

Journalist enquires about the potential health risks to an infant from any PFOS or PFOA transferred through breast milk near the Tindal airbase and other areas in the Northern Territory.

Questions:

If so, what action is Defence / authorities taking in regards to this? Will Defence or someone appropriate also address residents in the Territory about the matter (and about the new guidelines and how that may affect them / water etc) like it has done with Oakey?

Response:

The Commonwealth Department of Health released final Health Based Guidance Values (HBGV) for PFAS on 3 April 2017. These HBGVs were developed by FSANZ at the request of Department of Health and replace the interim enHealth guidelines released in June 2016.

Defence is assessing the implications of the FSANZ guidance values as a priority, and will work with its independent environmental consultants to revise and update relevant reports developed as part of the environmental investigations, including the Human Health Risk Assessments for Williamtown and Oakey.

Current and future Defence investigations and assessment, including those for RAAF Base Darwin, RAAF Base Tindal and Robertson Barracks, will now adopt the FSANZ guidance values in place of the enHealth interim values.

The following document released by the Department of Health provides responses to frequently asked questions relating to the FSANZ report and states that “the significant health benefits of breastfeeding are well established and far outweigh any potential health risks to an infant from any PFOS or PFOA transferred through breast milk”:

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/2200FE086D480353CA2580C900817CDC/\\$File/faq-FSANZ-report.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/2200FE086D480353CA2580C900817CDC/$File/faq-FSANZ-report.pdf)

Additional questions on the FSANZ report should be directed to the Department of Health.

Defence continues to be committed to engaging with the local community throughout these investigations and will be holding two Community Walk-in Sessions on Wednesday 12 April in Katherine to provide local residents and business owners with an opportunity to discuss the detailed environmental investigation into per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) on, and in the vicinity of, RAAF Base Tindal. The details for the event are:

Response provided to journalist
10 April 2017

Date:

Wednesday 12 April 2017

Where:

Katherine Country Club
Pearce Street, Katherine

Session 1:

2:00 pm Doors Open
2:30 pm Presentation
4:00 pm Session Concludes

Session 2:

5:00 pm Doors Open
5:30 pm Presentation
7:00 pm Session Concludes

Further information on the walk-in sessions can be found at:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/ID/Tindal/>