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INQUIRY INTO GOVERNMENT'S MISHANDLING OF PFAS ESTABLISHED

The Turnbull Government's disgraceful response to PFAS contamination issues will finally be investigated, with today's establishment of a Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry.

It is almost two years since Labor released its [policy](#) to address PFAS contamination. In the absence of their own policy, the Turnbull Government adopted Labor's plan but have failed to implement a national, coordinated approach.

Communities dealing with PFAS contamination deserve better than this Government's mishandling of such an important issue.

Labor has been fighting to get the Government to act – they could have agreed to this inquiry months ago.

The terms of reference for the inquiry are:

The Committee shall inquire into the Commonwealth Government's management of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination in and around Defence bases, with particular reference to:

- a) the extent of contamination in and around Defence bases, including water, soil, other natural assets and built structures;
- b) the response of, and coordination between, agencies of the Commonwealth Government, including, but not limited to, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Health, the Department of the Environment and Energy, the Department of Defence and the Australian Defence Force;

- c) communication and coordination with state and territory governments, local councils, affected local communities and businesses, and other interested stakeholders;
- d) the adequacy of health advice and testing of current and former defence and civilian personnel and members of the public exposed in and around Defence bases identified as potentially affected by contamination;
- e) the adequacy of Commonwealth and state and territory government environmental and human health standards and legislation, and any other relevant legislation;
- f) remediation works at the bases; and
- g) what consideration has been given to understanding and addressing any financial impact to affected businesses and individuals.

Any solution must be a national solution and must address all 23 Defence sites.

Labor looks forward to the inquiry answering many of the questions asked by PFAS-affected communities across Australia.

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Authorised by Noah Carroll ALP Canberra