

**1. Where is the testing up to and when will the results be released for those two sites?**

**HMAS Albatross**

Defence commenced an environmental investigation at HMAS Albatross in May 2016 to understand the extent and levels of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) including perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), perfluorohexane sulfonate (PFHxS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) on, and in the vicinity of, the base. The environmental investigation is expected to be complete in early 2017.

The findings of the report and the next steps will be discussed at the next community information session to be held on 5 October 2016. This will enable the community to ask questions and for Defence to work with local residents to share information. Defence remains committed to being open and transparent with local communities during the investigations.

Details on the community information session can be found at:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/ID/Albatross/CommunityConsultation.asp>

Further detailed information regarding the investigations can be found on the Defence PFAS website for *HMAS Albatross* at

<http://www.defence.gov.au/ID/Albatross/Default.asp>

**HMAS Creswell**

Defence completed the preliminary sampling program at HMAS Creswell/Jervis Bay Range Facility (JBRF) in July 2016. The purpose of the preliminary sampling program is to understand if PFAS are present on, or in the vicinity of the base. Sampling is now complete and Defence is reviewing the draft report, and is conducting analysis of the data. Defence will provide the sampling results to local and state authorities and will engage with the local community on these results at the earliest opportunity.

Subject to the outcomes of the preliminary sampling program, an environmental investigation may be undertaken at selected sites. If investigations are undertaken, they will be conducted in accordance with the National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure (MEPM)

**2. Does the department accept the determination (attached) that says “PFOA is clearly a threat to human health and the environment”**

The Australian Government’s priority remains the health and safety of the community and the management of potential impacts of PFAS exposure on the environment.

Questions regarding human health should be directed to the Department of Health.

**3. Will this UN committee determination influence the government’s decision to compensate or make reparations to individuals/residents/former employees submitting compensation claims?**

PFOS has been through the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) and PFOA is now going through the process.

Response provided to journalist  
29 September 2016

Question regarding the Stockholm Convention and the processes of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee to the Stockholm Convention should be directed at the Department of Environment and Energy.

**Background:**

Specialised Aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) was used for nearly 50 years across a range of major military bases, civilian aerodromes and industrial facilities around Australia for critical national defence and other purposes to rapidly extinguish liquid fuel fires.

Chemicals in the older fire fighting foams - in particular, Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), PFOS and PFOA - were also used in a range of industrial, commercial and domestic products.

In 2003 Defence became aware that this was an emerging contaminant. From 2004, Defence transitioned to a new product called Ansulite for use on the Defence estate. The product currently used by Defence has significantly reduced environmental impact and does not contain PFOS and PFOA as active ingredients.

Defence has been proactive in initiating an environmental program to investigate the extent and levels of PFOS and PFOA on, and in the vicinity of, some of its bases around Australia.

As well as a number of detailed environmental site investigations already underway, a preliminary sampling program has also commenced at a number of sites.

Defence is continuing to work with Commonwealth, State and local authorities to investigate this legacy issue. This issue is not unique to Defence.

Most people living in developed nations will have some level of PFOS and PFOA in their body as these chemicals were also used in common household and industrial applications, such as in the manufacture of non-stick cookware, fabric, furniture and carpet stain protection applications, food packaging and in some industrial processes.

According to the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) Perfluorinated Chemicals Guidance Statements released on 16 March 2016 and updated on 24 June 2016, there is currently no consistent evidence that exposure to PFOS and PFOA causes adverse human health effects. Because these compounds persist in humans and the environment, enHealth recommends that human exposure is minimised as a precaution.

The enHealth Guidance Statements are available from the Department of Health at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-publthpublicat-environ.htm>

Defence has established a national website to facilitate access to information regarding its PFOS and PFOA investigation program:  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/id/PFOSPFOA/Default.asp>

Defence has also established a national telephone number: 1800 365 414 and email address: [PFCDefenceCoordination@golder.com.au](mailto:PFCDefenceCoordination@golder.com.au)