

→ Mr Graff comment of DEC, NSW.

FAXED
31/7/2006

Our reference : HOF69676



3/8/06
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Dr M Hartley
Director
NICNAS
GPO Box 58
SYDNEY NSW 2001

31 JUL 2006

Margaret
Dear Dr Hartley

On behalf of the Environment Protection and Heritage Council's Chemicals Working Group, I welcome NICNAS' proposed reforms to its Existing Chemicals Assessment Program. I understand that the reforms seek to enhance the Program by improving three basic elements:

- inputs required for an effective program;
- processes required for efficient delivery; and
- outputs necessary to address stakeholder needs.

The Chemicals Working Group is strongly supportive of the direction that the reforms are taking and believes that they are consistent with the proposals being developed by the Working Group for a national approach to managing the environmental risk of chemicals – known as **National Chemicals Environmental Management (NChEM)**.

As you may be aware, the NChEM proposals are designed to improve environmental outcomes and to provide industry with a more streamlined, consistent, simple and transparent operating environment. The latter has been raised by industry and the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) deregulation reform agenda as an issue of concern. The Chemicals Working Group is striving to deliver simplicity and reduced fragmentation in the management of chemicals. One option for this that the Working Group strongly supports is a better coordinated national approach to managing higher risk chemicals, including increased powers being made available to NICNAS so that it can make fully informed decisions at a central national level.

The Chemicals Working Group looks forward to continuing to work closely with NICNAS in its reform work, and assisting NICNAS deliver outcomes common to both reform processes.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Corbyn
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Director General

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