

s 22(1)

From: s 22(1)

Sent: Tue, 26 Sep 2023 01:42:20

To: s 22(1) s 22(1)

Subject: RE: Request for review / input please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Importance: Normal

Sensitivity: None

Thanks!

From: s 22(1)

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2023 11:40 AM

To: s 22(1) ; s 22(1)

Subject: RE: Request for review / input please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s 22(1)

As discussed, I think specifically mentioning WH&S regulators at '**relevant regulators**' is worthwhile, as some jurisdictions have specific advice on mould as a hazard for which employers are responsible. e.g. [Mould at work](#) | [SafeWork NSW](#)

All the rest looks factual.

Regards

s 22(1)

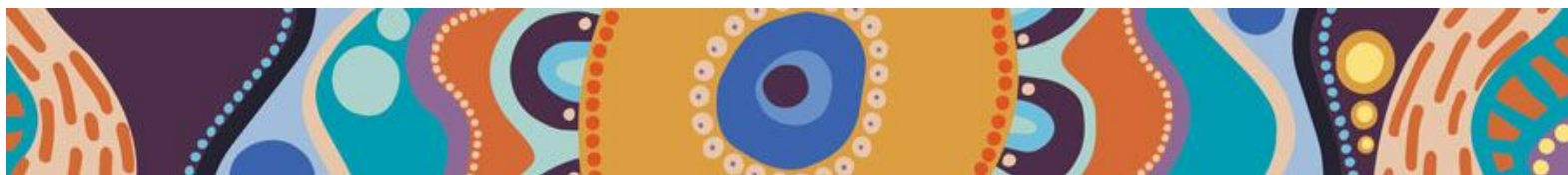
Assistant Director

Mining, Automotive, Construction and Property | Industry Skills Education and Engagement

VET Quality and Policy Division

Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Phone s 22(1) | www.dewr.gov.au



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Cheers

From: s 22(1) [<@dewr.gov.au>](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 11:41 AM

To: s 22(1) [<@dewr.gov.au>](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)

Cc: s 22(1) [<@dewr.gov.au>](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)

Subject: FW: Request for review / input please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Importance: High

Hi s 22(1)

Not sure you have had any involvement in this in the past.

Just took a call from Dept Health and follow up email below. They are seeking confirmation that the para in yellow is correct. Pretty sure the para is based on input we provided ???18 months ago. I told her I would seek your input as I am in a different position now.

I see [training.gov.au - CPPCLO4107 - Remediate mould contaminated structures and contents](#) was updated Jan 2022.

I think the para is fine, but if you have any further intel or views I can leave this with you, otherwise i can get back to s 22(1) with an affirmative.
)

Regards

s 22(1)

From: s 22(1) <@Health.gov.au>

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 11:23 AM

To: s 22(1) <@dewr.gov.au>

Cc: s 22(1) <@Health.gov.au>

Subject: Request for review / input please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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\qc

Hi s 22(1)

Thank you very much for your time in the phone just now. It was lovely to speak with you and thank you very much for kindly assisting with this request.

As mentioned, the Department of Health and Aged Care have received some correspondence, referred from PM&C, relating to the implementation status of recommendations from the *House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport inquiry into biotoxin-related illnesses in Australia*.

The Health Portfolio is responsible for monitoring the implementation of all the recommendations.

We are seeking an update in relation to the implementation status of **Recommendation 2** of the Inquiry which relates to Standards and/or accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries. This recommendation was referred to State and Territory Building Ministers and the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). The recommendation in full reads:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the states and territories to conduct further research into, and develop standards and/or accreditation requirements for the mould testing and remediation industries, which should include consideration of:

- *the most effective methods of testing and remediation of buildings affected by mould and/or moisture;*
- *appropriate accreditation requirements for professionals working in these fields; and options for greater regulatory oversight of these industries*

If possible, I would greatly appreciate any updates you may have in relation to the second dot point above and your review of our draft wording below. We have also contacted Department of Industry Building policy team and Australian Building Codes Board to help inform our reply correspondence.

In our draft reply (attached), we have included the following paragraph:

I understand that the development of standards and accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries is the responsibility of industry and relevant regulators. Professional cleaners are trained through the vocational education and training system. I understand the relevant qualification for cleaners has been updated to include mould-specific skills and knowledge.

This unit, CPPCLO4107 - Remediate mould contaminated structures and contents, is available on the National Register of vocational education and training and is informed by standards set by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) and relevant Australian Standards and applies to experienced technicians responding to jobs in commercial and domestic sites.

s 22(1)

Our draft reply (not yet cleared) is also attached for your reference, noting the information relating to the above recommendations may be outdated.

I would be very grateful for review and input as soon as possible please, by COB today if possible. I very much apologise for the short turnaround. In the case that you need to consult internally with another area, I can certainly arrange for additional time.

Thank you very much again and happy to discuss further.

Kind regards

s 22(1)

s 22(1)

A/g Assistant Director – Environmental Health Policy Section
Environmental Health and Climate Change Branch

Office of Health Protection Division | Chief Medical Officer Group

Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care

T: s 22(1) | E: s 22(1) [@health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@health.gov.au)

GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

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MC23-016097 – DoHAC draft response

I refer to your correspondence of 16 August 2023 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP regarding health risks of mould exposure and mould remediation standards in Australia. Your letter has been referred to the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP. The Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf.

s 47F(1)

The Department of Health and Aged Care is responsible for responding to several of the recommendations from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport Inquiry into Biotoxin-related illnesses in Australia. This includes developing a biotoxins (indoor damp and mould) clinical pathway to assist general practitioners and other health professionals with the diagnosis, treatment and management of patients with biotoxin-related illnesses. You might be interested to know that the clinical pathway has been developed in consultation with medical practitioners, medical professional organisations and patient and consumer groups and is expected to be published on the department's website in coming months.

In addition, a fact sheet on the health effects of mould has been developed by the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth), a standing committee of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC). The fact sheet consolidates current jurisdictional advice on the health effects of mould and is available at www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/enhealth-guidance-potential-health-effects-of-mould-in-the-environment?language=en. State and territory health departments also offer fact sheets on the health effects of mould and dampness, suggested ways to prevent mould and advice on ways to safely remove mould.

You may also be interested to know the National Health and Medical Research Council is funding a study to develop an integrated platform for the early diagnosis and treatment of biotoxin-related illnesses in Australia like Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome.

I understand that the development of standards and accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries is the responsibility of industry and relevant regulators. Professional cleaners are trained through the vocational education and training system. I understand the relevant qualification for cleaners has been updated to include mould-specific skills and knowledge. This unit, *CPPCLO4107 - Remediate mould contaminated structures and contents*, is available on the National Register of vocational education and training and is informed by standards set by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) and relevant Australian Standards and applies to experienced technicians responding to jobs in commercial and domestic sites.

My understanding is that the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) has published an updated "Condensation in Buildings" handbook that is available from the ABCB website. This handbook provides guidelines to assist architects, designers and builders in the assessment and the management of the risk of condensation and its consequences. The handbook also provides further support to practitioners to use the new condensation management provisions in the National Construction Code 2022.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

s 22(1)

From: s 22(1)

Document 3

Mail received time: Wed, 31 Jul 2024 06:43:38

Sent: Wed, 31 Jul 2024 06:43:14

To: s 22(1)

Cc: s 22(1)

Subject: RE: DEWR Request for update please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Importance: Normal

Sensitivity: None

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Thank you for your response s 22(1)

I will add for our information.

Have a nice afternoon,

S

~~~~~

s 22(1)

Policy Officer | Environmental Health Policy Section



Health Protection Policy and Surveillance Division | Interim Australian Centre for Disease Control

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

T: s 22(1) | E: s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@Health.gov.au)

This email comes to you from the traditional Country of the Kaurna people.

Location: Adelaide

The Department of Health and Aged Care acknowledges First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to all Elders both past and present.

\sb120

From: s 22(1)

Sent: Friday, 26 July 2024 11:15 AM

To: s 22(1)

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations - Documents released under FOI - LEX 1436

Cc: s 22(1)

Subject: FW: DEWR Request for update please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Document 3

Hi s 22(1)

Apologies for not getting back to you prior to now; I had to take some personal leave earlier in the week and we were also confirming with our colleagues that work in the WHS/employment area of the DEWR whether they had any input, which they don't.

We have checked the references to CPPCLO4107, which remain current and therefore previous contribution stands.

\cbpat9Regards, s 22(1)

s 22(1) (he/him)

Director

Mining, Automotive, Construction and Property | Industry Skills Education and Engagement  
Industry Engagement and Quality Division | Skills and Training Group  
Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations  
Phone s 22(1) | Mobile s 22(1)

[dewr.gov.au](http://dewr.gov.au)

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---

From: s 22(1)

[@dewr.gov.au](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)>

Sent: Friday, July 19, 2024 8:34 AM

To: s 22(1)

[@Health.gov.au](mailto:@Health.gov.au)>

Cc: s 22(1)

[@Health.gov.au](mailto:@Health.gov.au)>; s 22(1)

[@dewr.gov.au](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)>; s 22(1)

[@dewr.gov.au](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)>

Subject: RE: DEWR Request for update please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s 22(1)

I have referred your request to the DEWR team that looks after construction and property services.

Regards

s 22(1)

s 22(1)

Agribusiness / Manufacturing | Industry Skills Policy and Performance | Industry Engagement and Quality Division

**Department of Employment and Workplace Relations**

Location Level 6 50 Marcus Clarke St, Canberra City ACT 2601, GPO Box 9880, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: s 22(1) Email: s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)

[www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au) 6 of 32

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations - Documents released under FOI - LEX 1436

From: s 22(1)

@Health.gov.au>

Document 3

Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 5:15 PM

To: s 22(1)

@dewr.gov.au>

Cc: s 22(1)

@Health.gov.au>

Subject: DEWR Request for update please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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\cbpat3\qc**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

\qc

Good afternoon s 22(1)

Hope you are well.

We have received some similar correspondence to our previous enquiry below which you assisted with (email chain below). It relates to the implementation status of recommendations from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport inquiry into biotoxin-related illnesses in Australia. The Health Portfolio is responsible for monitoring the implementation of all recommendations from the Biotoxin-related Illnesses inquiry.

I would appreciate any updates you may have on the previously used response, and implementation of dot point 2 in Recommendation 2:

**Response:**

*I understand that the development of standards and accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries is the responsibility of industry and relevant work health and safety regulators. Professional cleaners are trained through the vocational education and training system. I understand the relevant qualification for cleaners has been updated to include mould-specific skills and knowledge.*

*This unit, CPPCLO4107 - Remediate mould contaminated structures and contents, is available on the National Register of vocational education and training and is informed by standards set by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) and relevant Australian Standards and applies to experienced technicians responding to jobs in commercial and domestic sites.*

**Recommendation 2:**

*The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the states and territories to conduct further research into, and develop standards and/or accreditation requirements for the mould testing and remediation industries, which should include consideration of:*

- the most effective methods of testing and remediation of buildings affected by mould and/or moisture;
- appropriate accreditation requirements for professionals working in these fields; and options for greater regulatory oversight of these industries

I would be very grateful for any updates by Monday COB 22 July 2024, if possible.

Kind Regards,

s 22(1)

s 22(1)

Health Protection Policy and Surveillance Division | Interim Australian Centre for Disease Control

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

T: s 22(1) | E: s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@Health.gov.au)

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\sb120

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**From:** s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@dewr.gov.au)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 26, 2023 11:12 AM  
**To:** s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@Health.gov.au)  
**Subject:** FW: Request for review / input please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

s 22(1)

Your paragraph in yellow is accurate. You could insert WH&S regulators.

Regards

s 22(1)

Agribusiness / Manufacturing | Industry Skills Policy and Performance| Industry Engagement and Quality Division

## Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Location Level 6 50 Marcus Clarke St, Canberra City ACT 2601, GPO Box 9880, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: s 22(1) Email s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@dewr.gov.au)

[www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au)

---

**From:** s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@dewr.gov.au)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 26, 2023 11:40 AM  
**To:** s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@dewr.gov.au); s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@dewr.gov.au)  
**Subject:** RE: Request for review / input please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s 22(1)

8 of 32

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations - Documents released under FOI - LEX 1436

As discussed, I think specifically mentioning WH&S regulators at 'relevant regulators' is worthwhile, as some jurisdictions have specific advice on mould as a hazard for which employers are



responsible. e.g. [Mould at work](#) | [SafeWork NSW](#)

All the rest looks factual.

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s 22(1)

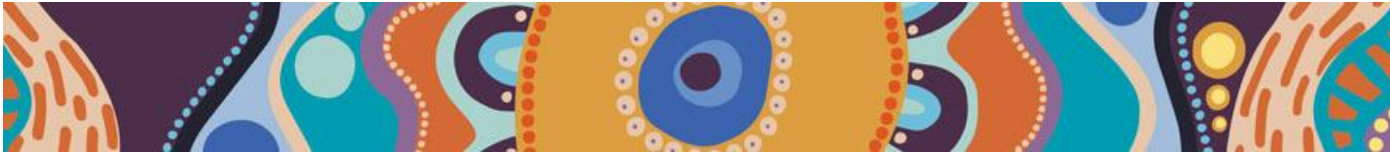
Assistant Director

Mining, Automotive, Construction and Property | Industry Skills Education and Engagement

VET Quality and Policy Division

Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Phone s 22(1) | [www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au)



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---

**From:** s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Monday, September 25, 2023 11:41 AM

**To:** s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)>

**Cc:** s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)>

**Subject:** FW: Request for review / input please - Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Importance:** High

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I see [training.gov.au - CPPCLO4107 - Remediate mould contaminated structures and contents](https://training.gov.au/entry/CPPCLO4107) was updated Jan 2022.

I think the para is fine, but if you have any further intel or views I can leave this with you, otherwise i can get back to s 22(1) with an affirmative.

Regards

s 22(1)

---

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**To:** s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:@dewr.gov.au)>

**Cc:** s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:@Health.gov.au)>

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We are seeking an update in relation to the implementation status of **Recommendation 2** of the Inquiry which relates to Standards and/or accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries. This recommendation was referred to State and Territory Building Ministers and the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). The recommendation in full reads:

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If possible, I would greatly appreciate any updates you may have in relation to the second dot point above and your review of our draft wording below. We have also contacted Department of Industry Building policy team and Australian Building Codes Board to help inform our reply correspondence.

In our draft reply (attached), we have included the following paragraph:

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Thank you very much again and happy to discuss further.

Kind regards

s 22(1) 10 of 32

A/g Assistant Director – Environmental Health Policy Section  
Environmental Health and Climate Change Branch



Office of Health Protection Division | Chief Medical Officer Group

Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care

T s 22(1) | E s [@health.gov.au](mailto:health@gov.au)

GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

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For review - MC24-018319

I am aware of the mould issues in rental houses and of the concerns some Australians have about complex illnesses that are difficult to diagnose. I would like to pass on my sympathies to <sup>s 47F(1)</sup> . I am advised the Department of Health and Aged Care has previously corresponded with <sup>s 47F(1)</sup> on this issue.

As noted in the Australian Government's response to the recommendations from the Inquiry, there are several Commonwealth departments who have responsibilities relevant to the consideration and management of mould-related issues. State and territory governments generally manage local environmental health issues, including concerns relating to the potential health effects of mould in the environment and housing. They provide information about ways to prevent or reduce mould growth and advice on its removal.

In relation to the status of recommendations relevant to the health portfolio, the Department of Health and Aged Care has undertaken a review and developed a 'Biotoxins (indoor damp and mould) Clinical Pathway' to assist GPs and other health professionals with the diagnosis, treatment and management of patients with biotoxin-related illnesses. The clinical pathway is designed specifically for use in the Australian context. It encourages patient management through a multidisciplinary approach, and was developed in consultation with medical practitioners, patient and consumer groups. The clinical pathway can be accessed on the Department of Health and Aged Care's website at [www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/biotoxins-indoor-damp-and-mould-clinical-pathway?language=en](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/biotoxins-indoor-damp-and-mould-clinical-pathway?language=en).

In addition to the clinical pathway, the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) has developed a fact sheet on the health effects of mould consolidating jurisdictional advice. The fact sheet is endorsed by the Australian Health Protection Committee (AHPC) and is available at [www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/enhealth-guidance-potential-health-effects-of-mould-in-the-environment?language=en](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/enhealth-guidance-potential-health-effects-of-mould-in-the-environment?language=en).

The National Health and Medical Research Council, through a targeted call for research, has funded relevant research on mould-related illnesses. The purpose of this research is to produce evidence that will improve the broader understanding of the origin and pathophysiology of biotoxin-related illnesses. The outcomes of this research may shape the future management and diagnosis of biotoxin-related illnesses to help improve the support that is provided to patients. More information about this funding is available at [www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/targeted-calls-research/biotoxin-related-illnesses](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/targeted-calls-research/biotoxin-related-illnesses).

The Australian Building Codes Board continues to develop a body of research to investigate and develop mitigating responses to condensation and mould risk in buildings through the National Construction Code. The National Construction Code 2022 contains an initial set of measures to support reduced condensation and mould risk. However, the adoption of the National Construction Code into relevant building



regulations is a matter for individual states and territories. To assist the building industry to decrease the risks related to mould, the Australian Building Codes Board has published a 'Condensation in Buildings Handbook' found at [www.abcb.gov.au](http://www.abcb.gov.au). This handbook provides guidelines to assist architects, designers and builders in the assessment and the management of the risk of condensation and its consequences.

The development of standards and accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation is the responsibility of industry and relevant regulators, including state and territory work health and safety regulators. Professional cleaners are trained through the vocational education and training system. I understand the relevant qualification for cleaners has been updated to include mould-specific skills and knowledge. The unit 'CPPCLO4107 – Remediate mould contaminated structures and contents' is available on the National Register of vocational education and training and is informed by standards set by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification.

## Attachment A

## Summary of Recommendations, Agency Responsible and Implementation Status

### INQUIRY INTO BIOTOXIN-RELATED ILLNESSES IN AUSTRALIA

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation 1:</b> Fact sheet on the health effects of mould                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Aged Care produce and publish in the short term a fact sheet, and in the medium term undertake further research on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the potential health effects of exposure to damp and mould;</li> <li>• the prevalence of dampness and mould in the built environment; and</li> <li>• advice on the prevention and removal of mould.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Responsibility:</b> Department of Health and Aged Care.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><b>Actions:</b> The Department will seek to work with states and territories, through the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) to develop a new fact sheet to consolidate existing advice.</p> <p>enHealth currently offers guidance on indoor air quality and the treatment of mould at the national level. States and territories separately offer fact sheets on: the health effects of mould and dampness; suggested ways to prevent mould; and advice on ways to safely remove mould.</p>                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Status:</b> The Expert Reference Panel on Environmental Health (within Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth)) has developed a fact sheet consolidating current jurisdictional advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The factsheet for the general public was endorsed by AHPPC on 5 August 2021 and was published on the enHealth webpage on 5 October 2021. The fact sheet consolidates current jurisdictional advice on the health effects of mould.</li> <li>• The research component of this recommendation is addressed through the response to recommendation 6 (by the NHMRC).</li> </ul> |
| <b>Recommendation 2:</b> Standards and/or accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the states and territories to conduct further research into, and develop standards and/or accreditation requirements for the mould testing and remediation industries, which should include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the most effective methods of testing and remediation of buildings affected by mould and/or moisture;</li> <li>• appropriate accreditation requirements for professionals working in these fields; and</li> <li>• options for greater regulatory oversight of these industries</li> </ul>          |
| <b>Responsibility:</b> State and Territory Building Ministers and the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |



The AISC provides advice to Commonwealth and state/territory Industry and Skills Ministers on the implementation of national vocational education and training (VET) policies, and approves nationally recognised training packages for implementation in the VET system.

**Actions:** The Government Response stated that the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources advised of its intention to put the items on the July 2020 Building Ministers' Meeting (BMM, formerly the Building Minister's Forum) agenda.

**Status:** Building Ministers were notified of the Response to the Inquiry and the items were placed on the forward agenda of the BMM. In June 2020, the AISC commissioned the Property Services Industry Reference Committee to review and update three cleaning qualifications in the CPP Property Services Training Package to address new demands for specialist cleaning skills including mould.

The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources have advised the Department on the progress of implementation of this recommendation.

- The development of standards and accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries is the responsibility of industry and relevant regulators. Professional cleaners are trained through the vocational education and training (VET) system.
- The Property Services Industry Reference Committee (IRC) of the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) is responsible for reviewing the relevant VET qualifications. The Australian Government supports the IRC through Artibus Innovation.
- The relevant qualification for cleaners has been updated to include mould-specific skills and knowledge. At its July 2021 meeting, AISC approved revised training products developed by the Property Services IRC for the cleaning sector, including the development of a new unit of competency.
- The development of standards and accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries is the responsibility of industry and relevant regulators, including state and territory Work Health and Safety regulators. Professional cleaners are trained through the vocational education and training system. The relevant qualification for cleaners has been updated to include mould-specific skills and knowledge. The unit CPPCLO4107 - Remediate mould contaminated structures and contents, is available on the National Register of vocational education and training and is informed by standards set by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification and relevant Australian Standards and applies to experienced technicians responding to jobs in commercial and domestic sites.

### **Recommendation 3:** Information for tenants about disclosure and rectification of existing mould and/or water damage issues

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government works with the states and territories to ensure that tenants in rental properties, aged care facilities, and community, social and public housing are provided with timely information about disclosure and rectification of any previous or existing mould and/or water damage issues in a property before entering into a residential leasing agreement.

**Responsibility:** State and Territory governments.

**Actions:** Tenancy law and the day-to-day management of community and public housing are the responsibility of individual state and territory governments. This includes decisions about the maintenance of dwellings and determining associated health risks.



**Status:** On 29 July 2020, State and Territory Housing Ministers were requested to outline the measures taken to disclose and rectify mould problems in social and public housing tenancies

- As of 1 May 2021, four jurisdictions responded (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia) outlining the measures taken to disclose and rectify mould problems in social housing tenancies.
- No further updates are available from the Department of Social Services.

**Recommendation 4:** Research into building codes and standards for prevention and remediation of dampness and mould in buildings

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with states and territories to conduct further research into the adequacy of current building codes and standards related to the prevention and remediation of dampness and mould in buildings.

**Responsibility:** State and Territory Building Ministers

**Actions:** The Government Response stated that the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources advised of their intention to put the items on the July 2020 Building Minister's Meeting (BMM) agenda.

**Status:** The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources have advised the Department on the progress of implementation of this recommendation.

- To assist industry to decrease the risks related to mould, the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) has published a Condensation in Buildings Handbook (updated most recently in July 2019). This handbook provides guidelines to assist architects, designers and builders in the assessment and the management of the risk of condensation and its consequences. The handbook can be found on the ABCB's website.
- To assist the building industry to decrease the risks related to mould, the Australian Building Codes Board has published a Condensation in Buildings Handbook. This handbook provides guidelines to assist architects, designers and builders in the assessment and the management of the risk of condensation and its consequences. The handbook can be found on the Australian Building Codes Board website at [www.abcb.gov.au](http://www.abcb.gov.au).
- The Australian Building Codes Board has consulted with stakeholders on further amendments to the National Construction Code to decrease the risk associated with mould and moisture caused by weatherproofing failures and condensation. These measures were included in the 2022 edition of the National Construction Code, which took effect from 1 May 2023. Further measures will be considered for inclusion in National Construction Code 2025. These measures are intended to decrease the risk of moisture and mould in buildings.
- The adoption of the National Construction Code into relevant building regulations is a matter for individual states and territories. Details on the adoption of National Construction Code 2022 can be found on the Australian Building Codes Board website [www.abcb.gov.au/ncc-2022-state-andterritory-adoption-dates](http://www.abcb.gov.au/ncc-2022-state-andterritory-adoption-dates).

**Recommendation 5:** Review into the treatment of patients presenting with Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (CIRS)-like symptoms

The Committee recommends the Department of Health and Aged Care conduct a review into the treatment of patients presenting with complex illnesses that are difficult to diagnose such as those with CIRS-like symptoms. This review should consider:



- methods to ensure patients with complex conditions, such as individuals reporting to have CIRS, are provided with effective and timely treatment and support (with the aim of reducing 'doctor shopping'); and
- whether doctors require further support in order to: identify environmental impacts on health; manage complex conditions; and provide appropriate treatment.

**Responsibility:** Department of Health and Aged Care.

**Actions:** As a part of procuring services for the development of clinical guidelines for General Practitioners, a review will be undertaken of the treatment of patients presenting with complex illnesses and a report including preliminary recommendations will be provided to the department by the end of 2022.

**Status:** The Department has implemented this together with Recommendation 7. For status, see Recommendation 7.

### **Recommendation 6: NHMRC research into CIRS-like syndromes**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government commission the National Health and Medical Research Council to conduct research into CIRS-like syndromes with a view to assisting in the diagnosis, treatment and management of patients. Research should also examine any links between mould and biotoxins and complex symptoms most commonly reported as typifying CIRS.

**Responsibility:** NHMRC.

**Actions:** The NHMRC will engage relevant experts and patient support groups to discuss the gaps identified by the Inquiry in defining the scope for a Targeted Call for Research (TCR), before opening a call for applications.

Funds will be allocated based on competitive peer review in accordance with the NHMRC's usual grant processes.

**Status:** A background paper was circulated to relevant experts and patient support groups as part of a targeted consultation (closed 18 January 2021).

Following targeted consultation to establish scope, NHMRC opened a Target Calls Research (TCR) into Biotoxin-related illnesses between 21 July 2021 and 15 September 2021. The focus of this TCR was to invite research proposals on improving broader understanding of the origin and pathophysiology of biotoxin-related illnesses, including CIRS. Following peer review, one application was funded by NHMRC. The outcome was published on 22 February 2022 and funding of \$1,063,797 for three years was awarded to [redacted] team, including [redacted] at Macquarie University. This funding is for research to develop an integrated platform for the early diagnosis and treatment of biotoxin-related illnesses in Australia, including CIRS. The research project commenced in July 2022 and is anticipated to be completed in 2025. The project seeks to both confirm existing and new CIRS biomarkers unique to biotoxin-related illnesses to identify and diagnose potential biotoxin-related illnesses in individuals. Research will study major aspects of CIRS including inflammatory responses, visual test, and brain imaging. Participants will undergo blood, urine, and sweat testing along with brain scans and environmental testing in their homes, in order to identify appropriate diagnostic tests that doctors can use. Findings resulting from this research project may help to inform future diagnostic, treatment and research approaches to managing Biotoxin-related illnesses.



Further information and annual progress report is available at [www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/targeted-calls-research/biotoxin-related-illnesses](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/targeted-calls-research/biotoxin-related-illnesses).

### **Recommendation 7: Clinical guidelines for GPs on CIRS-like conditions**

The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Aged Care, in consultation with patient groups, medical practitioners, and health bodies, develop clinical guidelines for general practitioners for the diagnosis, treatment and management of CIRS-like conditions.

**Responsibility:** Department of Health and Aged Care.

**Actions:** The Department will procure the services of experts to review the current treatments and develop general clinical guidelines to support the management of patient groups with debilitating symptom complexes of uncertain cause. Developing these guidelines will include working with medical practitioners, patient groups and health bodies.

The guidelines will emphasise the need for multidisciplinary approach to patient care, involving GPs and allied health professionals as well as specialists such as general physicians, specialist microbiologists, infectious diseases physicians, clinical allergists, clinical immunologists and psychiatrists.

**Status:** The Department has implemented this together with Recommendation 5.

In June 2021, the Department engaged the services of [REDACTED] to review the evidence and identify gaps in information to help inform the development of guidance for general practitioners and health professionals. Additionally, in July 2021, the Department established the Biotoxins-related Illnesses Advisory Committee (BIAC) to consider the outcomes of the evidence review (Recommendation 5) and guide the development of clinical guidance (Recommendation 7). The BIAC was chaired by [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]. Membership of the BIAC included professionals from a broad range of allied health and specialist medical fields as well as consumer and patient representatives.

- Evidence Evaluation was undertaken in consultation with BIAC. The evidence evaluation was informed by a broad range of peer-reviewed research and evidence-based practice/guideline documents and literature to support the development of the clinical guidance.
- Based on the evidence evaluation, a *Biotoxins (indoor damp and mould) Clinical Pathway (the Clinical Pathway)* was developed. The BIAC was consulted on the Clinical Pathway before undergoing a six-week targeted stakeholder consultation process. [REDACTED], on behalf of the Department, undertook this targeted stakeholder consultation to ensure the Clinical Pathway was fit for purpose and effectively supports health professionals to provide support to patients presenting with biotoxin-related illnesses. The list of key stakeholders included Commonwealth agencies and State and Territory Health Departments, relevant medical professional associations as well as patient and consumer groups.
  - The purpose of the Clinical Pathway is to support decision-making for general practitioners (GPs) and other medical professionals for the diagnosis, treatment, and management of patients with biotoxin-related illnesses and Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (CIRS)-like conditions.



- The Clinical Pathway has been designed specifically for use in the Australian context. It is consistent with international advice and has been developed using guidance from international authorities and medical professional associations.
  - The clinical pathway is an evidence-based resource targeted specifically at medical professionals and is designed to help clinicians structure assessments and manage patients with a wide variety of symptoms and severity of disability.
  - The clinical pathway encourages patients' management through a multidisciplinary approach, and was developed in consultation with medical practitioners, patient and consumer groups.
  - The Clinical Pathway is also aligned with the Department's existing Debilitating Symptom Complexes Attributed to Ticks (DSCATT) Clinical Pathway, including referral pathways and guidance on management of patients with medically unexplained symptoms (MUS).
- The release and publication of the Biotoxins (indoor damp and mould) Clinical Pathway was approved by Minister for Health, The Hon Mark Butler and has been published on department's website in November 2023.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Some Australians report chronic debilitating symptom complexes which they associate with exposure to indoor mould and biotoxins. These health effects are often referred as biotoxin-related illnesses. Some complementary and alternative medicine practitioners have labelled this condition as chronic inflammatory response syndrome (CIRS).
  - The diagnosis of biotoxin-related illnesses and CIRS is not widely accepted by mainstream medical practitioners. There is no scientifically validated or approved diagnostic criteria for CIRS and for this reason CIRS is not considered as a recognised disease in Australia or included in the Clinical Pathway.
  - The Clinical Pathway includes information on management of patients who have persistent undiagnosed symptoms, including support through mental health strategies and person-centred care in chronic cases.
  - The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is currently funding a research project to develop 'An integrated platform for the early diagnosis and treatment of biotoxin-related illnesses in Australia like Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome'. The outcomes of this research may provide further insights into biotoxin-related illnesses.
  - There is potential for the Clinical Pathway to be reviewed in future should the evidence base change significantly.

s 22(1)

**From:** s 22(1)

**Sent:** Wednesday, 11 December 2024 11:42:03 AM

**To:** s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:@Health.gov.au)

**Cc:** s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:@Health.gov.au) s 22(1) s 22(1)

**Subject:** FW: For review by COB 6 December - Correspondence re. Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Importance:** Normal

**Sensitivity:** None

**Attachments:**

[Markup Attachment A - Status of Implementation - Biotoxin-related Illnesses - Dec 2024.docx](#); [Markup - Draft MC24-018319 - For review.docx](#);

Good afternoon s 22(1)

Having reviewed the documents we have made some suggestions in track changes to the reply for your consideration.

We have also updated the 'Attachment A' with more relevant and current references to industry engagement arrangements and some background below for your information if required

Background if required:

- The Australian Government has established a national network of 10 Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) to provide industry with a stronger voice to ensure Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector delivers better outcomes for learners and employers. They bring together employers, unions and governments in a tripartite arrangement to find solutions to skills and workforce challenges.
- Jobs and Skills Councils replaced previous industry engagement arrangements including Skills Service Organisations and Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) which included the Property Services IRC which was supported by Artibus Innovation and the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC).
- JSCs identify skills and workforce needs for their industry sectors, map career pathways across education sectors, develop contemporary VET training products, support collaboration between industry and training providers to improve training and assessment practice, and act as a source of intelligence on issues affecting their industries.
- BuildSkills Australia (BuildSkills) is the Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) for the building, construction, property and water services industry sectors and is responsible for developing contemporary VET training products, supporting collaboration between industry and training providers to improve training and assessment practice, and act as a source of intelligence on issues affecting their industries.

Regards

s 22(1)

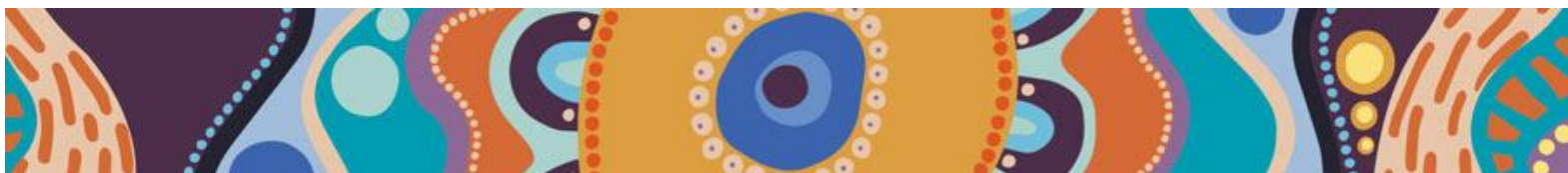
Assistant Director

Mining, Automotive, Construction and Property | Industry Skills Education and Engagement

VET Quality and Policy Division

Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Phone s 22(1) | [www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au)





From: s 22(1) @Health.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 10 December 2024 1:16 PM

To: s 22(1) @dewr.gov.au>; s 22(1) @Health.gov.au>

Cc: s 22(1) @dewr.gov.au>

Subject: RE: For review by COB 6 December - Correspondence re. Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Importance: High

You don't often get email from s 22(1) @health.gov.au. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi s 22(1)

Thanks so much for your reply and the information about Artibus.

We look forward for the updated text and yes if you could please expedite and send the response to us early tomorrow morning that would be great.

Thanks

s

-----

s 22(1) BVSC, MVSC, PhD

Assistant Director – Environmental Health Policy Section

Environmental Health and Climate Change Branch



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care



Australian  
Centre for  
Disease  
Control

Health Protection Policy and Surveillance Division | Interim Australian Centre for Disease Control

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

T: s 22(1) | Es 22(1) @health.gov.au

This email comes to you from Nggunnaw al Country

Location: Scarborough House Level 4

PO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

The Department of Health and Aged Care acknowledges First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to all Elders both past and present.



From: s 22(1) @dewr.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 10 December 2024 2:04 PM

To: s 22(1) @Health.gov.au>; s 22(1) @Health.gov.au>

Cc: s 22(1) @dewr.gov.au>

Subject: RE: For review by COB 6 December - Correspondence re. Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s

-----

s

22(1)

s 22(1)

Apologies for not replying to last Thursday's email as both and I were on leave and email went to SPAM for some reason.

Can you please hold off on the response text as Artibus are no longer responsible for the relevant VET qualifications and the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) ceased operating last year and have been replaced with another approval mechanism?

We will endeavour to get something to you by early tomorrow morning if that's OK.

Regards

s 22(1)

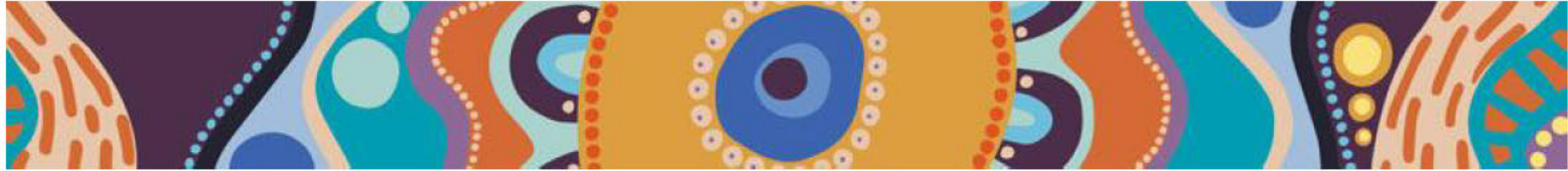
Assistant Director

Mining, Automotive, Construction and Property | Industry Skills Education and Engagement

VET Quality and Policy Division

Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Phone s 22(1) | [www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au)



The Department of Education, Skills and Employment acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and Elders past, present and emerging.

**From:** s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@Health.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 10 December 2024 12:29 PM

**To:** s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@dewr.gov.au); s 22(1)

[@dewr.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@dewr.gov.au)>

**Cc:** s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@Health.gov.au); s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@Health.gov.au)>

**Subject:** RE: For review by COB 6 December - Correspondence re. Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations

[SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Importance:** High

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Hi s 22(1)

I hope you are doing well.

Further to s 22(1) previous request, we have been asked to include background on the Artibus innovation. Below is the text that we have included in response – mostly taken from [Artibus Innovation - A workforce consultancy organisation](#).

- \* The Property Services Industry Reference Committee (IRC) of the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) is responsible for reviewing the relevant VET qualifications. The Australian Government supports the IRC through Artibus Innovation, which is a certified for benefit workforce development consultancy that specialises in skills development, including the VET sector. They design and develop solutions to enhance workforce capability. Artibus Innovation works with private, public and community sectors to deliver specialist services ranging from strategy and planning to workforce development, training package/product development, organisational capability, secretariat and project management services.

Grateful if you could please confirm you are comfortable with this by **COB, Wednesday 10 December**. I apologise for the tight timeframe.

If your area is not responsible for this work, grateful if you could please point me in right direction.

Thanks

S  
s 22(1) BVSC, MVSC, PhD  
Assistant Director – Environmental Health Policy Section  
Environmental Health and Climate Change Branch

Document 6



Health Protection Policy and Surveillance Division | Interim Australian Centre for Disease Control  
Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care  
T: s 22(1) | E: s 22(1) [@health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@health.gov.au)

This email comes to you from Nggunawal Country  
Location: Scarborough House Level 4  
PO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

The Department of Health and Aged Care acknowledges First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to all Elders both past and present.



---

**From:** s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@Health.gov.au)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 5 December 2024 2:44 PM  
**To:** s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@dewr.gov.au)  
**Cc:** s 22(1) [@dewr.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@dewr.gov.au); s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@Health.gov.au); s 22(1) [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@Health.gov.au)  
**Subject:** For review by COB 6 December - Correspondence re. Inquiry into Biotoxins-related illness - status of recommendations [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Good afternoon s 22(1)

I hope you are well!

I am assisting with the Biotoxins-related Illnesses Inquiry work with the Department of Health and Aged Care. Your contact details were passed on to me by your colleague, s 22(1).

The Department of Health and Aged Care has received some priority correspondence relating to the implementation status of recommendations from the *House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport inquiry into biotoxin-related illnesses in Australia*. The Health Portfolio is responsible for monitoring the implementation of all recommendations from the Biotoxin-related Illnesses inquiry.

To help inform our reply correspondence, we would be grateful for your review of the attached draft reply and Attachment A – Status of implementation of recommendations.

We would also be grateful for input from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations if there are any updates in relation to recommendation 2 of the inquiry, which relates to Standards and/or accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries.

This recommendation was referred to State and Territory Building Ministers and the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). The recommendation in full reads:

*The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the states and territories to conduct further research into, and develop standards and/or accreditation requirements for the mould testing and remediation industries, which should include consideration of:*

- *the most effective methods of testing and remediation of buildings affected by mould and/or moisture;*
- *appropriate accreditation requirements for professionals working in these fields; and options for greater regulatory oversight of these industries*

I have attached the previous update provided by s 22(1) relating in relation to this for your reference. **Document 6**

I would be very grateful if you could kindly let me know if you are comfortable with the attached content by COB tomorrow, Friday 6 December, if possible. I apologise for the tight timeframe.

Many thanks and kind regards

s  
22(1)

s 22(1) [She/Her]

Policy Officer - Environmental Health Policy Section



Health Protection Policy and Surveillance Division | Interim Australian Centre for Disease Control

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

T: s 22(1) | E: s 22(1) [@health.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)@health.gov.au)

This email comes to you from Wurundjeri Country  
595 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

The Department of Health and Aged Care acknowledges First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to all Elders both past and present.

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## Attachment A

## Summary of Recommendations, Agency Responsible and Implementation Status

### INQUIRY INTO BIOTOXIN-RELATED ILLNESSES IN AUSTRALIA

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation 1:</b> Fact sheet on the health effects of mould                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Aged Care produce and publish in the short term a fact sheet, and in the medium term undertake further research on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the potential health effects of exposure to damp and mould;</li> <li>• the prevalence of dampness and mould in the built environment; and</li> <li>• advice on the prevention and removal of mould.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Responsibility:</b> Department of Health and Aged Care.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><b>Actions:</b> The Department will seek to work with states and territories, through the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) to develop a new fact sheet to consolidate existing advice.</p> <p>enHealth currently offers guidance on indoor air quality and the treatment of mould at the national level. States and territories separately offer fact sheets on: the health effects of mould and dampness; suggested ways to prevent mould; and advice on ways to safely remove mould.</p>                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Status:</b> The Expert Reference Panel on Environmental Health (within Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth)) has developed a fact sheet consolidating current jurisdictional advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The factsheet for the general public was endorsed by AHPPC on 5 August 2021 and was published on the enHealth webpage on 5 October 2021. The fact sheet consolidates current jurisdictional advice on the health effects of mould.</li> <li>• The research component of this recommendation is addressed through the response to recommendation 6 (by the NHMRC).</li> </ul> |
| <b>Recommendation 2:</b> Standards and/or accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the states and territories to conduct further research into, and develop standards and/or accreditation requirements for the mould testing and remediation industries, which should include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the most effective methods of testing and remediation of buildings affected by mould and/or moisture;</li> <li>• appropriate accreditation requirements for professionals working in these fields; and options for greater regulatory oversight of these industries</li> </ul>                     |
| <b>Responsibility:</b> State and Territory Building Ministers and Jobs and Skills Councils .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p>BuildSkills Australia, the Jobs and Skills Council for the building and construction property and water services industry sectors provides advice to Commonwealth and state/territory Skills</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |



Ministers on the implementation of national vocational education and training (VET) policies, and approves nationally recognised training packages for implementation in the VET system.

**Actions:** The Government Response stated that the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources advised of its intention to put the items on the July 2020 Building Ministers' Meeting (BMM, formerly the Building Minister's Forum) agenda.

**Status:** Building Ministers were notified of the Response to the Inquiry and the items were placed on the forward agenda of the BMM. In June 2020, the AISC commissioned the Property Services Industry Reference Committee to review and update three cleaning qualifications in the CPP Property Services Training Package to address new demands for specialist cleaning skills including mould.

The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources have advised the Department on the progress of implementation of this recommendation.

- The development of standards and accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries is the responsibility of industry and relevant regulators. Professional cleaners are trained through the vocational education and training (VET) system.
- The relevant qualification for cleaners has been updated to include mould-specific skills and knowledge. At its July 2021 meeting, the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) approved revised training products developed by the Property Services Industry Reference Committee (IRC) in consultation with the cleaning sector, including the development of a new unit of competency covering mould remediation work.
- The development of standards and accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation industries is the responsibility of industry and relevant regulators, including state and territory Work Health and Safety regulators. Professional cleaners are trained through the vocational education and training system. The relevant qualification for cleaners has been updated to include mould-specific skills and knowledge. The unit of competency CPPCLO4107 Remediate mould contaminated structures and contents released in October 2021 and updated in January 2022, is available on the National Register of vocational education and training and is informed by standards set by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification and relevant Australian Standards and applies to experienced technicians responding to jobs in commercial and domestic sites.
- BuildSkills Australia is responsible for reviewing the relevant VET qualifications and ensuring they reflect current standards and accreditation requirements for its industry sectors.

### **Recommendation 3:** Information for tenants about disclosure and rectification of existing mould and/or water damage issues

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government works with the states and territories to ensure that tenants in rental properties, aged care facilities, and community, social and public housing are provided with timely information about disclosure and rectification of any previous or existing mould and/or water damage issues in a property before entering into a residential leasing agreement.

**Responsibility:** State and Territory governments.

**Actions:** Tenancy law and the day-to-day management of community and public housing are the responsibility of individual state and territory governments. This includes decisions about the maintenance of dwellings and determining associated health risks.



**Status:** On 29 July 2020, State and Territory Housing Ministers were requested to outline the measures taken to disclose and rectify mould problems in social and public housing tenancies

- As of 1 May 2021, four jurisdictions responded (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia) outlining the measures taken to disclose and rectify mould problems in social housing tenancies.
- No further updates are available from the Department of Social Services.

**Recommendation 4:** Research into building codes and standards for prevention and remediation of dampness and mould in buildings

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with states and territories to conduct further research into the adequacy of current building codes and standards related to the prevention and remediation of dampness and mould in buildings.

**Responsibility:** State and Territory Building Ministers

**Actions:** The Government Response stated that the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources advised of their intention to put the items on the July 2020 Building Minister's Meeting (BMM) agenda.

**Status:** The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources have advised the Department on the progress of implementation of this recommendation.

- To assist industry to decrease the risks related to mould, the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) has published a Condensation in Buildings Handbook (updated most recently in July 2019). This handbook provides guidelines to assist architects, designers and builders in the assessment and the management of the risk of condensation and its consequences. The handbook can be found on the ABCB's website.
- To assist the building industry to decrease the risks related to mould, the Australian Building Codes Board has published a Condensation in Buildings Handbook. This handbook provides guidelines to assist architects, designers and builders in the assessment and the management of the risk of condensation and its consequences. The handbook can be found on the Australian Building Codes Board website at [www.abcb.gov.au](http://www.abcb.gov.au).
- The Australian Building Codes Board has consulted with stakeholders on further amendments to the National Construction Code to decrease the risk associated with mould and moisture caused by weatherproofing failures and condensation. These measures were included in the 2022 edition of the National Construction Code, which took effect from 1 May 2023. Further measures will be considered for inclusion in National Construction Code 2025. These measures are intended to decrease the risk of moisture and mould in buildings.
- The adoption of the National Construction Code into relevant building regulations is a matter for individual states and territories. Details on the adoption of National Construction Code 2022 can be found on the Australian Building Codes Board website [www.abcb.gov.au/ncc-2022-state-andterritory-adoption-dates](http://www.abcb.gov.au/ncc-2022-state-andterritory-adoption-dates).

**Recommendation 5:** Review into the treatment of patients presenting with Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (CIRS)-like symptoms

The Committee recommends the Department of Health and Aged Care conduct a review into the treatment of patients presenting with complex illnesses that are difficult to diagnose such as those with CIRS-like symptoms. This review should consider:



- methods to ensure patients with complex conditions, such as individuals reporting to have CIRS, are provided with effective and timely treatment and support (with the aim of reducing 'doctor shopping'); and
- whether doctors require further support in order to: identify environmental impacts on health; manage complex conditions; and provide appropriate treatment.

**Responsibility:** Department of Health and Aged Care.

**Actions:** As a part of procuring services for the development of clinical guidelines for General Practitioners, a review will be undertaken of the treatment of patients presenting with complex illnesses and a report including preliminary recommendations will be provided to the department by the end of 2022.

**Status:** The Department has implemented this together with Recommendation 7. For status, see Recommendation 7.

### **Recommendation 6: NHMRC research into CIRS-like syndromes**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government commission the National Health and Medical Research Council to conduct research into CIRS-like syndromes with a view to assisting in the diagnosis, treatment and management of patients. Research should also examine any links between mould and biotoxins and complex symptoms most commonly reported as typifying CIRS.

**Responsibility:** NHMRC.

**Actions:** The NHMRC will engage relevant experts and patient support groups to discuss the gaps identified by the Inquiry in defining the scope for a Targeted Call for Research (TCR), before opening a call for applications.

Funds will be allocated based on competitive peer review in accordance with the NHMRC's usual grant processes.

**Status:** A background paper was circulated to relevant experts and patient support groups as part of a targeted consultation (closed 18 January 2021).

Following targeted consultation to establish scope, NHMRC opened a Target Calls Research (TCR) into Biotoxin-related illnesses between 21 July 2021 and 15 September 2021. The focus of this TCR was to invite research proposals on improving broader understanding of the origin and pathophysiology of biotoxin-related illnesses, including CIRS. Following peer review, one application was funded by NHMRC. The outcome was published on 22 February 2022 and funding of \$1,063,797 for three years was awarded to [redacted] team, including [redacted] at Macquarie University. This funding is for research to develop an integrated platform for the early diagnosis and treatment of biotoxin-related illnesses in Australia, including CIRS. The research project commenced in July 2022 and is anticipated to be completed in 2025. The project seeks to both confirm existing and new CIRS biomarkers unique to biotoxin-related illnesses to identify and diagnose potential biotoxin-related illnesses in individuals. Research will study major aspects of CIRS including inflammatory responses, visual test, and brain imaging. Participants will undergo blood, urine, and sweat testing along with brain scans and environmental testing in their homes, in order to identify appropriate diagnostic tests that doctors can use. Findings resulting from this research project may help to inform future diagnostic, treatment and research approaches to managing Biotoxin-related illnesses.



Further information and annual progress report is available at [www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/targeted-calls-research/biotoxin-related-illnesses](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/targeted-calls-research/biotoxin-related-illnesses).

### **Recommendation 7: Clinical guidelines for GPs on CIRS-like conditions**

The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Aged Care, in consultation with patient groups, medical practitioners, and health bodies, develop clinical guidelines for general practitioners for the diagnosis, treatment and management of CIRS-like conditions.

**Responsibility:** Department of Health and Aged Care.

**Actions:** The Department will procure the services of experts to review the current treatments and develop general clinical guidelines to support the management of patient groups with debilitating symptom complexes of uncertain cause. Developing these guidelines will include working with medical practitioners, patient groups and health bodies.

The guidelines will emphasise the need for multidisciplinary approach to patient care, involving GPs and allied health professionals as well as specialists such as general physicians, specialist microbiologists, infectious diseases physicians, clinical allergists, clinical immunologists and psychiatrists.

**Status:** The Department has implemented this together with Recommendation 5.

In June 2021, the Department engaged the services of [REDACTED] to review the evidence and identify gaps in information to help inform the development of guidance for general practitioners and health professionals. Additionally, in July 2021, the Department established the Biotoxins-related Illnesses Advisory Committee (BIAC) to consider the outcomes of the evidence review (Recommendation 5) and guide the development of clinical guidance (Recommendation 7). The BIAC was chaired by [REDACTED].

Membership of the BIAC included professionals from a broad range of allied health and specialist medical fields as well as consumer and patient representatives.

- Evidence Evaluation was undertaken in consultation with BIAC. The evidence evaluation was informed by a broad range of peer-reviewed research and evidence-based practice/guideline documents and literature to support the development of the clinical guidance.
- Based on the evidence evaluation, a *Biotoxins (indoor damp and mould) Clinical Pathway (the Clinical Pathway)* was developed. The BIAC was consulted on the Clinical Pathway before undergoing a six-week targeted stakeholder consultation process. [REDACTED], on behalf of the Department, undertook this targeted stakeholder consultation to ensure the Clinical Pathway was fit for purpose and effectively supports health professionals to provide support to patients presenting with biotoxin-related illnesses. The list of key stakeholders included Commonwealth agencies and State and Territory Health Departments, relevant medical professional associations as well as patient and consumer groups.
  - The purpose of the Clinical Pathway is to support decision-making for general practitioners (GPs) and other medical professionals for the diagnosis, treatment, and management of patients with biotoxin-related illnesses and Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (CIRS)-like conditions.



- The Clinical Pathway has been designed specifically for use in the Australian context. It is consistent with international advice and has been developed using guidance from international authorities and medical professional associations.
  - The clinical pathway is an evidence-based resource targeted specifically at medical professionals and is designed to help clinicians structure assessments and manage patients with a wide variety of symptoms and severity of disability.
  - The clinical pathway encourages patients' management through a multidisciplinary approach, and was developed in consultation with medical practitioners, patient and consumer groups.
  - The Clinical Pathway is also aligned with the Department's existing Debilitating Symptom Complexes Attributed to Ticks (DSCATT) Clinical Pathway, including referral pathways and guidance on management of patients with medically unexplained symptoms (MUS).
- The release and publication of the Biotoxins (indoor damp and mould) Clinical Pathway was approved by Minister for Health, The Hon Mark Butler and has been published on department's website in November 2023.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Some Australians report chronic debilitating symptom complexes which they associate with exposure to indoor mould and biotoxins. These health effects are often referred as biotoxin-related illnesses. Some complementary and alternative medicine practitioners have labelled this condition as chronic inflammatory response syndrome (CIRS).
  - The diagnosis of biotoxin-related illnesses and CIRS is not widely accepted by mainstream medical practitioners. There is no scientifically validated or approved diagnostic criteria for CIRS and for this reason CIRS is not considered as a recognised disease in Australia or included in the Clinical Pathway.
  - The Clinical Pathway includes information on management of patients who have persistent undiagnosed symptoms, including support through mental health strategies and person-centred care in chronic cases.
  - The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is currently funding a research project to develop 'An integrated platform for the early diagnosis and treatment of biotoxin-related illnesses in Australia like Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome'. The outcomes of this research may provide further insights into biotoxin-related illnesses.
  - There is potential for the Clinical Pathway to be reviewed in future should the evidence base change significantly.



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I am aware of the mould issues in rental houses and of the concerns some Australians have about complex illnesses that are difficult to diagnose. I would like to pass on my sympathies to <sup>s 47F(1)</sup>. I am advised the Department of Health and Aged Care has previously corresponded with <sup>s 47F(1)</sup> on this issue.

As noted in the Australian Government's response to the recommendations from the Inquiry, there are several Commonwealth departments who have responsibilities relevant to the consideration and management of mould-related issues. State and territory governments generally manage local environmental health issues, including concerns relating to the potential health effects of mould in the environment and housing. They provide information about ways to prevent or reduce mould growth and advice on its removal.

In relation to the status of recommendations relevant to the health portfolio, the Department of Health and Aged Care has undertaken a review and developed a 'Biotoxins (indoor damp and mould) Clinical Pathway' to assist GPs and other health professionals with the diagnosis, treatment and management of patients with biotoxin-related illnesses. The clinical pathway is designed specifically for use in the Australian context. It encourages patient management through a multidisciplinary approach, and was developed in consultation with medical practitioners, patient and consumer groups. The clinical pathway can be accessed on the Department of Health and Aged Care's website at [www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/biotoxins-indoor-damp-and-mould-clinical-pathway?language=en](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/biotoxins-indoor-damp-and-mould-clinical-pathway?language=en).

In addition to the clinical pathway, the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) has developed a fact sheet on the health effects of mould consolidating jurisdictional advice. The fact sheet is endorsed by the Australian Health Protection Committee (AHPC) and is available at [www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/enhealth-guidance-potential-health-effects-of-mould-in-the-environment?language=en](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/enhealth-guidance-potential-health-effects-of-mould-in-the-environment?language=en).

The National Health and Medical Research Council, through a targeted call for research, has funded relevant research on mould-related illnesses. The purpose of this research is to produce evidence that will improve the broader understanding of the origin and pathophysiology of biotoxin-related illnesses. The outcomes of this research may shape the future management and diagnosis of biotoxin-related illnesses to help improve the support that is provided to patients. More information about this funding is available at [www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/targeted-calls-research/biotoxin-related-illnesses](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/targeted-calls-research/biotoxin-related-illnesses).

The Australian Building Codes Board continues to develop a body of research to investigate and develop mitigating responses to condensation and mould risk in buildings through the National Construction Code. The National Construction Code 2022 contains an initial set of measures to support reduced condensation and mould risk. However, the adoption of the National Construction Code into relevant building

regulations is a matter for individual states and territories. To assist the building industry to decrease the risks related to mould, the Australian Building Codes Board has published a 'Condensation in Buildings Handbook' found at [www.abcb.gov.au](http://www.abcb.gov.au). This handbook provides guidelines to assist architects, designers and builders in the assessment and the management of the risk of condensation and its consequences.

The development of standards and accreditation requirements for mould testing and remediation is the responsibility of industry and relevant regulators, including state and territory work health and safety regulators. Professional cleaners are trained through the vocational education and training system. I understand the relevant qualification for cleaners has been updated to include mould-specific skills and knowledge. The unit 'CPPCLO4107 Remediate mould contaminated structures and contents' was released in October 2021 on the National Register of vocational education and training and updated in January 2022. The unit was developed in close consultation with industry stakeholders with content informed by the Standard for Professional Mold Remediation set by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC).