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**The Secretary,
Australian Labor Party
Armadale Kelmscott Sub Branch WA**

September 9, 2005

Dear Ms. Lewis,

I respond to the correspondence received June 8th 2005 from the WA Minister of Agriculture, replying to the sub branch's concern about the handling of former APB workers' poisoning claims.

Although the minister's response may give the appearance of a thorough independent investigation to the workers' claims, I wish to draw the membership's attention to the following:

* The so-called "Expert Medical Panel" was headed by Bruce Armstrong, who I believe was Commissioner of Public Health during previous years that the APB workers were seeking an investigation.

Is the reviewer going to criticise his own previous area of responsibility?

* Armstrong also has previously authored articles in medical journals refuting claims of injury by herbicides. In the Medical Journal of Australia Volume 140 No 7, he supposes *birth defects of children fathered by Vietnam Veterans is more likely caused by the fathers' herpes, syphilis, or other STD's and passed on to the mother. He continues that spousal abuse by emotionally disturbed men, prone to excess alcohol would affect the pregnant spouse. This is further compounded by her use of grog, smokes, and mood-altering drugs.*

I attach a copy of the offending article for those readers who are prone to disbelief.

Is it not asking too much expecting an "expert" to arrive at a contrary conclusion to his already published works?

* It is also worthwhile noting that the Armstrong Review was conducted without interviewing any of the exposed workers, and without accessing their medical records, **but somehow managed to generate five (5) psychiatric reports on the sick and dying workers.**

* The review also looked at the health effects of standard 245T exposure. This was not relevant, and is a red herring.

The workers claims were based on the illegal supply of off-specification herbicide, allegedly containing 260 to 2600 times the allowable deadly dioxin contaminant.

The Ingraham Report of the Review substantiates the manufacture and government analysis of this material. **Yet the minister says no evidence exists.**

* The scores of eyewitness in the original Harper Report, that Armstrong was reviewing, account the supply of material physically consistent to the illegal material described in the Ingraham Report (not standard 245T, which is very different). **Yet the minister says no evidence exists.**

Is the minister saying all these former workers are liars?

* Majority of eyewitnesses in the Harper Report and ALS interviews state no or insufficient labelling of the chemical supplied in second-hand drums, indicating that the APB supply was illegal and contrary to the Poisons Act. **Yet the minister says no evidence exists.**

Is the minister saying all these former workers are liars?

* The minister's response also states that the expert panel found that there is no evidence of chloracne, which has causal association with the suspected dioxin agent. There is **little wonder of finding any evidence of anything, using the manner exercised by the so-called expert panel.**

The most common complaint by former workers is skin rashes.

I believe there have also been previous workers compensation claims on this basis.

However the APB conveniently chose to call the cause of these skin irritations as being diesel fuel used to mix with the chemical, or personal reaction to noxious flora.

It is also written elsewhere that doctors who actually attended the workers have previously refuted the "no chloracne" claim.

* The Sunday Times recently reported only five (5) workers have been paid compensation, although the campaigners estimate more than fifty (50) former workers have already died.

To add insult to the dying workers, it should be noted that an original offer for settlement from the government was reported to be \$5,000.

This apparently is indicative of the way the government sees the issue.

* Professor Andrew Harper, who performed the original investigation, has accused the WA government of "wriggling out backwards". On the issue of only recognising cancer as being caused by the spraying exposure, and denying all other illnesses, Professor Harper is also quoted as stating it is a "misuse of science" to deny the innocent workers to justice and assistance.

The former workers require support and assistance from any front.

We as members of the ALP must hold some responsibility if we allow our own people to screw these innocent citizens to death.

These people have done nothing other than attempted to earn an honest living, yet through apparent criminal actions of those charged with their safety, they have been let down horribly.

As a community, and as part of the ALP, we must not support the deceitful handling of this shameful saga of our own history.

Despite the whitewash that the WA government has presented to the public of a "thorough investigation", I ask the membership of the sub-branch to support the worker' original claims (supported by evidence) that they were illegally supplied with chemical other than standard 245T herbicide.

This is supported by manufacture's reports, workers' descriptions of the material, eye-witness accounts of illegal supply, Federal Hansard report of material analysis containing extremely elevated levels of dioxin up to 2600 times allowable during the spraying program, and deaths and injuries consistent to exposure to the alleged toxic chemical.

Sincerely,