

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 01 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000192

OUTCOME: 5 - Regulation, Safety and Protection

Topic: NICNAS

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Siewert, Rachel

Question:

- a) Can you give us an update on the delay in releasing the National Assessment of CSG Chemicals conducted by NICNAS? It was originally slated for release at the end of 2013.
- b) Is there a draft report?
 - i. If yes, when was it completed?
- c) Is the final report sitting with the Department of Environment and Energy?
 - i. When was it sent?
- d) When will the final assessment be released?
- e) Have you already sent a final draft?
- f) Did the Minister ask for changes?
- g) Has the Department provided feedback on the report/will they?
- h) What format will the final report take?
- i) Have you discussed any follow-on work with the Department i.e. amendments to regulations, guidelines, public communication campaign?

Answer:

- a) NICNAS is responsible for six of the 14 technical reports that make up the National Assessment of Chemicals Associated with Coal Seam Gas Extraction in Australia. The National Assessment is led by the Department of the Environment and Energy and questions on the National Assessment should be directed to that Department.
- b) The latest versions of the technical reports for which NICNAS is responsible were provided to the Department of the Environment and Energy in November 2016.
- c) See answer above.
- d) See answer to question a) above – this question should be directed to the Department of the Environment and Energy.
- e) See answer to question b) above.

- f) NICNAS has not been asked by the Minister for the Environment and Energy to make changes to the technical reports for which NICNAS is responsible.
- g) The Department of the Environment and Energy has provided feedback and sought clarifications in relation to the technical reports for which NICNAS is responsible, and these issues have been addressed.
- h) See answer to question a) above – this question should be directed to the Department of the Environment and Energy.
- i) NICNAS has provided input to a risk assessment guidance manual for chemicals associated with coal seam gas extraction, informed by the National Assessment, which the Department of the Environment and Energy is currently preparing.