



Australian Government

Department of Health
National Industrial Chemicals
Notification and Assessment Scheme

NICNAS Reference: E13-27745.06.03

Mr Paul Swain

By email - foi+request-1548-2a78791d@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Swain

NOTICE OF DECISION

I refer to your request of 13 February 2016 to the Department of Health seeking access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) to:

Any information that the Department of Health holds that relates to the 2010 NICNAS report into the research needs of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity and its recommendations.

Your request was transferred to NICNAS in accordance with section 16(1) of the FOI Act and I am writing to advise you of my decision.

Decision

I have identified 3 documents falling within the terms of your request. The documents are set out in the schedule at [Attachment A](#).

I have decided to give access to all documents in their entirety.

Charges

As minimal resources were expended in processing this request, there will be no charge for provision of the documents.

Review rights

If you are dissatisfied with my decision, you may apply for an internal review or Australian Information Commissioner (Information Commissioner) review of the decision.

Internal review

Under section 54 of the FOI Act, you may apply in writing to the Department for an internal review of my decision. The internal review application must be made within 30 days of the date of this notice (or such further period as the Department allows). Where possible please provide reasons why you consider review of the decision is necessary. The internal review will be carried out by another officer of this Department within 30 days. An application for an internal review should be addressed to:

Email: info@nicnas.gov.au

OR

Mail: FOI Contact Officer
NICNAS
GPO Box 58
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Information Commissioner Review

Under section 54L of the FOI Act, you may apply to the Information Commissioner to review my decision. An application for review must be made in writing 60 days of this notice (if you do not request an internal review).

The Australian Information Commissioner can be contacted by:

Email: enquiries@oaic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 363 992

More about the Information Commissioner review is available on the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) website at <http://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/requesting-a-review>

You may also make a complaint to the Information Commissioner about action taken by the Department in relation to your application. Further information can be obtained from the OAIC website.

Relevant provisions

The FOI Act, including the provisions relevant to your request can be accessed from the ComLaw website using the following link: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A02562>

Publication

You should be aware that as I have decided to release documents to you, NICNAS may also publish the released material on its Disclosure Log. NICNAS will however, not publish information (such as personal or business information) where it would be unreasonable to do so.

For your reference the NICNAS Disclosure Log can be found at:
<http://www.nicnas.gov.au/about-nicnas/freedom-of-information/foi-disclosure-log>

Contacts

If you require clarification of any of the matters discussed in this letter you should contact the NICNAS FOI Team on (02) 8577 8800 or via email at info@nicnas.gov.au .

Yours sincerely



Lewis Norman
Programme Head
Registration, Outreach & Reporting Programme National Industrial Chemicals Notification
and Assessment Scheme

31 March 2016

Attachment A

SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS – FOI 153-1516

Doc. No.	No. of Pages	Date	Author	Addressee	Description of Document	Decision ¹	Portion Exempt
1	1	10/2/2015	Hon Kelly Vincent	Hon Susan Ley Commonwealth Minister for Health	Letter seeking progress on implementing Finding 3 of the 2010 report from NICNAS into research needs for Multiple Chemical Sensitivity	R	NIL
2	2	undated	Hon Fiona Nash	Hon Kelly Vincent	Draft response to document no. 1	R	NIL
3	1	23 /3/2-15	Hon Fiona Nash	Hon Kelly Vincent	Final response to document 1	R	NIL

¹ R= Release, RE = Release with Exemptions applied, E = Exempt in Full, I = Irrelevant



Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
Assistant Minister for Health
Senator for New South Wales
Deputy Leader of the Nationals in the Senate

Ref No: MC15-002712

The Hon Kelly Vincent MLC
Parliament House
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Ms Vincent

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 February 2015 to the Minister for Health and Minister for Sport, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, seeking information on the implementation of findings from the November 2010 Scientific Review Report entitled Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS): Identifying Key Research Needs, prepared by the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS), and the Office of Chemical Safety and Environmental Health. Your letter has been referred to me as the Assistant Minister for Health with portfolio responsibility for this matter.

NICNAS aids in the protection of Australian people and the environment by assessing the risks of industrial chemicals, providing information and making recommendations to promote their safe use. During the preparation of this report, NICNAS conducted a survey of several key professional organisations with experience in dealing with MCS, including the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). All respondents to the survey were provided with a copy of the final report.

In responding to your inquiry, staff in the Office of Chemical Safety contacted the RACGP to ascertain whether any follow up action had been taken with respect to Finding 3 of the report. The RACGP has advised that, to date, no specific guidance on approaches to clinical management of MCS has been developed for medical practitioners.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Fiona Nash'.

FIONA NASH

23 MAR 2015



Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
Assistant Minister for Health
Senator for New South Wales
Deputy Leader of the Nationals in the Senate

Ref No: MC15-002712

Ms Kelly Vincent
Parliament House
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Ms Vincent

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 February 2015 to the Minister for Health and Minister for Sport, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, seeking information on the implementation of findings from the November 2010 Scientific Review Report entitled *Multiple Chemical Sensitivity: Identifying Key Research Needs*, prepared by the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS), and the Office of Chemical Safety and Environmental Health (OCSEH). Your letter has been referred to me as the Assistant Minister for Health.

The National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme aids in the protection of Australian people and the environment by assessing the risks of industrial chemicals and providing information to promote their safe use.

NICNAS activities are dictated by the *Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act (1989)*. External funding is required to undertake additional activities.

As you are aware, NICNAS and OCSEH undertook a Scientific Review Report (the report) for Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) with the aim of examining the current scientific research on MCS and to identify priority areas for further study to inform and engage the clinical and scientific research community. The report made a number of findings for further potential areas of research. No further funding has been received by NICNAS to progress the report's findings.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

FIONA NASH

Encl

Minister Fiona Nash

PDR Number MC15-002712

Subject implementation of findings from the November 2010
entitled A Scientific Review of Multiple Chemical
Sensitivity: Identifying Key Research Needs prepared
by NICNAS and the OCSEH

Initiator Ms Kelly Vincent

Action Officer <Name>
<Phone>

Clearance Officer <Name>
<Phone>

Division/Branch Office of Chemical Safety

Advisor Comments: Returned to Dept for Rewrite NFA

Hon Susan Ley
 Minister for Health
 Suite M1 41
 Parliament House
 Canberra, ACT 2600



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
 PARLIAMENT HOUSE
 ADELAIDE, S.A. 5000

MC15-002712

RECEIVED

18 FEB 2015

Division: **OCS**
 Minister: **FN**

Milestones:
 10 15 20

INFO
 VIP
 PM

13 FEB 2015

SL for LWC.

Dear Minister

In November 2010 a report prepared by the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) and the Office of Chemical Safety and Environmental Health (OCSEH) entitled: *A Scientific Review Of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity: Identifying Key Research Needs* stated that:

7 - Finding 3: Education/training

A survey of clinical approaches to MCS of Australian medical practitioners identified a lack of coverage of MCS within the current Australian medical curriculum given the relatively small amount of time devoted to minor specialties. Other than hospital protocols containing practical measures to assist inpatients with chemical sensitivities, there are also currently no clinical guidelines available to inform medical practitioners as to how to provide appropriate care for MCS individuals.

The development of a clinical education program should be investigated. Such a program should be based on evidence currently available, utilise any findings from clinical research in Australia (such as a longitudinal investigation) and consider the practical guidance on approaches to MCS clinical management agreed by participants in the recent clinical review of MCS.

I would like to be informed as to what progress has been made on the implementation of this finding, and what guidelines are available to general practitioners to assist them in treating patients with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity.

Yours sincerely

Kelly Vincent

10.2 2015

Minister for Health
 Minister for Sport

16 FEB 2015

Reply by: Minister Chief of Staff Adviser

Action: Response Phone Call Information

Asst Min for Min Department Urgent by

Other: Campaign Constituent Background Refer to

Kelly Vincent MLC Parliament House Adelaide SA 5000 vincent.office@parliament.sa.gov.au kellyvincentmlc.com Dignity for Disability	Phone: (08) 8237 9548 Fax: (08) 8237 9489
	<p>Assistant Minister for Health</p> <p>17 FEB 2015</p> <p>Reply by: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minister <input type="checkbox"/> Chief of Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Adviser</p> <p>Action: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Response <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Call <input type="checkbox"/> Information <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent by</p> <p>Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Campaign <input type="checkbox"/> Constituent <input type="checkbox"/> Background <input type="checkbox"/> Information <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to</p> <p>Required Comments:</p>