

Media Release

TOWARDS A NATIONAL POLLUTANT INVENTORY

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Australian industry will soon be asked to report the amount of hazardous substances that it emits to the environment each year.

The information gained from reporting will be presented, along with emissions data from other sources, on the *National Pollutant Inventory (NPI)*.

The NPI will be a database available on the internet, searchable by regions. It will allow the community to access information on the amount and type of pollutants in its environment.

The reporting process for emissions from industry and other sources, such as cars and households, is currently being trialed in South East Queensland. The trial is designed to ensure smooth transition into national reporting, which is expected to begin in July 1998.

Environment Australia, in cooperation with its State and Territory partners, has undertaken an extensive consultation process with industry and community groups to determine the best methods for collecting information for the NPI. The results of the consultation process will be known early in 1998.

The NPI is designed to satisfy community desire for access to information about the amount of pollution entering the environment and to provide information to industry and governments for environmental planning and management.

By focusing attention on emissions to the environment, the NPI will assist industry identify ways to achieve substantial cost savings and opportunities for pollution prevention. It will also enable industry to document its progress reducing emissions.

In February 1998 the National Environment Protection Council (NEPC) will consider the NPI as a National Environment Protection Measure. Currently, NEPC is made up of the Federal Environment Minister, Senator Robert Hill, and the state and territory environment ministers.

A trial version of the NPI database has been released over the internet for public comment. It can be accessed at

<http://www.environment.gov.au/net/npi.html>

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