

## **QUESTIONS**

I have been following the testing issues for possible historical contamination from firefighting foams at both HMAS Albatross and HMAS Creswell (Jervis Bay Airfield).

I have heard that testing is complete and there was evidence of contamination.

I understand a report may be in Defence's hands.

If that is the case and if so when the report may be made public.

I have also heard further community consultation meetings are planned with the local community. If so could we have the dates for these so we can also publicise them?

## **RESPONSE TO ALL**

Defence commenced a detailed environmental investigation at HMAS Albatross in May 2016. The investigation is expected to be complete in early 2017.

As Defence receives verified results for HMAS Albatross, it will make these results available to relevant landholders and state authorities. The next community information session to discuss the current results of the investigation, is expected to be held at HMAS Albatross in September 2016. The community consultation will provide information on the preliminary site investigation and next steps. This will enable the community to ask questions and for Defence to work with local residents to share information. Defence remains committed to being open and transparent with local communities during the investigations.

Defence completed preliminary sampling at HMAS Creswell/Jervis Bay Range Facility (JBRF) in July 2016. The purpose of the preliminary sampling is to understand if PFOS and PFOA are present on, or in the vicinity of, the base.

Sampling is now complete and Defence is reviewing the draft report, and is conducting analysis of the data. Defence will provide the sampling results to local and state authorities and will engage with the local community on these results at the earliest opportunity.

### **Background Information**

Specialised Aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) was used for nearly 50 years across a range of major military bases, civilian aerodromes and industrial facilities around Australia for critical national defence and other purposes to rapidly extinguish liquid fuel fires.

Chemicals in the older fire fighting foams - in particular, Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), PFOS and PFOA - were also used in a range of industrial, commercial and domestic products.

In 2003 Defence became aware that this was an emerging contaminant. In that same year, Defence released a specification for the supply and testing of AFFF concentrates.

The product currently used by Defence is a more environmentally safe product and does not contain PFOS and PFOA as active ingredients.

Defence has been proactive in initiating an environmental program to investigate the extent and levels of PFOS and PFOA on, and in the vicinity of, some of its bases around Australia.

As well as a number of detailed environmental site investigations already underway, a preliminary sampling program has also commenced at a number of sites.

Defence is continuing to work with Commonwealth, State and local authorities to investigate this legacy issue. This issue is not unique to Defence.

Most people living in developed nations will have some level of PFOS and PFOA in their body as these chemicals were also used in common household and industrial applications, such as in the manufacture of non-stick cookware, fabric, furniture and carpet stain protection applications, food packaging and in some industrial processes.

According to the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) Perfluorinated Chemicals Guidance Statements released on 16 March 2016, there is currently no consistent evidence that exposure to PFOS and PFOA causes adverse human health effects. Because these compounds persist in humans and the environment, enHealth recommends that human exposure is minimised as a precaution.

The enHealth Guidance Statements are available from the Department of Health at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-publthpublicat-environ.htm>

Defence has established a national website to facilitate access to information regarding its PFOS and PFOA investigation program:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/id/PFOSPFOA/Default.asp>

Defence has also established a national telephone number: 1800 365 414 and email address: [PFCDefenceCoordination@golder.com.au](mailto:PFCDefenceCoordination@golder.com.au)