

**Questions:**

I'm seeking a statement from Defence responding to the below media release from Shine Lawyers. A specific question I would like addressed is, will the survey be used "without prejudice" in future legal action? Secondly, are there any plans to conduct one on one interviews (inc blood and ongoing medical testing) with the landholders taking part in the class action?

**Response:**

Defence is finalising a detailed environmental investigation to better understand the extent and levels of per- and poly- fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) on, and in the vicinity of, Army Aviation Centre Oakey (AACO).

In 2016 Defence completed a detailed Environmental Site Assessment, including ground water modelling, a Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) and a Preliminary Ecological Risk Assessment.

Following the completion of these assessments it was identified that data gaps remained in some portions of the Investigation Area. As a result Defence is conducting further works to update and refine the 2016 assessment reports.

Defence is conducting a 2017 community survey to inform the ongoing investigation of, and response to, the PFAS contamination in the Oakey Investigation Area, in particular refining the HHRA. The survey will help obtain more information about:

- fruit, vegetables, fish, livestock and poultry grown within the Investigation Area that have potentially been exposed to PFAS and that people eat
- potential new sample locations within the Investigation Area to enable further biota sampling to be undertaken
- how water and land within the Investigation Area was typically used to grow fruit, vegetables, fish, eggs, livestock and poultry

The questions in the survey seek to understand how people in the Investigation Area would typically use their land to grow produce and livestock, together with how much of this produce, and how often they would typically consume it.

The survey includes multiple choice answers so that the assumptions in the 2016 HHRA can be refined to reflect the frequency and amounts of local produce consumed by Oakey residents. The de-identified survey results will be presented in the refined HHRA due to be released in approximately October 2017.

Participation in the survey is voluntary. The information provided may be shared with Defence's technical advisors, relevant Queensland government agencies and organisations, and environmental consultants directly involved in the response to the groundwater contamination. Such organisations may include, but are not limited to: Queensland Department of Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland Department of Health and Toowoomba Regional Council.

Response provided to journalist  
4 April 2017

Defence is not aware of Shine Lawyers formally commencing legal proceedings against the Commonwealth at this time, and it is unable to advise whether the refined HHRA may be relevant to matters raised in any proceedings.

Defence is taking a responsible and proactive approach to this issue and is working with Commonwealth, State and local authorities to investigate the nature and extent of PFAS on, or in the vicinity of, the base.

The 2017 Community Survey can be found at:

[http://www.defence.gov.au/ID/Oakey/\\_master/docs/AACOCCommunitySurveyFeb2017.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/ID/Oakey/_master/docs/AACOCCommunitySurveyFeb2017.pdf)

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