



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment and Heritage**

The Hon. Bob Charles, MP  
Chairman  
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Charles

**INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT AND INTEGRITY OF ELECTRONIC  
INFORMATION HELD BY THE COMMONWEALTH**

I refer to your letter of 16 September 2003 to Mr Beale requesting information on computer related security breaches that may have occurred in the Department of the Environment and Heritage and its associated agencies since July 1998.

The response to the Joint Committee's request is attached. If you require any further information, please contact me on (02) 6274-1555.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'D R Anderson'.

D R Anderson  
Fir Assistant Secretary  
Corporate Strategies Division

17 October 2003

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## Response to Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit – Computer Related Security Breaches within the Environment and Heritage Portfolio

### 1) Losses of Software and/or Hardware

There have been no losses of software reported during the period. Hardware losses are as follows:

	Dept of the Environment and Heritage	Bureau of Meteorology	Australian Antarctic Division
1998/ 99	Nil	12 laptops stolen	1 scanner stolen
1999/ 00	7 laptops stolen	12 laptops and 1 PC stolen	3 laptops stolen
2000/ 01	1 PC Computer Processing Unit and 2 laptops stolen;	9 laptops stolen, 1 laptop lost from the baggage compartment on a plane flight; 1 monitor identified as stolen initially but subsequently recovered	4 laptops stolen
2001/ 02	4 laptops, 4 workstations (PC, keyboard and mouse), 1 printer, 1 zip drive stolen	3 laptops stolen	1 laptop stolen
2002/ 03	4 laptops, 1 workstation stolen	6 laptops stolen, 1 laptop lost in fire	Nil

#### Notes:

- (i) The Department of the Environment and Heritage (DoEH) figures include Parks Australia, the Australian Greenhouse Office, the Australian Heritage Commission and the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator.
- (ii) In no cases have these losses led to classified information being compromised.
- (iii) The National Oceans Office, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority have not lost or had any equipment stolen during this period.
- (iv) All thefts were reported to the police, but none of the equipment has been recovered, nor have the offenders been apprehended.

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**2) Unauthorised access to computer systems**

A Departmental web server was attacked by the Code Red worm in 2001. No confidential or classified information was compromised or lost.

A number of workstations and laptops in the portfolio were attacked by the Blaster and Nachi worms in August 2003. DoEH and BoM computers were infected causing a denial of service. In both cases the worms entered the networks from infected laptops which had been connected to the Internet. Although the denial of service caused internal disruptions to both the Department and Bureau, external operational services were maintained with minimal interruptions. No confidential or classified information was compromised or lost.

Computer security arrangements are kept under constant review. The Department has recently upgraded its Internet Gateway and the security measures employed for all Internet facing systems. Current virus protection measures are in place.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) has in place a multi-layered approach to IT security, with several layers of protection. All Bureau Internet and external connections are via firewalls and all emails are scanned for viruses and Spam. In addition server authentication is used to manage access to individual computers.

**3) Other significant events involving information technology security**

Nil