

NSW Cut Flower Industry

Chemical Control of Insect Pests

Best practice in the selection and use of pesticides starts with the correct identification of the TARGET pest(s) and/or disease(s) and then the development of a specific pest management program, which may include the use of pesticides. If a pesticide is to be used it must be applied to the right PLACE at the right TIME with minimal impact on people, beneficial organisms, property, and the environment. If unsure contact your local agronomist, plant pathologist, IPDM consultant or expert for advice.

Ask yourself these questions before and during any pest management program:¹

1. What is the best time to apply the product?

- Timing impacts the efficacy of the pesticide due to pest lifecycle stages, weather conditions, and other activities in the area.
- Proper timing ensures optimal effectiveness and safety for workers and the environment.
- Apply chemicals during periods when beneficial insects are least active. For example, apply treatments in the early morning or late evening when predatory insects are less likely to be foraging.

2. Is the product being applied to the right place?

- Targeting the correct location maximises the efficacy of the pesticide while preventing harm to non-target areas and organisms.
- Clear identification and record-keeping of treated zones are essential.
- If the infestation is localised, use spot treatments rather than blanket applications. This reduces the exposure of beneficial insects to the chemical.

3. Is the right amount of product being applied?

- Applying the correct dose of chemical ensures effective pest control, minimises waste and environmental contamination.
- Calibration of equipment and adherence to label instructions are crucial here.

4. Are pesticides from different chemical groups being applied?

- Rotate chemicals with different modes of action to prevent the development of pest resistance. This also helps in reducing the overall chemical load on beneficial insects.
- Integrate non-chemical methods to delay resistance developing.
- Monitor for resistance signs and adjust strategies accordingly.



Figure 1. PPE being worn for indoor spraying (<https://www.uvex-safety.com/blog/pesticides-ppe-plant-protection/>)

5. Am I using 'soft' pesticides?

- Choose pesticides that are selective and have minimal impact on beneficial insects. Opt for chemicals with lower toxicity to non-target organisms and shorter residual effects. Be aware that some fungicides and herbicide have residual toxicity on beneficial insects so check what has been sprayed and the time between spray and release of the specific beneficials to minimise disruption.
- A great resource to check this is the **Bugs For Bugs** technical sheets and the **Biobest Side Effects app**.

6. Am I using the right chemical in the right way?

- Carefully read and follow the pesticide label instructions. Ensure that the chemical is registered for use on cut flowers and specifically for the pest or disease being targeted.

7. Am I staying safe?

- Using the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ensures the safety of operators from exposure to harmful chemicals. This protects workers' health and complies with legal requirements.
- Whether spraying indoor or outdoor ensure the right PPE and safety procedures are being adhered to if staff are spraying.
- All this information can be found on the Chemical Label and Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

¹ <https://greenlifeindustryqld.org.au/wp-content/uploads/securepdfs/Best-Practice-Manual-for-Pesticide-Application.pdf>

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Asking yourself these questions can help to minimise the impact of pesticides on the environment due to spray drift, soil and water contamination. Proper pesticide application is legally required to avoid contamination. Key sources of pollution include the movement of chemicals in:

- The air beyond the target area during or after application (known as spray drift). This can be influenced by factors such as droplet size, weather conditions, and equipment settings.

- Ground and surface-water, harming aquatic life and potentially contaminating groundwater. To prevent contamination, capture and treat runoff, especially the first flush, and monitor nutrient content. Strategies include building dams, using grassed drains, and planting moisture-loving plants to absorb runoff.
- The soil profile, affecting soil organisms and future crops. To reduce soil contamination, follow label instructions, consider soil pH, avoid over-irrigation, and use practices like stubble retention and surface grading to minimise runoff.

Table 1. Chemical groups of insecticides approved for use on ornamentals

MAIN MODE OF ACTION GROUP	SUB-GROUP	ACTIVE(S)
1A	Carbamates (AChE inhibitors)	Carbaryl, Methiocarb, Pirimicarb
1B	Organophosphates (AChE inhibitors)	Acephate, Chlorpyrifos, Dimethoate, Malathion, Phorate
3A	Pyrethroids / Pyrethrins (Sodium channel modulators)	α -Cypermethrin, Betacyfluthrin, Permethrin + Potassium chloride, Pyrethrins + PBO, Tau-fluvalinate
4A	Neonicotinoids (nAChR agonists)	Acetamiprid, Dinotefuran, Imidacloprid, Thiamethoxam (premix), Chlorantraniliprole + Thiamethoxam, Cyantraniliprole + Thiamethoxam
5	Spinosyns (Allosteric nicotinic modulators)	Spinetoram, Spinosad
6	Avermectins / Milbemycins (Chloride channel activators)	Abamectin, Emamectin, Emamectin benzoate, Milmectin
7B	Juvenile Hormone Mimic (Carbamate ester type)	Fenoxycarb
7C	Juvenile Hormone Mimic (Pyriproxyfen type)	Pyriproxyfen, Pyroxyfen
9D	Chordotonal Organ Modulator (TRPV channel)	Dimpropyridaz (Dimporopyridaz)
10A	Mite Growth Inhibitor (Thiazolidinone)	Hexythiazox
11A	Microbial disruptors of midgut membranes (Cry toxins)	Bacillus thuringiensis (var. kurstaki, aizawai), Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis
12A	Oxidative phosphorylation inhibitor (Thiourea)	Diafenthriuron
12B	Oxidative phosphorylation inhibitor (Organotin)	Fenbutatin oxide
12C	Oxidative phosphorylation inhibitor (Sulfite ester)	Propargite
13	Microbial insecticide (Fungal contact pathogen)	Beauveria bassiana
15	Chitin synthesis inhibitor (Benzoylurea)	Diflubenzuron, Novaluron (premix)
16	Chitin biosynthesis inhibitor (Homopteran specific)	Bufoprezin
17	Moulting disruptor (Triazine derivative)	Cyromazine
20B	METI (Complex III – Quinoline derivative)	Acequinocyl
20D	METI (Complex III – Hydrazine derivative)	Bifenazate
21A	METI (Complex I inhibitor)	Rotenone, Tebufenpyrad
23	Lipid biosynthesis inhibitor (Tetramic acid derivative)	Spirotetramat
25	METI (Complex II inhibitor – β -Ketonitrile)	Cyflumetofen
26	Molluscicide (Iron phosphate type)	Iron III phosphate dihydrate
28	Ryanodine receptor modulator (Diamide)	Chlorantraniliprole, Cyantraniliprole, Chlorantraniliprole + Thiamethoxam, Cyantraniliprole + Thiamethoxam, Cyantraniliprole + Diafenthriuron
29	Feeding blocker (TRPV modulator)	Flonicamid
30	Ryanodine receptor modulator (non-diamide)	Isocycloseram
31	Viral insecticide (Nucleopolyhedrovirus)	Helicoverpa armigera NPV, Spodoptera frugiperda NPV
M2	Inorganic contact materials (Sulphur compounds)	Wettable sulphur
UN/NC	Non-classified or physical/mechanical action	Paraffinic oil, Petroleum oil, Botanical oil, Azadirachtin, Clitoria ternatea extract, Potassium salts of fatty acids, Iron EDTA, Iron powder, Permethrin + Potassium chloride

Rotating to avoid resistance

To avoid pests building resistance it is recommended that chemical products are rotated so that products that belong to the same chemical group are not used repeatedly.

Chemical groups are categories of insecticides, fungicides and herbicides that share similar chemical structures and often have similar modes of action. These groups are identified to help manage resistance and ensure effective pest control.

For acaricides, fungicides and insecticides, the mode of action describes how a chemical affects a pest at the cellular or biochemical level. Understanding this helps in selecting pesticides that can prevent or manage resistance. The Insecticide Resistance Action Committee (IRAC) classifies modes of action and assigns them group numbers, which are used globally, including in Australia.

The chemical groups of the actives approved for managing insect pests in ornamentals are identified in **Table 1** on the previous page.

Chemical labels, selecting chemicals and their use

Chemical labels

The pesticide label is a **legally binding document**, approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). This label provides essential information to ensure the safe and efficient use of pesticides when the directions are followed. The layout of the label is regulated and will vary depending on the size of the packaging and the required information. Typically, the label will consist of a main panel along with one or two ancillary panels. In cases where more information is needed, additional details may be provided in a leaflet attached to the container, which is also considered a part of the label.²

Further information on understanding pesticide labels is available from https://www.apvma.gov.au/sites/default/files/publication/67431-understanding_labels_booklet_2020.pdf

Safety data sheet (SDS)

All pesticides and their active ingredients come with a Safety Data Sheet (SDS). These documents provide detailed information about the product's properties and safety management, especially in case of an emergency.

Key Information in a SDS:

- Identification Details:** Product name and physical description/properties
- Health Hazards:** Potential health effects and first aid measures
- Precautions for Use:** Recommendations for personal protection and information on flammability
- Safe Handling Information:** Guidelines on proper storage and transport
- Toxicity Information:** Details on the product's toxicity levels
- Ecological Effects:** Information on the environmental impact of the product
- Other Relevant Information:** Additional details necessary for safe and effective product use.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are readily available upon request at points of sale. It is essential to ensure a current SDS is provided for each pesticide product being used. A SDS for each product being stored or used should be readily available for staff to read, with copies kept in or adjacent to the pesticide storage area for quick reference. By adhering to these guidelines, operators in the cut flower industry can ensure they are well-prepared to manage any emergencies effectively while maintaining a safe working environment.



Figure 2.
Chemical Label
for Abamectin

(<https://apparentag.com.au/product/abamectin-18/>)

² <https://www.ngiq.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/securedpdfs/Best-Practice-Manual-for-Pesticide-Application.pdf>

Key pests and approved chemicals

Below in **Table 2** are the current approved (either registered or permitted) actives for the management of insect and mite pests in ornamentals. Use the [PubCris resource](#) to confirm registered chemicals and the [APVMA Permit Portal](#) to confirm permitted chemicals. Always follow the instructions listed on the chemical label.

Table 2. Approved actives for use on insect pests in ornamentals

PEST	CHEMICAL (ACTIVE)	REGISTERED OR PERMIT (expiry date)	COMMENTS (based on label or permit information)	PEST	CHEMICAL (ACTIVE)	REGISTERED OR PERMIT (expiry date)	COMMENTS (based on label or permit information)
Aphids	Paraffinic Oil	R			Spirotetramet	PER91816 30 Apr 27	
	Betacyfluthrin	R	Toxic to beneficials		Diadifenphuron	PER91806 30 Nov 26	
	Potassium salts of fatty acids	R			Chlorantraniliprole + Thiamethoxam	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Apply as drench
	Imidacloprid	R			Dinotefuran	PER91805 30 Apr 26	
	Pyrethrins + PBO	R	Toxic to beneficials, but not residual		Imidacloprid	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Mixed with media
	Tau-fluvalinate	R		Ants	Fipronil	PER91804 30 Jun 27	Drench media
	Azadirachtin	R			Imidacloprid	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Mixed with media
	Dimethoate	R	Toxic to beneficials	Beetles	Spinosad	R	Leaf-eating (chrysomelid)
	Beauveria bassiana	R			Imidacloprid	R	Scarab larvae in medium (drench)
	Permethrin + Potassium chlorate	R	Fumigant; Toxic to beneficials		Chlorpyrifos	R	Scarab larvae in medium (drench); Toxic to beneficials
	Pirimicarb	R			Betacyfluthrin	R	Garden weevil; Toxic to beneficials
	Botanical Oil	R			Carbaryl	R	
	Acetamiprid	R			Abamectin and Chlorantraniliprole	PER91944 30 Sep 30	Beetles, weevils; Toxic to beneficials
	Malathion	R	Toxic to beneficials		Azadirachtin	PER91944 30 Sep 30	Stem borers
	Phorate	R	Granular application		Chlorantraniliprole	PER92942 30 Apr 26	Larvae of African black beetle, scarabs, stem weevil; Apply as drench to medium/pots
	Rotenone	R			Cyantraniliprole + Thiamethoxam	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Larvae of black beetle, scarabs, chafers, stem weevil; Apply as drench
	Dimpropipyridaz	PER94253 30 Apr 27	Green peach, cotton/melon, cabbage aphids				
	Cyantraniliprole + Diadifenphuron	PER92919 31 Oct 26	Green peach, cotton/melon aphid; Toxic to beneficials				
	Cyantraniliprole	PER92766 28 Feb 26	Green peach, cotton/melon aphid				
	Cyantraniliprole	PER91816 30 Apr 27					
	Flonicamid	PER91816 30 Apr 27					
	Petroleum oil	PER91816 30 Apr 27					

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Bugs (sucking)	Diflubenzuron	PER91944 30 Sep 30	Weevils; Not compatible with IPM		Permethrin + Potassium chlorate	R	Fumigant; Toxic to beneficials
	Dinotefuran	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Borers, leaf beetles, weevils; Toxic to beneficials		Carbaryl	R	
	Fipronil	PER91804 30 Jun 27	Scarab, weevil, wireworm larvae; Drench		Tau-fluvalinate	R	Heliothis
	Imidacloprid	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Scarab larvae; Drench		H. armigera NPV	R	Heliothis
	Methomyl	PER91944 30 Sep 30	Borers; Toxic to beneficials		Betacyfluthrin	R	Toxic to beneficials
	Imidacloprid	R			Bacillus thuringiensis (several subspecies)	R	Heliothis, loopers, light brown apple moth
	Dimethoate	R	Toxic to beneficials		Spinetoram	R	
	Carbaryl	R			Malathion	R	Toxic to beneficials
	Betacyfluthrin	R	Toxic to beneficials		Rotenone	R	
	Acetamiprid	R	Lace bugs, psyllids		Spodoptera frugiperda Nucleopolyhedrovirus	PER 91477 31 Mar 27	Fall armyworm only
Caterpillars	Cyantraniliprole	PER91816 30 Apr 27	Stink bugs, psyllids		Isocycloseram	PER94004 28 Feb 26	Diamondback moth, cucumber moth, heliothis
	Malathion	R	Lace bugs; Toxic to beneficials		Chlorantraniliprole	PER92942 30 Apr 26	Cutworms, armyworms, webworm; Apply drench to medium/pots
	Spinetoram	PER91816 30 Apr 27	Psyllids		Cyantraniliprole + Diafenthuron	PER92919 31 Oct 26	Toxic to beneficials
	Imidacloprid	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Lace bugs, psyllids; Mixed with media		Diafenthuron	PER91806 30 Nov 26	Including fall armyworm
	Spinosad	R			Acetamiprid + Novaluron	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Including fall armyworm
	Betacyfluthrin	R	Toxic to beneficials		Fipronil	PER91804 30 Jun 27	Cutworm; Toxic to beneficials
	Pyrethrins + PBO	R	Toxic to beneficials, not residual		Alpha-cypermethrin	PER91928 30 Sep 30	Cutworm, fall armyworm; Toxic to beneficials
	α -Cypermethrin	R	Banksia moth, autumn gum moth; Toxic to beneficials		Abamectin and Chlorantraniliprole	PER91928 30 Sep 30	Cutworm, fall armyworm; Toxic to beneficials
					Azadirachtin	PER91928 30 Sep 30	Including fall armyworm
					Acephate	PER91928 30 Sep 30	Fall armyworm; Toxic to beneficials

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Fungus gnats, shore flies	Diflubenzuron	PER91928 30 Sep 30	Armyworm including fall armyworm	Leaf miners	Petroleum oil	PER91816 30 Apr 27		
	Dimilin	PER91928 30 Sep 30	Including fall armyworm		Chlorantraniliprole + Thiamethoxam	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Apply as drench	
	Methomyl	PER91928 30 Sep 30	Including fall armyworm; Not to be used in protected crops; Toxic to beneficials		Dinotefuran	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Including Mirids	
					Imidacloprid	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Mixed with media	
	Lamda cyathothrin	PER91928 30 Sep 30	Including fall armyworm; Toxic to beneficials		Dimethoate	R	Toxic to beneficials	
	Spinetoram	PER91928 30 Sep 30	Including fall armyworm		Carbaryl	R		
	Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis	PER91811 31 Mar 27			Spinosad	PER94331 Until Apr 26	Serpentine, American Serpentine leaf miners	
	Chlorantraniliprole	PER91811 31 Mar 27			Chlorantraniliprole	PER 91811 31 Mar 27		
	Diflubenzuron	PER91812 31 Mar 27			Cyromazine	PER91811 31 Mar 27	Toxic to beneficials	
	Fipronil	PER91804 30 Jun 27	Drench; Toxic to beneficials		Spinetoram	PER91811 31 Mar 27		
Leaf-hoppers	Pyriproxyfen	PER91812 31 Mar 27			Abamectin	PER91812 31 Mar 27		
	Imidacloprid	PER91805 30 Apr 26			Azadirachtin	PER91812 31 Mar 27		
	Betacyfluthrin	R	Toxic to beneficials		Diflubenzuron	PER91812 31 Mar 27		
	Pyrethrins + PBO	R	Toxic to beneficials, not residual		Emamectin	PER91812 31 Mar 27	Suppression only	
	Dimethoate	R	Toxic to beneficials		Diafenthriuron	PER91806 30 Nov 26		
	Acetamiprid	R			Chlorantraniliprole + Thiamethoxam	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Apply as drench	
	Phorate	R	Granular application	Mealybugs	Potassium salts of fatty acids	R		
	Bufoprezin	PER91816 30 Apr 27			Imidacloprid	R		
	Emamectin benzoate	PER91816 30 Apr 27	Mirids		Botanical Oil	R		
	Flonicamid	PER91816 30 Apr 27	Mirids		Bufopezin	PER91816 30 Apr 27		
	Clitoria terneata extract	PER91816 30 Apr 27	Mirids		Cyantraniliprole	PER91816 30 Apr 27		
					Flonicamid	PER91816 30 Apr 27		
					Dinotefuran	PER91805 30 Apr 26		
					Imidacloprid	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Mixed with media	

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Scales	Fipronil	PER91804 30 Jun 27	Root mealybugs Drench	Thrips	Spinosad	R	Western Flower Thrips
	Paraffinic Oil	R	Immatures/ crawlers		Betacyfluthrin	R	Toxic to beneficials
	Imidacloprid	R	Soft scales		Potassium salts of fatty acids	R	
	Pyroxyfen	R			Imidacloprid	R	Greenhouse thrips
	Carbaryl	R	White wax scale				Toxic to beneficials, not residual
	Acetamiprid	R	Not white wax		Azadirachtin	R	Western flower thrips
	Malathion	R	On hardy plants; Toxic to beneficials		Dimethoate	R	Toxic to beneficials
	Bufoprezin	PER91816 30 Apr 27			Beauveria bassiana	R	Western flower thrips, Onion thrips
	Cyantraniliprole	PER91816 30 Apr 27	Soft scales		Betacyfluthrin	R	Toxic to beneficials
	Fenoxy carb	PER91816 30 Apr 27			Acetamiprid	R	Greenhouse thrips, plague thrips
	Petroleum oil	PER91816 30 Apr 27			Spinetoram	R	Western flower thrips
	Spirotetramet	PER91816 30 Apr 27			Malathion	R	Toxic to beneficials
Snails, slugs	Dinotefuran	PER91805 30 Apr 26			Dimporopyridaz	PER94253 30 Apr 27	Greenhouse, Silverleaf whiteflies
	Imidacloprid	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Mixed with media		Isocycloseram	PER94004 28 Feb 26	
	Methiocarb	R	Spray and bait		Cyantraniliprole + Diafenthiuron	PER92919 31 Oct 26	Western flower thrips, Tomato thrips, Plague thrips; Toxic to beneficials
	Iron EDTA	R	Bait		Cyantraniliprole	PER92766 28 Feb 26	
	Iron III phosphate dihydrate	R	Bait		Imidacloprid	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Silverleaf whitefly (some strains); Mixed with media
	Iron powder	R	Bait				



Figure 3. Knapsack sprayer and calibration equipment (<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/forestry-wildlife/the-1-128-calibration-method-for-backpack-sprayers/>)

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	Acetamiprid + Novaluron	PER91805 30 Apr 26			Potassium salts of fatty acids	R	
	Chlorantraniliprole + Thiamethoxam	PER91805 30 Apr 26			Fenbutatin Oxide	R	
	Dinotefuran	PER91805 30 Apr 26			Hexythiazox	R	
	Chlorantraniliprole	PER91929 31 Mar 27	Thrips, including western flower thrips		Azadirachtin	R	
	Flonicamid	PER91929 31 Mar 27	Thrips, including western flower thrips		Cyflumetofen	R	
	Petroleum Oil	PER91929 31 Mar 27	Thrips, including western flower thrips		Botanical Oil	R	
	Pyrethrins	PER91929 31 Mar 27	Thrips, including western flower thrips		Propargite	R	
	Spinetoram	PER91929 31 Mar 27	Thrips, including western flower thrips		Milbemectin	R	
	Spirotetramat	PER91929 31 Mar 27	Thrips, including western flower thrips		Phorate	R	Granular application
	Abamectin and Chlorantraniliprole	PER91941 30 Sep 30	Thrips, including western flower thrips; Toxic to beneficials		Tebufenpyrad	R	
	Acephate	PER91941 30 Sep 30	Thrips, including western flower thrips		Isocycloseram	PER94004 28 Feb 26	
	Alpha-cypermethrin	PER91941 30 Sep 30	Thrips, including western flower thrips; Toxic to beneficials		Acequinocyl	PER93970 31 Jul 27	
	Azadirachtin	PER91941 30 Sep 30	Thrips, including western flower thrips		Cyantraniliprole + Diafenthiuron	PER92919 31 Oct 26	Toxic to beneficials
	Isocycloseram	PER94004 28 Feb 26	Including western flower thrips, plague thrips, onion thrips		Abamectin	PER91810 31 Mar 27	Mites in general
Two-spotted spider mite	Tau-fluvalinate	R			Bifenazate	PER91810 31 Mar 27	Mites in general
	Abamectin	R			Emamectin	PER91810 31 Mar 27	Mites in general
	Paraffinic Oil	R			Petroleum oil	PER91810 31 Mar 27	Mites in general
	Wettable sulphur	R			Diafenthiuron	PER91806 30 Nov 26	Mites in general
					Isocycloseram	PER94004 28 Feb 26	Spider mites, broad mite
Weevils							
Whiteflies							

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Beauveria bassiana	R				Clitoria terneata extract	PER91816 30 Apr 27	Silverleaf whitefly
Pyroxyfen	R				Flonicamid	PER91816 30 Apr 27	Silverleaf whitefly
Botanical Oil	R		Greenhouse whitefly		Spirotetramet	PER91816 30 Apr 27	
Betacyfluthrin	R		Toxic to beneficials		Chlorantraniliprole + Thiamethoxam	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Apply as drench
Dimpropipyridaz	PER94253 30 Apr 27		Silverleaf, Greenhouse whiteflies		Dinotefuran	PER91805 30 Apr 26	
Cyantraniliprole	PER92766 28 Feb 26		Silverleaf whitefly		Imidacloprid	PER91805 30 Apr 26	Silverleaf whitefly; Mixed with media
Bufopezin	PER91816 30 Apr 27						

Disclaimer: The information contained in this fact sheet is provided for general guidance only and reflects regulatory approvals and product information current at the time of publication (November 2025). Approvals, product registrations and use conditions may change over time. The listed products are registered for use on ornamental plants and may not be approved or suitable for use on other crops or situations.

Users should verify current product registrations on the APVMA website, label directions and state and government regulations before making any pest management decisions. Independent professional or agronomic advice should be sought to confirm product suitability for specific circumstances.

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Australian Government



RMCG