Mustard gas dumped

By JOANNA MATHER

HUNDREDS of chemical weapons in our waters

A statement issued by the Department of Defence said since World War II two canisters of mustard gas had been recovered and if more were found they would probably be disposed of. However, it was likely the gas would have dispersed in sea water long ago, the statement said.

Mr Reynolds said it was common knowledge the waters off Townsville had been a dumping ground for bombs and ammunition following the war.

"But to my knowledge there has never been a suggestion until now that chemical weapons were included," he said.

But the defence statement said information relating to historical mustard gas dumping — including the Chemical Warfare Agent report referred to in the Weekend Australian article — had been posted on the Australian Hydrographic Office website since January 2006. It said the data had been published through Notices to Mariners since 1982 and attracted attention from the public several times since it was first reported in 1945.

It said the last dumping of a small quantity of mustard gas used for chemical defence training purposes was in 1970 and that mustard gas would dissolve and break down close to the dump site.

"The resultant products are relatively non-toxic, and will be rapidly diluted by ocean currents, so would not have a significant effect on the marine environment," it said.

A spokeswoman for Environment Minister Concetta Fierravanti-Wells said it was likely the gas would have dispersed in sea water long ago.

"They plan to run art workshops to not only improve skills, but give people the chance to make new friends and feel more confident in the community," he said.

The workshops will be held between March and May.

An exhibition of workshop participants’ creations is expected later in the year.

The Multicultural Communities Arts Program is an annual initiative administered by Arts Queensland with joint funding from Multicultural Affairs Queensland.

Applications for the next funding round close in November.

Inquiries should be directed to Arts Queensland on (07) 3224 4895 or email to grants@arts.qld.gov.au.

Doctor, dentist for hospitals

A NEW dentist has been appointed to the Bowen Hospital and a new doctor has been appointed to the Proserpine Hospital under Queensland Health’s Rural Health Scholarship scheme.

Acting Health Minister Robert Swartzen said the doctor was one of 56 medical appointments and the dentist one of six appointments to hospitals in rural and regional Queensland as part of the scheme.

"The scheme aims to attract health professionals to work and experience life in rural and regional areas of the State," Mr Swarzen said.

"All 56 graduates have taken up positions across Queensland, highly trained and ready to deliver medical and other health services.”

Private school plans funded

TWO Townsville schools have received planning grants under the State Government’s Capital Assistance Scheme for non-government schools.

The Marian School, Currajong, will use its $8000 planning grant to enable the school to revisit their master plan for the provision of administration and facilities. St Patrick’s College in Townsville will use its $10,000 grant to develop a master plan providing facilities suitable for physical education and to look at options in providing manual arts and graphics in existing facilities.

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