



**Mark Speakman**  
Minister for the Environment  
Minister for Heritage  
Assistant Minister for Planning

## STATEMENT

Thursday, 8 October 2015

### VISIT TO WILLIAMTOWN

Today I visited Williamtown to meet with the Expert Panel and the Community Reference Group about the off-site contamination originating from the RAAF base.

With federal Assistant Defence Minister Darren Chester and EPA CEO Barry Buffier, I also received an on-site briefing from the Department of Defence in relation to the contamination of and around the RAAF base.

The visit was an opportunity to receive an update on actions taken by NSW agencies in liaison with the Department of Defence to address the contamination issue and to meet with community representatives.

The NSW Government is putting a great deal of effort and resources into identifying the nature and extent of the problems and to find appropriate solutions for managing any impacts into the future.

I attended a meeting of the Williamtown Expert Panel, led by Chief Scientist and Engineer, Mary O'Kane, where results of current testing of oysters, fish and surface water were discussed.

The NSW Government, on advice from the Expert Panel, is continuing to take a precautionary approach to assessing the nature of any potential offsite impacts and to developing appropriate responses.

The current commercial and recreational fishing closure remains in place.

While I am continuing to receive advice that any risk to human health from contamination from the Williamtown RAAF base is low, the NSW Government is working closely with the Expert Panel to ensure that the community has access to clear and up-to-date information.

During the visit, I stressed to Mr Chester the importance of the Department of Defence providing a timely and sympathetic response to the financial impacts caused to the community from the pollution coming from its site.

An independent review, by Professor Mark Taylor of Macquarie University, will consider, among other things, the EPA's implementation of the findings of the Auditor-General's 2014 report into managing contaminated sites.

**MEDIA: Lance Northey | Minister Speakman| 0437 506 637**

