



ShireBiz

The Shire Economic Development Alliance

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NICNAS- Removing Australian Jobs.

Australia's New Industrial Chemical Notification & Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) has since its inception contributed enormously to the "dumbing down" of much of our manufacturing industries and to the shifting of many jobs overseas. The future of the Australian economy is in grave danger of collapse due to the burden that NICNAS places on it in general & specifically on the manufacturing sector. It must be clearly understood that this is not about the manufacture of new substances in Australia but about ALL of our manufacturing industries-it is impossible to name a manufacturing industry that is not affected by this legislation.

NICNAS was established initially at the behest of the Arts & Heritage people in the Federal sphere. It was suggested that the health of workers, consumers & the environment were at risk if Australia did not introduce its own regulatory scheme over new substances (mainly industrial chemicals). Australia already had (& continues to have) its own regulatory schemes covering agricultural & pharmaceutical substances.

Users, manufacturers & importers of such substances (industrial) are required to pay an annual registration fee to NICNAS based on the turnover of their organisation. Further, any Company wishing to "introduce" (ie manufacture or import) a new substance must pay a fee to NICNAS plus provide an enormous amount of data plus contend with delays while that substance is accredited by NICNAS. This process is required regardless of accreditation or accepted use by a number of overseas countries operating with the same ideals as NICNAS in Europe, Japan, USA, Canada etc. A number of Australian Companies have suggested that aside from NICNAS fees it costs somewhere between A\$150,000 & A\$250,000 per substance to obtain NICNAS accreditation.

Obviously any such costs must be recovered but in so many cases the volumes are such that this is not possible-hence new substances are not introduced meaning that Australian Companies are denied access to the latest raw materials and must either move off shore or continue to struggle on using old technology. It is plainly ridiculous that Australia should have its own special accreditation scheme especially when you consider that the Australian Inventory of Chemical Substances (AICS-the list of substances that can be used in Australia) contains around 41,000 substances (around 3,000 have actually been accredited by NICNAS with the remainder "allowed" because they were listed around the time that NICNAS was created) but the European system lists over 110,000 substances! With the current average of 250 accreditations pa (by NICNAS) it would take around 300 years for Australia to catch up! How can Australian consumers of substances-our manufacturers-survive let alone compete in international markets.(some examples of NICNAS impeding manufacture are listed later).

Suppliers of an accredited substance must supply to the end user, a Material Safety Data Sheet which has an approved format & must contain any hazard data, toxicological data, health information, how to handle spills etc etc. It is the right of any worker or consumer to be able to access this data which, provided it is kept up to date really should be all that is required. If one felt that there should be more then simply accept the European system-why must we in Australia re-invent the wheel especially when there is no benefit possible to Australia.