

Response provided to journalist
30 June 2016

Question:

I was just wondering if the Department of Defence has an explanation as to why personal files are being kept on residents in the Williamstown contamination area, including transcripts of phone conversations where permission was not granted for the records to be made?

Response:

Defence does maintain records relating to individuals in the course of the PFC environmental investigations undertaken at RAAF Base Williamstown.

Defence documents information such as correspondence, and records of telephone conversations to assist in capturing and responding to actions.

The *Archives Act 1983* imposes statutory obligations on Defence for the management of records including the action which must be taken to retain Commonwealth records. This includes records in relation to the environmental investigations (including community engagement) currently being conducted at various Defence sites.

Where personal information is collected, it is handled in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Defence Privacy Policy.

For further information, please see the Defence Privacy Policy which can be found at <http://www.defence.gov.au/privacy.asp>. A supplementary privacy statement specific to the National PFC Environmental Management Program can be found at <http://www.defence.gov.au/ID/PFOSPFOA/Privacy.asp>.