

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

GUIDELINES FOR

The National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS)

INTRODUCTION

The **National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS)** is the Australian Government's regulatory body for industrial chemicals, established in 1990 under the *Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989* to aid in the protection of people at work, the public & the environment from the harmful effects of industrial chemicals.

NICNAS aims to ensure the safe use of industrial chemicals by making risk assessment and safety information on chemicals and their potential worker, public health and environmental risks widely available. NICNAS assesses industrial chemicals that are new to Australia for their health and environmental effects before they are used and/or released to the environment. NICNAS also assesses those chemicals that are already in use in Australia on a priority basis.

The Act sets out five key obligations for manufacturers and importers of industrial chemicals. These obligations relate to:

- 1) New chemicals assessments – notification & assessment of chemicals determined as “new industrial chemicals”.
- 2) Existing chemicals assessments – assessments of chemicals declared “Priority existing chemicals (PEC)”
- 3) Secondary notification – notification and assessment of chemicals previously assessed by NICNAS including chemicals assessed under the self assessment category.
- 4) NICNAS Registration – registration of anyone importing and/or manufacturing relevant industrial chemicals of any value for commercial purposes.
- 5) Treaties – certain regulatory requirements apply to chemicals subject to an international agreement to which Australia is a Party.

All new industrial chemicals must be notified to NICNAS and assessed prior to their import or manufacture. Certain new industrial chemicals are exempt from notification provided they meet certain criteria (such as: use, volume, concentration, risk to human health or the environment). For most exempt categories no further action is required prior to the introduction of the new chemical. All exemption categories have an annual reporting obligation.

The AICS (Australian Inventory of Chemical Substances) is a key tool & the legal device that distinguishes new from existing chemicals. It is a listing of all industrial chemicals available for use in Australia between 1 January 1977 and 28 February 1990. It also includes new assessed chemicals and corrections, as required. It is maintained under NICNAS and contains over 38 000 chemicals. Only chemical identity data is included. It does not contain information on toxicity, manufacturers or importers. AICS contains only the following chemical details: CAS number, chemical name, chemical, formula and associated names.

The **Australian Inventory of Chemical Substances (AICS)** is accessible on the Internet at: <http://www.nicnas.gov.au/Industry/AICS/Search.asp>

IMPORTATION OF CHEMICALS

All schools or departments that manufacture chemicals for commercial purposes, or import chemicals other than through an Australian supplier must:

1. Look up each chemical to be imported on the AICS to determine whether notification to NICNAS is required or whether there are any conditions of use of each chemical.
2. Inform the OHS Section of the details and quantity of chemicals imported other than through an Australian supplier, to ensure that University registration requirements are fulfilled. The OHS Section will assist with notification or registration.

Table 1 – Notification and Registration Summary

Item	Response	
	Yes	No
<p>For manufactured chemicals</p> <p>Is the chemical being manufactured by the University for commercial purposes?</p>	<p>Check the AICS to determine whether the chemical is listed there.</p> <p>Inform the OHS Section of: the chemical name, CAS number, location, quantity and value.</p>	<p>No further action is required in relation to NICNAS</p>
<p>For imported chemicals</p> <p>Is the chemical being imported into Australia through an Australian supplier?</p>	<p>The supplier is responsible for NICNAS registration</p>	<p>Check the AICS to determine whether the chemical is listed there.</p>
<p>Is the chemical listed in the AICS?</p>	<p>Check the AICS to determine whether use of the chemical is subject to conditions of use</p>	<p>Notification to NICNAS is required (form 21-4A)</p> <p>Inform the OHS Section of the chemical name, CAS number, location, quantity and value.</p>
<p>Is the chemical intended for commercial use?</p>	<p>Registration with NICNAS is required for commercial use.</p> <p>Inform the OHS Section of the chemical name, CAS number, location, quantity and value.</p>	<p>Registration is not required for imported chemicals used solely for research and development and where the total quantity imported by the University is less than 100 kg in 12 months</p> <p>Inform the OHS Section of the chemical name, CAS number, location, quantity and value.</p>