

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: IQ25-000049

PFAS exposure via dermal or inhalation pathways

Written

Senator: Lidia Thorpe

Question:

7. Are there plans to conduct research in Australia to analyse PFAS exposure via dermal or inhalation pathways—not just ingestion?

Answer:

- The Government has provided \$11.7 million for health and medical research through the National Health and Medical Research Council (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.
- Three of the nine successful applications investigate exposure via dermal or inhalation pathways:
 - “Impact of PFAS exposure on the human mucosal barrier and interaction with pre-existing medical conditions” - This project studies the impact of PFAS exposure on human mucosal barriers on the surfaces of the intestinal tract and lung, and its interaction with pre-existing medical conditions (inflammatory bowel disease and asthma).
 - “Impact of exposure pathway and source on PFAS absorption and bioavailability” - This project assesses the impact of exposure pathway and source on PFAS absorption and bioavailability for human risk assessment. The project focuses on PFAS commonly found in firefighting foams and assesses the extent of PFAS absorption into the bloodstream following ingestion, inhalation or skin contact.
 - “Human exposure to PFAS and their precursors in the environment and their biotransformation processes” - This study aims to identify PFAS profiles in the environment for exposed cohorts, characterise the biotransformation processes of PFAS precursors, identify their products, and evaluate the contribution from exposure pathways of air inhalation, dust ingestion and dermal contact to the total human burden of PFAS.
- The results of these studies will be considered when developing and revising relevant health advice.