



MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Green’ and ‘organic’ doesn’t mean it’s better

A recent study finding cancer-causing chemicals in products claiming to be ‘green’ or ‘organic’ doesn’t surprise the country’s largest organic group.

A Melbourne University study analysed 37 household products, finding 156 volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted from the items and fragranced ‘green’ products contained VOCs.

Australian Organic, which owns the nation’s most recognised organic certification scheme Australian Certified Organic – recognised by the ‘Bud’ logo - warns shoppers not to judge a book by its cover.

General manager of commercial for Australian Organic, Joanne Barber, says the company has raised the widespread problem of ‘green washing’ with consumer watchdogs like the ACCC.

“There are many products on our shelves using green washing marketing claims and getting away with it because claims like ‘eco’, ‘green’ and ‘organic’ aren’t regulated,” she says.

“There are companies who use just one certified organic ingredient amongst 50 other synthetic ingredients but promote that one ingredient on the front of the label, giving shoppers the impression that the product is certified organic or that the rest of the ingredients can’t be too bad.”

A product can’t claim to be certified organic unless all of it meets strict organic standards. This means the whole manufacturing process and every ingredient must comply. Companies are audited annually for compliance. VOCs are strictly prohibited.

“Our advice to shoppers is that even if a product calls itself ‘eco’, ‘environmentally friendly’ or ‘organic’ and it’s packaging looks environmentally friendly, look for an organic certification logo that proves its claim, like the Bud symbol used by Australian Certified Organic.”

Due to the nature of household products and the ingredients they use it is very unusual for them to be able to meet organic standards and therefore achieve certification.

“Read the ingredients. You should be able to understand them and if there are no ingredients listed, perhaps you’re safer leaving it on the shelf.”

The term ‘certified organic’ is protected under consumer law so if you suspect a product is calling itself certified organic and it’s not call Australian Organic on 07 3350 5716.

Images available. Media: Kathy Cogo 0466 015 183, kathy.cogo@austorganic.com.