

CHANGES TO THE PUBLIC SECTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN INVENTORY OF CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES (AICS) AND TO RELATED AICS FEATURES

Purpose

To inform users of the AICS of a number of updates made to the AICS search function, AICS forms and public AICS records.

Background

The AICS is central to NICNAS' role of regulating industrial chemicals by providing a legal mechanism for distinguishing between existing chemicals and new chemicals. Maintaining the accuracy of the AICS requires that NICNAS regularly monitors the AICS and corrects errors and inaccuracies when NICNAS becomes aware of them.

The effectiveness of the role the AICS plays in regulating industrial chemicals is not only affected by its accuracy, but also depends upon an efficient search facility.

Maintaining both these aspects – the accuracy of the AICS and the usability of the search facility – also results in fewer calls to the AICS Manager.

Recent concurrent developments have impacted on the utility of the AICS:

- Following on from the recent Chemical Abstract Service (CAS) audit of the public AICS (see [Notice 2 in the August 2012 Gazette](#)), the CAS numbers and names of several chemicals have been updated. NICNAS would like to encourage Industry to adopt these updated chemical details, however we are also aware that Industry will need time to adapt to these changes. To allow for this, NICNAS has incorporated a number of new features in the AICS and the AICS search function.
- Further improvements to the AICS search function have been made following responses to the [2010 NICNAS survey of stakeholders](#). The survey results indicated that AICS users required improvements to be made to the usability of the AICS search tool, particularly for the less frequent users of the AICS, whom the survey found are generally less confident in their ability to use and interpret AICS search outcomes.
- In addition to these improvements, changes to other AICS functions and AICS forms have been made following the [Cost Recovery Impact Statement \(CRIS\)](#). As advised in the [“Changes to AICS fees: 2012-13”](#) the non-confidential (public) AICS search service provided by NICNAS for an administrative fee, is no longer available as of 1 July 2012 due to a lack of demand for the service following the advent of the on-line search tool.
- As advised in the [March](#) and [August](#) 2012 Chemical Gazette Notices (No. 3 and 2 respectively), NICNAS has been removing some chemicals ineligible for listing on the AICS, so as to improve its accuracy.

Specific improvements made to the AICS

As a result of the above drivers, NICNAS has made specific improvements to the public AICS records, search function and associated guidance material. These changes, which are designed to assist users of the AICS adjust to such things as updated particulars for some chemicals, and to provide a more efficient and effective search experience, are:

- 1) Improvements following the CAS audit:
 - a) Updated CAS numbers and names on the AICS.
 - b) Creation of a new field entitled “Superseded CAS No”, to enable searching using superseded CAS numbers for chemicals amended as a result of the CAS audit changes.
 - c) A text warning informing searchers that they have searched using a superseded CAS number will appear in red text at the top of search page results.
 - d) Superseded chemical names have been moved to the “Associated Names” field, enabling searching using superseded names.
- 2) AICS search improvements following CRIS and the stakeholder surveys:
 - a) As NICNAS no longer offers public AICS searches as a fee-for-service. Form AICS 4C (AICS Search Request Form – Non-Confidential Section) has been removed from the NICNAS web site.
 - b) A pop-up warning has been added to warn searchers when an invalid CAS number has been entered, so searchers can recheck the CAS number before continuing with the search.
 - c) The AICS search “No results returned” page, now includes possible reasons for a nil result to assist users in determining what to do next.
 - d) [Form AICS 5C \(AICS Search Request Form – Confidential Section\)](#) has been modified to ensure users have correctly undertaken a search of the public (non-confidential) AICS.
- 3) Removal of ineligible chemicals from the AICS to improve its currency:
 - a) Non-stoichiometric alloys are considered to be mixtures and have been removed from the AICS. Note that the component elements remain on the AICS.
 - b) Ions have been removed from the AICS as they are not considered to be eligible chemicals.

To assist users of the AICS to adjust to these changes, NICNAS has also included pointers on the AICS search tool and extra advice in the AICS search guidance.

For further information, or to provide feedback on the utility of these improvements, please contact:

The AICS Manager
NICNAS
Phone: (02) 8577 8830
Fax: (02) 8577 8888
Email: aics.officer@nicnas.gov.au