

CCA TREATED TIMBER: A GUIDE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

On 15 March 2005 the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) released a report on its review of arsenic timber treatment products (CCA and Arsenic Trioxide). The decisions detailed in this report will lead to changes in the use of copper chrome arsenate (CCA) as a timber preservative. The key implications of the decision are summarized below. For more detailed information refer to www.apvma.gov.au and www.tpa.com.au.

Limitation on the use of CCA

- From 31 March 2006 CCA must not be used to treat timber products intended for use as garden furniture, picnic tables, exterior seating, children's play equipment, patio and domestic decking and hand rails.
- CCA can continue to be used to treat timber products intended for all other uses including structural timbers, telegraph poles, fence posts, fence palings and retaining structures.
- Each piece of CCA treated timber must be labelled as having been treated with CCA (except in specific circumstances where supplied and therefore marked as a pack).
- All timber treatment facilities that use CCA will be required to be designed and operated to meet the appropriate Australian Standards (AS/NZS 2843.1:2000 and AS/NZS 2843.2:2000).

Existing Structures

- The APVMA made no recommendation about existing structures made from CCA treated timber. However, the APVMA did state that
 - *"However, based on a consideration of the exposure to CCA-treatment timber products, in particular children's play equipment, **there was no compelling evidence from the available data to conclude that there was likely to be an unacceptable risk to public health from exposure to arsenic from CCA-treated timber.** Based on this finding, there would not seem to be any good justification for taking immediate action to remove existing CCA-treated playground structures."* and
 - *"no other countries that have examined this issue ... are recommending the dismantling of existing structures".*

Alternatives

- There are a number of timber treatment alternatives to CCA including ACQ and Copper Azole. Some light organic solvent preservatives may also be used in some H3 situations. Whilst the alternatives are more expensive than CCA they offer a solution for treating products from our renewable plantation timber resource. They may appear similar in appearance to CCA but will carry different labelling.