ensure consumers are not misled and that compliance with the ban is assured.
- If a ban is in place that applies to all new products then there is no need for specific labelling.
- Consumers would have a decreased range of products on the shelves, as companies may choose not to sell products in Australia because of the ban.

### **Next Steps**

The Department acknowledges and appreciates the time and effort of all stakeholders in contributing to this consultation process to date. There will be further opportunities to participate in the consultation process with additional workshops scheduled to take place in early 2017.