



## HRCC Statement on the use of RoundUp. 4 July 2019

Weed control is not entirely dependent on chemical use. It is merely a tool that significantly increases the efficiency, and therefore reduces the cost of the exercise to the community. Organisations such as Councils are increasingly being targeted to ban the use of the most commonly used herbicide – glyphosate (RoundUp) (Fellnar & Hannam 2019). This is the flow on effect of a World Health Organisation claim that glyphosate 'probably' causes cancer (WHO 2016) and a US court ruling that awarded record damages of \$2.9billion after a jury agreed Roundup caused the plaintiff's non-Hodgkin lymphoma (Rosenblatt 2019). This issue has increasingly been pushed upon local government as a moral one, primarily via the forces of social media. More recently, it has led to industrial action at Blacktown City Council (Higgins 2019).

The organisation responsible for the legality of all chemicals in Australia is the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). They currently consider it safe to use. Council's by definition are obliged to follow the directions of the higher tiers of governmental advice.

The solution to this issue requires consideration on several fronts. Firstly, staff safety must be maintained as the highest priority. To this end, all HRCC staff must adhere to stringent "Safe Work Method Statements" when mixing, transporting or applying the chemical. The same process is followed to mitigate all other risks associated with operational activities. This is supervised not only by team leaders but also a Work Safety Coordinator who is part of the team. Secondly, HRCC undertakes a range of different weed management techniques such as surveillance, mapping, education, mechanical, biocontrol and aquatic harvesting, which require no chemical use. This allows for the rotation of staff between these roles, thereby reducing everyone's exposure.

HRCC is currently reviewing its practices to see if chemical application and use of glyphosate can be further reduced, and if any better staff protection measures can be employed.

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Fellnar, C. & Hannam, P. 2019, 'Sydney councils move to ban Roundup weedkiller over cancer fears', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 June 2019, <<https://www.smh.com.au/national/sydney-councils-move-to-ban-roundup-weedkiller-over-cancer-fears-20190524-p51quo.html>>.

Higgins, H. 2019, 'Sydney council workers fight orders to use Roundup, go on strike', *Sydney Morning Herald*, <<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/sydney-council-workers-protest-roundup-use-forced-to-use-or-leave-20190704-p523ys.html>>.

Rosenblatt, J. 2019, 'Bayer ordered to pay couple \$2.9b in Roundup cancer trial', *Sydney Morning Herald*, <<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/bayer-ordered-to-pay-couple-2-9b-in-roundup-cancer-lawsuit-20190514-p51n06.html>>.

WHO 2016, *Q&A on Glyphosate*, World Health Organisation, viewed 24 June 2019, <[https://www.iarc.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/QA\\_Glyphosate.pdf](https://www.iarc.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/QA_Glyphosate.pdf)>.