

Report on the National Pollutant Inventory Public Workshops  
June-July 1994

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Summary  
Schematic Representations

Major issues emerged in the discussions. These were based on the Key Issues in the Discussion Paper. Differing perspectives were presented by different stakeholders in the discussions. The various views represented local needs and goals. The impetus for these views can be generalised into the following categories:

- \* health issues
- \* economic issues
- \* environmental issues.

Although the reasons often varied, there was a high degree of agreement on the approach which should be taken in regard to the major issues. In general, the participants described a National Pollutant Inventory which will provide the necessary data for information based planning and informed decision making...leading to responsible action by individuals and groups at home and in the workplace; and in policy development.

The different perspectives and the rationale supporting those perspectives is represented in the schematic diagram on the following page.

Summary Table 1, Australia NPI Public Workshops, June-July 1994

<b>Perspective Main Data Providers eg industry</b>	<b>Major Issues &lt;- -&gt; Indicates disagreement -&gt; &lt;- Indicates agreement</b>	<b>Perspective Main Data Users eg local residents</b>
The community may misinterpret the data.	<b>Access</b> <- ->	The community needs access to raw data to make informed decisions.
Community education is essential.	<b>Education</b> -> <-	Community education is essential.
Begin with a small list. ADDITIVE	<b>Type of List</b> <- ->	Begin with a large list. SUBTRACTIVE
Develop the list on objective,	<b>Basis for Inclusion</b> <- ->	Provide opportunity for community

scientific, risk-based assessment criteria		input to the list: "We tell you our concerns."
Issues are localised and will vary across the nation. Reporting should be locally relevant	<b>Focus of Data</b> Localise -> <-	Create data on local issues with trends indicated over a broader region (State and National).
Information should be relevant and useful to avoid misinterpretation and misrepresentation. Geographic issues must be considered.	<b>Form of Data</b> Contextual, Local Accessible -> <-	Information should be available in raw form, but with support information to allow it to be useful.
Industrial emissions < 10% of total load. Community emissions are large, diffuse, non-point source and hard to trace. Avoid 10 employee cut off. Include agriculture, mining and other sources of pollution.	<b>Scope</b> -> <- Use mass-load approach Include total env. load Include non-point source Include raw data	Measure inputs and outputs (emissions). Monitor products. Avoid 10 employee cut off. Include non-point source, agriculture, mining and other sources of pollution.
Current reporting through licensing is based on maximum allowable emissions not actual emissions. This is not an accurate picture.  Create a network system which will not duplicate existing reporting mechanisms and will not increase cost of reporting.	<b>Organisation of Data</b> Collect relevant data -> <-  Avoid duplication -> <-  Network across all levels of government -> <-	Provide information on cumulative effects on the environment and on health.  Create a network system which will allow access to all information. Expedite access, Eliminate the red tape of access to information.
Standardise but don't legislate. Include trials and voluntary phase-in. Protect trade confidentiality. Resource industry for compliance.	<b>Legislation</b> Ensure uniformity and validity through legislation -> <- Voluntary phase-in -> <- FOI should be nationally uniform <- ->	Legislate to ensure compliance. Reporting will be more credible if it is legislated. Uniformity is essential. Start now! FOI must be standardised nationally.
Make risk the criterion for inclusion,	<b>Criteria</b> <b>risk</b> -> <-	Make risk the criterion for inclusion,

based on scientific  
proof of risk.

based on personal  
experience of risk.

The following comments are general interpretations of the data. They do not represent an individual point of view but, rather a summation of some of the issues which emerged in the discussion of each of the Key Issues identified in the NPI Discussion Paper.

Summary Table 2, Australia NPI Public Workshops, June-July 1994

<b>Key Issues</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Community right-to-know</b>	Community right-to-know (CRTK) is an access issue, not a function. CRTK must be supported with community education. The community wants to know the current situation ... and how to take action toward improvement.
<b>Public scrutiny</b>	Public Scrutiny is an important form of social change. However, the community bears the cost. Legislation is essential.
<b>Functions of an NPI</b>	The functions must be clearly stated before the design, or the design will be wrong. CRTK is not a function, it is an access issue. International reporting obligations are not as important as improving the environment in Australia.
<b>Relevance of overseas models</b>	The NPI should be designed to meet Australian needs. The overseas models can provide background information to this design. The models themselves should not be imported.
<b>National, State or regional focus</b>	Work together: Create a network system to avoid duplication. Contextualise and localise the information to match problems of different geographic regions. These cannot be accommodated by a generic NPI.
<b>Adequacy of proposed modules</b>	Include non-point source emissions. Track products to calculate estimated mass load. Build in flexibility to ensure future adequacy. Integration is essential to environmental issues. A focus on one issue (e.g. water or air) may increase problems in other areas.
<b>Problems of measurement and estimation</b>	Measurement can be simplified by tracking products and calculating the mass load in local areas. Attempting to measure the environment is costly and time consuming, and can provide only specific answers to specific questions.
<b>Criteria for reporting</b>	Risk is the primary criterion. Use the Precautionary Principle. Different interpretations polarised the groups according to the method for determining risk (e.g. scientific proof or personal experience).

<b>Ranking the chemicals</b>	Expert advice is essential. The experts should include those whose physical well-being has been affected by pollutants Longitudinal or epidemiological studies may be too late.
<b>Community access to information</b>	Community access should be made available through local libraries, on computerised data bases and with supporting information. Hard copy text should also be made available to identify major local issues. This information should be accompanied by educational information which explains the data, identifies the risk and identifies methods for improvement.
<b>Legislation of the NPI</b>	Reporting should be legislated. Reporting should not duplicate existing mechanisms. Compliance should be supported with incentives (tax and time).
<b>Benefits of the NPI</b>	The NPI is baseline information for improvement. However it is retrospective. Improvement requires action. Collecting data now may provide explanations in the future. Data collection does not ensure improvement. This must be supported and managed through other policy and systematic action. Actions for improvement should begin now! The NPI can assist local government in SoE reporting.
<b>Costs of reporting and access</b>	<p>The costs of reporting seem to be inadequate. The resources for improvement have not been costed in the equation. The gap between the present situation and the improved situation is often very costly. This is a major barrier to change.</p> <p>Access must be carefully planned to avoid expensive mistakes in technology. Current systems (e.g. nationwide library network) can provide the network links.</p>