

**Questions:**

Why did Defence say in December, 2015, that contaminated water extracted during de-watering activities was being treated, when in fact there was no water treatment plant on-site at that time?

In the response provided today, the department says:

"In areas where testing found PFOS and / or PFOA concentrations above the adopted level of acceptance, works were not undertaken until the onsite water treatment plant was operational"

However, as I pointed out in my questions, as late as November ... in the area where the storage tank (formerly known as the AFFF tank) is located, dewatering was taking place at around 24L/sec with PFOS concentrations between 1 and 5 ug/L.

Has defence made a mistake or is it lying?

**Response:**

Defence confirms its previous response that **'in areas where testing found PFOS and / or PFOA concentrations above the adopted level of acceptance, works were not undertaken until the onsite water treatment plant was operational'**. With respect to the statement that **'as late as November ... in the area where the storage tank (formerly known as the AFFF tank) is located, dewatering was taking place at around 24L/sec with PFOS concentrations between 1 and 5 ug/L'**, Water testing carried out prior to works commencing in this area, and in accordance with the Project's Contaminated Soil and Water Management Plan, found PFOS concentrations to be below the adopted screening criteria (in accordance with Defence Contamination Directive #8) and did not require any form of treatment. Works for the storage tank commenced on 22 September 2015. Subsequent testing conducted during the works and the associated dewatering process indicated increasing PFOS concentrations above the adopted screening criteria and in accordance with the Project's Contaminated Soil and Water Management Plan, dewatering in this area was immediately suspended with effect 26 October 2015.

The on site establishment of the first of the two water treatment plants currently operating at RAAF Base Williamtown commenced on 27 October 2015 , with the first water treatment plant being commissioned and approved for operation on 4 January 2016 and the second (much larger plant) being commissioned and approved for operation on 5 February 2016. Treatment of water commenced in December 2015 as part of the commissioning protocols for the water treatment plant to ensure the screening criteria was being met. Notwithstanding, it is important to note that no treated water was released until the first water treatment plant was approved for operation. It was stored in on site holding tanks.