

To the Committee Secretariat,

Senate Standing Committees on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

RE: Submission to the PFAS Contamination Inquiry - Anonymous Personal Testimony

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to formally submit my personal testimony to the current Parliamentary Inquiry into PFAS Contamination.

This submission, titled *"Trapped in Contamination: A Mother's Plea for Liam's Safety,"* shares my lived experience as a mother of two children with disabilities-one of whom, Liam, has profound intellectual disability and severe PICA-and outlines the ongoing harm, distress, and inaction my family has faced while living on PFAS-contaminated land in Western Australia.

Due to the sensitive and personal nature of this story, I respectfully request that my submission be included in the inquiry's records under my name but that it be treated as anonymous in the public domain.

This testimony is not about blame. It is about change. I hope it assists the Committee in strengthening the systems and policies that are meant to protect vulnerable people-particularly those with complex disabilities-from prolonged exposure to harm.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

Kind regards,

[Name Withheld]

## Trapped in Contamination: A Mother's Plea for Liam's Safety

Personal testimony to the PFAS Inquiry (2025)

### Executive Summary

This submission is from a mother of two children with disabilities, including Liam, who has profound intellectual disability and severe PICA. Our home in Western Australia is contaminated with PFAS, and our family has consumed contaminated water and food for years. Despite medical professionals advising relocation as the only viable option, we are still living in a toxic environment that endangers Liam's life and our wellbeing. This is a plea for urgent, compassionate intervention.

### Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry on PFAS Contamination

To Whom It May Concern,

This submission is provided as a personal testimony regarding the ongoing PFAS contamination affecting my home and family. I respectfully request that this submission be recorded under my name but treated as anonymous in the public record.

Our family resides at a property in Western Australia that has been confirmed to be contaminated with PFAS. Over many years, my entire family - including my two children with disabilities - has unknowingly consumed large quantities of PFAS through our environment: our soil, our home-grown food, and our water. The psychological burden of this knowledge is profound and ongoing.

The harm caused by this contamination has been made worse by the time it has taken for any meaningful response to be delivered. Despite numerous professionals - including support coordinators, medical practitioners, and disability service representatives - consistently stating that

relocation is the only viable and safe long-term option for my son "Liam", no such action has been taken. Instead, remediation continues to be offered, even when all involved agree that such a course would cause grave harm to our family.

All medical advice has been consistent: limit exposure to PFAS. However, this is impossible for a person like Liam, who lives with complex disabilities including PICA, profound intellectual disability, sensory processing disorder, high support autism, and communication limitations. Liam does not understand danger, and his condition means he eats soil, grass, leaves, and other biota in his environment. These are the very vectors through which PFAS contamination persists.

To make matters even more devastating, my mother - who has also resided on this contaminated land and shared in the homegrown produce and water - has recently been diagnosed with stage three cancer. This follows years of cumulative exposure to a known carcinogen in what was meant to be her family home.

Liam requires a highly secure and adapted environment due to the complexity of his disability. Relocation is not a preference - it is a necessity.

All levels of government have been made aware of our situation. And yet, nearly three years on, we remain living in what feels like a prison. Liam's fundamental human rights - to live in a safe home and to have access to clean water - are being violated.

The only tangible support we have received, nearly three years in, is the short-term provision of delivered water - a measure that is unreliable, logistically difficult, and fundamentally inadequate for meeting our family's long-term needs. The delays, uncertainty, and repeated disregard for the well-being of vulnerable people has left us feeling unheard, exposed, and exhausted.

Recent testing has shown that PFAS is still present in the groundwater and in the biota on our property, which continues to pose an active threat to Liam and our family.

We did not cause this contamination. Yet every day we pay for it with our health, our safety, and our sanity. The weight of that injustice is relentless.

We live in constant fear - fear that Liam will ingest something toxic again, fear that another family member will fall ill, fear that one more delay will lead to irreversible harm. Our property, once built to give Liam peace, has become a trap. We cannot sell it, cannot leave it, and cannot make it safe.

This is not just about inconvenience - it is about danger. The kind of danger no parent should ever have to manage. It is about being forced to watch your child live 24/7 in poison because there is literally nowhere else for him to go. It is about sleepless nights and emergency interventions. It is about guilt. And it is about screaming for help into a silence that lasts for years.

Due to his complex disabilities and lack of understanding, Liam can become highly distressed under stress, and in those moments, he may harm himself or others - at this point, only me. Whilst trying to limit his exposure to keep him safe, we are in fact triggering his defence mechanisms - resulting in severe self-harm, which I then try to limit, ending in me becoming hurt, to the point where I have needed medical attention. What do I do? Allow him to consume the poison, which may cause harm later, or stop it - which will cause harm now. The emotional and physical toll of trying to protect him while knowing the very environment we live in is harming him is beyond words.

All levels of government are aware of the danger - and continuing inaction risks not only our health but breaches of basic human rights, including Liam's right to a safe home, access to clean water, and freedom from foreseeable harm.

We are seeking:

- Permanent relocation to a comparable property
- Urgent inter-agency coordination to plan and support this move
- Recognition of the long-term physical, emotional, and financial harm

We are not asking for perfection - just safety, stability, and dignity. Thank you for hearing our story.