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Federal Government extends its support to commercial fishers in Tilligerry Creek and Fullerton Cove

The Australian Government today tabled its response to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee report, Inquiry into firefighting foam contamination Part A - RAAF Base Williamtown.

As part of its response, the Australian Government has announced the continuation of the existing financial assistance package to fishers and businesses affected by the NSW Government's precautionary closures of the Tilligerry Creek and Fullerton Cove fisheries beyond 30 June 2016 and will also introduce a new Business Transition Payment.

Defence continues to work closely with NSW Government and other Commonwealth agencies to further investigate the nature and extent of the legacy PFOS/PFOA issue at RAAF Base Williamtown. Defence is carrying out detailed environmental investigations at Williamtown, which includes the development of a human health risk assessment.

This human health risk assessment is due to be completed by the end of July. In the interim, the Australian Government will continue to provide support to assist with the financial hardship experienced by individuals and businesses as a result of the NSW Government's decision.

The Australian Government will continue to provide an Income Recovery Subsidy to individuals who have experienced a loss of income as a result of closure of the fisheries. These payments will continue for a period of eight weeks after 30 June 2016, which is when the NSW Government is due to make a decision on the current bans.

On 1 July 2016, the Australian Government will also provide the ability for fishing businesses affected by the closures to claim a further Business Hardship Payment of up to \$20,000. In addition to the Business Hardship Payment, the Australian Government will be implementing a Business Transition Payment of up to \$25,000 to assist businesses pursue alternative sources of income if the NSW Government delays its decision to reopen these fisheries beyond 30 June 2016.

Individuals and businesses affected by the closures are encouraged to contact the Department of Human Services to discuss their circumstances by calling the direct hotline for this package - 180 23 22.

The Government's response to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee report, Inquiry into firefighting foam contamination Part A - RAAF Base Williamtown is available at:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/id/Williamtown/MediaCoverage.asp>