



Conservation
Council SA

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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19 July 2021

Dear Joint Standing Committee

RE: Submission to the Minamata Convention on Mercury Inquiry

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee's consideration of ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

The Conservation Council SA is an independent, non-profit and strictly non-party political organisation representing around 60 of South Australia's environment and conservation organisations and their 90,000 members.

Mercury pollution – especially methylmercury pollution – is an environmental toxicant that gradually accumulates in organisms (i.e. 'bioaccumulative') and is extremely hazardous to the wellbeing of humans and many fauna. The Minamata Bay example – for which the Convention is named – provides an example of the horrible potential of the bioaccumulation of methylmercury pollution in fish and shellfish from industrial wastewater to cause mass neurological disorders and more than a thousand human deaths, let alone the devastation to other marine and terrestrial fauna.

Mercury pollution is a 'global bad' (as opposed to a 'global good'), as mercury pollution in the atmosphere spreads easily across the globe¹. As a well-resourced country seeking to bolster its reputation as a good international citizen, Australia has both a clear duty and a clear opportunity to assist in limiting global mercury pollution and its deleterious effects upon the environment that we all share.

¹ See: <https://theconversation.com/australia-emits-mercury-at-double-the-global-average-82577>

In conclusion, the Conservation Council SA recommends that the Australian Government follow through on its 2013 commitment to the Minamata Convention and urgently ratify the Treaty.

If you require further information, please contact me at craig.wilkins@conservationsa.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



Craig Wilkins
Chief Executive