

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 253
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Topic: Townsville Air Force Base Toxic Firefighting Foam
Hansard Page: 39
Question Date: 08 February 2016
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Rhiannon asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Thank you very much. Today, it was reported on the ABC that Colin Trinder, a former director of environmental impact management, Australian Defence Force, stated, 'It is highly likely toxic firefighting foam has run off from Townsville Air Force base and onto the Great Barrier Reef.' Is this something that you are aware of? Could you comment on your knowledge of this, please.

Dr Reichelt: Sorry, Senator. I am not aware of an incident like that in the Townsville port. I can take on notice and correct that, but my understanding is: 'No, we are not aware of it.' That is all I can say on that.

Senator RHIANNON: So if you could take it on notice.

Answer:

The Senate inquiry report into firefighting foam contamination - RAAF Base Williamtown, released February 2016 included a submission from Colin Trinder, a former director of environmental impact management, Australian Defence Force in regards to the likelihood that "*toxic firefighting foam has run off from Townsville Air Force base and onto the Great Barrier Reef*".

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority through discussions with the Department of Defence is not aware of any specific releases of firefighting foam into the Great Barrier Reef associated with the operation of the Townsville Air Force Base.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has a strong collaborative relationship with the Department of Defence to ensure that all Defence activities within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area are well planned, well resourced and are of a high environmental standard.