

# **PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE**

## **Department of Health Disability and Ageing**

### **Select Committee on PFAS (per and polyfluoroalkyl substances)**

#### **Inquiry into the extent, regulation and management of PFAS**

**10 June 2025**

**PDR Number: IQ25-000045**

#### **PFAS research in last five years on human health**

##### **Written**

**Senator:** Lidia Thorpe

##### **Question:**

1. Considering all of the evidence the committee has heard throughout this inquiry, and new research published in the last five years on PFAS and human health effects:
  - a) Is there sufficient evidence to state with a degree of confidence that high levels of exposure to PFAS likely cause:
    - I. negative human health effects and/or disease;
    - II. increased risk of some cancers?
  - b) If the science is still not settled, what further research is needed and how could that research be supported and coordinated?

##### **Answer:**

- There is scientific evidence showing associations between exposure to certain PFAS (notably PFOA and PFOS) and a range of adverse human health effects. However, the emerging evidence has not changed enough to state with a degree of confidence that any particular form of PFAS causes any particular disease. Despite this, the Australian Government takes a precautionary approach to managing PFAS exposure and recommends minimising exposure to PFAS wherever possible.
- The department monitors and supports scientific research into the potential health impacts of PFAS and considers new evidence to ensure policy advice and guidance is appropriate and supports positive health outcomes. For example, the government has provided \$11.7 million for health and medical research through a Targeted Call for Research by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to further increase the understanding of the acute and long-term potential human health effects from exposure to PFAS. In December 2019, the NHMRC announced nine successful applications for funding. These studies are expected to conclude by the end of 2025.

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**Select Committee on PFAS (per and polyfluoroalkyl substances)**

**Inquiry into the extent, regulation and management of PFAS**

**10 June 2025**

**PDR Number: IQ25-000048**

**Research related to dermal uptake of PFAS from consumer products**

**Written**

**Senator:** Lidia Thorpe

**Question:**

6. Has the Department or NHMRC commissioned or published any research related to dermal uptake of PFAS from consumer products?

**Answer:**

- The Government has provided \$11.7 million for health and medical research through the NHMRC Targeted Call for Research scheme to further increase the understanding of the acute and long-term potential human health effects from exposure to PFAS.
  - In December 2019, NHMRC announced nine successful applications for funding. These studies are expected to conclude by the end of 2025.
  - Various studies include consideration and investigation of exposure pathways including dermal exposure, which can include exposure from consumer products. More information has been provided in the department's response to IQ25-000049.

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**Department of Health, Disability and Ageing**

**Select Committee on PFAS (per and polyfluoroalkyl substances)**

**Inquiry into the extent, regulation and management of PFAS**

**10 June 2025**

**PDR Number: IQ25-000055**

**Implications of the new Drinking Water PFAS Guideline Values**

**Written**

**Senator:** Lidia Thorpe

**Question:**

11. What are the implications of the new Drinking Water PFAS Guideline Values for other regulatory instruments—such as state and territory water regulations and other Commonwealth regulations and guidelines, including the NEMP?

**Answer:**

- The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is responsible for developing the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines; however, implementation of the guidelines is outside NHMRC's remit.
- Questions on the review of guidance values other than NHMRC advice should be referred to the relevant agencies.