

Response provided to journalist
18 November 2016

Questions:

What levels of water contamination were found at HMAS Cerberus?
Over what period?
What's being done by way of ground and water remediation?

Response:

Defence has been proactive in initiating an environmental program to investigate the nature and extent of PFAS, on and in the vicinity of selected Defence properties around Australia.

Preliminary sampling was conducted at HMAS Cerberus in June 2016. A total of 4 samples were collected from off-base locations in the vicinity of HMAS Cerberus – 1 groundwater and 3 surface water samples. No on-base samples were collected. PFAS was detected in 1 of the 3 surface water samples, but this was below the interim screening criteria. PFAS was not detected in the groundwater sample.

Based on the outcome of the preliminary sampling program, HMAS Cerberus will be subject to a detailed environmental investigation. The detailed environmental investigation will determine the full nature and extent of PFAS on, and in the vicinity of, the base as part of Defence's national PFAS environmental investigation program. The detailed environmental investigation will commence in 2017 and take approximately 12 months to complete. Specific dates will be advised once Defence has consulted with relevant federal, state and local government authorities.

The best management and remedial options for a particular site are determined by site-specific factors, including the site's hydrogeology, the type of contamination, and access to the site. The detailed environmental investigation will provide Defence with significant site-specific information to assist in the identification of suitable management and remedial options. Defence continues to work with domestic and international partners on this matter.

Defence remains committed to being open and transparent with local communities during the investigations. Once further information regarding the detailed environmental investigations are available, Defence will provide this information to the local and state authorities and will engage with the local community at the earliest opportunity.

Further information about the pending investigations can be found at:
<http://www.defence.gov.au/ID/PFOSPFOA/DefenceSitesPending.asp>