

Senator the Hon Robert Hill
Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for the Environment

The Hon Ian Causley MP
Chair
House of Representatives Standing Committee
for Environment, Recreation and the Arts
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Causley

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE To REPORT BY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, RECREATION AND THE ARTS**

I am writing to you about the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Environment, Recreation and the Arts report *Environmental Management of Commonwealth Land. A review of Audit Report No. 31 1995-96 -Environmental Management of Commonwealth Land: Site Contamination and Pollution Prevention*. The Government has considered the report and finalised its response, which is attached.

I also wish to advise you that my Department has put in place measures to minimise any future delays in responding to Committee reports.

Yours sincerely

Robert Hill

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT, RECREATION AND THE ARTS

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF COMMONWEALTH LAND:

A review of Audit Report No. 31 *1995-96 - Environmental Management of Commonwealth Land. Site Contamination and Pollution Prevention*. March 1997.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE. April 1999.

RECOMMENDATION

(1) That the Commonwealth Government reassess the priorities and resources of Environment Australia to develop a Commonwealth policy on the environmental management of Commonwealth land, including site contamination, pollution protection and appropriate levels of public disclosure.

(2) That the Commonwealth Government examine these issues again once it is known what the Commonwealth Government will have to do to implement the outcomes of the Intergovernmental Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development Working Group on Commonwealth/State roles and responsibilities for the environment.

(3) That the Department of Defence, as part of its national approach to the management of UXO information:

- develop a program to identify and assess UXO contamination and allocate more resources in each State to carry out these assessments; and
- include in its annual report a statement of the progress made in implementing the UXO program.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Agreed in principle.

Environment Australia has allocated a Senior Officer Grade B to this work from within existing resources.

Allocation of resources is under continual review.

Agreed. See response to recommendation 1.

Agreed.

The Department of Defence has advised the Committee that a register of contaminated sites has been established and further work is progressing in this area. The Department is also examining what scope there might be for allocating additional resources to the UXO program.

A statement of the progress made in implementing the UXO program will be included in the Department's annual report.