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PESTICIDES AMENDMENT BILL PASSES UPPER HOUSE

There will be improved protection for NSW landowners with last night's passing through State Parliament of the Pesticides Amendment Bill.

The amendments to the Pesticides Act, clarifies that the existing offence of causing damage to another person's property, includes the wilful or negligent over-spraying of pesticides which prevents land from being used for its current agricultural purposes.

Prior to the amendments being passed, it was not sufficiently clear that damage included agricultural spray drift which might have prevented safe grazing of livestock on some pastures.

These amendments change that. They give much greater protection to farmers for their most important asset - their land – and they encompass farms with organic certification.

The Government intends to protect the State's reputation as a supplier of clean agricultural produce.

The EPA will replace WorkCover as the licensing authority for pest management technicians and fumigators.

The EPA will also be able to enter into Enforceable Undertakings (EU) for breaches of the Act. Failure to comply with an agreed (EU) could result in court action.

Existing offences relating to on-premises harm will be extended to include companion animals, to better protect working dogs and household pets from negligent poisoning.

These are sensible and practical changes that will benefit and protect property owners from pesticide misuse and will improve the administration of the Act.