MEDIA RELEASE
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Government watchdog fails Australians by refusing to ban chemical linked to Parkinson's

A herbicide linked to Parkinson's Disease will continue to be used in Australia after a national regulator rejected calls to fall into line with more than 70 countries that have banned the chemical.

After three decades of reviews and the submission of mounting scientific studies, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) today announced stronger controls around the use of paraquat.

Parkinson's Australia has led the campaign for a ban - including a #Ban Paraquat petition with 20,000 signatures - and has slammed the APVMA over its shocking decision, warning it will have catastrophic health consequences.

Parkinson's Australia CEO Olivia Nassaris says the incidence of Parkinson's is projected to triple by 2050, posing pressure to the health system and economy.

"This is going to be an absolute epidemic and we have to be doing something now if we are to stop it," Ms Nassaris says.

"While we welcome the controls, including increasing PPE requirements and getting rid of backpack sprayers in favour of enclosed cabs, they simply don't go far enough.

"The APVMA has failed not only farmers who use paraquat but all the other Australians exposed to it. In the 30 years they've been reviewing this chemical, 70 countries around the world have banned it – yet we've still got Aussie farmers using it every day. We're the last to act here – and we've failed."

Neurologist David Blacker, who has Parkinson's, says the data on paraquat is overwhelming.

"Large scale studies have identified an association between paraquat and the incidence of Parkinson's," he says.

"Like myself, people who grew up on farms and live around places like golf courses that are using paraquat aren't safe."

Professor Blacker says banning paraquat is not just about reducing Parkinson's, it's about improving the quality of food for everyone – we missed an ideal opportunity to improve the health of everyone.

Interviews: Olivia is at the Brisbane Convention Centre. David is at the Sydney International Convention Centre. Media Contact: Olivia Nassaris | CEO Parkinson's Australia **0478 913 214** | olivia@parkinsons.org.au

ABOUT PARKINSON'S AUSTRALIA

Parkinson's Australia is the national advocacy body for people living with Parkinson's, their families and carers, researchers and health professionals. We promote the best possible quality of life for people with Parkinson's.

We advocate for the Parkinson's community on issues of national significance. We work to reduce the impact of Parkinson's by promoting best practice care to ensure that people can maximise their opportunities to live well and maintain their independence.