

# Ministerial Statement



**Hon John Hill**  
Minister for Health  
Minister for the Southern Suburbs  
Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts

Wednesday 20 September 2006

## **MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY DAY**

Thank you for the invitation to address the meeting but due to prior commitments I'm not able to be with you today.

I understand that MCS presents a range of problems for sufferers, the medical profession, and for government agencies.

For some individuals there can be profound morbidity that can be difficult to clinically manage or obtain a satisfactory outcome. Sufferers often feel that they are being given the 'run around' from doctors, who with little information, and no clinical guidelines, attempt to diagnose and treat this diffuse syndrome.

In the absence of clinical guidelines, about either the symptoms of MCS or how these symptoms should be treated, it is difficult for government agencies to know what they should do.

This problem was recognised by the Social Development Committee enquiry into MCS. Nevertheless, the Committee was able to produce some meaningful recommendations and the Government is acting on these.

Most importantly, the Department of Health has established an MCS Reference Group, which includes community representatives on its membership. Its brief is to maintain ongoing communication and provide up-to-date information on developments in the debate around MCS, its causation and effects (and there is likely to be considerable debate around this controversial subject) so that agencies and the community can understand more about MCS and the types of action that can be taken to reduce the harm felt by sufferers.

The Department is also developing consistent protocols and procedures for dealing with MCS sufferers in hospitals as this was an area of particular concern identified by the Social Development Committee.

In addition to these initiatives, the Department is working with interstate agencies and the Commonwealth to find a way forward for the medical profession to better understand MCS and potential clinical management approaches.

The SA Task Force on Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (of which Peter Evans is the convenor) has spent considerable effort highlighting the plight of individuals with this condition and it is to the Task Force's credit that MCS is more widely known in the community and with the new established MCS Reference group I believe the understanding of this issue will be deepened across Government. I wish you well in your continued work raising awareness on this disabling condition.