

Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth)

Outcomes of the enHealth Videoconference

23 February 2022

1:30pm to 3:30pm AEDT

Document tendered by

Ms Faehrmann

Received by

Robin Howlett

Date:

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Resolved to publish Yes / No

Members attending

Chris Lease (Chair)	South Australia
Angie Bone	Victoria
John Piispanen	Queensland
Lara Purdy	Commonwealth
Richard Broome	New South Wales
Tracy Ward	Northern Territory
Jonathan Chen (Proxy)	Australian Capital Territory
Mark Taylor	Heads of Environment Protection Authority (HEPA)
Paul Hunt	Tasmania
Jennifer Savenake	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

Expert Reference Panel Chairs

Sophie Dwyer	Radiation Health Expert Reference Panel (RHERP)
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Other attendees

Carl-Magnus Larsson	Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)
Gary Lum	Commonwealth
Catherine Kelaher	Commonwealth
Nicholas Johnson	Commonwealth
Katie Volter	Commonwealth

Apologies

Michael Lindsay	Western Australia
Sally Singleton	Australian Capital Territory
Sally Gilbert	New Zealand
Maryka Gaudio	Commonwealth

enHealth Secretariat

Giovanna Casa	Commonwealth
Lauren Porteous	Commonwealth

1. Meeting opening – welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chair, Chris Lease, opened the meeting and welcomed members and guests. Members noted the apologies and proxies as listed above. No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Previous Meeting

Item 2.1 – Minutes from previous meeting

The outcomes of the 27 January 2022 meeting were circulated to members on 9 February 2022.

It was noted that no amendments had been provided out of session. Chris asked members for any comments, none were received, and members agreed to endorse the minutes of the 27 January 2022 enHealth Videoconference.

Item 2.2 – Outstanding action items

2a – AHPPC PFAS Factsheet Update

Chris invited Lara to speak to the AHPPC PFAS Factsheet update.

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Lara provided a recap of the discussion at the 27 January 2022 enHealth meeting, advised that the Commonwealth would lead the update, and suggested changing the factsheet to a guidance statement, and that the previous statements on the enHealth webpage be archived.

- The update would ensure that the language is aligned and current, include information about the mental health effects of living in a PFAS-affected community and address concerns related to health-based guidance values relating to food in PFAS-affected communities.
- Lara also asked if there are any additional topics members thought should be included in the guidance.

John supported changing the factsheet to a national guidance statement. He noted that he would want to review the finalised statement and then consider whether the current statements should be archived.

Angie also supported the change to a guidance statement and advised that she would consult with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) on their thoughts. She noted that her team recommended that there not be any changes to the consumption limits of food that were part of any site-specific human risk assessments set by the Department of Defence. Angie also noted the opportunity to use the risk communications framework as part of this work.

Giovanna noted that the Commonwealth will be meeting with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) for further discussion around food but clarified it would be a change to the type of language used, and sorts of scenarios addressed, not a change to the PFAS limits.

Mark noted that in relation to food consumption, Angie's team has undertaken some work that looks at consumption at specific sites and agricultural locations over time, and this may also adjust the advice we include in the guidance statement.

- Mark also noted that the phlebotomy study has been approved for publication. The results show that by donating blood or plasma, you will lower the levels of PFAS in your blood. He suggested that it may be beneficial for enHealth to have a presentation on that study prior to the update of the guidance statement being finalised.

Paul agreed that it would be beneficial to hear about the phlebotomy study but questioned its inclusion in the enHealth statement. He noted an interest in the work with FSANZ around food as Tasmania have not had the opportunity to be involved in this advice.

Chris asked for clarification around the FSANZ study, and Lara noted that the study was published late last year. Lara advised that the Secretariat would send the link to the study to members.

Giovanna noted that the FSANZ study assessed the general food supply for PFAS levels, and the results showed that none of the foods examined in the study had PFAS levels above the trigger point values.

Angie agreed that she would like to hear more about the phlebotomy study, and it would be beneficial to have some dedicated time to unpack this but noted caution about possible unintended consequences of including this advice in the enHealth statement. This matter would need to be carefully considered.

Richard noted that we would have to be careful about the wording around mental health, as it isn't clear if mental health is affected by living in a PFAS-affected community or if it is affected by the government response to living within a PFAS-affected community. Messaging will need to be carefully considered.

Noting this feedback, it was agreed that the Commonwealth would commence drafting the updated guidance. enHealth will consider whether or not to archive any material after reviewing the proposed draft.

Action	Secretariat
01/0222	To send the link to FSANZ 27th Australian Total Diet Study to members.