



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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The Government today released for public comment the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) working group draft reports. The reports, covering nine major industry sectors, are due to be finalised by the end of October. A further draft report on intersectoral issues will be available for public comment in the next few weeks.

The Government expects the final reports to provide the basis of discussion and consideration by all levels of government on strategies to achieve ecologically sustainable development in key industry sectors. The reports will also provide important information and input for other environment-related activities, such as the Inter-Governmental Agreement on the Environment currently being discussed.

Following finalisation of the reports, they will be considered initially at the November Special Premiers' Conference. The Conference is also expected to discuss appropriate processes and the timetable for considering the final recommendations of the ESD working groups.

The nine sectors are Agriculture, Energy Production and Distribution, Energy Use, Fisheries, Forestry, Manufacturing, Mining, Tourism and Transport.

The Government congratulates the working groups and the three Chairs - Professor Stuart Harris, Professor David Throsby and Dr Roy Green - for preparing the draft reports. The groups, containing representatives from industry, environmental and community organisations, as well as Commonwealth, State and Territory officials, have demonstrated a constructive and positive approach to tackling the wide range of issues under consideration.

The Government is encouraging comments on the issues raised in the draft reports, and sees public participation as an important component of the ESD process. A public consultation program has been established, with some public forums already held and further ones planned. A survey of public attitudes on ESD issues is to commence shortly.