

Response provided to journalist
02 November 2016

Questions:

In an article published in September we reported: The Defence Department is expected to release the full report after it has been reviewed by the State Government and Townsville City Council this month as per a previous response from Defence. As such:

1. When did Townsville City Council and EHP receive this report from Defence and how long will they have to review it?
2. If they have not received it yet, why not?
3. If they have, how long did each party have to review this report from Defence?
4. When will the full report be made public?
5. Why has the release of the report and proposed investigation program taken so long?
6. When will community consultation begin and how will it work?

Response:

Defence has been proactive in initiating an environmental program to investigate the nature and extent of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), on and in the vicinity of selected Defence properties around Australia.

A Preliminary Sampling Program was undertaken at 12 Defence properties across Australia, including RAAF Base Townsville, to understand if PFAS are present on, or in the vicinity of the properties.

Defence has finalised the preliminary sampling program report. The report was provided to relevant Queensland Government authorities for review and consultation on 21st October. Defence representatives have been in contact with the Townsville City Council regarding the report and will engage in consultations in the near future. Following these consultations, Defence is anticipating to release the preliminary sampling program report to the general public in the first half of November.

Subject to the outcomes of the preliminary sampling program, a detailed environmental investigation may be undertaken at RAAF Base Townsville. If detailed investigations are undertaken, they will be conducted in accordance with the National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure (NEPM) framework. Defence would conduct a community briefing and information activity prior to the commencement of a detailed environmental investigation.