**GHS AND REACH. WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

Peter Sommers. Managing Director, Merck Pty Ltd.   
  
**Abstract:**   
  
How is Australia likely to be affected by the European Union's REACH and GHS Programs?   
  
REACH is the new chemical Regulation of the European Union (Regulation (EC) No. 1907/2006) went into force on 1 June  2007.   
REACH eliminates the differentiation between existing substances and new substances; now the same legal requirements apply to all substances.

GHS stands for the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. In December 2002, the United Nations published the GHS in the so-called “Purple Book“ with a description of harmonised classification and labelling criteria. The goal of GHS is to harmonise the various existing classification and labelling systems all over the world. Because of the various evaluation criteria, it has long been the case that one and the same substance can be classified as poisonous, harmful to health, or even not harmful. This leads to different levels of protection in terms of occupational health and safety, consumer protection, and environmental protection. GHS offers the first-ever globally uniform basis for the evaluation of substance properties. GHS establishes the requirement for a globally high protection level for human health and the environment.The resulting harmonised hazard communication includes criteria for classification and labelling as well as hazardous substance labelling and requirements for the creation of Safety Data Sheets.