

Response provided to journalist  
16 September 2016

**Questions:**

1. What levels of PFOS was found at the base? And where was this found? (i.e. in groundwater, in soil etc?)
2. What levels of PFOA was found at the base? And where was this found?
3. Can I please grab a date, time and location for the public meeting to discuss the Edinburgh RAAF base investigation?

**Response:**

An exact date for the community consultation has not yet been finalised, however it is proposed to take place in late October 2016. This will include a briefing of the community of Defence's current understanding of PFAS on, and in the vicinity of RAAF Base Edinburgh.

The routine environmental monitoring program that detected PFAS at RAAF Base Edinburgh in 2014 involved sampling of ground water and selected soil locations. It was a broad non PFAS specific sampling program.

Defence intends to include and release that data and further details of historical AFFF usage at the base in a comprehensive historical review within the detailed environmental investigation for RAAF Base Edinburgh that is currently being progressed. Defence will also undertake a comprehensive PFAS specific testing program on and in the vicinity of the base as part of that investigation with reports to be released to the community.

**BACKGROUND:**

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, with all recommended follow on sampling and investigations from those reports to take up to a further 12 months. 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 decision to progress directly to a detailed environmental investigation at RAAF Base Edinburgh was based on the following considerations:

- Consultation between Defence, EPA SA and the City of Salisbury Council.
- Sampling conducted by Defence as part of routine environmental monitoring which was not PFAS specific. The results identified the presence of PFOS and PFOA. The data will be utilised as background for the detailed environmental investigation.
- Sampling undertaken by the City of Salisbury Council in the Kurna Park and Edinburgh South wetlands areas, resulting in positive detections. The council's sampling served a purpose similar to that intended of Defence's preliminary sampling program. Any queries relating to that sampling should be referred to the City of Salisbury Council.

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. 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.

Subject to the outcomes of the detailed environmental investigation, long-term contamination remediation/management arrangements will be implemented. Defence will consider, and may implement short – medium term contamination management arrangements in parallel with the detailed environmental investigation as appropriate technology and options become available.