

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12- 039

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: NICNAS- Industry dissatisfaction – Cost to Industry

Type of Question: Hansard Page 89, 31 May 2012

Number of pages: 1

Senator: Senator Smith asking on behalf of Senator Boyce

Question:

Given the Better Regulation Ministerial Partnership Review why is NICNAS still making policy decisions that have and I quote, significant implications into the future when the industry NICNAS serves has lost all confidence in the competence of NICNAS? (Note: such as matters in Question 38). b) Existing Chemicals Review program is another example where NICNAS ignored overseas models with a cost of \$9 million over 4 years all paid for by new industry charges).

Answer:

As part of a Better Regulation Ministerial Partnership, a review is underway to explore possible options for reforming the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS). A *Discussion Paper on the Review of the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme* was released on 1 June 2012 outlining potential options for reforming the role of NICNAS within the broader institutional and regulatory framework for chemicals regulation. Until a decision is made by the Australian Government, NICNAS continues to have legislative responsibilities under the *Industrial Notification and Assessment (ICNA) Act 1989*.

The Government agreed program of work for the accelerated assessment and prioritisation of existing industrial chemicals commenced on 1 July 2012. This program of work uses a new framework - the Inventory Multi-Tiered Assessment and Prioritisation - which was developed in consultation with stakeholders and technical experts and will be implemented in a staged manner. To ensure efficiency and reduce duplication of effort this program will utilise overseas assessment information, where it is appropriate for the Australian context.