

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention

Article 3 – Retention of Anti-Personnel Mines for Training and Research Purposes

Statement by Australia

24 June 2011

Philip Kimpton, First Secretary, Australian Permanent Mission to the UN, Geneva

Australia is pleased to provide an update for the Standing Committee on Australia's retained mines under Article 3 of the Convention beyond the information set out in our Article 7 transparency report.

As you are aware, Australia's operational stock of anti-personnel mines was destroyed more than a decade ago.

In conformity with the Convention and domestic legislation Australia retains sufficient numbers of anti-personnel landmines to:

- maintain a demining and countermine capability, including disposal of anti-personnel mines;
- demonstrate the effects of anti-personnel mines as part of mine awareness and countermine training; and
- undertake research into the effects of anti-personnel mines on in-service and trial equipment.

The number and types of mines that Australia currently holds are outlined in Australia's annual transparency report. The mines that Australia holds are not functional and cannot be used for their original intended purpose; Australia has only one hundred mine detonator assemblies (also known as mechanical fuzes) – the assemblies are no longer serviceable and are scheduled for disposal.

Small quantities of Australia's retained mines are used each year, consistent with Australia's specific training requirements. Stocks levels are currently being reviewed and assessed. Australia views retention of mines in accordance with Article 3 as essential for our defence training.

Within the Australian Defence Force only those personnel and units likely to be involved in demining, countermine operations and training deal with live mines – typically this is Explosive Ordnance Demolition specialists, combat engineers, and armour and infantry personnel. Confidence and familiarisation training using live anti-personnel mines helps ensure that ADF casualties on operations are minimised. These training requirements cannot be fully met by using replica mines only.