

Questions:

1. Is the investigation finished, if not..how far into the investigation is the department?
2. Is there any findings that can be released yet - if so what?
3. What sorts of tests/ work is being undertaken as part of the investigation?
4. How many other bases in Australia are being investigated for this same reason and where are they?
5. How many teams/ people are involved in the Edinburgh investigation?
6. Is there a time it is expected to be complete by?

Response:

Defence has commenced a national PFAS environmental investigation program, including preliminary sampling at selected Defence sites across Australia, to review its estate and implement a comprehensive approach to manage the impacts of PFAS resulting from the historical use of legacy firefighting foams.

RAAF Base Edinburgh is one of the sites included in the national PFAS environmental investigation program. It was initially intended that RAAF Base Edinburgh be included in a preliminary sampling program however a decision has since been made in consultation with the Environmental Protection Authority South Australia (EPA SA) that the base will proceed directly to a detailed environmental investigation, conducted in accordance with the National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure (NEPM) framework.

The investigation will commence prior to the end of 2016 and take approximately 12 months to complete the key investigation reports including a detailed site assessment, human health risk assessment and an ecological risk assessment. The investigation will determine the nature and extent of PFAS contamination on and in the vicinity of the base, and assess the risk to human health and the environment.

The first community engagement activity will occur prior to the commencement of the detailed environmental investigation and a specific date for that engagement activity has yet to be determined but is proposed to take place in late October 2016. Defence will work closely with the City of Salisbury Council and SA EPA with respect to community engagement.

Planning for the detailed environmental investigation including engagement of independent expert contractors has commenced and Defence will proactively engage with the community and stakeholders throughout the investigation. Details on the investigation process and resourcing will be available when the process formally commences.

Defence remains committed to engaging with the relevant state authorities, the local councils and community residents with respect to the upcoming investigation at RAAF Edinburgh.

Further information regarding the PFAS environmental investigation program can be found at:

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