

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: IQ25-000054

Guideline Value for PFOS

Written

Senator: Lidia Thorpe

Question:

10. What evidence or feedback prompted the NHMRC to set the Guideline Value for PFOS at 0.008 µg/L (8 ng/L), instead of 4 ng/L, as proposed in the draft?

Answer:

- The draft guideline value for PFOS in drinking water of 4 ng/L proposed at public consultation was based on a benchmark dose selected by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) as the best available model on which to derive a reference dose for PFOS for bone marrow effects.
- During the consultation process, some stakeholders questioned the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) selection and adaption of this particular benchmark dose model.
- In response to this feedback, and on advice from the expert Water Quality Advisory Committee Chemical Subgroup, NHMRC commissioned a critical appraisal of the different benchmark models considered by the US EPA.
- On reviewing these findings, NHMRC's Water Quality Advisory Committee recommended the Gamma model as more robust. The Gamma model produced a health-based guideline value of 8.49 ng/L, which was rounded to 8 ng/L as per the rounding conventions described in Chapter 6 of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.
- The additional PFOS assessment and the considerations by the Water Quality Advisory Committee are detailed in Appendices F and G of the Administrative Report, available at www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/environmental-health/water/PFAS-review/guideline-development#download.