

10 Erskine Street,
Nunawading, 3131
01/01/2009.
9877-2143



Dear Madam/Sir,

I have just read the "Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Draft Review and Report" and would like to provide feed back for consideration. I feel that the Draft Report has a psychological and or a psychiatric bias, and feel that, that needs to be turned around. That is the only correction or comment that I have. Below is a very brief snap shot of some of our life, which I thought might be included in the additional information.

My wife (Chris) suffers from MCS, and has done since 1991. It is an extremely debilitating disease and it has without question changed every facet of our life and our family's lives. Our two boys and their partners are extremely understanding, and accepting of Chris's illness. We have few friends, as the people we knew couldn't cope with Chris's illness, or kept using chemicals that made Chris sick. I mentioned every facet of our life, when we walk the dog; fertilizer on people's gardens makes Chris sick. Shopping at the supermarket is a terrible strain for her, because all the cleaning products used and all the cleaning products sold make her very sick, but as we need food she feels that she has to do the shopping. As with hobbies, as she can't use glue's, paint's, or solvents, this limits her to things like knitting, cooking, or gardening. Chris enjoyed going to church and the church life, but that ceased as the perfumes and aftershave's was too over powering, she ended up sick each week. Chris tried doing volunteer work, but again it was hopeless as people forgot about her illness and used chemicals. We can't go on a holiday because holiday places are cleaned with commercial chemicals. Chris can tolerate about 10 hours a week outside the house, after that she is so sick that she usually ends up in bed or lying on the couch for a day or two. The place needs painting inside and I don't know what to do. The allergy free paints make Chris ill. We try to have some sort of family life occasionally going out with our sons and grand children. Chris can usually only tolerate about two hours before she really feels ill and we have to come home. Chris drives the car (I don't) but she can't fill the vehicle with fuel because of the fumes, even when I do it the fumes still get it the car as I get in and out. Chris can't enjoy things like taking our grandson to the local pool because chlorine makes her ill. In my previous job I was spray painting, and the fumes that got on my cloths from that upset Chris so much that I had to have a shower when I got home before even saying "hello" Chris can't even do things like buying magazines or daily papers as out gassing of ink is too strong, sometimes the lady next door leaves some old magazines for Chris, but they have to stay outside on the front porch for 3 or 4 weeks before she reads them.

Another way it impacted on the family was financially. We had a gas stove; gas space heating and they were useless after Chris got sick, as she couldn't tolerate the fumes from the burnt gas. It took several years to save up for an electric stove, and even more time to save for reverse cycle air conditioners. Prior to the air conditioners we just had 2400w room heaters to heat the house. The power bills were enormous, they are still enormous being all electric it is far more expensive than gas, and there is nothing that we can do about it. Also, financially we have struggled (like most MCS family's), I work and Chris gets a part disability pension. That is a far cry from 2

wage packets every week, holiday pay, leave loading, public holiday pay, superannuation, etc. I don't begrudge the Chris's pension it helps a lot, but there is a big difference I'm sure you will appreciate. Something that I am concerned about is the fact that if we get to the stage where we need to go into a age care facility, or nursing home Australia has nowhere for Chris to go. It is ok while she can cope in her own home, but if it comes to the point that she can't what happens? Will some facility kill her with the use of chemicals? If it gets that far she may well be too frail to be vigilant like she is now. This is why I have set out the things that I feel are important to get done by the federal government either Labor or Liberal

- 1) I would like to see the Australian Government recognise MCS as a genuine illness/disease.
- 2) I would like to see hospitals around Australia have the knowledge and the equipment to treat someone with MCS (Not necessarily every hospital, but enough to not have to travel for too long)
- 3) I would like to see Age care, and Nursing homes cater for clients with MCS. There will be quite a lot filtering through in the next few years.
- 4) I would like to see the Government BAN a lot of dangerous chemicals, and place very strict conditions of use on all dangerous chemicals.

Thankyou for your time, I hope I have been some help,
Yours Sincerely
Chris Lemm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Lemm', with a long, sweeping underline that ends in a small loop.