2023 SHORT REPORTS OF THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

Report submitted on 14 December 2023

REPORTING PERIOD:
1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022

▼ INFORMATION ON THE PARTY

1. Information on the party

Name of party
Australia

Date on which its instrument of ratification, accession, approval or acceptance was deposited
7 December 2021

Date of entry into force of the Convention for the party
7 March 2022

2. Information on the national focal point

Full name of the institution
Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Title of contact officer
Branch Head, Chemicals and Atmosphere Branch

Name of contact officer
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3. Information about the contact officer submitting the reporting format if different from the above

Focal Point is submitting the national report

- ○ Information is submitted by the national focal point
- ◉ Information is submitted by another contact officer

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Full name of the institution
Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Title of contact officer
Senior policy officer

Name of contact officer
Olha Furman

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Web page
https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/protection/chemicals-management/mercury

▼ ART. 3: MERCURY SUPPLY SOURCES AND TRADE

3.1. Does the party have any primary mercury mines that were operating within its territory at the date of entry into force of the Convention for the party?

- ○ Yes
- ◉ No

Additional information on this question if needed
{Empty}

3.3. Has the party endeavoured to identify individual stocks of mercury or mercury compounds exceeding 50 metric tons and sources of mercury supply generating stocks exceeding 10 metric tons per year that are located within its territory?

- ◉ Yes
- ○ No

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*If the party answered Yes to Question 3 above:

i. Please attach the results of your endeavor or indicate where it is available on the internet, unless unchanged from a previous reporting round.
Results attached.

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ii. Supplemental: Please provide any related information, for example on the use or disposal of mercury from such stocks and sources.

No individual stocks of mercury or mercury compounds located in Australia are likely to exceed 50 metric tonnes. The stored mercury and mercury compounds originate largely from the treatment of mercury wastes in line with paragraph 2 of Article 11. Australia has measures in place to ensure that mercury and mercury compounds are managed in an environmentally sound manner and are either re-used for a use allowed under the Minamata Convention or exported for environmentally sound disposal in line with the provisions of paragraph 3 of Article 11 of the Minamata Convention and the Basel Convention. Each export of mercury for re-use must be authorised by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. Authorisations are only granted if the mercury is not excess mercury from the decommissioning of chloralkali facilities and if the importing country has provided its written consent to the import of the mercury for a use allowed under the Minamata Convention.

3.5. Has the party received consent, or relied on a general notification of consent, in accordance with article 3, including any required certification from importing non-parties, for all exports of mercury from the party's territory in the reporting period?

- [ ] Yes, exports to parties
- [ ] Yes, exports to non-parties
- [ ] No
- [x] No, no export

Part E - Additional comments on this article

Australia implements Minamata Convention obligations for Article 3(6), 3(8), 4(1) and 4(5) through the following legislative instruments:
• The import or export of mercury for industrial purposes is regulated by Rules made under the Industrial Chemicals Act 2019;
• The import or export of mercury, the import, export and manufacture of mercury-added products, and the incorporation of mercury-added products into other products, for therapeutic purposes, is regulated by the Therapeutic Goods Regulations 1990;
• The import or export of mercury, and the import, export and manufacture of mercury-added products, for agricultural or veterinary purposes is regulated by the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Regulations 1995;
• The import and export of mercury is regulated by the Customs (Prohibited Export) Regulations 1958 (Prohibited Export Regulations) and the Customs (Prohibited Import) Regulations 1956 (Prohibited Import Regulations) to ensure appropriate border controls are in place. No permissions need to be granted under the Customs legislation, rather the Prohibited Export Regulations and the Prohibited Import Regulations simply recognise the permissions granted under the relevant subject specific legislation.

Consistent with Article 3, paragraph 6(b)(i), Australia denied a request to export elemental mercury to a non-Party for gold extraction purposes in June 2022 on the basis the non-Party could not provide certification that there are measures in place to ensure the protection of human health and the environment.

▼ ART. 11: MERCURY WASTES

11.2. Are there facilities for final disposal of waste consisting of mercury

or mercury compounds in the party's territory?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Do not know (please explain)

If yes, if the information is available, how much waste consisting of mercury or mercury compounds has been subjected to final disposal under the reporting period? Please specify the method of the final disposal operation/operations.

Australia has one geological repository facility for the final disposal and permanent storage of waste consisting of mercury and mercury compounds. In line with domestic regulations, liquid mercury waste must be stabilised and solidified before final disposal. Australia does not currently have facilities to convert liquid elemental mercury to an inert form.

Australia has several specially engineered landfills or cells, which are designed to receive waste containing or contaminated with mercury if they satisfy leachability criteria defined in the licence conditions for the landfill site.

The total amount of mercury wastes as defined by paragraph 2 of Article 11, deposited to the geological repository, specially engineered landfills or cells are based on reports from sub-national government authorities and industries. The amount of reported mercury waste between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2022 is 311 tonnes. This total is based on Australia's definition of waste mercury and mercury compounds as set out by the National Environment Protection (Movement of Controlled Waste between States and Territories) Measure. During the identification and categorisation process, it was determined that these wastes are predominantly comprised of oil and gas industry spent catalysts and/or mercury removal units (about 77% of the national total), fluorescent lamps, and other types of end-of-life products. The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is endeavouring to further identify and categorise the quantities of mercury or mercury compounds in these waste streams.

Kindly attach any additional relevant information

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Part E - Additional comments on this article

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▼ COMMENTS

Part C: Comments regarding possible challenges in meeting the objectives of the Convention (Art. 21, para. 1)

{Empty}

▼ SUPPLEMENTAL - ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Supplemental: Part D: Comments regarding the reporting format and possible improvements, if any

{Empty}