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To MCS@nicnas.gov.au

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Subject re MCS report [No Protective Marking]

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Dr Graham Harvey
Existing Chemicals Team
National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme

Dear Sir.

I have read the first 30 pages of the MCS report and quickly browsed through the rest. Some of it was slow and heavy reading...

I'm sure all of us with MCS will appreciate anything that helps make the condition better known and accepted as a real (non psychiatric) entity by the medical profession.

I have struggled with MCS since 1984, and for the first ten years was unaware that the condition had a name, nor did I know of anyone else with the condition until in 1994 when I stumbled across an ACTA representative who fully understood my own struggles.

Prior to meeting other people struggling with the same syndrome, I had wondered if I was going mad, and had to struggle alone with this debilitating condition.

Nobody believed me. Nobody understood me.

Struggling alone and being regarded as a crank are strong issues for people with MCS, and in view of this, getting the condition out into the open and more well known and verified will certainly help us.

I am unable to nominate specifically what brought my chemical sensitivities on, except that it started within a few months after I gave up smoking in December 1983.

I had no idea it would become a long term chronic condition, and doctors did not take me seriously.

Prior to developing MCS, I had plenty of exposure to petrochemicals and other agents commonly cited as causative, but by the time I found out about the condition, and it's assumed causes, too much water had passed under the bridge for me to be certain about what started it.

One of the things that seems to be missing from the MCS Report is addressing the problems faced by people with MCS in the workplace.

Problems such as:-

working with other staff who wear overpowering and overbearing cosmetic products.

working in the same rooms as photocopiers which emit fumes.

working in offices which have poor indoor air quality.

working in an environment where some people insist on having those plug-in automatic air deodorisers (airwick) perfuming the entire office.

These sorts of problems are extremely difficult for us to deal with, because to fix them requires controlling other people's behaviour and lifestyle.

Personally I've had to resign from four jobs because of this sort of unresolvable problem.

It would be great if some sort of legislation or understanding could be put in place to help MCS people in this sort of workplace situation.

Kind regards
Tony Lewis

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