

Murray Thompson

Bligh Park NSW 2756
Saturday, July 02, 2005

Mr Sean Perry
Manager Parks & Recreation
C/- General Manager
HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL
PO Box 146
Windsor NSW 2756

CC Mr Howard Wolfers, Principal, Richmond High School
Councillor Leigh Williams
Mr Steven Pringle MP, State Member for Hawkesbury
Lee Rhiannon, MLC, The Greens, Parliament of New South Wales
Drs Nagwa Morris & Louise Arnold, Sth. Windsor Medical Clinic
Ms Gail Knox, Hawkesbury Gazette

Dear Mr Perry:

Thank you for your positive note in response to the large packet of information on Roundup and pesticide toxicity I mailed you recently. I especially refer to your comment re the suspending of kiddies playground spraying with Roundup. It might be worth considering the situating of concrete or plastic strips around the perimeter of each playground. It would be better if the strip was continuous with the padded green matting - perhaps able to be 'welded' via heat or other method. Alternatively, if the matting technology were able to be modified so that the playground borders used strips of matting already bonded to perimeter strips about 0.5m wide that could be mowed. These strips might need to penetrate the soil to a depth suitable to minimize the subsurface spread of grasses toward the matting. Brush cutting would obviously still need to be employed, but likely at a much reduced frequency. The surrounding playground/park grasses would take longer to gain a foothold in the matting and attack its matrix.

I appreciate the difficulties faced in terms of the large areas that Council maintains, the control of weeds, the lack of manpower, and budgetary constraints. However, short term chemical fixes and the aforementioned constraints do not adequately consider long term public health issues and environmental damage. In short, the clinical urge to control weeds generates the need for chemicals applications, which in turn then creates future, larger problems that no amount of money can fix. Note: "glyphosate is toxic to human placental JEG3 cells within 18 hr with concentrations lower than those found with agricultural use, and this effect increases with concentration and time or in the

presence of Roundup adjuvants" (<http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/members/2005/7728/7728.html>). Somewhere in Council's deliberations there is a profound need to address the entire concept of what is considered tidy and what is not (repeated spraying of weeds that bounce back traditionalizes and amplifies chemical exposures – more effective and non-toxic weed removal is essential). If some weeds, grasses and bushes in fact retain and maintain healthy populations of insect and bird life, then why would you trade that overall environmental plus for the superficial and temporary appearance of order with less weeds, but also, consequently:

1. more chemical-mediated human health problems,
2. and even further environmental and human health problems once the Roundup has decimated frog populations (<http://www.esajournals.org/esaonline/?request=get-abstract&issn=1051-0761&volume=015&issue=02&page=0618>; <http://www.mindfully.org/Pesticide/Glyphosate-TadpolesJul01.htm>; <http://www.cnf.ca/magazine/spring05/sentinnels.html>) leading to **increases in mosquito populations and mosquito-borne diseases** (<http://www.landcareaustralia.com.au/MediaDisplay.asp?ArticleID=67>; <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/resources/0588mcmichael.pdf>).

If Roundup continues to be used at current rates (and this includes private usage around households), this entire Hawkesbury Valley may likely see epidemics of Ross River Fever (with pesticides also generating compromised immune function) and various other insect plague problems. I believe some of these outbreaks would likely be somewhat unanticipated and sudden – in terms of little forewarning via obvious visible/identifiable evidence, apart from further declines in River and wetlands health, and larger insect swarms. Sudden rainfall amidst the drought combined with warmer temperatures would bring on these problems quickly, and their effects would grow exponentially. Agricultural production would shut down as farmers and their families are incapacitated, and local businesses would fail as workers succumb and shoppers shop elsewhere.

The consequences of using weedicides are in the details of the ecological relationships, pathways of exposure, Climate Change implications, and overall predictable outcomes.

Thanks for your consideration. Regards,

Murray Thompson

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